Most student teachers are introduced (however briefly) to key issues and possible issues during their ITE that they may have to negotiate in school once they have qualified. However although a third of all state funded education is carried out in Christian schools this is not an area that is routinely addressed in the education of teachers. A third of all primary schools are faith based, a significant minority of secondary schools are faith based and most schools are required by law to perform acts of worship of a mostly Christian character. Recent changes in policy means that there is a possibility that more schools (free and academies) may be faith based yet issues surrounding teaching from a distinctly Christian perspective or even in a Christian environment are generally omitted from ITE.

The research in this paper is part of a UK research project exploring the impact of a distinctively Christian approach to pedagogy. This paper discusses data collected from 35 ITE tutors in three universities with a Christian foundation. The tutors were from a variety of faith backgrounds and none. Tutors were asked to consider a range of scenarios and issues in relation to the relationship between ITE and the issues surrounding Christian education as well as their understanding of the place of faith to their professional roles as tutors. Some scenarios were based on comments taken from interviews and observations in earlier parts of the project. They were asked to talk about their own values and their understanding of the place of values in ITE and the curriculum.

Preliminary analysis of the data suggests that for some tutors (about a third) the question of including debates and approaches to a distinctively Christian approach to pedagogy was a polarizing issue. It is also the case that while most tutors believed there was a place for particular values, as well as a diversity of values in ITE they were often uncomfortable with values that they interpreted as exclusive.

The strongest theme to emerge from the data was the challenge in finding a shared language of values in ITE. Not only was the definition of values varied but their was no common understanding even by tutors within the same university or who specialized in the same curriculum subject.