



Department
for Education

Initial teacher training: forming partnerships

Updated guidance

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Contents

Summary	4
Who is this publication for?	4
Overview	5
What is a partnership?	5
Partnership definitions	7
Accredited ITT provider	7
Lead partner	7
Placement schools	8
Postgraduate Teaching Apprenticeship (PGTA) specific definitions	8
Main provider	8
Supporting provider	8
Accredited provider delegation and accountability	9
Curriculum development	10
Additional curriculum guidance for undergraduate courses	11
Student registration, degree awarding powers and student fees	12
Undergraduate ITT	12
Undergraduate ITT academic award	12
Managing applications	12
Postgraduate ITT	13
Postgraduate ITT academic award and accountability	13
Managing applications	13
HE data collection	13
Teaching apprenticeships	14
Delivering level 6 teacher apprenticeship provision across an ITT partnership	14
Inspection of PGTA provision	15
Informing DfE of partnership arrangements for PGTA provision	15
Applications for the RoATP	16
End point assessment	16
Apprenticeship Register changes from 1 August 2023	17
Partnerships and simplifying routes into teaching	18
Recruitment and marketing	19

Trainee recruitment services	20
Lead partners working with multiple accredited ITT providers	21
Accredited ITT providers acting as a lead partner for another accredited ITT provider	21
Teaching School Hubs	22
Getting partnerships ready for delivery from September 2024	24
Curriculum and readiness to deliver checks (Stage 2 checks)	24
Accreditation status dormancy and reactivation	24
ITT funding	26
ITT reform funding	26
Student fee funding	26
DfE grant funding for salaried routes	26
Bursaries and scholarships	27
Inspection of ITT provision	28
Next steps	29
Annex A – Forming a partnership	31
Governance and leadership	31
Curriculum materials and delivery	32
Partnership approach to course offer	32
School placements	32
Mentoring	33
Quality assurance	33
Finance	33

Summary

This publication provides guidance from the Department for Education (DfE). It has been produced to help accredited Initial Teacher Training (ITT) providers and other organisations form partnerships to deliver high-quality ITT provision in compliance with DfE's 2024/25 ITT criteria.

The content sets out a clarification of the roles and responsibilities, key features and expectations of a partnership, as well as broader policy context to inform the formation of partnerships. This update provides further clarification and guidance relating to curriculum design, marketing, funding arrangements and degree awarding powers.

This is an update to guidance first published in December 2022.

Who is this publication for?

This guidance is for:

- accredited ITT providers delivering ITT that leads to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) from 2024/25,¹ that have formed, or will be forming a partnership with other organisations;
- accredited ITT providers who want to expand their ITT provision through partnering; and
- non-accredited organisations who are partners of, or who want to partner with, an accredited ITT provider.

¹ This guidance applies to accredited ITT providers who have agreement to deliver the new ITT quality requirements and criteria early, from 23/24 AY.

Overview

What is a partnership?

From September 2024, accredited ITT providers are required to deliver ITT in compliance with DfE's 2024/25 ITT criteria. The draft 2024/25 ITT criteria, which has been available to applicants in the accreditation process, will be updated in September 2023. The 2024/25 ITT criteria will include the updated Quality Requirements which are available at Annex A of the [Stage 2 guidance](#).

Organisations involved in ITT have the flexibility to form partnerships in which they share knowledge, experience and resources, in order to support delivery and help retain existing talent and experience in the sector. The resulting partnership can increase the capacity and capability of all organisations involved, to deliver high-quality ITT provision across the country.

DfE will not prescribe the structure of partnerships, nor the number of organisations involved. However, the key responsibilities listed below must be covered within the partnership. All organisations involved in ITT will be classified using the three roles below. Whilst all partnerships must be led by a single accredited ITT provider, other roles may overlap. For instance, an accredited ITT provider may have lead partner responsibilities and some schools that are placement schools may also have a role as a lead partner.

Box 1 – key responsibilities in an ITT partnership

- The **accredited ITT provider** will have been awarded accreditation during Stage 1 and has full and final accountability for all aspects of training design, delivery, and quality across the partnership.
- **Lead partner(s)** will have an operational or strategic role with responsibilities such as trainee recruitment, delivering training, involvement in curriculum design, supplying lead mentors, or running Intensive Training and Practice.
- **Placement schools** will provide placements and general mentors.

The single accredited ITT provider is responsible for ensuring that robust governance arrangements are put in place and exercised effectively. The accredited ITT provider is also accountable for the whole ITT programme including its curriculum, finance, quality of provision and compliance with ITT criteria. By agreement, partner organisations can contribute their expertise - such as knowledge of subjects, phases, and local networks - to ensure strong delivery of ITT provision.

ITT Partnerships can take various forms, from simple collaborations between two or three organisations, to larger networks with multiple partners. Partnerships can adapt to serve specific local needs or have a multi-regional or national focus. In forming partnerships, accredited ITT providers may want to consider how they can retain the local expertise of quality practitioners, maintain strong sector relations, and how they can work collaboratively with other local organisations to provide sufficient training capacity, such as Teaching School Hubs (TSHs).

DfE must be informed of all lead partners undertaking any of the following functions:

- recruitment and delivery of ITT on behalf of an accredited ITT provider;
- receiving and managing student fees from the Office for Students (OfS); and
- making an academic award for the ITT course.

DfE will use the information provided by accredited ITT providers on the digital services to maintain a register of accredited ITT providers and their partners, including partnership structures and the routes being offered. The register will be used to aid DfE oversight of the ITT market, and key information will also be shared with Ofsted to support Initial Teacher Education (ITE) inspection planning. Accredited ITT providers may be contacted to provide additional information that is not available via the digital services.

Partnerships should be based on a formal agreement. The partnership agreement should be a clear working document that can be used to guide and inform the contributions of each partner and help to support coherent arrangements across the various contexts in which the training takes place. The partnership agreement should be underpinned by other practices, such as well-understood procedures for communication between the partners and agreed arrangements for the co-ordination of the training.

Each partnership arrangement will be unique to the organisations involved, their local or regional circumstances, and their ultimate aims and ambitions over time, and partnerships may need to be adjusted to reflect changes to local circumstances or roles. Further information to support organisations to form partnerships, including support on governance, curriculum delivery, school placements and mentoring is set out in Annex A.

Partnership definitions

Accredited ITT provider

Synonyms: accredited provider, accredited entity, legal entity

The accredited ITT provider is a legal entity that has been accredited by the Secretary of State to deliver teacher training that leads to QTS, in accordance with [The Education \(School Teachers' Qualifications\) \(England\) Regulations 2003](#).

The accredited ITT provider has been awarded accreditation and has full and final accountability for all aspects of training design, delivery, and quality across the partnership. The accredited ITT provider is liable for the quality of provision, governance, internal controls, and will be accountable and responsible for public funds spent for the purposes intended across its ITT partnership.

Accredited ITT providers must contact DfE via itt.accreditation@education.gov.uk to seek approval for any significant changes to their governance.

Lead partner

Synonyms: lead delivery partner, delivery partner, training partner, strategic partner, Teaching School Hub partner

Lead partner(s) will work within the ITT partnership and have a partnership agreement with the accredited ITT provider. Lead partners may be higher education institutes (HEIs), schools, trusts or other types of organisations (including Teaching School Hubs) who have the capacity and expertise to take on significant operational or strategic roles in the ITT partnership. They will work in collaboration with their accredited ITT provider, and their role(s) could include:

- trainee recruitment;
- delivering ITT courses;
- contributing to curriculum design;
- designing and delivering of mentor curriculums;
- supplying lead mentors;
- running Intensive Training and Practice; and
- quality assurance of aspects such as mentoring.

Lead partners may have multiple roles. Their responsibilities should be agreed and delegated through formal arrangements with the accredited ITT provider.

From September 2024, all Teaching School Hubs operating as lead partners will be expected to deliver ITT courses. Teaching School Hubs may choose to undertake other operational or strategic roles as a lead partner - for example, those listed above - in addition to this.

Placement schools

Synonyms: school partner, placement partner

A school which has the capacity to provide high-quality general school placements for ITT trainees and supply mentors. Placement schools or other school partners may have the capacity and expertise to offer the school-based element of Intensive Training and Practice for the ITT partnership.

Postgraduate Teaching Apprenticeship (PGTA) specific definitions

Main provider

A main provider, in the context of the PGTA, will directly deliver training to apprentices for other organisations. While doing this, it can also train:

- its own employees;
- employees of connected companies or charities; and
- act as a subcontractor for other main and employer providers.

A main provider can be an accredited ITT provider or a lead partner.

Supporting provider

A supporting provider, in the context of the PGTA, will act as a subcontractor for main and employer providers to train apprentices up to a maximum of £500,000 per year. If an organisation is new on the register, it will be limited to £100,000 in its first year. A supporting provider can be an accredited ITT provider or a lead partner.

Please see the [‘Teaching apprenticeships’](#) section for further guidance on delivering the PGTA.

Accredited provider delegation and accountability

Accredited ITT providers have the flexibility to delegate responsibilities to their lead partners, as long as the accredited ITT provider has sufficient oversight. All organisations in a partnership may have some involvement in the development of the ITT programme and, in some cases, the accredited ITT provider may wish to delegate aspects of their course design to lead partners. The accredited ITT provider holds ultimate responsibility for all elements of the course and must ensure that their capacity to meet the 2024/25 ITT criteria can be demonstrated across their partnership.

It will be incumbent on the accredited ITT provider to ensure clear roles and expectations are established for partners. Where the accredited ITT provider delegates roles to a lead partner, the accredited ITT provider should establish clear partnership agreements to ensure clarity in the delegation of roles and responsibilities within the partnership and the process for quality assurance.

Curriculum development

Accredited ITT providers will be accountable for the content and delivery of postgraduate courses leading to QTS (although the delivery itself may be undertaken by a lead partner), which includes ensuring the [Core Content Framework](#) (CCF) and the new [Quality Requirements](#) are incorporated in full. Any organisation in a partnership may have some involvement in the development of the ITT programme and, in some cases, the accredited ITT provider may wish to delegate aspects of their course design to lead partners.

Given the focus on curriculum design in the new Quality Requirements, it is important that every trainee within the ITT partnership gains the benefits of the high-quality and coherent curriculum that has been designed. The accredited ITT provider will be responsible for the content and delivery of all curricula in their partnership, regardless of where the curriculum is being delivered. We would expect one core curriculum to be delivered across a partnership for each single phase and subject so that ITT within a partnership is underpinned by the same foundational concepts and principles. It is up to the accredited ITT provider to allow any flexibility or variation in the curriculum across the partnership and ensuring they meet all the ITT criteria, including full incorporation of the CCF and Quality Requirements.

All curriculum content, implementation and delivery within a partnership is within the remit of the Ofsted inspection. The accredited ITT provider will be accountable for all ITT content and delivery throughout the partnership and should ensure they have robust quality assurance processes in place to ensure consistently high-quality ITT.

Ofsted inspection will ensure the CCF and the Quality Requirements are incorporated into all ITT leading to QTS in full. Ofsted would expect the accredited ITT provider to have a clear rationale for any differences in curriculum across the partnership and robust arrangements in place to ensure the quality of any variation. As part of their inspection of an accredited ITT provider, Ofsted will check that all partners are implementing the agreed curriculum to a high standard and that the accredited ITT provider has robust processes in place to ensure that the partner is working within the scope of what has been agreed.

Additional curriculum guidance for undergraduate courses

Accredited ITT providers may delegate the development and/or delivery of undergraduate degree content and academic award to lead partners registered with the Office for Students (OfS), providing they have clear and robust quality assurance processes in place to ensure consistently high-quality ITT courses. For undergraduate programmes, the accredited ITT provider will make recommendations for QTS at the end of the course and will be accountable for all content and delivery throughout the course that relate to the QTS recommendation and for fully incorporating the CCF and Quality Requirements.

Ofsted will inspect all ITT courses being delivered within the partnership as part of the inspection of the accredited ITT provider. For undergraduate ITT, Ofsted will inspect undergraduate courses in the same way that they do now, where they look at trainees/students' experiences across the 3- or 4-year course.

Student registration, degree awarding powers and student fees

It is at the accredited ITT provider's discretion how roles are delegated across partnerships, and it is the accredited ITT provider who is accountable for the delivery of all ITT across their partnerships.

For undergraduate or postgraduate ITT, regulations allow accredited ITT providers to delegate the following:

- degree awarding powers to a lead partner registered with the OfS;
- applications to undergraduate courses through UCAS to be delegated to a lead partner registered with OfS; and/or
- the setting and receiving of student fees, within the fee cap limit set by OfS or DfE, to a lead partner registered with the OfS.

Undergraduate ITT

Undergraduate ITT academic award

For undergraduate programmes, the accredited ITT provider will make recommendations for QTS at the end of the course and will be ultimately accountable for all elements throughout the programme that relate to the QTS recommendation. While we recognise that it will not always be possible to draw a clear distinction between aspects of programmes relating to the awarding of an undergraduate degree and making recommendations for QTS, compliance with regulatory requirements in respect of academic awards (e.g., to the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) and OfS) can rest with the delivery partner that awards the undergraduate degree rather than with the accredited ITT provider. It is the responsibility of the accredited ITT provider to agree roles with their partners which must be clearly set out in formal partnership agreements.

Managing applications

Applications for undergraduate ITT go through UCAS. Where both the accredited ITT provider and the lead partner are HE institutions, it is at the discretion of the accredited ITT provider to determine which institution handles applications for undergraduate ITT leading to QTS. However, consideration should be given to ensuring that application processes are as straightforward as possible for trainees. It should be clear to candidates which organisation is responsible for course content and curriculum design, which organisation will be delivering the course, which organisation is accountable for delivery and for making recommendations for QTS, where the training will take place, and where the student will be registered and studying.

Postgraduate ITT

Postgraduate ITT academic award and accountability

Only the accredited ITT provider can make recommendations for the award of QTS. However, if a lead partner has degree awarding powers, the ITT regulations and the HE regulations allow a lead partner to be the awarding body for a PGCE if the accredited ITT provider wants to delegate such functions. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the accredited ITT provider to agree roles with their partners.

Managing applications

Applications for postgraduate ITT go through the Apply digital service. As with undergraduate ITT, accredited ITT providers have the discretion to delegate responsibilities to their lead partners, including recruitment and managing applications. Marketing of courses must make clear who the accredited ITT provider is, so it is always clear to candidates and trainees who is accountable for an ITT course.

HE data collection

For both undergraduate and postgraduate courses, where the accredited ITT provider and the lead partner are both higher education institutes, arrangements must give due consideration to ensuring clarity around OfS data collection and surveys, and how particular trainee teacher/students' data and surveys are captured. This should be clearly set out in partnership agreements.

Teaching apprenticeships

Delivering level 6 teacher apprenticeship provision across an ITT partnership

Accredited ITT providers wishing to offer the PGTA will need to consider how to manage the delivery of PGTA provision across the ITT partnership, in line with wider DfE Apprenticeship rules. Accredited ITT providers will be accountable for the PGTA curriculum, delivery, and recommendation for QTS. Partnership agreements should clearly set out whether organisations delivering the PGTA register are doing so as the 'main provider' or 'supporting provider', according to the apprenticeship subcontracting rules set out in [Apprenticeship funding rules for main providers - Contracting and subcontracting - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apprenticeship-funding-rules-for-main-providers).

Under the [Apprenticeship funding rules - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apprenticeship-funding-rules), the 'main provider' holds the responsibility for delivering a substantial part of the apprenticeship training and must be on DfE's [Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/register-of-apprenticeship-training-providers) (RoATP). The 'main provider' must directly deliver some of the apprenticeship training and/or on-programme assessment associated with each employer's apprenticeship programme. The 'main provider' will receive apprenticeship funding directly from DfE for apprentice trainees under a contractual agreement.

The 'main provider' may subcontract delivery of apprenticeship provision to organisations on the RoATP to enhance delivery; these organisations may be registered on the RoATP as a 'main provider' or 'supporting provider.'

Where an accredited ITT provider decides to delegate substantial delivery of the PGTA to a lead partner within the ITT partnership, the lead partner must be on the RoATP and, in accordance with the apprenticeship rules, will be classified as the 'main provider' for the PGTA. The accredited ITT provider must also be on the RoATP as they are accountable for design and delivery of the PGTA and recommend QTS. In such cases, the accredited ITT provider should register on the RoATP as a 'supporting provider', unless they are already registered as a 'main provider' because they also deliver the PGTA as a 'main provider' or deliver other professional apprenticeships.

The accredited ITT provider must ensure that formal ITT partnership agreements reflect a lead partner role as the 'main provider', acknowledging that they will receive apprenticeship funding directly from DfE for apprentice teacher trainees, under a contractual arrangement. ITT partnership agreements should be clear that the accredited ITT provider has overall accountability for the content, quality, and governance of the PGTA, including Ofsted ITE inspection outcomes.

Inspection of PGTA provision

In all cases, the accredited ITT provider is the accountable body for the PGTA, and the PGTA will form part of their ITT Ofsted inspection under [Initial teacher education \(ITE\) inspection framework and handbook - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/initial-teacher-education-ite-inspection-framework-and-handbook). The PGTA will not form part of Ofsted inspection on the further education skills inspection. Further information can be found: [Initial teacher education \(ITE\) inspection framework and handbook - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/initial-teacher-education-ite-inspection-framework-and-handbook).

If the lead partner as the 'main provider' delivers other apprenticeships, the PGTA will not form part of Ofsted inspection on the further education skills inspection, further information can be found: [Further education and skills handbook - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-education-and-skills-handbook)

Informing DfE of partnership arrangements for PGTA provision

To meet ITT and Apprenticeship regulation rules, DfE must be informed of the accredited ITT provider's intention to deliver PGTA from September 2024 and beyond, and the capacity in which the accredited ITT provider and lead partner(s) will be operating in.

Accredited ITT providers must inform itt.accreditation@education.gov.uk if they intend to deliver PGTA, and specify whether:

- the accredited ITT provider will act as the 'main provider' and does not intend to subcontract delivery to a lead partner;
- the accredited ITT provider will act as the 'main provider' and will delegate some of the delivery via subcontracting arrangements to a lead partner as a 'supporting provider' (details of the lead partner should be provided);
- the accredited ITT provider will delegate substantial delivery to a lead partner, who will act as a 'main provider' and the accredited ITT provider is also registered as a 'main provider' of the PGTA or other professional apprenticeships (details of the lead partner should be provided); or
- the accredited ITT provider will delegate substantial delivery to a lead partner, who will act as the 'main provider' and subcontract the accredited ITT provider (details of the lead partner should be provided).

In all cases, the accredited ITT provider will be required to provide evidence to DfE of the partnership agreement in place and confirmation of the current RoATP status of the organisations involved.

This information is required as part of the approval process for RoATP registration and funding. DfE will be unable to validate and approve new applications to the RoATP for PGTA without it.

The information on ITT partnership delivery arrangements for the PGTA will be included in DfE's register of accredited ITT providers and their partnerships and will be shared with Ofsted to support inspection planning.

Applications for the RoATP

Accredited ITT providers and lead partners should complete a Growing Capacity expression of interest form (via [Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers: how to apply - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/register-of-apprenticeship-training-providers-how-to-apply)) and send this to DfE's RoATP team to request an invitation to apply. ITT providers currently do not have to demonstrate a gap in provision before they are invited to join the RoATP.

ITT providers may advertise and commence recruitment whilst finalising their RoATP outcome and should make clear to candidates on the course offering, where this is subject to final agreement with DfE. Further information on the Teacher Apprenticeship standard is accessible via [Teacher / Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teacher-institute-for-apprenticeships-and-technical-education).

Once an expression of interest form has been submitted by an accredited ITT provider or their lead partner, DfE's RoATP team will conduct checks regarding the organisation's ITT status, including UK Register for Learning Providers (UKRLP) status. Once ITT status is confirmed (as an accredited ITT provider or lead partner), the Register's application service will be opened for the organisation to submit an application within 30 calendar days. Once the application has been submitted, DfE's RoATP team will expedite the assessment of applications which will take approximately 8 weeks. If the organisation receives a 'successful' outcome and subsequently begins delivery, the organisation will be allocated a dedicated contract manager. The organisation will be required to complete all apprenticeship onboarding activities prior to being 'active' on the RoATP and current guidance states only one full application can be made within a 12-month period. Further information and details of how to request an invitation to apply can be found here: [Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers: how to apply - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/register-of-apprenticeship-training-providers-how-to-apply).

End point assessment

Accredited ITT providers can register as an End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO), whether operating in the capacity of a 'main provider' or 'supporting provider.' Only the accredited ITT provider can register as an EPAO and cannot delegate this to a lead partner in the accredited ITT provider's partnership. Further information can be found here: [Register of end-point assessment organisations - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/register-of-end-point-assessment-organisations)

Apprenticeship Register changes from 1 August 2023

End Point Assessment Organisations (EPAOs) will be added to the RoATP and RoATP will be renamed to become the Apprenticeship Provider and Assessment Register (APAR).

The APAR's market entry criteria (main provider and supporting provider registration roles) will remain the same for accredited ITT providers and lead partners.

The RoATP mailbox email address will also be changing on 1 August 2023 alongside the GOV.UK page to reflect the change to APAR.

Partnerships and simplifying routes into teaching

From September 2024, all ITT that leads to QTS should be defined within three core routes (undergraduate fee-funded, postgraduate fee-funded, and postgraduate employment based), as set out in the [ITT market review report](#) and confirmed in the [government response](#) to the consultation, following widespread support for the principle. A simplified landscape provides more clarity for applicants and schools and allows accredited ITT providers to streamline recruitment processes.

In recognition of the three core routes, accredited ITT providers should cease marketing a 'School Direct' route to candidates for courses starting from September 2024. Current School Direct lead schools forming part of an accredited ITT provider partnership may continue to operate as lead partners, agreeing delegated responsibilities with the accredited ITT provider and capturing this in partnership agreements. Where School Direct lead schools have had such previously established responsibilities - for example, the recruitment of trainees - they may be in the position to carry on with their current structure, so long as this is formally agreed with their accredited ITT provider.

Accountability for all aspects of the operation of the partnership rests with the accredited ITT provider. Where responsibilities are delegated, the accredited ITT provider should ensure appropriate quality assurance processes are in place. The ITT market review report was clear on the importance of strong existing School Direct lead schools continuing to play a role in the reformed ITT market. As such, the Quality Requirements for Structures and Partnerships (see [Stage 2 guidance](#)) state that accredited ITT providers must set out how they will 'ensure that at a local level, schools and other lead partners are well placed to recruit trainees, in the way that School Direct currently achieves this; for example, given the fact that local recognition and relationships are critical for securing and maintaining the confidence of potential trainees'.

Salaried teacher training is and will remain an important part of the ITT offer. Both School Direct salaried and the PGTA will continue to be available from the academic year 2023/24.

Recruitment and marketing

Accredited ITT partners should accurately represent their role within the partnership structure and delivery of ITT. No organisation should be marketing, naming or in any other way presenting themselves as an accredited ITT provider unless they have been accredited to deliver ITT from September 2024. This includes marketing and branding on Find and Apply, and other marketing materials.

Lead partners may recruit to, and deliver, ITT courses where delegated by the accredited ITT provider. All marketing, including on Find and Apply, should set out the roles of each partner so that it is clear to candidates which organisation has designed the curriculum, which organisation will be making an academic award (if applicable), which organisation will be delivering the ITT course, and where the training will take place. It should always be clear to candidates and trainees who the accredited ITT provider is, and that the accredited ITT provider is accountable for the ITT course leading to QTS, developing the programme content, and making the recommendation for QTS at the end of the training.

If a degree award is made as part of the ITT programme (undergraduate or postgraduate) it should also be made clear to candidates and trainees which organisation will make the award.

Where lead partners are registered with the OfS, and it has been agreed with the accredited ITT provider that they will set and receive student fees, this should be made clear to candidates and trainees. Marketing and pre-course materials should also make clear who is responsible for student wellbeing and support.

Accredited ITT providers and their partners should cease to market or badge courses as School Direct (fee-funded) for courses that start from September 2024. Organisations may continue to market the features of their postgraduate fee-funded courses, such as being primarily school-based. DfE does not require organisations with 'School Direct' in their name to change this as long as their marketing material does not describe postgraduate fee funded courses as 'School Direct' or imply that 'School Direct' is a distinct route. Organisations that were previously known as School Direct Lead Schools will become lead partners from September 2024 if they continue working with an accredited ITT provider.

Organisations' marketing, including on Find and Apply services, should ensure clarity for candidates following the ITT reforms. The term 'School Direct' does not appear on candidate facing services such as Find and Apply, and will be removed in reference to the fee funded route from DfE central marketing services, such as gov.uk and Get into Teaching, from May 2023. General guidance on marketing an ITT course can be found in the [ITT marketing and recruitment guide](#).

Trainee recruitment services

Ensuring sufficient ITT national and geographical coverage is a strategic priority of the ITT reforms and DfE wants to ensure that partnership arrangements can be facilitated to maximise the availability of ITT across England.

Accredited ITT providers should consider how best to use expertise within their partnership, including drawing on lead partner experience with trainee recruitment. Partnerships should be configured to ensure that schools and other lead partners are well placed to recruit and select the trainees they need at a local level.

The Apply service will continue to allow accredited ITT providers to delegate the assessment of applications to their lead partners. From May 2023, DfE will contact accredited ITT providers and lead partners to clarify the onboarding process for the Publish and Manage services, in readiness for the ITT 2024 recruitment cycle. These services allow ITT providers to publish their courses and receive and respond to ITT applications. DfE will continue to ensure that these services, as well as the candidate-facing Find and Apply services, simplify the application process for candidates and retain accredited ITT providers' ability to delegate recruitment processes and recruit locally.

Lead partners working with multiple accredited ITT providers

Lead partners will continue to play a critical role in the design and delivery of ITT. Strong, stable partnership arrangements are therefore critical to implementing the Quality Requirements. We understand that there may be circumstances where a lead partner chooses to work with more than one accredited ITT provider, for example, in order to be involved in ITT delivery across phases and subjects.

When lead partners work with more than one accredited ITT provider, they will need to carefully consider mentor workload. All ITT mentors should understand the ITT curriculum of the trainees that they support. Mentor training must therefore be closely aligned to the accredited provider's ITT curriculum. ITT partnership arrangements will need to ensure that the training expectations and workload placed on individual mentors is realistic.

Accountability for the delivery of each trainee programme that a lead partner is involved in will remain with the accredited ITT provider.

Accredited ITT providers acting as a lead partner for another accredited ITT provider

Accreditation to deliver ITT leading to QTS is not phase- or subject-specific, and an accredited ITT provider is able to deliver ITT courses for any subject or phase. DfE therefore expects that in most circumstances accredited ITT providers will want to have oversight and accountability for all ITT that they lead and deliver.

However, there may be exceptional circumstances where an accredited ITT provider chooses to deliver particular ITT courses as a lead partner under another accredited ITT provider's accountability. There is nothing in the ITT criteria or ITT market regulations that prevents such arrangements.

Where such arrangements are in place, the respective roles of individual organisations must be clear to trainees and schools. Accountability for a particular course always sits with the organisation that is the accredited ITT provider for that course. Due consideration must also be given to ensuring that robust partnership agreements are in place which clearly set out roles and responsibilities, including overall accountability for the quality of provision.

Teaching School Hubs

Teaching School Hubs (TSHs) already play a significant role in ITT. Recommendation 10 in the ITT Market Review 2021 outlined two roles for TSHs in the reformed ITT market.

The first part of recommendation 10 sets out that all non-ITT accredited TSHs should partner with an accredited ITT provider to play an operational or strategic role in the delivery of ITT as a lead partner. From September 2024, DfE expects all TSHs to be involved in the primary delivery of ITT. This means that all TSHs:

- will recruit trainees in accordance with the formal agreement they hold with an accredited ITT provider;
- will deliver courses on behalf of the accredited ITT provider; and
- will be subject to having those courses inspected by Ofsted as part of the accredited ITT provider's inspection (with the inspection outcome attributed to the accredited ITT provider).

The second part of recommendation 10 outlines new strategic roles, to support local ITT delivery across their TSH area. The roles identified are:

- to increase school engagement in ITT across their TSH region; and
- find and support Intensive Training and Practice across their TSH region.

TSHs will play an important regional role in their TSH area working with both schools and accredited ITT providers to understand the local market, context and challenges. Utilising this local knowledge and intel, TSHs will be well placed to work with schools, particularly those not actively engaged already, to raise awareness of ITT, the new ITT reforms and requirements, providing information of the accredited ITT providers operating within their area and encourage increased engagement with ITT across the region. To complete this work, TSH will contact other local accredited ITT providers to build further knowledge of the ITT landscape within their area.

Although it is an accredited ITT provider's responsibility to design and secure its own Intensive Training and Practice placements across its partnership, TSHs can play an important regional role in understanding the local market, raising awareness of the new Intensive Training and Practice requirements with schools, and encouraging them to engage. TSHs are also well placed to support partnerships to identify suitable schools for Intensive Training and Practice if they do not currently have suitable provision secured. DfE encourages schools and accredited ITT providers to contact their local TSH for more information on the strategic role and how they can work collaboratively in their region.

As part of the new strategic roles from September 2023, DfE is asking TSHs to engage with schools to collect a range of data on their current and potential future engagement in ITT, not personal data. This data will be shared with DfE and may be shared with accredited ITT providers during their engagement. DfE is not mandating that accredited ITT providers or schools provide this data and therefore have the right to decline to give this to TSHs. DfE has no plans to publish the information. However, any information provided to DfE may be subject to publication or disclosure under the [Freedom of Information Act 2000](#).

Getting partnerships ready for delivery from September 2024

Curriculum and readiness to deliver checks (Stage 2 checks)

Through the [Stage 2](#) process, DfE is checking the progress that accredited ITT providers have made in preparing to deliver consistently high-quality programmes that are compliant with the 2024/25 ITT criteria from September 2024. These checks include reviewing a selection of the accredited ITT providers' curriculum materials and assessing readiness to deliver in mentoring, Intensive Training and Practice, and partnerships – 3 key areas of focus for the 2024/25 ITT criteria.

The Stage 2 guidance supports accredited ITT providers through the curriculum and readiness to deliver checks and should therefore be read in conjunction with this document to ensure all organisations in a partnership have a clear and robust understanding of how DfE will assess readiness to deliver against the updated Quality Requirements on partnerships and structures. The timetable for the readiness to deliver checks will vary slightly across accredited ITT providers, but the process must conclude by Spring 2024.

Accreditation status dormancy and reactivation

Some accredited ITT providers may prefer to collaborate to deliver ITT at greater scale under one partnership, and we recognise the benefits that a greater range of expertise brings to ITT delivery, efficiency, and trainee recruitment. For those accredited ITT providers wishing to come together in such partnerships under the accountability of one accredited ITT provider, DfE have allowed a two-year accreditation dormancy period to support them in determining their future partnership plans.

Organisations accredited to deliver ITT from September 2024 had the opportunity to request that their accreditation status be kept dormant for up to two years (up to 2026/27 academic year), as long as they are delivering ITT as a lead partner with another accredited ITT provider during this period. The deadline to apply for accreditation dormancy has passed.

Those wishing to reactivate their accreditation status must complete Stage 2 curriculum and readiness checks ahead of delivery. Stage 2 checks will commence in April 2024 for those wishing to reactivate their accreditation for ITT delivery in 2025/26 and April 2025 for those reactivating accreditation for ITT delivery in 2026/27, with Ofsted inspection taking place within the 3-year cycle completing in July 2027.

If a dormant accredited ITT provider decides to reactivate their accreditation status to deliver in 2025/26, a request must be made to DfE by 1 March 2024. For those wanting to deliver from 2026/27, a request must be made to DfE by 1 March 2025. If accreditation

status is not activated by this point, DfE will commence the formal closure process for an accredited ITT provider.

ITT funding

ITT reform funding

In May 2023, DfE updated the [ITT Reform Funding guidance](#) for organisations seeking funding for reformed initial teacher training courses leading to the award of QTS from the 2024/25 academic year onwards.

Following the 2022 accreditation process, newly accredited ITT providers are eligible to apply for multiple funding streams to help them to deliver the new ITT requirements. These funding streams seek to support with the costs related to set-up ahead of delivery, establishing a new partnership in a specific area, establishing lead mentor functions, and Intensive Training and Practice. Placement schools will also be able to access grant funding to support with the new training requirements of school-based mentors.

Applications for both the set-up grant and partnership grant have now closed.

Student fee funding

DfE will continue to award specific course designation to accredited ITT providers who are not registered with the OfS for eligible courses or programmes of Initial Teacher Training leading to QTS in England. DfE will continue to set tuition fee limits in line with [Higher Education \(Fee Limits and Fee Limit Condition\) \(England\) Regulations 2018](#) and confirm these arrangements with the Student Loans Company (SLC). Details will be published in the [Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) annually.

In partnerships where a lead partner is registered with the OfS, there is nothing to prevent the accredited ITT provider delegating the setting and receiving of student fees, within the fee cap limit set by OfS or DfE, to the lead partner. Any such arrangements are at the discretion of the accredited ITT provider. However, it will not be possible for accredited ITT providers to delegate the responsibility for fees to a non-OfS registered lead partner.

DfE grant funding for salaried routes

Grant funding will still be available as a contribution to the training and salary costs for qualifying trainees on salaried routes. From September 2024, DfE grant funding to support salaried routes will be allocated to the accredited ITT provider. For PGTA courses, accredited ITT providers may prefer to use the grant funding from DfE for salary costs, as the apprenticeship levy is restricted to training and assessment. The accredited ITT provider will be responsible for the funding arrangements for the partnership and ensuring that all grant funding that is designated to support salary costs reaches the employing school so that it can be used for its intended purpose.

Bursaries and scholarships

Where trainees are eligible for a bursary or scholarship, this will be allocated via their accredited ITT provider.

Inspection of ITT provision

Ofsted will move to a 3-year inspection cycle from September 2024, inspecting against their [ITE](#) inspection framework and the 2024/25 ITT criteria requirements. Organisations accredited to deliver ITT for the first time will have their first inspection in their second year of delivering ITT to trainees.

Where a new ITT partnership has formed following the 2022 accreditation process between a provider accredited to deliver from 2024/25 and providers that are not, DfE will liaise with Ofsted to determine the appropriate timing of the first inspection. DfE will recommend to Ofsted that consideration should be given for newly formed partnerships where:

- the partnership involves an accredited ITT provider partnering with an unaccredited HEI; and
- the partnership involves an accredited ITT provider partnering with multiple unaccredited partners and there have been demonstrable changes in governance, leadership and quality assurance.

Ofsted will use this information as well as the process outlined in their [published risk assessment methodology](#) to determine the timing of an ITT inspection.

The [ITE inspection framework](#) and handbook are usually updated annually during the summer term. Alongside the handbook, Ofsted also publish a summary of key changes made.

Alongside postgraduate courses, undergraduate (multi-year) ITT courses starting before September 2024 will also continue to be subject to Ofsted inspection. It should be noted that ITT courses that begin prior to the 2024/25 academic year and are scheduled to finish after September 2024 (for example, multi-year undergraduate courses beginning in 2022/23 or 2023/34) will not be required to comply with the new Quality Requirements and will be inspected against the ITT criteria in force at the time of course commencement. For example:

- a 3- or 4-year undergraduate programme beginning September 2023 and inspected in 2026 will be inspected against the 2023/24 ITT criteria; or
- a 3- or 4-year undergraduate programme beginning September 2024 and inspected in 2026 will be inspected against the new Quality Requirements and 2024/25 ITT criteria.

Next steps

Partnership formation will progress at varying speeds depending on provider and partner context. The indicative timeline below is intended to support the formation of partnerships and should be read in conjunction with the [Stage 2 provider guidance](#) on readiness to deliver checks. Firm deadlines are set out; the remainder of the timeline is intended to inform planning and finalising partnerships.

Activity	Key dates
Partnership discussions commence and continue	From Autumn 2022
ITT associates make first contact with accredited ITT providers as part of readiness to deliver checks.	<p>From November 2022 for round 1 accredited ITT providers</p> <p>From January - February 2023 for round 2 accredited ITT providers</p>
ITT reform funding - Set-up grant	Deadline of 9 February 2023
Partnership grants	Deadline of 28 February 2023
DfE will contact accredited ITT providers to onboard them onto the Publish teacher training courses and Manage teacher training application services.	From April 2023
Request for accreditation dormancy	Deadline of 28 April 2023
Accredited ITT providers (and partners where appropriate) create and publish their ITT course details on Publish.	May - September 2023

Activity	Key dates
<p>DfE will use the information provided by accredited ITT providers on the digital services to maintain a register of accredited ITT providers and their partnerships, including partnership structures and the routes being offered. During this period, accredited ITT providers may be contacted to provide additional information that is not available via the digital services.</p>	<p>June 2023 - September 2023</p>
<p>Apply opens for candidates to begin applying and accredited ITT providers/delegated lead partners to begin receiving their applications.</p>	<p>October 2023</p>
<p>Deadline for completion of readiness to deliver checks (including partnerships)</p>	<p>Spring 2024</p>

Annex A – Forming a partnership

All organisations within a partnership should be able to articulate the proposed scale they seek to operate at, how they will deliver quality training to achieve their targets, and their specific roles and responsibilities. They should be able to set, recognise and deliver the quality level set out in the 2024/25 ITT criteria and have sufficient capacity to train agreed numbers of trainees in the subjects and phases they offer.

The information provided below should be used alongside the [updated Quality Requirements](#) to prompt discussions and questions amongst organisations seeking to form a partnership, but should not be considered a definitive checklist. To form a partnership, an accredited ITT provider and potential partners will need to agree on a range of issues, including those outlined below.

Governance and leadership

For matters relating to governance and leadership, accredited ITT providers will need to:

- acknowledge and reflect throughout all arrangements that ultimate accountability for all aspects of the operation of the partnership rests with the accredited ITT provider;
- agree a clear vision of the strategic and delivery outcomes, including scale, range and geographical spread of ITT with corresponding plans and evidence of capacity and capability across the partnership;
- ensure robust governance arrangements are agreed, in place, and exercised effectively, with clearly established structures, including formal arrangements between accredited ITT providers, partners, and placement schools;
- make clear how the accredited ITT provider will report to, and be strategically steered by, their accountable body, e.g., Trust Board or Governing Body;
- establish and articulate formal ways of working, including a clear definition of, and rationale for determining, roles and responsibilities across the partnership;
- set out how training and delivery capacity of partners and placement schools will be established and developed to meet the overall ambition of ITT delivery;
- reference the roles, memberships and functions of groups and committees in managing the partnership;
- specify the different roles within the partnership including, for example, programme and course leaders, lead mentors or mentor leadership teams, mentors and internal and external moderators (this should also set out how partners contribute towards these roles); and
- establish clear protocols for conflict resolution and exit arrangements.

Curriculum materials and delivery

For matters relating to curriculum materials and delivery, accredited ITT providers will need to:

- agree how high-quality curriculum materials will be developed and ready for delivery from September 2024, taking account of the experience, expertise and needs of all involved in a partnership;
- ensure clear roles and expectations are established for partners;
- ensure that a quality curriculum for each subject and phase is delivered to every trainee across the partnership;
- secure and retain school partners to enable delivery of training in line with the ITT criteria and to meet the needs of all trainees; and
- determine the role of each partner in addressing and managing trainee teacher workload.

Partnership approach to course offer

For matters relating to the course offer, accredited ITT providers will need to:

- agree which courses will be delivered and target recruitment numbers, including minimum and maximum numbers that will be in place, and who will have responsibility for recruitment; and
- establish the course offer and marketing plans for courses and determine roles and responsibilities for selecting and interviewing applicants.

School placements

For matters relating to school placements, accredited ITT providers will need to:

- establish an approach to selecting, training, retaining, and supporting placement schools, including utilising existing placement arrangements, to ensure consistently high-quality training across the partnership;
- establish how schools and partners will support recruitment of trainees building on local relationships, to secure and maintain the confidence of potential trainees; and
- ensure that effective assessment of trainees, which is aligned to the planned curriculum, is undertaken during the course and that when the course completes, accurate assessment can be made against the Teachers' Standards.

Mentoring

For matters relating to mentoring, accredited ITT providers will need to:

- establish a professional network of well-trained and expert mentors with a deep understanding of the trainee curriculum, the relevant research base which informs it, and their role in supporting its delivery and practice;
- develop and deliver a fully resourced mentor curriculum that aligns with the curriculum. Equip mentors with an understanding of the curriculum content that trainees will cover and an approach to mentoring based on the best available evidence;
- ensure that mentors have the time, resources, and the support of their school to discharge the requirements of their role; and
- ensure trainees receive clear and consistent mentoring and support from mentors and other expert colleagues.

Quality assurance

For matters relating to quality assurance, accredited ITT providers will need to:

- ensure that robust and mutually understood processes are in place for quality assurance, including self-evaluation and improvement planning, and managing challenges, issues and disagreements amongst partners; and
- agree how the partnership will draw on sources of evidence and data, as well as feedback to ensure continuous improvement of delivery.

Finance

For matters relating to finance, accredited ITT providers will need to:

- determine overall budgets within the partnership, establish robust financial reporting and auditing arrangements across the partnership;
- establish budgetary arrangements that set out how funds are distributed across the partnership in a way which reflects the distribution of delegated responsibilities;
- accredited ITT providers must ensure that funding is used for intended purposes at all levels in the partnership, and that these arrangements contribute both to quality provision for trainees and to the retention of partners; and
- reflect and acknowledge that ultimate financial responsibility rests with the accredited ITT provider, including for purposes of reporting, auditing or grant agreements.

In addition, organisations may need to agree on a range of other issues, incorporating professional advice as necessary, for areas such as:

- proposed organisation structure;
- HR arrangements, e.g., handling existing contracts (including TUPE as appropriate), requirements for new staff and selection processes;
- IT and administrative requirements;
- communications and branding, e.g., internal and external processes, agreeing key messages, websites, handling queries;
- management of physical resources, e.g., property, building and resources;
- data collection and management;
- compliance with data protection requirements;
- safeguarding, well-being, health and safety; and
- accountability processes, e.g., requirements and timings, preparation for and involvement in Ofsted inspections.



Department
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