



Department
for Education

Addressing teacher workload in Initial Teacher Education (ITE)

Advice for ITE providers

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Introduction

High workload is one of the most commonly cited drivers for teachers leaving the profession and can be a disincentive for potential new teachers to join¹. The most effective actions to reduce workload are those that encourage better teaching – by focusing on what makes the most difference, supported by evidence, and making best use of teacher time.

This advice sets out principles, considerations and examples of practical support to address workload within and through ITE, including how the ITE sector has been responding to the specific recommendations in the three workload reports on [marking](#), [planning](#) and [data management](#). It has been produced in consultation with ITE providers, Ofsted, the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET), the National Association of School-Based Teacher Trainers (NASBTT) and teaching unions.

ITE providers continue to be an integral part of the concerted effort needed by the whole education system to reduce workload. They are in a unique position to:

- **reduce workload of trainees** by, for example, using and embedding the principles of the three workload reports on [marking](#), [planning and resources](#), and [data management](#) in their training, supported by wider resources, where appropriate. These include the [Workload Reduction Toolkit](#), the ‘[Reducing Workload: Supporting teachers in the early stages of their career](#)’ advice and ‘[Ways to reduce workload in your school](#)’ advice.
- **establish ‘good habits’** in their trainees that support the progress of their pupils but are not overly burdensome, and embed effective time management and resilience strategies.
- **encourage and foster culture change** to tackle workload.

This advice is one part of a wider programme of work to address workload issues, including commitments from government, Ofsted and others. Further information can be found on the [Reducing Teacher Workload policy page](#).

¹ Smithers and Robinson (2003); Teachers’ Analysis Compendium (2017); Hobson, Malderez, Tracey, Homer, Mitchell, Biddulph, Giannakaki, Rose, Pell, Roper, Chambers and Tomlinson, 2007 (Newly qualified teachers’ experiences of their first year of teaching).

Principles for ITE providers to support workload reduction

ITE providers and managers should review their practice in the following four areas. The questions and further information below will help as a starting point:

1. Addressing workload and changing the culture of burdensome practice through ITE content

- How are you addressing the challenges faced by trainees, NQTs and teachers in the early stages of their careers in relation to workload? How are you pre-empting these within your content? How do you use evidence and research?
- How have you responded to, and embedded within your ITE provision, the recommendations and principles of the independent workload reports relating to [marking](#), [planning and resources](#) and [data management](#)?
- What effective practice is occurring within your provision to help trainees reduce their workload whilst maintaining standards? How are you ensuring that this practice is shared across your partnership?
- Which tasks could be stopped, that have become established through custom and practice rather than evidence of positive impact on trainees and pupils?
- How have you reviewed your provision to develop trainees to focus on planning a sequence of lessons rather than writing individual lesson plans?
- How have you addressed the need for trainees to access fully resourced schemes of work and high quality curriculum resources including textbooks?

2. Addressing workload of trainees on professional placements and their school

- Have you reviewed the tasks trainees need to undertake on their placement to make sure they are beneficial for trainees and pupils?
- How do you work effectively with schools to eliminate unnecessary burdens?
- How do you support trainees and their new school with the potential increase in workload when making the transition from trainee to qualified teacher?

3. Supporting the wider partnership to tackle workload

- How have you ensured there is a shared understanding across your partnership of the expectations on trainees and associated workload considerations?
- How do you seek the views of partners about workload related to supporting trainees? How do you identify effective evidence-based practice and ensure this is embedded across all schools and their trainees?

4. Supporting mental health and wellbeing

- What are your mechanisms to support trainees and for them to tell you what would help in relation to managing their workload and supporting their mental health and wellbeing?

Addressing workload and changing the culture of burdensome practice through ITE content

ITE providers should:

- **consider workload management throughout ITE content.** It is important that workload reduction is considered in all content rather than as a standalone item. This will enable workload considerations to become embedded in practice.
- **be mindful of, and act upon, the challenges faced by trainees, NQTs and teachers in the early stages of their career in relation to workload.** Examples of these challenges, and questions to consider, are set out in the [‘Reducing Workload: Supporting teachers in the early stages of their career’](#) advice. These should be embedded:
 - within subject sessions, being mindful of any particular workload implications related to subject disciplines; and
 - within discrete professional studies sessions, linking workload to themes such as marking, curriculum planning and resources, behaviour management and assessment. Examples of good practice include exploring scenarios with trainees as the focus of discussion, and using case studies drawn from the partnership.
- **take account of evidence and research when addressing workload challenges**, for example by:
 - routinely drawing upon colleagues both from within and external to their partnership to share examples relating to reducing workload and time management strategies; and
 - drawing upon national and international research concerning teacher workload to inform discussions with trainees. This includes [12 school based research projects](#) that set out examples of how schools have removed unnecessary workload related to marking, curriculum planning and resources and data management.
- **challenge all practices and processes** and remove those that have become established through custom rather than evidence of what works. **This is particularly relevant in relation to lesson planning.** ITE providers should review their demands on trainee teachers in relation to planning to concentrate on the purpose of planning and how to plan across a sequence of lessons (as recommended in the report from the independent review group on [planning and resources](#)). This includes:
 - reviewing and using the [curriculum planning and resources](#) materials found in the [Workload Reduction Toolkit](#) and [‘supporting teachers in the early stages of their](#)

[career](#)' advice.

- focusing on developing the curriculum planning skills of trainees by:
 - reducing the expectation on trainees to develop their own individual lesson plans and curriculum resources for every lesson they teach; instead trainees should focus on evaluating, using and adapting (where necessary) existing high quality resources, schemes of work and textbooks;
 - adopting a phased approach to supporting trainees develop curriculum planning skills, including planning sequences of lessons. Curriculum planning at the early stages of teacher training may require a more structured approach, including encouraging the use of high quality curriculum resources and textbooks to plan a sequence of lessons. As trainees become more secure in their planning, they should be encouraged to evaluate existing resources to assess their quality and make decisions on which are best to use in different contexts; and
 - ensuring that only once trainees have a good knowledge of existing resources and sequencing of lessons, should they then start to develop their own plans when these are required. Over time, trainees should also be encouraged to develop more light touch planning over sequences of lessons in line with the principles found in the [independent report on planning and resources](#).
- ensuring evidence collection against the teachers' standards is proportionate rather than burdensome;
- reviewing policies and practice relating to both sending and responding to emails; and
- reviewing the structure of a course to help minimise pressure points associated with academic assignments.
- **monitor workload of trainees and implement strategies to reduce it**, including trainees on employment based routes. ITE providers, school leaders and trainee managers should monitor the workload of colleagues in the school and identify strategies to manage workload and eliminate unnecessary tasks. This includes trainees on employment based routes and, in particular, ensuring the timetable and proportion of teaching expected in the early stage of training is proportionate to the stage of training. Whilst the statutory guidance states that trainees on employment based routes should not be 'required to perform more than 90 per cent of the teaching duties normally required of a full-time qualified teacher' such a high proportion would neither be desirable nor appropriate for a trainee in the early stage of their training. Any training programme should include protected non-contact time and planned professional development opportunities. ITE providers may wish to consider how workload considerations and expectations are incorporated into

partnership agreements. ITE providers should work with partners to ensure that there is a shared understanding of the difference in expectations for trainee teachers and qualified teachers.

- **embed sessions on managing workload as part of transition work from trainee to NQT.** Examples could include:
 - liaison with partners and employers about the potential areas that early career teachers find challenging, as set out in the [‘Reducing Workload: Supporting teachers in the early stages of their career’](#) advice, and share good practice;
 - [materials in the Workload Reduction Toolkit](#);
 - [‘ways to reduce workload in your school’](#) advice; and
 - [Ofsted myth busting](#).

Case study: Supporting workload of new teachers – University of Bedfordshire – Dr Kate Hudson-Glynn, kate.hudson-glynn@beds.ac.uk

Introduction

The University of Bedfordshire ITE Partnership offers undergraduate and postgraduate teacher training routes across all four phases of education. We work in partnership with a wide range of schools including several MATs, teaching schools and free schools. We believe that universities should stay involved in the professional development of teachers immediately after their graduation and beyond.

Phase 1: ITE – Readiness

The university provides opportunities for trainees to protect their own wellbeing. In addition our course structures and content are streamlined and we have reduced the collection of evidence and curriculum planning. We purposefully discuss the DfE Workload reports with the trainees so that they can take control of their own workload as they move to their NQT role.

Phase 2: NQT year – Relationships

We have built strong working relationships with our NQTs, local Appropriate Bodies, Induction Tutors and the wider network of partner schools who employ our NQTs to support retention. Our NQT Coordinator hosts a termly meeting with the local teaching schools and local authorities that employ the majority of our NQTs. We discuss their development and identify themes in the issues they are facing. We regularly bring together Induction Tutors to hear their perspective on their NQTs’ progress and discuss

workload and wellbeing. By drawing on these perspectives the Coordinator provides personalised interventions as required, and we can hone support for them.

During the year we are in touch with and support our NQTs directly to maintain a strong relationship, ensuring that they do not feel isolated. In the autumn term we host the Bedfordshire NQT conference and this year we ran a successful workshop on sharing workload management strategies.

Phase 3: Years 2 and 3 of teaching (RQTs) – Resilience

The first couple of years after the NQT year is when a recently qualified teacher's resilience can be tested. Offering RQTs the opportunity to share their problems makes a significant difference in alleviating some of the pressures they feel. In partnership with our Bedfordshire Borough Council Appropriate Body we are trialing an informal, agenda-free meeting opportunity for our RQTs. These optional, free, twilight sessions take place termly and we discuss workload levels and wellbeing, dispel myths and offer a warm and friendly space.

Our next steps

Following a successful Ofsted inspection last year, we continue to review our courses, looking to streamline workload and building in more time for thinking about managing a work-life balance with trainees, NQTs and Schools.

Case study: Embedding wellbeing and workload management within the culture and ethos of the Partnership – Stockton-On-Tees Teacher Training Partnership – Kirsten Webber, Partnership Manager- Kirsten.Webber@stockton.gov.uk

Introduction

Stockton-On-Tees SCITT offers training in the secondary and primary phases, training approximately 50 trainees each year. Our partnership consists of 32 schools including the local Teaching Alliance and multi academy trusts. Wellbeing and managing workload are embedded within the culture and ethos of the Partnership, considering both trainee and school-based mentor workloads across all aspects of our programme.

Balancing the year

It is important to consider the whole year and the progression a trainee will make. This is reflected across all our programmes, particularly trainees' teaching commitment:

- 30% rising to maximum 40% - Autumn Term
- 50% rising to maximum 60% - Spring Term
- 70% rising to maximum 80% - Summer Term

Limiting the teaching timetable, in the autumn term in particular, recognises that time is needed to develop effective curriculum planning and marking skills at first. As trainees gain experience and practical strategies, alongside central training, their teaching commitment increases. We make clear to our schools that a significant amount of non-contact time should be spent on curriculum planning and preparation, with dedicated professional development in the rest of the non-contact time.

We have negotiated assignment deadlines so that they are spread across the year and set at appropriate times in the programme. This helps our trainees to better manage their workload and avoids creating too many pressure points in the year.

Wellbeing

Wellbeing checks are undertaken by schools with trainees. Mentors are trained to ask key questions that address workload and wellbeing. For example, they are expected to assess how long trainees are spending on curriculum planning including finding resources and provide support to prioritise and manage their time most effectively. Central training sessions delivered by the SCITT, such as explicit sessions on 'Effective Resourcing' and 'Marking Strategies', encourage trainees to consider the cost-benefit of time spent on any particular activity.

Evidence

There is no such thing as the perfect evidence file. We have worked to reduce the paperwork requirements so that the only documents trainees and mentors are expected to use regularly are diagnostic working documents. Any documents designed just to be filed have been removed. In addition, we have moved from the idea of a final evidence file. This is because it has added unnecessary stress to trainees and much of the evidence used had already been assessed previously. Instead, we have introduced a more structured approach to ongoing assessment, using smaller 'bundles' of evidence at key points across the training year. This supports trainees to manage their workload more effectively and avoids pinch points of gathering evidence within the year.

Addressing workload of trainees on professional placements and their school

ITE providers should review the tasks trainees are required to undertake on their placement in order to reduce workload, and those in their schools who provide support such as their mentor. Measures should be put in place to eliminate unnecessary burdens. The following questions should be considered:

- Are all the tasks necessary? Do they all directly improve trainee development / pupil progress? If not, can they be stopped?
- If they are necessary, are they appropriately staggered? Is time ring-fenced as part of school-based training time for the tasks?

ITE providers should consider:

- **Efficiency and impact:** there can be a tendency for trainees to have to spend unacceptably and unsustainably high proportions of their time and effort on tasks and activities not related to supporting pupil progress or their own development. The primary focus of all activities that trainees are asked to undertake should always be on those which contribute directly to pupil outcomes and effective development of the trainee. Activities which do not do this should be reviewed, streamlined or stopped where necessary.
- **Effective collaboration to help trainees develop curriculum planning skills:** ways for trainees to evaluate and use existing high quality resources for sequences of lessons, to promote a collaborative culture in using, adapting and evaluating the quality of curriculum plans and schemes of work. Providers should work with and encourage schools to share existing high quality materials with trainees, such as schemes of work, high quality curriculum resources and textbooks, and help them to use these when planning a sequence of lessons. Providers and schools can facilitate collaboration and discussion between trainees, and between trainees and schools by developing online sharing platforms, using cloud-based file sharing systems and creating social media networks.
- **High quality training and support:** training and support for provider based tutors / school based mentors relating to workload and wellbeing issues faced by trainees on professional placement and developing, with partners, advice and guidance for trainees on managing their workload effectively.

- **Shared expectations:** there should be a shared vision across the partnership in relation to:
 - **expectations for trainees on professional placement**, using the principles from the workload reports on [marking](#), [planning and resources](#) and [data management](#).
 - **expectations which match the reality of the role** and do not add to workload.
 - **expectations for how trainees' evidence is meeting the Teachers' Standards** including:
 - ensuring the emphasis concerns proportionate and quality evidence rather than the quantity of evidence.
 - whether the processes are sufficiently streamlined to avoid, for example, duplication of evidence and collection of evidence against the sub-bullet points for each standard ([Ofsted](#) do not require schools to provide evidence in respect of each of the bulleted sub-headings in the Teachers' Standards).
 - how technology, online platforms and e-portfolios can assist in reducing any administrative burdens for both trainees and mentors, whilst being mindful of any unintended consequences which could increase workload. For example, trainees scanning and uploading evidence or copying and pasting evidence / feedback to include in an e-portfolio.

- **Support for mentors:** routinely seeking the views of school partners on the workload challenges experienced by their staff, such as school-based mentors, when supporting trainee teachers. Provide guidance and high quality training to support mentors to undertake their role effectively and efficiently. Use guidance and examples of effective practice within ITE partnerships and beyond to help senior leaders support mentors to undertake their role effectively and in ways which do not add unnecessarily to their existing workload.

Case study: Developing and supporting approaches to sustainable teaching - University of Warwick - Dr Deborah Roberts, D.C.Roberts@Warwick.ac.uk

Introduction

The University of Warwick ITE partnership offers courses across all four phases of education. We have taken actions as a provider and supported our partnership schools to take actions to ensure that workload burdens on our trainees, mentors and schools are minimised and trainees learn a variety of strategies to manage their workload.

Actions to date

At a university level we have:

- Used the workload documents to revise our 'Key Questions' that both our schools and we consider when a trainee goes on placement. These questions include 'how can we help trainees understand the purpose of data collection' and 'how can we help trainees use this data?'
- Reviewed how we teach trainees to plan lessons including the process behind coherent curriculum planning and streamlining forms and templates
- Encouraged trainee PPA time to be shared with their mentor or class teacher
- Developed our wellbeing programme to include lectures and course days on trainee mental health and university support services, increased reflection sessions through tutorials and personal tutor sessions and sharing a trainee's workload strategies with their school before placement
- Reviewed our overall programme to better support trainees' time, including reducing our taught programme to give more time to study for academic assignments and a more streamlined Electronic Personal Development Portfolio that focuses on quality of evidence

Our work to support actions at a school level include:

- Raising awareness of the three independent workload reports and the EEF's 'A Marked Improvement?' with our partnership schools and working with them to embed the findings into their practice
- Amending our placement documentation to include key messages from the three workload reports and to encourage our mentors to judge when a trainee should move from individual to weekly lesson plans: based on the trainees' confidence with curriculum planning and assessment
- Encouraging our classroom teachers and schools to collaborate with trainees as much as possible by sharing weekly and termly planning, supporting trainees to amend schemes of work and to undertake guided planning as a teaching team
- Encouraging trainees to use a variety of feedback methods, such as verbal feedback, that are 'meaningful, manageable and motivating' and encouraging mentors to help trainees understand the assessment policy in their school
- Sharing evidence manageability tips with our school and trainees and encouraging trainees to consider how to gather and store their evidence efficiently

We have a clear aim in our approach to tackling the workload of our trainees. This aim is to ensure that the quality of our provision enables pupil progress whilst developing the skills of new entrants to the profession in a sustainable and manageable way.

Supporting the wider partnership to tackle workload

ITE providers play an important role in helping to encourage and foster culture change needed across the education system to address workload issues. Examples of how ITE providers have worked collaboratively with their partnership to both raise awareness of issues relating to workload and identify solutions include:

- **organising partnership conferences and events** to provide a forum to share [workload reduction strategies](#), effective use of resources and [evidence of what works](#).
- **using their communication mechanisms**, for example, partnership newsletters, to communicate key messages relating to workload and updates from the education sector, including, for example, [Ofsted myth-busting](#) guidance and [case studies](#) on the DfE Teaching blog.
- ensuring that **ITE partnership committees include workload and work-life balance** of trainees, mentors, school-based and centre-based trainers as a standing agenda item.

Case Study: University of Greenwich: Tackling Workload Reports: An ITE Provider's Response – Michael Green, M.S.Green@Gre.ac.uk

Since the publication of the three workload reports, we have actively worked through and with our partnership schools to embed the recommendations of all three reports. What follows is an overview of how we have supported our partnership to respond to the reports' recommendations.

We believe that collaboration and sharing of practice between professionals is an important vehicle for change. With this in mind we have:

- Organised a partnership conference on tackling teacher workload and the workload reports which included trainees, NQTs, experienced teachers and school leaders
- Facilitated a second conference led by school partners aimed at sharing effective practice that reduces workload, considering how these can be used to support early career teachers, and to raise awareness of the local and national efforts to tackle workload
- Developed a shared understanding of the purpose of planning across partnership schools, placing a greater emphasis on the process of planning and not the production of individual lesson plans.

- Established an online forum for trainees, NQTs and RQTs to collaborate and share workload strategies
- Organised informal #teachmeets for teachers to come together and share examples, resources and experiences of how to support early career teachers and how to tackle workload at a practical level
- Developed a collaborative approach to using evidence to support early career teachers
- Supported school-led professional development days where trainee teachers can hear from several of our partnerships schools about effective ways to deliver feedback efficiently and how to plan sequences of lessons
- Reviewed our school based training to increase the workload considerations our trainees look for when watching and learning from teaching in their placement schools
- Created a school-led review group, including six of our partner schools, who have reviewed our demands on student teachers and made recommendations on how we can reduce the burdens on our trainees whilst on placement

The events and conferences mentioned above have led to a wide range of discussions and actions from our partnership schools, particularly around marking and curriculum planning. These actions include recognising the value of different forms of feedback other than written marking and reviewing planning formats to focus on sequences of lessons rather than individual lesson plans.

Overall, what has come through very strongly through the discussions with partners is that workload, and the pressures it produces, can be managed more effectively through collaborative teacher learning and dialogue.

Supporting mental health and wellbeing

ITE providers should:

- **embed workload management** in wider wellbeing and resilience training content.
- **ensure that content focuses on teaching, pedagogy and subject knowledge** development with mental and physical wellbeing embedded throughout. This can be done by:
 - supporting trainees to develop the resilience needed to manage the unavoidable pressures, demands and pinch points that occur within any profession.
 - routinely seeking the views and experiences of trainees regarding any causes of stress, anxiety and tension on an ITE course and working with them and the partnership to find solutions and strategies.
 - reviewing the support mechanisms for trainees and ensuring that staff and colleagues who are supporting trainees (e.g. personal tutors, school-based mentors) have the skills and time necessary to undertake this pastoral role.
 - ensuring that any analysis of trainee withdrawal or deferment is able to capture whether workload issues were a reason. This would include the origin of any workload issues and how deferred trainees are then best supported to successfully complete their training.

Case study: Embedding resilience, workload and wellbeing at St Mary's University - Professor Anna Lise Gordon – annalise.gordon@stmarys.ac.uk

Part of St Mary's mission statement is to prepare our students for 'flourishing lives, successful careers and social commitment'. Ensuring our trainees are resilient and can manage their workload is important to achieving this statement.

We have worked to integrate resilience, workload and wellbeing right from the start of our provision. For example, in the secondary ITE programme, this includes:

- an early focus, for example in the interview for future entrants to the profession to explore their understanding of the term resilience, awareness of why it might be important in teaching and strategies they have used in the past.
- two lead lectures as part of the Professional Studies which highlight the recommendations from the three independent workload reports on [marking](#), [planning and resources](#) and [data management](#).

- three individual tutorials with tutors, in September, January and June, to review progress and plan for ongoing development.
- focusing on reducing workload in the Portfolio of Evidence, requiring trainees to focus on evidence for a smaller number of key areas from the Teachers' Standards in each phase of placement.
- at the end of the PGCE course, an interactive and solution-focused workshop in subject groups to consider resilience, workload and wellbeing for NQTs.
- ongoing support including through NQT social media and regular e-newsletters.
- a research cluster focusing specifically on teacher resilience and wellbeing with collaboration from colleagues from Student Services (wellbeing, learning support, mental health) and representation from all ITE programmes.
- in partnership with placement schools, a focus on resilience, workload and wellbeing in mentor training sessions, inclusion of key resources on our Partnership Portal (VLE) and online mentor training and webinars that can more easily accessed, recognising their workload needs to be managed too.
- collaboration with the wider teaching profession, through regular CPD work with schools to share the expertise and experience gained from our research and work with trainee teachers.

It is difficult to 'measure' resilience and wellbeing, but anecdotal evidence, as well as more formal feedback (evaluations, tutorials, and programme board discussion) indicate that the focus on resilience and wellbeing is welcomed.

We hope that our initial input has a positive impact and sets trainee teachers on the right path. As a result of our wider sharing of approaches and ongoing research, we aim to support and collaborate with others to raise awareness of the issues and, more importantly, question and review the demands that are placed on new entrants to the profession and beyond.

Additional materials

- [Tracking trainees progress and evidence bundles – NASBTT](#)
- Independent workload reports on [marking](#), [planning and resources](#), and [data management](#)
- [Workload Reduction Toolkit](#)
- [Reducing Workload: Supporting teachers in the early stages of their career](#) advice
- [Ways to reduce workload in your school](#) advice for school leaders
- [DfE 'Teaching Blog'](#)
- [DfE TES 'Reducing Teacher Workload Hub'](#)



Department
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