



Department
for Education

International Qualified Teacher Status (iQTS): Inspection Framework

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Introduction

International qualified teacher status (iQTS) is a teaching qualification backed by the Department for Education (DfE) and the UK government. iQTS meets the same high standards as English qualified teacher status (QTS). iQTS is designed to:

- provide opportunities for accredited English initial teacher training (ITT) providers to expand into the growing international teacher training market
- make high quality training accessible around the world, allowing trainees to benefit from evidence-based ITT
- support schools outside of England to recruit, retain and to develop local talent
- increase the global pool of high-quality teachers and to support global mobility within the teaching profession

More information about iQTS can be found at [Introducing international qualified teacher status \(iQTS\)](#).

Who this publication is for

This document gives information about DfE's iQTS inspection policy and will be relevant for:

- All iQTS providers who have delivered iQTS for one full academic year and are therefore due for inspection
- iQTS providers and English initial teacher training (ITT) providers interested in delivering iQTS in the future
- applicants to the iQTS training programme
- schools and organisations outside England working in partnership with [iQTS providers](#)

[Apply to provide international qualified teacher status - GOV.UK](#) explains how ITT providers can apply for approval to offer iQTS

[Get international qualified teacher status \(iQTS\)](#) explains how candidates can apply to train on the iQTS programme.

[Introducing international qualified teacher status \(iQTS\)](#) gives information for schools outside England wishing to offer an iQTS placement.

Purpose of iQTS inspection

The purpose of iQTS inspection is to:

- ensure that delivery of iQTS is compliant with the [iQTS criteria](#), which also makes reference to the [Initial Teacher Training and Early Career Framework \(ITTECF\)](#) and [iQTS Teachers' Standards](#)
- assess and evaluate the effectiveness of provider leadership and management and programme design and delivery
- provide independent external assurance that iQTS provision meets DfE's quality expectations and legal requirements
- protect and maintain the integrity and reputation of the quality of iQTS
- identify key strengths and where relevant, provide recommendations on areas of development
- provide information to:
 - potential trainees who are considering undertaking iQTS
 - schools who are thinking about employing iQTS trainees or getting involved in iQTS delivery as a placement school
 - parents whose children are going to a school with iQTS trainees or iQTS holders
 - governments and organisations who have an interest in iQTS quality and standards

We expect providers, trainees and the schools where iQTS trainees and iQTS holders are training and teaching to seek continuous improvement through self-evaluation and by working in partnership with iQTS inspectorates.

All those involved in iQTS should engage in open and honest dialogue, in a cooperative environment where providers are comfortable sharing areas of concern or difficulty with inspectorates. This will allow them to work together to ensure that trainees receive high quality training.

It is our aim that iQTS inspection be seen as a quality support tool. By clearly identifying what works well and what areas of trainee experience could be improved or developed, the inspection report will provide a firm foundation to enhance the quality of iQTS delivery as it continues to expand around the globe.

iQTS inspection framework

The pilot inspection framework was tested through the inspections of 5 iQTS providers. The iQTS inspection pilot ran from January 2024 to June 2024. The pilot inspection framework used the [iQTS criteria](#), iQTS Core Content Framework (now [Initial Teacher Training and Early Career Framework \(ITTECF\)](#)) and [iQTS Teachers' Standards](#), to test how the iQTS inspection model would work in practice. Inspections were conducted by independent companies referred to as 'inspectorates' who met the necessary criteria and were approved by DfE following selection through open competition. The organisations selected for the pilot were:

- [Penta International](#)
- [Independent Schools Inspectorate \(ISI\)](#)

The pilot year was completed and quality assured. DfE has reviewed findings and recommendations with iQTS providers and inspectorates. Based on these discussions, the inspection framework has been updated.

The revised framework will be implemented from Autumn 2025 for the iQTS inspection programme for 2025-2026. The grading descriptors have also been refined to ensure clearer distinctions between outcomes. However, the grades awarded to iQTS providers during the pilot remain valid until their next inspection.

The cost of inspection will be met directly by the provider and will be payable to the inspectorate within 3 working days of receiving notification of inspection.

General guidelines for the inspection

How iQTS inspections will be carried out

iQTS providers will be due inspection once they have completed one full academic year of delivery. Only the provision of iQTS will be inspected; providers' domestic initial teacher training provision, the school in which the iQTS trainee is teaching and the trainee themselves are not in scope.

Providers, their delivery partners and schools are not expected to do any additional preparatory work for the inspection other than that requested below.

Inspections will be hybrid in approach, with evidence and data provided both in person and via remote technology. One provider school overseas will be visited by the inspectorate. Inspections last for 4 to 5 days, working around time zone differences.

DfE will allocate inspectorates to specific providers. Neither inspectorates nor providers will be involved in the allocation process.

The cost of inspection will be met directly by the provider and will be payable to the inspectorate within 3 working days of receiving notification of inspection.

Information for schools

Inspectorates may wish to speak with the school's senior leadership, mentors, and other members of staff, if they host trainees undertaking the iQTS programme with one of our English-based pilot providers. The purpose of this interaction is to look at the logistics of iQTS programme delivery. The inspectorate will also speak to the trainees about their iQTS journey and how they are bringing the training experience into their work as a teacher.

This may take place using remote technology and could include observing the iQTS trainee as they implement the learning from their iQTS programme while delivering a lesson in the classroom. Alternatively, it may take place in person with the inspectorate visiting the school and spending a couple of days there.

The focus of iQTS inspection is solely on the English-based iQTS provider, not the school in which the iQTS trainee is teaching, the iQTS trainee themselves, or the pupils in the school.

The iQTS provider will contact schools with more information. This will include when the inspection is taking place if the school has been selected to be involved in inspection and if contact with the inspectorates will be remote or in person.

Information on iQTS provider, trainees and schools

Providers will be asked to provide the following information to inspectorates:

- provider contacts for notification of inspection email
- profile of each provider's iQTS team outlining their roles and responsibilities
- iQTS provider organogram, including names and role on programme
- iQTS trainee information, subject/phase, mentor, school
- breakdown of selection process and recruitment process
- details of school-based training and, if available, placement dates and details
- school contact (for liaising with inspectorate) and address for school
- dates in your academic year when the school will be closed/unable to accommodate the inspection (remote or in person)
- adjustments made to reflect the local context in which iQTS is being delivered and why

This information should be provided to DfE at the same time it is submitted to the inspectorate. From this information, the inspectorate will select the school that will be visited and the trainees and mentors they want to speak to, whether remotely or in person.

DfE will provide a letter for providers to send to schools explaining the purpose of the iQTS inspection and the need for the inspectorate to engage with the school.

Composition of the inspection team

Each team will have a lead inspector with a minimum of one additional inspector. A third or fourth inspector will join the team on the 3rd or 4th day of the inspection event to quality assure the work done by the inspectorate to date.

Inspectors are required to provide their profiles, including a short biography and contact details to providers, prior to inspections.

If any conflicts of interest are identified by the provider at this time, they should be flagged with the inspectorate and DfE within 24 hours.

Point of contact during and post-inspection

Both the provider and the inspectorate must also provide points of contact during the inspection event for any issues that may arise. Any contact should be within regular working hours except for scheduled meeting negotiated in advance where time zones require this.

Post-inspection, they must both provide a further point of contact for any issues which may arise.

Local context

The provider will have supplied information on local context as part of the trainee, mentor and school information requested. The inspectorate will discuss this with the provider to ensure everything is understood and then detail in their report how they have taken this into account.

Data gathering, management and regulation

DfE expects iQTS inspectorates to treat and protect the provider's iQTS personal data in line with UK GDPR [requirements](#). Inspectorates will provide a copy of their data security plan if requested.

It is agreed that statutory and other constraints on the exchange of information will be fully respected, including the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Human Rights Act 1998, and any successor or amended legislation to the same.

Contingency planning

The inspectorate should provide a statement of how they will deal with any force majeure (for example, in-country lockdowns or general illness). It should also ask the provider to consider contingencies if one or more of their team is ill or otherwise unable to complete the inspection.

The inspectorate should outline what procedures will be put in place for potential cyber-attacks.

Complaints

Providers can raise complaints at any point during the inspection event. If they are raised pre- or post-inspection, they should be directed to DfE. If they arise during the inspection, they should be raised with the lead inspector as soon as possible. Failing that, they should be discussed in the final day's session with the inspectorate.

If a school, trainee or mentor wishes to raise a concern about inspectorate conduct, they must do this via the provider, who will in turn raise the concern with the inspectorate.

Any concerns raised and responses and actions taken must be recorded in the inspection evidence.

Deferral/cancellation policy

There may be serious mitigating circumstances warranting a deferral or cancellation of the inspection – for example, a crime or emergency that closes the provider or school due to be inspected. In such a case, the inspectorate should agree another convenient time to carry out the inspection, with the provider and DfE.

In the event of a disagreement about deferral/cancellation, DfE will make the final decision including any costs chargeable.

Presenting evidence for inspection

In preparation for inspection, providers should set up a secure online shared space on their systems to which the inspectorates are given time-limited access. Once the inspection report is agreed and published, access can be removed.

In this secure online shared space, providers should create a folder called “iQTS inspection – MONTH 2025’ and upload the compliance grid. To demonstrate the meeting of the iQTS criteria, providers should either add a link to the evidence on their compliance grid beneath each of the critical headings from C1.1 to C3.4 detailing the title of evidence.

Part 1: Entry Criteria

- C1.1 GCSE standard equivalent
- C1.2 Degree criteria
- C1.3 English language proficiency
- C1.4 Suitability and safeguarding
- C1.5 iQTS recruitment practices

Part 2: Training Criteria

- C2.1 Programme structure
- C2.2 Intensive training and practice
- C2.3 Age ranges, subject-specific and phase-specific training
- C2.4 School placements
- C2.5 Mentoring
- C2.6 Assessment
- C2.7 Awarding iQTS

Part 3: Management and quality assurance criteria

- C3.1 Management
- C3.2 Partnerships and structures
- C3.3 Legislation
- C3.4 Quality assurance

Notification of inspection

The inspectorate will contact the provider by email 4 weeks before the inspection event, with:

- names of the inspectors who will need access to the secure online shared space
- the school selected for the inspection visit
- trainees and mentors selected to be inspected remotely
- a link to an iQTS survey for trainees and mentors to complete – this gives an opportunity for feedback for anyone not interviewed by the inspectorates
- the iQTS criteria compliance grid list – this allows providers to link to the evidence they are presenting against each criteria

Notification to schools

Providers must inform the selected school of its involvement in the inspection within 48 hours of receiving notification using the 'Notification of inspection – in person' and 'Notification of inspection – remote' letters provided by DfE.

They should also provide the inspectorate with a contact for the school. The inspectorate will then confirm arrangements for the in-person visit and dates for the remote contact with the provider and school. From then on, the inspectorate will liaise directly with the school, copying in the provider.

The inspectorate will not request or require any documentation or evidence that the provider would not normally hold. The inspection event should not place a burden on the provider to prepare extra materials beyond those which are needed to facilitate the smooth running of the inspection, for example, timetables.

Pre-inspection discussion

The pre-inspection discussion will be a virtual meeting arranged within 48 hours of notification of inspection email.

In this discussion, the inspectorate will confirm the details of the inspection given in the notification of inspection email and give an overview of how the inspection visit itself will operate and what time the inspection will start on day 1.

The lead inspector should also discuss with providers:

- the approach the inspectorate will take to sampling the submitted evidence
- the settings (interviews, discussions and observations) and technology most appropriate for virtual sessions with the relevant people, including mentors and trainees
- any other meetings needed to support the inspection, stakeholders who should be approached for discussion, and when and how this will take place
- how meetings with relevant staff, including those responsible for delivering the iQTS curriculum, will be conducted
- arrangements for meetings with the lead for mentor training, and with groups of mentors, depending on numbers
- the range of technology used to gather evidence electronically for the inspection –this will include laptops, tablets and mobile phones
- that inspectorates may also take photographs on electronic devices of evidence, but this will not identify individuals, nor will they take photographs of individuals
- clarification of any cross-phase aspects of the inspection that the lead inspector could carry out to avoid duplication, for example, compliance, safeguarding, DBS, ICPC, police checks, governance arrangements
- staff absences or other practical issues
- organising a meeting with those responsible for oversight of the provider (partnership, committee, chair, etc)
- the inspectorate's privacy notice
- the inspectorate's inspection contract for signature
- arrangements for a short meeting at the end of each day for the lead inspector to:
 - provide an update on the day's inspection events
 - share how their findings are comparing to iQTS compliance grid evidence
 - raise any questions or requests for the following day

Providers should be asked:

- to inform inspectorates if there are any planned interruptions to normal routines during the inspection, either with them, or their partner schools
- to supply information about school and provider-based training, recruitment and selection and other events taking place during the inspection period that the inspectorates should be made aware of
- to provide details of trainee placements during the inspection event or places of work, including addresses
- whether they have any questions not covered or have any concerns they wish to raise

Following the meeting, the inspectorate will complete the pre-inspection discussion template and forward it to the provider within 24 hours of the call as a record of what has been agreed. The provider should check this document and contact the inspectorate to correct or amend any information within 48 hours.

Inspection evidence

Providers must give the inspectorate teams access to the secure online shared space and prepare the evidence they wish to submit for inspection into folders or via a link on the compliance grid that follow the iQTS criteria Parts 1, 2 and 3 as described in 'Presenting evidence for inspection'.

The lead inspector should inform the provider that the evidence the provider wishes to submit for inspection must be available no less than 3 weeks before the inspection. Evidence should include the following:

- iQTS criteria compliance grid
- iQTS programme guidance
- partnership agreements
- programme handbook
- safeguarding and compliance checks and materials
- course materials
- mentor handbook
- mentor training curriculum
- placement handbook and tasks
- trainee timetable/schedule, including the location for training
- formative and summative assessment process and schedule
- compliance documentation
- quality assurance statement and supporting documents to include curriculum map linked to [Initial Teacher Training and Early Career Framework \(ITTECF\)](#)

The inspection event

The inspection event will last approximately 4 to 5 days, working around time zone differences. On the morning of Day 1, the lead inspector will give an overview of the inspection, including:

- which subjects/phases they are planning to inspect
- provider staff they would like to speak to
- trainees and mentors they are intending to speak to remotely and in-person during the inspection visit, reflecting the size and location of the cohort
- details of virtual and in-person meetings and how they will take place (for example over an individual telephone call or through video conferencing)
- the pre-inspection check list, reviewed to confirm details
- end of day meetings time and place
- a daily start time for the inspection for the remainder of the days
- opportunities for the provider to ask questions or raise concerns
- time and place for a review of the provider's iQTS compliance grid

Inspection event activities such as meeting with trainees, mentors and stakeholders, conducting observations and reviewing documentation will be undertaken using the following iQTS documentation:

- [iQTS criteria for providers](#)
- [iQTS Teachers' Standards](#)
- [Initial Teacher Training and Early Career Framework \(ITTECF\)](#)

The final day of inspection, Day 4 or Day 5 will cover the final meeting, key findings and proposed grading.

The inspectorate will meet with the provider leadership team to share conclusions. The feedback will include:

- a summary of the evidence base
- the provisional grade
- key findings, highlighting strengths and areas for development
- summary of next steps

This meeting provides an important opportunity for the provider to seek further clarification of findings or to offer additional evidence for consideration by the inspectorate. Any concerns about the inspection not previously flagged should also be raised at this point.

Inspection gradings

Reaching an overall assessment of grade 1 to 4 following an inspection will be based on the following assessments: compliance of provision with iQTS criteria, quality of leadership and management and quality of programme design and delivery.

The combination of these three separate elements will determine the overall grade awarded following the inspection.

Grade 1 is the highest grade that can be awarded and grade 4 is the lowest.

Providers awarded a grade 4 will be subject to reinspection. See page 24 and 25 for more information on reinspection.

Inspection assessments

Compliance of provision with the iQTS criteria

During the inspection event inspectorates will examine the provider's compliance with the iQTS criteria for overall grade. It will be measured against the [iQTS criteria](#), which also makes reference to the [Initial Teacher Training and Early Career Framework \(ITTECF\)](#) and [iQTS Teachers' Standards](#).

The footnotes referenced in this section can be seen in the [iQTS criteria](#).

Part 1: Entry Criteria

- C1.1 GCSE standard equivalent: all approved iQTS providers must ensure that all entrants have:
 - a standard equivalent to a grade 4[footnote 2] in GCSE mathematics
 - a standard equivalent to a grade 4 in a GCSE science subject, if they intend to teach pupils aged 3 to 11
- C1.2 Degree criteria: all approved iQTS providers must ensure that all entrants hold a first degree from a UK or non-UK institution of higher education, or an equivalent qualification [footnote 3]
- C1.3 English language proficiency: to demonstrate proficiency in the English language, candidates will need to evidence an average IELTS score of 6.5 or higher (or equivalent score in another English language testing system), or to have completed some of their education in English, for example a degree studied in English
- C1.4 Suitability: all approved iQTS providers must ensure that all entrants, as part of the provider's selection process, have taken part in a rigorous selection process designed to assess their suitability to train to teach
- C1.5 iQTS Recruitment practices: all approved iQTS providers must ensure their course information is accurate, up to date and provides trainees with the information they need. Providers must also provide timely responses to applications and demonstrate how they quality assure recruitment practices.

Part 2: Training criteria

- C2.1 Programme structure: all approved iQTS providers must ensure that the content, structure, delivery and assessment of programmes are designed to:
 - Enable an evidence-based, sequenced curriculum which encompasses all aspects of the [Initial Teacher Training and Early Career Framework \(ITTECF\)](#) as well as the programme requirements set out in these criteria
 - enable iQTS trainees to meet all the standards for iQTS across the age range of training

- ensure that no iQTS trainee is awarded iQTS until they have met all of the standards for iQTS
 - take into account the trainee's local context in line with the guidance for international use on the iQTS Teachers' Standards and the ITT Early Career Framework
- C2.2 Intensive Training and Practice: This should focus on specific, foundational, or pivotal areas of the iQTS curriculum. All iQTS providers must:
 - Identify parts of the iQTS curriculum that will be the focus of intensive training and practice
 - Design and implements intensive training and practice to build trainees' knowledge, understanding and classroom practice
 - Meet the minimum time expectations for intensive training and practice as detailed below:
 - Minimum weeks of intensive training and practice (in addition to general school placements, does not need to be delivered in a single block) – 4 (20 days)
 - Minimum planned and supported hours during intensive training and practice 2 – 25 per week (average of 5 per day)
 - Minimum hours of expert support per trainee during intensive training and practice 3 – 5 per week (average of 1 per day)
- C2.3 Age ranges: all approved iQTS providers must ensure that they prepare all trainees to teach within one of the following age phases (to note that these are specific to England and age phases may differ internationally):
 - ages 3 to 11 (primary)
 - ages 7 to 14 (middle)
 - ages 11 to 19 (secondary)
- C2.4 Schools placement: all approved iQTS providers must ensure that training programmes are designed to provide trainee teachers with sufficient time being trained in schools[footnote 4], to enable them to demonstrate that they have met all the standards for iQTS. This means that iQTS programmes would typically be structured to include at least 120 days training in schools[footnote 5]
- C2.5 Mentoring: All approved iQTS providers must ensure that all trainees have access to expert mentors to support the delivery and practice of training. Given the largely remote nature of iQTS provision, the role of the mentor is essential for the trainee. An in-school mentor in the trainee's placement school is a mandatory requirement for iQTS.
- C2.6 Assessment: All approved iQTS providers must set out an assessment and progression framework which is aligned to the planned and sequenced curriculum and reflects evidence-based principles.
- C2.7 Awarding iQTS: in England, providers recommend trainees for the award of QTS to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) and the TRA grants this

status. As iQTS is a teaching qualification, not a status, iQTS providers are approved to award the qualification themselves

Part 3: Management Criteria

- C3.1 Management: all approved iQTS providers must ensure that their management structure ensures the effective operation of their training programme
- C3.2 Partnerships and structures: all approved iQTS providers must ensure robust governance arrangements are put in place and exercised effectively, with clearly established structures and partnerships. They must also ensure that partners establish a partnership agreement setting out the roles and responsibilities of the iQTS provider, the placement school and any other partners
- C3.3 Legislation: in England, all accredited ITT providers must ensure that they comply with all current legislation relevant to ITT. Approved iQTS providers must satisfy the criteria specified by the Secretary of State. They must also be aware of relevant local legislation for their trainees' context
- C3.4 Quality assurance: all approved iQTS providers must ensure that they monitor, evaluate and moderate all aspects of provision rigorously and demonstrate how these contribute to securing improvements in the quality of the training and assessment of trainees.

Quality of leadership and management

In addition to compliance with the iQTS criteria, the leadership and management of iQTS is expected to be of high quality. During the inspection event inspectorates will seek to establish whether leaders and managers have put in place the following:

Part 1: Entry Criteria

- clear and accurate information on their website and other documentation about the provision they deliver, the entry requirements, the age phases/ranges and subject specialisms covered
- robust systems for recruitment and selection processes at the application and interview stage which ensure the candidate meets all iQTS entry requirements including English language proficiency i.e., IELTS 6.5
- clear processes to ensure applicants are treated fairly and details of the complaints procedure are accessible and straightforward.

Part 2: Training criteria

- a well-considered iQTS curriculum, designed to meet trainees' needs

- a curriculum which is locally adapted where necessary to each area iQTS is delivered in, and understood by overseas partners
- accurate formative and summative assessment of trainees, including their school-based training experience in their employing/placement school and/or second school placement
- clear processes and systems for assessing and improving the trainees' English and mathematics skills throughout the course and assurance these are in place before the award of iQTS
- mentors have been identified, trained, and monitored by providers to support trainees through the school-based elements of the programme
- robust internal and external quality assurance processes which evaluate the quality of training and school placements, to ensure that it meets the needs of trainees and mentors
- the award of iQTS is made correctly and consistently following appropriate examination/assessment boards

Part 3: Management and quality assurance criteria

- information is easily available to support trainees to manage their workload
- procedures to monitor trainee workload are in place, whilst recognising that local expectations related to workload may be different from those in England
- strong, supportive and productive relationships with all partners exist, underpinned by partnership agreements which detail the roles and responsibilities of both partners
- records of regular meetings, agreed actions and outcomes are kept e.g. internal provider meetings, partnership meetings, mentoring meetings, etc
- systems to ensure leaders and managers receive feedback from all members of the partnership, are alert to areas for improvement and have clear plans in place to support related developments
- accurate self-evaluation using data to improve the ongoing quality of their iQTS programme is provided
- processes for measuring the impact of programme design and delivery of trainee and mentor curricula on mentors' and trainees' practice exist
- clear and robust internal and external moderation processes are in place and used to improve current and future course delivery

Quality of programme design and delivery

In addition to compliance with the iQTS criteria, the quality of programme design and delivery is also expected to be of high quality. During the inspection event inspectorates will seek to establish how leaders and managers have put in place:

Part 2: Training criteria

- high quality training programmes that embed the iQTS Core Content Framework in the curriculum
- training, which is sensitive to the local context, resulting in highly skilled teachers that meet the iQTS Teachers' Standards and any local requirements at the end of the programme
- evidence-based training which trainees can build on throughout their careers
- high quality training which results in confident teachers, providing high standards of education for all in the classroom
- support for the development of trainees' fundamental English and mathematics skills with clearly documented arrangements which detail requirements for trainees' engagement with the programme
- clearly documented and accessible trainee assessment schedules
- relevant and constructive feedback that identifies good practice and areas for development that trainees can build on
- innovative approaches to programme delivery of iQTS using digital technology, blended and/or face-to-face delivery
- a programme which works around different time zones enabling trainees to engage at a time that works for them
- high quality training for mentors which is aligned to the trainee curriculum and enables mentors to confidently support and develop trainees
- mentoring which enables trainees to build on their existing knowledge and skills to ensure they continue to develop their teaching practice
- subject specialism and age phase training which is tailored to meet individual needs
- second school placement or experience as appropriate
- interventions and remedial support for trainees where necessary
- procedures which clearly demonstrate trainees meet the iQTS Teachers' Standards at the end of their training

Overall inspection gradings

Grade 1

The provision is compliant with the iQTS criteria and other core iQTS documents.

The quality of leadership and management and the quality of programme design and delivery meets all requirements and exceeds in most areas.

Grade 2

The provision is compliant with the iQTS criteria and other core iQTS documents.

The quality of leadership and management and the quality of the programme design and delivery meets all requirements and may exceed in some areas.

Grade 3

The provision does not fully comply with the iQTS criteria and other core iQTS documents.

The non-compliance is minor, easily rectifiable and does not have significant negative impact on the learning of trainees or their development into qualified teachers. It also does not significantly affect the quality of leadership, management or the quality of programme design and delivery.

Grade 4

The provision is not compliant with the iQTS criteria and all other core iQTS documents.

Non-compliance has a significant negative impact on the quality of leadership and management and the quality of programme design and delivery. Recommendations are significant; therefore, reinspection will be required.

The inspection gradings can also be seen in the table at Annex A.

Following the inspection event

The inspectorate will complete its iQTS draft inspection report and send it to the provider within 10 working days of the end of the inspection. The provider then has 10 working days to comment on the inspection process or its findings before signing off the report which is then published by the inspectorate and DfE.

Provider challenges to the inspection process or its findings

If the provider wishes to challenge the inspection process or its findings, they must detail their reasons for challenge. Any challenge should be in writing and be limited to matters of factual accuracy, conduct of the inspectorate, inspectorates and/or maladministration.

The inspectorate has 10 working days to respond to the challenge presented and provide a reply, giving reasons for retaining the original grade, or for changing it.

If there is still disagreement at this point, the reports are sent to DfE to review, DfE will aim to respond within 10 working days.

Publication of inspection report and the provider action plan

On completion of all quality assurance processes including provider challenge above, the inspectorate will finalise the report and send an electronic copy to the provider and DfE with 10 working days. It then has a further 5 days to publish the report on its website. There is no right of appeal against the grading.

DfE will also publish within 10 working days where possible.

After report publication, the inspectorate will request feedback from the provider. This will be reviewed in full by the inspectorate with DfE. The inspectorate must advise DfE how it will act on all feedback and update DfE at regular intervals on progress.

All providers must complete an action plan to work on the areas the inspection highlighted for improvement, regardless of grading. This must be sent to DfE within 20 calendar days of receipt of the inspection report, unless a grade 4 has been given (see below). An action plan template will be made available.

The inspection report will be published on:

- the inspectorate website

- DfE's website, location to be confirmed

Actions following a grade 4 inspection grading

Providers who receive a grade 4:

- must produce an improvement action plan within 30 calendar days of receiving the final report
- must schedule regular meetings with DfE to show how they are making progress against the improvement action plan
- will be subject to a reinspection within 12 months of the original inspection

Models of reinspection

Reinspection will be required where the report indicates a failure to meet minimum standards, Grade 4.

Depending on the specific findings and recommendations of the inspection event, a full reinspection may not be required, and a partial reinspection may be sufficient. This variation will be reflected in the pricing model applied.

The following table describes the criteria and associated costs for Category A: partial reinspection, and Category B: full reinspection.

Category	Description	Cost
A	<p>The failings against iQTS compliance and quality criteria may be effectively re-assessed through the scrutiny of further evidence, remote observations and discussions with the provider. This may include supplementary observations and conversations with trainees and mentors and additional information provided by email/photographic evidence/phone calls.</p> <p>The reinspection requires less than 2.5 days of inspector time and is remote only, with up to 50% of inspection costs agreed in discussion with DfE.</p> <p>If the inspectorate assesses that the provision is still a grade 4 following the review of additional evidence, a full reinspection will be required and the difference in costs payable.</p>	Up to 50%

Category	Description	Cost
B	<p>There are significant failures of procedure, practice or outcomes against iQTS criteria compliance across all the evidence base gathered both remotely and in person by the inspectorate.</p> <p>A full reinspection is required, including an overseas school visit to a different school from the one first inspected.</p> <p>Full inspection cost is payable.</p> <p>If the inspectorate assesses that the provision is still a grade 4 following the full reinspection, DfE will start the withdrawal of iQTS approval process.</p>	100%

Depending on the improvements needed, the reinspection will take place between 25 working days and 12 months after the original inspection.

Following the reinspection, the inspectorate will re-grade the iQTS provision.

If after reinspection the provision is still assessed to be a grade 4, DfE will follow up immediately with providers and begin withdrawal of iQTS approval status.

This process is described in full in [Withdrawing iQTS provider approval status](#)

Subsequent inspections

We intend subsequent inspections to take place at intervals of up to but not exceeding 4 years.

DfE will allocate an inspectorate to the provider in subsequent years. The inspectorate will then determine the dates of the inspection. The provider will be informed of the date of inspection at the notification of inspection 4 weeks in advance.

iQTS inspection quality assurance

In the pilot year DfE quality assured the external inspection process. However, in 2025-2026 DfE will have an oversight role only, dealing with areas of significant failure by the provider or inspectorate.

Contact us

If you have questions about this guidance or any other aspect of the iQTS programme, please contact us at iqts.policy@education.gov.uk.

Glossary of terms

Term	Definition/Explanation
Initial Teacher Training and Early Career Framework (ITTECF)	The ITTECF framework sets out what trainee and early career teachers need to know, and know how to do, at the start of their careers. It captures the minimum entitlement to training for both in a single framework that will come into effect from autumn 2025. iQTS providers should continue to use the ITTECF as they did the ITT Core Content Framework (CCF, 2019) ensuring that all framework statements are covered.
DfE	Department for Education
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
Inspection	By Inspection, DfE mean the process carried out by approved inspectorates to ensure that delivery of iQTS is compliant with the iQTS criteria, which also makes reference to the Initial Teacher Training and Early Career Framework (ITTECF) and iQTS Teachers' Standards
Inspection Event	By inspection event, DfE means the inspection process, from notification to agreement of inspection report and overall inspection grade. This covers all inspection activities both remote and in person at a visit to one overseas school in the iQTS cohort
Inspectorates	Independent companies who quality assure products and services in the overseas and domestic education context
iQTS	International qualified teacher status
International qualified teacher status Teachers' Standards	Standards which trainees must meet by the end of the programme to be awarded iQTS.
International qualified teacher status: criteria for providers	Statutory guidance on the criteria that providers and their partners must meet to provide iQTS
ITT	Initial teacher training

Term	Definition/Explanation
ITT provider	Initial teacher training provider accredited by DfE to deliver training routes that lead to QTS (which may be at a higher education institution or be school based)
QTS	Qualified teacher status
Working days	The days of the week when work is normally conducted and excluding any national holidays, however this will differ internationally

Annex A: Inspection gradings

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4
<p>The provision is compliant with the iQTS criteria and other core iQTS documents.</p> <p>The quality of leadership and management and the quality of programme design and delivery meets all requirements and exceeds in most areas.</p>	<p>The provision is compliant with the iQTS criteria and other core iQTS documents.</p> <p>The quality of leadership and management and the quality of the programme design and delivery meets all requirements and may exceed in some areas</p>	<p>The provision does not fully comply with the iQTS criteria and other core iQTS documents.</p> <p>The non-compliance is minor, easily rectifiable and does not have significant negative impact on the learning of trainees or their development into qualified teachers. It also does not significantly affect the quality of leadership, management or the quality of programme design and delivery.</p>	<p>The provision is not compliant with the iQTS criteria and all other core iQTS documents.</p> <p>Non-compliance has a significant negative impact on the quality of leadership and management and the quality of programme design and delivery. Recommendations are significant; therefore, reinspection will be required.</p>

Annex B: Inspection sampling ratios guide

Size of cohort	Trainees	Mentors	Other
Up to 25 trainees	4	2	1
26 to 50	6	4	2
51 to 75	8	4	3
76 to 100	10	5	4
101 to 125	12	6	5
126 to 150	14	7	6
151 to 175	16	8	7
176 to 200	18	9	8
Over 200	20	10	9

Notes

1. These numbers are in addition to the inspectorate speaking to members of the provider iQTS teams
2. The numbers in this table are an indicative guide to the level of sampling required
3. “other” is defined as anyone in the school who has been involved in the iQTS programme through the provider
4. If the provider has more than 50 trainees, inspectorates may hold group meetings, but this will not exceed 40% of the sample, i.e. 60% of the sample will be 1-2-1 sessions.



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