



Department  
for Education

# **Initial teacher training (ITT): criteria and supporting advice**

**Academic year 2025/26**

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# Summary

## About the ITT Criteria

This document contains mandatory criteria and accompanying advice from the Department for Education (DfE). In these criteria we set out requirements and responsibilities, which all accredited initial teacher training (ITT) providers should follow as a condition of their accreditation. These criteria apply to all ITT that leads to Qualified Teacher Status, as defined within the four core routes (undergraduate fee-funded, undergraduate salaried, postgraduate fee-funded, and postgraduate salaried).

Where reference is made to partnerships or partners, organisations involved in the delivery of ITT will be classified in one or more of the following three ways:

- **Accredited ITT provider** - will have full and final accountability for all aspects of training design, delivery, and quality across the partnership. Accredited ITT providers may work with a wide range of partners, including those involved in ITT curriculum design, supply lead mentors/mentor leadership teams, and run Intensive Training and Practice

There are two types of partner with specific delivery responsibilities:

- **Training partner(s)** – will have an operational or strategic role with responsibilities delegated to them by the accredited provider and their role will include delivering training and may include trainee recruitment.
- **Placement school(s)** - will provide placements and general mentors.

Where an accredited ITT provider has delegated a role to a training partner, these mandatory requirements and responsibilities apply to the training partner. The ITT accredited provider is accountable for ensuring training partners meet these requirements and responsibilities.

## Review date

This guidance is effective for academic year 2025/26.

From academic year 2024/25 all ITT leading to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) must incorporate a new set of Quality Requirements; these ITT Quality Requirements have been embedded into these ITT criteria and supporting advice.

ITT courses that began on or prior to 31 May 2024 are subject to the Criteria that were in place when the ITT course commenced (for example, multi-year undergraduate courses beginning in 2022/23 or 2023/24).

DfE reserves the right to update criteria and accompanying advice to ensure they remain up to date and relevant.

## **Who are the ITT Criteria for?**

This guidance is for:

- accredited ITT providers and their training partners;
- Ofsted

## Accreditation

Accredited ITT providers must ensure that they meet these criteria to remain compliant. Accredited ITT providers who do not comply with these criteria may be subject to withdrawal of accreditation.

As part of our approach to quality assurance, from the 2025/26 academic year, Ofsted will inspect ITT delivery for all accredited ITT providers every 4 years in line with the [Initial Teacher Education \(ITE\) inspection: toolkit, operating guide and framework](#).

## Withdrawal of accreditation

This section sets out the circumstances that may lead to the [withdrawal of accreditation](#), and the requirements of accredited ITT providers during this process. DfE reserves the right to withdraw accreditation where:

- provision is non-compliant with one or more of the specified ITT criteria;
- the accredited ITT provider demonstrates impropriety or inadequate controls in its financial management, or does not comply with relevant financial reporting or governance requirements;
- the accredited ITT provider fails to comply with DfE data and reporting requirements;
- the accredited provider does not achieve the expected standard in all Ofsted evaluation areas of provision leading to QTS after Ofsted inspection and subsequent reinspection<sup>1</sup>;
- the accredited ITT provider ceases to offer provision.

Further information on the process for accredited ITT providers wishing to close ITT provision and the withdrawal of ITT accreditation can be found [here](#).

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<sup>1</sup> As determined by Ofsted on inspection and reinspection

## Fee charging arrangements

### Fee charging in academic year 2025/26 for undergraduate ITT courses leading to QTS

The maximum tuition fee that accredited ITT providers registered in the approved (fee cap) section of the [Office for Students' \(OfS\) register](#) can charge students for the 2025/26 academic year is determined by the Higher Education (Fee Limits and Fee Limit Condition) (England) Regulations 2018, in powers conferred by the Higher Education and Research Act 2017. This act also sets out the requirements for establishing OfS access and participation plans for 2025/26.

OfS-approved (fee cap) providers with a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award for 2025/26 may charge up to £6,355 for a full-time course if they do not have an OfS access and participation plan in place, or up to £9,535 if they have an OfS access and participation plan in place.

OfS-approved (fee cap) providers with a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award for 2025/26 may charge up to £4,765 for a part-time course if they do not have an OfS access and participation plan in place, or up to £7,145 if they have an OfS access and participation plan in place.

OfS-approved (fee cap) providers without a TEF award for 2025/26 may charge up to £6,185 for a full-time course if they do not have an OfS access and participation plan in place or up to £9,275 if they have an OfS access and participation plan in place.

OfS-approved (fee cap) providers without a TEF award for 2025/26 may charge up to £4,635 for a part-time course if they do not have an OfS access and participation plan in place, or up to £6,955 if they have an OfS access and participation plan in place.

Accredited ITT providers registering in the approved section of the [OfS register](#) (approved providers) are not subject to maximum fees and are not required to submit an access and participation plan to the OfS.

Organisations who are not registered with the OfS are not subject to the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 and are able to set their own tuition fees without reference to OfS. However, DfE requires that these accredited ITT providers must not charge [eligible trainees](#) over £9,535 for full-time or £7,145 for part-time programmes of ITT that lead to QTS in 2025/26. This means that accredited ITT providers who are not registered with the OfS can set and publish their own fees for international trainees for full-time and part-time programmes.

## Fee charging in the academic year 2025/26 for postgraduate courses leading to QTS

From the academic year 2024/25 onwards, accredited ITT providers registered with the OfS as approved (fee cap) providers will no longer be subject to fee limits set by the Higher Education (Fee Limits and Fee Limit Condition) (England) Regulations 2018, in powers conferred by the Higher Education and Research Act 2017, for postgraduate ITT courses leading to QTS.

Accredited ITT providers who are not registered with the OfS and accredited ITT providers who are registered with the OfS as approved (fee cap) providers will be able to set their own tuition fees without reference to OfS. However, DfE requires that these accredited ITT providers must not charge [eligible trainees](#) over £9,535 for full-time or £7,145 for part-time programmes of ITT that lead to QTS in 2025/26. This means that all accredited ITT providers can set and publish their own fees for international trainees for full-time and part-time programmes.

The above does not apply to accredited ITT providers registering in the approved section of the [OfS register](#) (approved providers), who are not subject to maximum fees and are not required to submit an access and participation plan to the OfS.

Any accredited ITT provider that changes their OfS registration status should inform DfE via [itt.accreditation@education.gov.uk](mailto:itt.accreditation@education.gov.uk).

## Student support in academic year 2025/26 for full-time and part-time courses

The level of fee loan support available to eligible trainees commencing full-time and part-time courses in 2025/26 will, in most cases, be determined by which part of the [OfS register](#) the provider has applied to register in.

Eligible trainees will qualify for fee loans up to the maximum fee limit the provider charges for their course, as detailed in the section titled: Fee charging in academic year 2025/26 for undergraduate ITT courses leading to QTS.

## Course designation and confirmation of tuition fee limits for future academic years

DfE will write to all accredited ITT providers annually in late autumn to provide course designation for postgraduate ITT that leads to QTS and undergraduate ITT offered by non-OfS registered accredited providers, and to confirm tuition fee limits for the following academic year. DfE will confirm arrangements with the Student Loans Company.

# Entry Criteria

## C1.1 GCSE standard equivalent

### All accredited ITT providers must:

- ensure that all entrants have achieved a standard equivalent to a grade 4<sup>2</sup> in the GCSE examinations in English<sup>3</sup> and mathematics; and
- ensure that those who intend to train to teach pupils aged 3 to 11 additionally have achieved a standard equivalent to a grade 4 in the GCSE examination in a science subject.

The aim of this criterion is to ensure that all entrants to ITT have demonstrated their achievement of a minimum standard of educational attainment, and for primary trainees that they demonstrate an acceptable level of subject knowledge in the core subjects of the National Curriculum.

Applicants who are otherwise suitable but have not successfully achieved a GCSE grade 4, or recognised equivalent, may be given an opportunity to show that they can meet the required standard either by taking an equivalence test or by offering other evidence of attainment, which should demonstrate a similar level and breadth. Accredited ITT providers should consider making similar arrangements for applicants who cannot provide original certificates as evidence.

DfE does not provide a list of qualifications that can be considered equivalent to the GCSE examinations in English, mathematics, and science. It is the provider's role to determine the equivalency of a qualification. When accredited ITT providers look for evidence that a qualification is of a standard equivalent to GCSE grade 4, they should look at the content not only in terms of its level, but also in terms of its breadth.

Accredited ITT providers should look for additional evidence of breadth of knowledge and understanding in applicants who have key and functional skills certificates but do not have GCSEs at grade 4 or above in English and mathematics.

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<sup>2</sup> For the equivalent of grades awarded under the new GCSE grading structure, refer to [Your qualification, our regulation: GCSE, AS and A level reforms](#).

<sup>3</sup> An equivalent to grade 4 in English language or English literature fulfils this criterion.

Qualifications in key and functional skills at level 2 are not equivalent to GCSEs in terms of breadth of content.

## Teaching Apprenticeship English and mathematics requirements

Those applicants meeting the required GCSE standard by taking an equivalence test or by offering other evidence of attainment, who intend to undertake the Postgraduate Teaching Apprenticeship (PGTA) or Teacher Degree Apprenticeship (TDA), will need to consult with their employing school on whether they require an additional functional skills qualification or equivalent qualification at level 2 in mathematics and English to meet apprenticeship gateway entry criteria.

## Intellectual and academic capabilities

Accredited ITT providers should consider the full range of applicants' knowledge, skills, academic background and prior experience to judge whether they have the capability to undertake an ITT course and meet the [Teachers' Standards](#) by the end of their training.

Prior to confirming a trainee meets the requirements for QTS, accredited ITT providers must assure that trainees demonstrate competence in the following areas:

- Speaking, listening, and communicating are fundamental to a teacher's role. Teachers should use standard English grammar, clear pronunciation, and vocabulary relevant to the situation to convey instructions, questions, information, concepts, and ideas with clarity. Teachers should read fluently and with good understanding.
- Writing by teachers will be seen by colleagues, pupils, and parents and, as such, it is important that a teacher's writing reflects the high standards of accuracy their professional role demands. They should write clearly, accurately, legibly, and coherently using correct spelling and punctuation.
- Teachers should use data and graphs to interpret information, identify patterns and trends and draw appropriate conclusions. They need to interpret pupil data and understand statistics and graphs in the news, academic reports, and relevant papers. Teachers should be able to complete mathematical calculations fluently with whole numbers, fractions, decimals, and percentages. They should be able to solve mathematical problems using a variety of methods and approaches, including estimating and rounding, sense-checking answers, breaking down problems into simpler steps, and explaining and justifying answers using appropriate language.

Any work to address shortfalls in English and mathematics must be undertaken by the trainee teacher in addition to other aspects of their training. It is the trainee's

responsibility to secure such fundamental English and mathematics, whereas responsibility for assurance lies with the accredited ITT provider. Fundamental English and mathematics may be supported and assured in different ways by different accredited ITT providers.

## Further information

The [European Network of Information Centres in the European Region](#) (ENIC) provides advice on the equivalence of overseas qualifications.

## C1.2 Degree criteria

### All accredited ITT providers must:

- ensure that, in the case of graduate programmes of ITT, all entrants hold a first degree from a United Kingdom higher education institution or equivalent qualification<sup>4</sup>.

The aim of this criterion is to ensure the graduate status of teaching. All entrants must have attained a qualification that demonstrates the level of knowledge, understanding and transferable intellectual skills associated with graduate status.

[The Education \(School Teachers' Qualifications\) \(England\) Regulations 2003](#) require all qualified teachers in England to have a UK first degree or equivalent qualification. Any equivalent qualification must be one single qualification, not an aggregation of a number of separate qualifications. The exception to this is where candidates undertake study to extend an existing degree (for example, a foundation level degree) or qualification to secure the required level of academic award to meet degree criteria requirements.

Those entering postgraduate ITT programmes need to have attained a degree before they commence the programme.

Accredited ITT providers should view original certificates in order to validate an applicant's degree status. However, they should exercise discretion for recent graduates where there is a delay in receiving the original certificate. In these cases, accredited ITT providers should obtain written confirmation from the relevant degree-awarding institution

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<sup>4</sup> A first degree comprises 300 HE credit points of which 60 must be at level 6 of the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF). Applicants with a foundation degree will need to supplement this qualification with at least 60 credits at level 6 (HE level 3) in order to attain an equivalent single qualification.

that the applicant has achieved graduate status. Accredited ITT providers should view the original certificate as soon as it is available.

In cases where an original certificate is no longer available, accredited ITT providers must gain assurance of graduate status and must keep an audit trail of the evidence obtained.

Where the awarding of an applicant's degree has been impacted by exceptional delays in the awarding organisation's administrative process (such as a delay to the marking of a final assessment), whereby the applicant cannot be awarded graduate status before entry to the ITT programme, accredited ITT providers should exercise discretion and review other relevant evidence that would demonstrate confidence from the degree-awarding organisation in the applicant's future graduate status. Due consideration should be given where evidence demonstrates that an applicant is unlikely to be awarded graduate status.

Where an accredited ITT provider has exercised their discretion to accept an individual onto an ITT course before they have been awarded their degree, the accredited ITT provider must, before confirming to DfE that the individual has completed that course and been assessed as meeting the Teachers' Standards, confirm that they have now been awarded their degree.

Those on undergraduate ITT programmes will, if successful, graduate and gain QTS at the same time. Only the accredited provider can confirm a trainee as having met the requirements for QTS through updating the DfE's 'Register' service. Accredited ITT providers may delegate the award of the first degree to a training partner registered with the Office for Students (OfS). Compliance with regulatory requirements in respect of academic awards (for example, to the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) and the OfS) can rest with a training partner that awards the undergraduate degree rather than with the accredited ITT provider.

## **Degree subjects**

Legislation does not specify that teachers must have a degree in a particular subject or discipline. There is no statutory requirement for primary trainee teachers to have a degree in a National Curriculum subject, or for secondary trainee teachers to have a degree in a specified subject, as long as they meet the Teachers' Standards, including those that relate to subject and curriculum knowledge, by the end of their training.

## Information on degree-level qualifications

Accredited ITT providers will need to make sure that those responsible for decisions on entry understand, or have access to, advice on the range of qualifications generally regarded as equivalent to a first (bachelor's) degree in the UK, including:

- Overseas qualifications;
- Professional or vocational qualifications;
- Qualifications no longer available but held by mature applicants.

Some master's degrees may provide the necessary breadth and have a similar type of academic engagement as would be expected from a first degree (for example, significant taught content, equivalent breadth).

It is for the accredited ITT provider to decide whether an applicant's qualification meets this criterion. Accredited ITT providers whose ITT partnerships do not include degree-awarding bodies may wish to seek advice from those that do.

## Further information

The [European Network of Information Centres in the European Region](#) (ENIC) provides advice on the equivalence of overseas degrees.

The [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies](#) describes the higher education qualifications awarded by UK higher education institutions (HEIs) at 5 levels.

## C1.3 Suitability

### All accredited ITT providers must:

- ensure that all entrants, as part of the accredited ITT provider's selection procedures, have taken part in a rigorous selection process designed to assess their suitability to train to teach.

Accredited ITT providers must ensure that, before anyone is admitted to an ITT programme, they have been deemed suitable to train to teach. This will help to protect children and young people from trainee teachers who might put them at risk of harm because their previous conduct shows that they are unsuitable for teaching. Accredited ITT providers should conduct interviews, run appropriate pre-selection checks, and

assess if an applicant has the potential to undertake an ITT course and meet the Teachers' Standards by the end of their training.

Accredited ITT providers should consider a range of evidence to judge applicants' suitability to train to teach prior to offering them a place on a course, for example:

- Information from application forms;
- Results of any entry tests or tasks;
- Interviews.

Prior experience in a school is not required. However, where applicants have been able to gain experience in schools, accredited ITT providers might find reports from those schools helpful. Lack of school experience should not be a reason for rejecting an otherwise suitable applicant.

Accredited ITT providers should ensure that applicant selection processes give due regard to relevant aspects of part three of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

Accredited ITT providers should ensure that at least one member of the recruitment panel has undertaken appropriate safer recruitment training.

## Interviews

Accredited ITT providers should consider how information from interviews can help to identify and take account of trainees' specific needs during training, including any exemptions from programme requirements on the basis of prior achievement. The interview process might include discussions of professional portfolios and discussions of prior achievement.

There is no requirement for a face-to-face interview. Interviews may take place virtually, providing suitable applicant identity checks are conducted.

Accredited ITT providers must ensure that applicants are given every opportunity, before and during the interview, to provide information about any special requirements that require reasonable adjustment.

## Equality

To comply with equality legislation, accredited ITT providers must ensure that interview procedures promote equality of opportunity and avoid discrimination.

The [Equality Act 2010](#) requires accredited ITT providers to ensure that they are not discriminating against applicants on the basis of any protected characteristic, or applicants with special educational needs (SEN).

Applicants with disabilities are under no obligation to disclose their disabilities. Accredited ITT providers must ensure that their provision does not place applicants with declared disabilities at a disadvantage. Accredited ITT providers must also consider making anticipatory adjustments to promote positive equality of access for disabled applicants, including access to benefits, facilities, and services. They should provide as many opportunities as possible for applicants to identify any special arrangements they may require, for example when inviting them for interview or making arrangements for any entrance tests.

Not all trainees will have declared their disability at application stage. Accredited providers should give all trainees the opportunity to disclose a disability before and during their training. Trainees with declared disabilities should have access to reasonable adjustments appropriate to the teaching profession, to ensure they are given every opportunity to meet the requirements for QTS.

## **Health and capacity to train to teach**

Accredited ITT providers should have regard to the relevant aspects of [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(KCSIE\)](#) requirements when assessing trainees' health and capacity to train to teach, so that children and young people are not at risk of harm. The activities that a teacher must be able to perform are set out in the [Education \(Health Standards\) \(England\) Regulations 2003](#). Accredited ITT providers are responsible for ensuring that only trainees who have the capacity to teach remain on the programme.

People with disabilities or chronic illnesses may have the capacity to train to teach, just as those without disabilities or medical conditions may be unsuitable to train to teach.

Successful applicants may be asked to complete a fitness questionnaire prior to commencing the programme. Accredited ITT providers should not ask all-encompassing health questions but should ensure that they only ask targeted and relevant health-related questions which are necessary to ensure that a person is able to train to teach.

## **Disclosure and Barring Service checks**

Accredited ITT providers should have regard to the [Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance](#) when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. They should ensure that all trainees have been subject to appropriate preselection checks. This will include obtaining and considering [Disclosure and Barring Service \(DBS\)](#) criminal records checks and children's barred list information.

Accredited ITT providers should confirm in writing to placement schools that a non-salaried trainee's criminal record check, including a check of the children's barred list, has been completed and that the individual has been judged by the accredited ITT

provider to be suitable to work with children. Accredited ITT providers are not required to provide any information to schools in addition to this confirmation. Schools may wish to record this confirmation in their single central record, but they are not required to do so.

When determining an individual's suitability to train to teach, accredited ITT providers, or employing schools for salaried routes, should check, by asking the trainee or using any other data or information they have access to, that a trainee has not previously been removed from an ITT programme because they have behaved in a way that indicates that they may not be suitable to work with children, or if the previous accredited ITT provider would have removed the trainee had they not left.

In the case of salaried routes, the responsibility lies with the employer to ensure that DBS checks have been carried out. The employing school should inform the accredited ITT provider that a satisfactory check has been obtained.

Where a school or college allows an individual to start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available, they should ensure that the individual is appropriately supervised and that all other checks, including a separate barred list check, have been completed.

Accredited ITT providers should establish clear safeguarding procedures and protocols that are agreed by all training partners and placement schools. This should include a common understanding of convictions, offences, cautions and warnings that would not pose a barrier to joining or continuing an ITT programme.

Accredited ITT providers should ensure that all trainee teachers, at the start of training in any school, are provided with:

- the child protection policy;
- the staff behaviour policy (sometimes called a code of conduct);
- information about the role of the designated safeguarding lead;
- a copy of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

Accredited ITT providers may wish to recommend to applicants, particularly those that are checked early in the recruitment cycle, that they register with the DBS update service.

If an accredited ITT provider removes a trainee from a programme because the trainee has harmed or poses a risk of harm to children, or if the accredited ITT provider would have removed the trainee had they not left, the accredited ITT provider should seek guidance from DBS and inform DfE by contacting [itt.safeguarding@education.gov.uk](mailto:itt.safeguarding@education.gov.uk).

Any queries about DBS checks should be referred to DBS at [customerservices@dbs.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@dbs.gov.uk) or on 03000 200 190.

## Other background checks

Applicants who are unsuited to working with children may not have any previous convictions, and accredited ITT providers should ensure that all those involved in the selection process are vigilant. Accredited ITT providers and employing schools for salaried routes have a duty to ensure that trainees are properly managed and supervised and that, if they have concerns, information is referred to the police and DBS.

Applicants who have lived or worked outside the UK must undergo the same checks as all other trainee teachers. In addition, further checks should be carried out so that events that occurred outside the UK can be considered. The Home Office has published guidance on [Criminal record checks for overseas applicants](#), and there is DfE guidance on recruiting individuals who have lived and worked outside the UK in [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) and [Recruit teachers from overseas](#).

Accredited ITT providers and employers must check that applicants are not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State.

## Childcare disqualification

Accredited ITT providers should have regard to the [Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 statutory guidance](#) and related obligations under the Childcare Act 2006.

Where trainees are salaried, it is the responsibility of the school to ensure that they comply with the legislation. If a salaried trainee is, or becomes, disqualified from a childcare role, schools should inform the accredited ITT provider of this. Where trainees are fee-funded, it is the responsibility of the accredited ITT provider to ensure that the trainee is not disqualified from childcare or that the trainee has obtained a childcare disqualification waiver from Ofsted.

Further advice on the childcare disqualification arrangements can be obtained from DfE at [mailbox.disqualification@education.gov.uk](mailto:mailbox.disqualification@education.gov.uk) or on 01325 340 409.

## Further information

### Statutory guidance:

[Regulated Activity \(children\) - supervision of activity with children which is regulated activity when unsupervised](#)

[Working together to safeguard children](#)

[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

## C1.4 ITT Recruitment practices

### All accredited ITT providers must:

- ensure course information is accurate, up to date and provides trainees with the information they need; and
- provide timely responses to applications.

Accredited ITT providers should ensure that applicants are treated fairly throughout the application and recruitment process. While consideration will need to be given to the availability of course places, accredited ITT providers should aim to ensure that as many applicants as possible are given the opportunity to demonstrate their potential at interview if they have met the entry criteria outlined above. Where places are no longer available, applicants should be advised in a timely manner to allow them to make an application elsewhere.

### Relevant course information

Accredited ITT providers should include training locations and contact details when publishing course information and ensure that these are kept up to date.

Accredited ITT providers should ensure that courses are closed on Apply swiftly once they are full. It should be clear to applicants when a course is full, and they should be made aware at the earliest opportunity when a course that they have applied to becomes full.

Accredited ITT providers should also give clear information about specific requirements or expectations they have of applicants applying to salaried courses.

Accredited ITT providers should give details of their complaint procedure on their website, which should be straightforward to follow if an applicant wishes to make a complaint.

### Decisions, offers, feedback, and deferrals

Accredited ITT providers should give timely responses to applications. Accredited ITT providers should allow applicants time to attend interviews for other courses, and to consider the outcomes of other applications before accepting or declining offers.

Accredited ITT providers should ensure that applicants are given a deadline to meet any offer conditions that have been set. Applicants apply and are interviewed at different times through the recruitment period, but they should be given the same amount of time

to meet the same conditions, where possible. Accredited ITT providers may wish to provide the same deadline to all applicants to meet similar offer conditions.

Interviews must take place before an offer is made. Succeeding at an interview should not be a condition of an offer.

If an application is rejected, feedback should explain the reason(s) why to the applicant, including advice on how the application can be improved. If an application is rejected because a course is full, where recruitment processes allow, accredited ITT providers should still aim to provide feedback.

If an offer is deferred, accredited ITT providers should ensure that there are sufficient places on the ITT course for the following year.

Applicants will provide details of references as part of their application. References should be checked only after an offer has been made.

## **Accessibility**

Accredited ITT providers should check the accessibility requirements of applicants and make any reasonable adjustments where required.

# Training Criteria

## C2.1 Programme structure

### All accredited providers must:

- design an evidence-based, sequenced curriculum which encompasses all aspects of the [ITT Initial Teacher Training Early Career Framework \(ITTECF\)](#) as well as the programme requirements set out in these criteria;
- design courses which enable trainee teachers to meet the [Teachers' Standards](#);
- ensure that no trainee teacher is confirmed as having met the requirements for QTS until they have met all of these Standards.

At the outset, accredited ITT providers should make clear to trainees, and to all those involved in ITT from their training partners and placement schools (including mentors), the scope and coverage of the programme, including subject and curriculum knowledge and understanding, and the anticipated training outcomes.

Programme design should be flexible enough to meet the needs of every trainee. Accredited ITT providers should keep under review the extent to which their provision and assessment practices are designed to ensure that trainees can meet the Teachers' Standards by the end of the course.

### Overarching requirements

Accredited ITT providers must have a fully developed, evidence-based curriculum. It must encompass all aspects of the ITTECF as a minimum entitlement, ensuring that trainees are prepared for the next stage in their professional development as Early Career Teachers.

An accredited ITT provider's curriculum must be sequenced and coherent, supporting trainees to develop their classroom practice. It should be appropriate for the particular subjects, phases, and age ranges which their trainees will teach. Accredited ITT providers should determine an appropriate and robust evidence base for their curriculum, including the best evidence for effective teacher training and development with well-evidenced subject- and/or phase-specific content integrated into the taught curriculum.

The ITT curriculum should enable trainees to engage in critical analysis of theory, research (including, where appropriate their own) and expert practice. Component elements of the planned curriculum must be closely integrated throughout with appropriate opportunities to ensure that trainees have sufficient feedback and support

from expert mentors/colleagues to understand, apply, reflect upon, and develop their teaching practice.

The ITT curriculum must closely inform taught components, independent learning, teaching practice and feedback. The ITT curriculum should provide the opportunity for trainees to consolidate fundamental components of knowledge, understanding and practice, before they begin to deliver longer sequences of teaching (which themselves draw on a range of knowledge, skills, and behaviours). As trainees move towards more complex, composite sequences and scenarios, they must have sufficient opportunity to identify, re-visit, and isolate areas which require further consolidation.

Those responsible for the professional development of trainees should have a deep understanding of the planned curriculum and its basis in evidence, to ensure that trainees experience consistent training and support at all stages.

Accredited ITT providers must identify how all components of the planned curriculum will be taught, applied to practice in a range of contexts and assimilated. The ITT curriculum should encompass a variety of teaching and learning approaches and experiences, including direct explanation, deconstruction, structured and focused observation and targeted practice with systematic analysis, feedback and mentoring.

## **Minimum time allocations<sup>5</sup>**

Accredited ITT providers must design training programmes which reflect the minimum time allocations for pivotal aspects of ITT programmes set out in Tables 1-4 of these ITT Criteria. Accredited ITT providers should note that these times refer to course design. It is accepted that at times, and for exceptional reasons such as sickness absence, some trainees, mentors, lead mentors or mentor leadership teams may not meet the full allocation. Accredited ITT providers should continue to exercise appropriate judgement in individual cases where this happens.

These minimum time allocations may be undertaken on a part-time basis but should be satisfied in full.

**Table 1 – Minimum course length**

All minimum time allocations are course design requirements. Accredited ITT providers must design ITT curricula that adhere to the minimum time allocation below:

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<sup>5</sup> Time in schools may be completed on a part-time basis to make up the full-time equivalent time allocations.

ITT minimum time allocations for the duration of the course	Postgraduate	Undergraduate
Total weeks of course	36 (180 days) <sup>6</sup>	N/A

## Specific requirements

Accredited ITT providers must design a sequenced ITT curriculum which:

- encompasses the ITTECF in full, includes further content to be taught that moves beyond the foundation of the ITTECF (including subject-specific and phase-specific content), and prepares trainees for the Early Career Entitlement (ECTE) and the broader demands of their early career;
- demonstrates explicitly how it will build the expertise and confidence of trainees, from a focus on fundamental component elements to complex or composite practice;
- demonstrates how taught components and classroom practice are integrated over time and across settings, to build systematically towards trainees' fluency in classroom practice;
- specifies a range of methods, carefully and intentionally orchestrated across the ITT curriculum, including, but not limited to, training undertaken with a range of experts, training undertaken with peers, supported independent study, rehearsal, and teaching practice;
- identifies the range of settings in which trainees will undertake each part of their training, including the minimum two placement schools;
- includes detailed curriculum planning for teaching trainees evidence-based, subject- and phase-specific approaches to teaching, including the use of systematic synthetic phonics for all primary trainees. Subject- and phase-specific approaches must be delivered by suitably qualified experts and take full account of the evidence available for subject- and phase-specific teaching. This part of the ITT curriculum must adequately cover all National Curriculum subjects, and the other compulsory subjects of: religious education, relationships and health education for primary trainees, and the relevant teaching subject(s) for secondary trainees and must enable trainees to understand the application of general research-based principles;

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<sup>6</sup> 36 weeks or 180 days of delivered content, which can include some self-study. Any self-study should have clear learning objectives for the trainee and the provider should have processes to check that self-study has had the envisioned impact on the trainees' development. Bank holidays that fall within the 36 weeks/180 days of delivered content, can count towards the overall course length.

- includes a comprehensive suite of high-quality course materials for trainees and those responsible for curriculum delivery to support all aspects of the training, including evidence-based subject- and phase-specific training;
- includes Intensive Training and Practice and identifies those parts of the ITT curriculum that will be delivered as Intensive Training and Practice;
- includes detail of the design of the Intensive Training and Practice element, how it will be delivered and what will be achieved.

## C2.2 Intensive Training and Practice

### All accredited ITT providers must:

- identify those parts of the ITT curriculum that will be the focus of Intensive Training and Practice;
- design and implement Intensive Training and Practice to build trainees' knowledge, understanding and classroom practice;
- meet the minimum time expectations for Intensive Training and Practice set out in Table 2.

Intensive Training and Practice should focus on specific, foundational, or pivotal areas of the ITT curriculum. It should also demonstrate and build the interplay between evidence-based theory and practice, engaging trainees in critical analysis, application of learning to classroom practice, and focused feedback on such practice.

As such, some elements of Intensive Training and Practice should take place in a school environment, while some elements may be provided in the ITT institution through virtual and face-to-face experiences, and/or through the use of approximations of practice.

Time allocated to the Intensive Training and Practice element should be additional to the 24 weeks (120 days) spent on general school placements.

### Focus areas and design of Intensive Training and Practice

Focus areas of Intensive Training and Practice should:

- be pivotal or foundational concepts of the planned ITT curriculum that trainees are able to put into practice immediately;
- be granular in nature; and
- have potential to impact on trainees' classroom practice irrespective of context.

Focus areas that are foundational or pivotal should have a high impact on trainees' classroom practice and they will be immediately practicable and can be utilised in multiple contexts. It is for accredited ITT providers to decide the foundational or pivotal focus areas of Intensive Training and Practice.

Intensive Training and Practice should be delivered in line with the minimum time allocations across the training year but does not need to be delivered as a single block. Accredited ITT providers may locate such practice at suitable points to ensure maximum impact on trainees' progress.

## **Delivery of Intensive Training and Practice**

Intensive Training and Practice would typically involve groups of trainees, but accredited ITT providers may choose to run them individually if a group experience is not possible.

Intensive Training and Practice may take place in either or both of the two general placement schools where a trainee is located, though it must be additional to and distinct from the general placement itself, as long as that is appropriate to the curricular intent of the Intensive Training and Practice.

A range of practice environments can be used to support Intensive Training and Practice and live practice experience can take place in more than one school. Schools supporting Intensive Training and Practice should offer a sufficient range of strengths to support the delivery of strongly curriculum-aligned practice.

## **Specific requirements**

Intensive Training and Practice will consist of:

- 3-5 carefully selected pivotal or foundational aspects of the planned curriculum. These will be identified in the overall design of the ITT curriculum. Many are likely to relate to the ITTECF, although this is not required, and where possible will be specific to the subject and phase being taught;
- structured observation of selected teaching practice (live lessons or recorded content), with those aspects under focus;
- critical analysis of observed teaching and relevant teaching materials, guided by an expert, with a focus on understanding the links between theory and practice;
- preparation for, and implementation of, classroom teaching practice with deliberate attention to the aspects under focus, with expert feedback and, where necessary, opportunities to repeat and vary such practice for different circumstances;
- expert theoretical and practical input by tutor(s) and/or mentor(s) and other expert colleagues (in school or in an ITT institution);

- critical analysis of relevant teaching materials in the light of theory and evidence (in school, virtually or in an ITT institution);
- focused observation, reflection upon, and deconstruction of teaching (in school or virtually);
- expert modelling and deconstruction of individual components of teaching practice (in school or virtually);
- live classroom teaching practice (or practice in a rehearsal environment), with deliberate attention to the aspects under focus (in school);
- focused feedback utilising appropriate questioning and opportunities to practise further and improve.

The outcomes of Intensive Training and Practice for trainees should include a strong understanding of the evidence base for the area concerned, which they can articulate, justify, and exemplify, and the ability to discuss effective classroom practice and to prepare and apply those aspects of teaching confidently in a range of contexts.

**Table 2 – minimum time allocations – Intensive Training and Practice**

All minimum time allocations are course design requirements. Accredited ITT providers must ensure that courses are designed to provide trainees with Intensive Training and Practice experiences that adhere to the below minimum time allocations:

<b>ITT minimum time allocations</b>	<b>Postgraduate</b>	<b>Undergraduate</b>
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)	6 (30 days)
Minimum planned and supported hours during Intensive Training and Practice <sup>7</sup>	25 per week (average of 5 per day)	25 per week (average of 5 per day)
Minimum hours of expert support per trainee during Intensive Training and Practice <sup>8</sup>	5 per week (average of 1 per day)	4 per week (average of 1 per day)

<sup>7</sup> This means 25 hours of the trainees' time during this Intensive Training and Practice period must be planned activity, but that does not necessarily mean that the expert must directly lead delivery of all 25 of these hours. The 25 hours should be a full and demanding timetable, which may include expert input, group work, lesson preparation, lesson delivery, observation, and feedback.

<sup>8</sup> This expert support time does not need to be 1:1 and may take place in groups. Support could be provided by mentors, the lead mentor/mentor leadership team, or by experts under the coordination of the lead mentor/mentor leadership team.

There are some specific undergraduate ITT courses where it may be more appropriate for the Intensive Training and Practice element to be four weeks rather than six weeks. These are:

- undergraduate courses that are six terms or less in length (or the equivalent for part time courses) and where the degree content is to extend a foundation degree in order to meet the degree requirements; or
- courses where students opt-in to ITT during their undergraduate degree and achieve QTS during the final year of their course.

For these specific types of course, it is for the accredited ITT provider to determine whether a four- or six-week Intensive Training and Practice element is most appropriate.

## C2.3 Age ranges, subject- and phase-specific training

### **All accredited ITT providers must:**

- ensure that they prepare all trainee teachers to teach within one of the following age phases: ages 3 to 11 (primary), ages 7 to 14 (middle) or ages 11 to 19 (secondary).

Training must enable trainees to acquire the knowledge and skills they need to teach within the phase for which they are training. Typically training will take place across the following age ranges:

- 3 to 7, 5 to 11, or 7 to 11 for primary training;
- 7 to 14 for middle training;
- 11 to 16, 11 to 18, or 14 to 19 for secondary training, depending on the subjects of training.

No training programme should cover fewer than four consecutive school years.

Where accredited ITT providers are offering middle phase ITT programmes, they should record trainees on these programmes as 'secondary' for DfE data purposes.

Programmes should enable trainees on middle phase programmes to demonstrate that they have met the Teachers' Standards across the relevant curriculum in the primary element of training, and in their specialist subject in the secondary element of training.

Accredited ITT providers should specify in their recruitment literature and programme design documentation the age range of training for each of their programmes. Accredited ITT providers should ensure, where possible, that trainees have the opportunity to

develop a comprehensive understanding of progression across, and before and after, the age range that they are training to teach. This might include enhanced experiences in other age ranges.

Accredited ITT providers should ensure that all trainees receive specialist subject training to develop the necessary knowledge and understanding of their subjects and related pedagogy, which will enable them to teach their subjects, where possible, across the full age and phase range of training. Trainees that are training to teach a subject that is always or predominantly taught in only one age range (for example post-16) should be offered the opportunity to demonstrate subject knowledge in a related subject if they do not have the opportunity to teach their subject across the full age range of training.

## **Subject- and phase-specific training**

The ITTECF emphasises the need for training to be specific to subject and phase. Subject specificity goes beyond subject knowledge. It is critically important that trainees learn about the evidence underpinning effective teaching at a general level and at a subject/phase-specific level. Accredited ITT providers must ensure that their curriculum sets out in detail approaches for each subject and phase. Accredited ITT providers must:

- have a clear evidence base underpinning each ITT course;
- ensure that trainees have sufficient knowledge of the content of the school curriculum in each subject and phase that they teach, including at the level required by relevant examination courses in secondary;
- ensure that their curriculum encompasses the ITTECF within a subject- and phase-specific context, with sufficient subject- and phase-specific exemplification for tutors and mentors to consistently build trainees' knowledge and understanding;
- ensure that trainees understand how subject-specific approaches to curriculum and pedagogy are based on both general research and evidence; and subject- and phase-specific research and evidence;
- ensure that tutors, lead mentors/mentor leadership teams and mentors, including those supporting the delivery of Intensive Training and Practice, have the relevant subject-specific curricular expertise, and close knowledge of the planned curriculum, to guide and support trainees effectively;
- set out clearly how trainees will learn the subject-specific elements of the planned curriculum, and who will support their learning;
- introduce trainees to relevant subject- and phase-specific communities of practice and equip them to contribute in an informed way to relevant debates affecting the teaching of their subject(s) and phase(s).

## C2.4 School placements

### All accredited ITT providers must:

- ensure that training programmes are designed to provide trainees with:
  - at least two school placements<sup>9</sup>;
  - sufficient time being trained in schools in line with the minimum time requirements; and
  - the experience they need to demonstrate all the Teachers' Standards for QTS.

Accredited ITT providers will need to work with a range of schools to ensure a broad range of school placements are available to their trainees. Time spent in schools, either as part of the two school placements, or other experiences or training in schools, should be part of a coherent training programme that is designed to enable trainees to meet the Teachers' Standards by the end of the course.

Other experiences, outside of school placements, can form a valuable part of training programmes, but only time spent in schools can count towards the minimum time requirements for school placements.

School placements and other training may take place in a special school, alternative provision, pupil referral units, and mainstream schools with SEN resource units, particularly where an accredited ITT provider chooses to offer an additional specialism in special educational needs. In these cases, accredited ITT providers should ensure that the design of the overall training programme would enable trainees to meet all of the Teachers' Standards by the end of the course, across the specific year groups and phase range of training.

Advice to accredited ITT providers on placements in special schools, alternative provision, pupil referral units and SEN resource units in mainstream schools can be found in the [Initial Teacher Training special schools and alternative provision guidance](#).

All ITT courses must be designed so that trainees can experience six weeks (30 days) of 80% contact ratio teaching. The 80% refers to a full teaching timetable, as it is typically defined by the school where the experience is taking place, rather than 80% of a full pupil or school timetable. For trainees who do not spend a full week in school placements (for example, those on flexible or part-time ITT course), accredited ITT providers should

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<sup>9</sup> Where we refer to schools in the school placement criteria, we also include early years and further education institutions.

ensure that trainees are still experiencing at least 30 days of 80% of a full teaching timetable as it is typically defined by the school where the experience is taking place.

As with other minimum time requirements, this relates to course design. This means that while ITT courses must be designed to provide this opportunity to every trainee, it is accepted that there may be individual circumstances, for example, trainee sickness, where the ITT curriculum may need to be adapted to provide additional tailored support and input during these six weeks (30 days).

Any such adjustments should ensure that individual trainees have the best opportunity possible to meet, and even exceed, the Teachers' Standards at the appropriate level to meet the requirements for QTS. This will be particularly beneficial to trainees who are not on trajectory to achieve QTS prior to the time the 80% contact ratio teaching experience takes place. Accredited ITT providers should exercise appropriate judgement in individual cases and ensure that they have a clear rationale for why any revision to the planned course curriculum during the six weeks (30 days) of 80% contact ratio teaching was appropriate for individual trainees.

**Table 3 – minimum time allocations for school placements**

All minimum time allocations are course design requirements. Accredited ITT providers must design ITT curricula that adhere to the below minimum time allocations:

<b>ITT minimum time allocations throughout the duration of the course</b>	<b>Postgraduate</b>	<b>Undergraduate</b>
Minimum weeks in school placements (general placements only, excludes Intensive Training and Practice)	24 (120 days)	24 (120 days) (for courses up to 3 years)  32 (160 days) (4 year course)
Minimum hours in classrooms (including observing, teaching, co-teaching, etc.) each week during general school placements	15 on average (average of 3 per day)	15 on average (average of 3 per day)

## Two schools

Trainee teachers need a variety of experience in schools to enable them to meet all of the Teachers' Standards. They need to teach children and young people in their specified age range, from different backgrounds, as well as gaining experience of different approaches to teaching and to school organisation and management.

Trainees must have taught classes to pupils in two schools to successfully complete their ITT course and meet the requirements for QTS. It is not sufficient for trainees only to have had non-teaching work experience in these schools. Accredited ITT providers may wish to consider whether a trainee with prior assessed experience of teaching in a school has gained enough relevant teaching experience to allow them to confidently count that previous teaching as one of the two schools specified. Where this is the case, the placement should offer the trainee a contrasting experience from that which they already have, and their course should still be designed in line with the minimum time requirements for school placements.

Salaried trainees will usually need to be released from their employing schools to spend time teaching in another school. Accredited ITT providers should ensure that the other schools are carefully selected to extend the trainees' knowledge, skills and understanding and provide opportunities for them to demonstrate, through their teaching, how they meet the Teachers' Standards.

Legislation requires that practical teaching experience for the purposes of ITT should take place wholly or mainly in England. However, there may be circumstances where part of the training could take place outside England.

## C2.5 Mentoring<sup>10</sup>

### **All accredited ITT providers must:**

- ensure that all trainees have access to expert mentors to support the delivery and practice of training.

### **The roles of mentors and lead mentors/mentor leadership teams**

Mentors should have a clear understanding of their role and the skills required to undertake it. They should also be familiar with the ITTECF and the evidence that underpins it, and the ITT curriculum. This is crucial to ensure that mentors can provide informed, targeted, and consistent and actionable input and feedback, aligned with the ITT curriculum. Excellent practice needs to be modelled and exemplified in a way which is matched to the sequenced curriculum.

Lead mentors and/or mentor leadership teams should comprise of individuals with an advanced level of ITT knowledge and expertise that will play a lead role in curriculum

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<sup>10</sup> Mentoring is defined here as in the ITTECF: "receiving structured feedback from expert colleagues on a particular approach – using the best available evidence – to provide a structured process for improving the trainee's practice".

design and implementation, mentor training, and Intensive Training and Practice. Their overarching role will be to ensure that trainees receive mentoring and support across placement schools which is aligned with the ITT curriculum and informed by practice at all times. Therefore, lead mentors and/or mentor leadership teams should play a key role in the training, support, and supervision of in-school mentors.

## **Overarching requirements**

Accredited ITT providers must establish a professional network of well-trained and expert mentors who understand the ITT curriculum, the relevant research base which informs it, and their role in supporting its implementation. All mentors must ensure that in-school experiences are coherent with the ITT curriculum, with opportunities for purposeful practice in relation to key concepts and high-quality feedback. Trainees must also have access to mentors who have expertise in the subject- and/or phase-specific approaches set out in the planned curriculum (encompassing the ITTECF), so that trainees are able to learn the best-evidenced ways of teaching their subject or phase.

Accredited ITT providers must ensure observation, reflection, deconstruction, and feedback take place throughout the year in line with the components of the ITT curriculum. Accredited ITT providers should have partnership agreements and quality assurance arrangements in place with placement schools to ensure that all mentors have the time, resources, and the support of their school to discharge the requirements of their role.

Mentors should receive sufficient high-quality training to ensure they can effectively support a trainee teacher to obtain the knowledge and skills they need to successfully complete their school placement. Mentor training (and relevant prior experience) should provide mentors with the knowledge and skills they need to undertake this role, including knowledge and understanding of the ITTECF and its underpinning evidence, and of the ITT curriculum which the trainee will be following. Refresher training should be completed annually so the mentors' understanding of the ITT curriculum and their role is up to date.

Accredited ITT providers should consider the prior learning of their individual mentors in determining the exact emphasis of the mentor training. Accredited ITT providers should not require mentors or lead mentors/mentorship leadership teams to repeat training but should adapt the delivery of the mentor training curriculum to meet individual needs. In all cases, accredited ITT providers must be able to demonstrate that all mentors have been trained in all areas of the mentor training curriculum.

Training can be delivered face to face or virtually. Some use of asynchronous training may also be appropriate. Accredited ITT providers are expected to ensure that mentors and lead mentors/mentor leadership teams are properly supported throughout their training, regardless of how it is delivered.

The full mentor or lead mentor training curriculum does not have to be completed before mentors or lead mentors/mentor leadership teams can begin to support trainees.

However, accredited ITT providers must ensure that mentor and lead mentor training is aligned to the trainees' needs throughout their ITT course. This means that mentors and lead mentors/mentor leadership teams must have completed sufficient training to give them the required knowledge, skills and understanding of the ITT curriculum to support the trainee with the relevant parts of the ITT curriculum at any given time.

## **Specific requirements**

Accredited ITT providers must ensure that:

- mentors have expertise in evidence-based subject- or phase-specific approaches to teaching and that they are allocated to trainees as appropriate to their subject or phase needs;
- mentor training builds mentors' knowledge and understanding of the ITT curriculum, and the evidence that underpins it;
- mentor training prepares mentors for their role in guiding and supporting trainees through that curriculum;
- mentoring practice fully reflects the intent and content of the ITT curriculum;
- mentors receive enough time to attend the required training to discharge their responsibilities as set out in these ITT Criteria
- a sufficient number of mentors are recruited and trained so that every trainee receives their entitlement of 1.5 hours per week (5 days) of mentoring support.

Where appropriate, accredited ITT providers should use their discretion to provide flexibilities so that all trainees receive at least 1.5 hours of mentoring per week and that across a two-week period they receive their full mentoring entitlement. For trainees who do not spend a full week in school placements (for example, flexible or part-time ITT courses), accredited ITT providers should ensure that all trainees are receiving the equivalent of 1.5 hours of mentoring per 5 days of placement and receive their full mentoring entitlement over 10 school placement days.

## **Lead mentors and mentor leadership teams**

The role of the lead mentor can be undertaken by mentor leadership teams. Different roles may be allocated to different members of that team ensuring that the full range of lead mentor responsibilities are fulfilled.

Roles of lead mentors/mentor leadership teams include:

- oversight, supervision, and quality assurance of other mentors;

- design and delivery of training for other mentors;
- close working with trainees during Intensive Training and Practice, and design of such elements;
- oversight of trainee progress through the year and identification of interventions or modifications where required.

The lead mentor/mentor leadership team must have particular expertise in the evidence base for effective initial teacher training, including programme design and content selection.

It is envisaged that lead mentors/mentor leadership teams will engage with much of the same training content as mentors and go into further depth to be fully prepared to deliver their responsibilities. They will also have an ongoing role in course development and improvement.

Minimum times for mentoring, and training of lead mentors/mentor leadership teams, are set out in Table 4.

**Table 4 – minimum time allocations – mentoring**

All minimum time allocations are course design requirements. Accredited ITT providers must design ITT courses that adhere to the below minimum time allocations:

<b>ITT minimum time allocations</b>	<b>Postgraduate</b>	<b>Undergraduate</b>
Minimum hours mentoring each week during general school placements <sup>11</sup>	1.5	1.5

## **C2.6 Assessment**

### **All accredited ITT providers must:**

- set out an assessment and progression framework which is aligned to the planned and sequenced curriculum and reflects evidence-based principles.

Trainee assessment procedures should be rigorous and robust, supporting consistent and accurate judgements. Where an accredited ITT provider’s training partners or

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<sup>11</sup> Accredited ITT providers should use their discretion, where appropriate, to provide flexibilities for trainees who do not spend a full week in school placements.

placement schools take a significant role in assessment and making judgements that a trainee has met the requirements for QTS, the accredited ITT provider should ensure that assessment moderation procedures are robust. The accredited ITT provider remains accountable for all assessment judgements and should ensure that this is understood across their ITT partnership, through their partnership agreements.

## Overarching requirements

Accredited ITT providers must set out a trainee assessment and progression framework which is aligned to the planned and sequenced curriculum. It should draw on overarching evidence-based principles for good quality assessment, which may include those set out in the ITTECF, relating to the assessment of pupils. The assessment framework should, as such, assess trainees with appropriate frequency on their knowledge and understanding of the curriculum, and how trainees apply such knowledge and understanding in classroom practice. Ongoing assessment is an important part of the training process and therefore, it should include focused feedback designed to enable trainees to improve. Feedback should draw on the content of the ITT curriculum and should support trainees in understanding how practice is informed and shaped by research and evidence.

Ongoing, formative assessment should be against trainees' progress in relation to the ITT curriculum, rather than against the level of expertise or standard required by the end of the course. During the course, assessment should help to identify aspects of the ITT curriculum which trainees are finding challenging and be used to adapt approaches to delivery or reshape practice accordingly. Accredited ITT providers must be able to demonstrate the ways in which this will happen.

Accredited ITT providers must ensure that all those involved in assessment of trainees, including lead mentors and mentors as appropriate, have received sufficient training to enable them to understand and use assessment frameworks accurately and appropriately.

Assessment specifically against the Teachers' Standards should be reserved for end-of-course assessment to meet the requirements for QTS. This does not prevent accredited ITT providers from referencing or referring to the Teachers' Standards at key assessment points during the course to help trainees understand their progress against the ITT curriculum at that point. Accredited ITT providers must demonstrate that end-of-course assessments are objective, valid, and reliable.

This approach aligns with the assessment principles of the [Ofsted Initial Teacher Education Inspection Framework and Handbook](#).

## Specific requirements

Accredited ITT providers must design an assessment framework which reflects evidence-based principles for good assessment, is straightforward to use, and meets the following requirements:

- ensures that ongoing formative assessment and feedback take place throughout the course, focused on trainees' ongoing progress in relation to the component elements of the planned curriculum;
- recognises the need for trainees to be assessed and receive feedback on the evidence-based, subject- and phase-specific approaches set out in the ITT curriculum;
- clearly defines roles and responsibilities for those conducting assessment and providing feedback at all levels, including arrangements for the robust quality assurance of assessment;
- assesses trainees' knowledge and understanding of the ITT curriculum, and how that is evidenced in their application of such knowledge to classroom practice and in any written assignments;
- requires those conducting assessment and providing feedback to gain a rich and developed knowledge of trainees' performance over time and to draw on a range of sources to ensure conclusions are secure and balanced;
- requires those conducting assessment to provide feedback to trainees which they can use, and are supported to use, for improvement, and where appropriate, supports trainees' understanding of how practice can be improved in the light of research evidence;
- enables insights from assessment to feed into programme delivery so that those responsible for training and mentoring can adapt in response to trainee needs;
- includes arrangements for objective, valid, and reliable end-of-course assessment against the Teachers' Standards to assess if trainees meet the requirements for QTS.

All those responsible for assessment and feedback must receive thorough training on the assessment framework and the ways in which it is intended to be used, to ensure that approaches are of consistently high quality for all trainees.

Accredited ITT providers that offer teaching apprenticeship routes should ensure that end-point assessments comply with the arrangements specified for the [postgraduate teaching apprenticeship programme](#) or [Teacher Degree Apprenticeship](#). Further guidance is available on [how to apply to join the apprenticeship provider and assessment register](#) and on [joining the apprenticeship provider and assessment register](#).

# Management and QA Criteria

## C3.1 Management

### All accredited ITT providers must:

- ensure that their management structure facilitates the effective operation of the training programme.

Accredited ITT providers must plan their training programme to ensure that they comply with the current ITT criteria and provide the opportunity for trainees to demonstrate that they meet the Teachers' Standards. Training should be of high quality and accredited ITT providers should seek continuous improvement.

Schools should play a significant and, often, leading role in the design and delivery of training provision. The management structure should demonstrate the central role that schools should play in all aspects of provision, from selection and recruitment, through delivery and training, to the assessment of trainees against the requirements for QTS.

Accredited ITT providers should ensure that the workload of trainee teachers is manageable. Guidance is available to support accredited ITT providers to address this using the [improve workload and wellbeing for school staff resource](#). Everyone across the ITT partnership should be clear about their role in reducing trainee teacher workload.

Accredited ITT providers are responsible for informing DfE about any proposed significant changes to their governance and/or operational structure as set out in C3.2.

## C3.2 Partnerships and structures

### All accredited ITT providers must:

- ensure that robust governance arrangements are put in place and exercised effectively, with clearly established structures and partnerships.

## Overarching requirements

Accredited ITT providers must be able to set out the essential features of their structures and partnerships which will enable them to provide teacher training in the way described in the preceding sections. Accredited ITT providers must:

- be able to set out at what scale they operate and, recognising the quality level set out in this document, demonstrate that they have sufficient capacity to be able to meet the criteria for training in all subjects and phases offered;
- secure and retain placement schools, any training partners and other specialist experts to enable them to deliver their programme in line with these criteria, and to meet the needs of all trainees and set out how they will develop the training capacity of any ITT training partners and placement schools in their partnership;
- be able to set out which courses are to be run and what target recruitment numbers and minimum and maximum numbers will be in place;
- identify and retain training partners (where appropriate) and be able to articulate what responsibilities have been delegated to training partners;
- establish the structure of their partnership and governance arrangements, including formal arrangements between any training partners and accredited ITT providers, and between placement schools and accredited ITT providers or training partners, and exercise governance effectively, recognising that accountability for all aspects of the operation of the partnership rests with the accredited ITT provider;
- market the course offer, recruit trainees in line with C1.4;
- establish budgetary arrangements that set out how funds are distributed across a partnership and adequately reflect the distribution of delegated responsibilities;
- ensure that ITT funding is used for intended purposes at all levels in the ITT accredited provider's partnership, and that these arrangements contribute both to quality provision for trainees and to the retention of placement schools and training partners;
- ensure that trainees are prepared to teach pupils in schools across a broad range of contexts found in the geographical area in which they are training, including areas of high disadvantage, where possible. For example, trainees' placements could include time in schools serving disadvantaged communities, or a focused period teaching pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds or schools judged to require improvement where the accredited ITT provider has carried out a risk assessment and is satisfied that the trainee will have a high-quality experience;
- ensure that, at a local level, schools and other training partners are well placed to recruit trainees or support the recruitment of trainees, given the fact that local

recognition and relationships are critical for securing and maintaining the confidence of potential trainees;

- have regard for the well-being of trainees and arrangements in place to support their welfare;
- establish arrangements for secure and compliant data handling across partnerships.

The roles and responsibilities of all partners should be clearly defined in partnership agreements. Partnership agreements should be clear, working documents 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. Each 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.

The partnership agreement should also include details of the:

- clear quality assurance procedures for every role that a partner undertakes;
- content, delivery, and impact of each of the ITT programmes;
- policies for equality of opportunity;
- organisation and management of the partnership;
- role of each partner in addressing and managing trainee teacher workload;
- role of all partners in protecting trainees' mental health and well-being.

The partnership agreement may make reference, for example, to the functions of groups and committees in managing the partnership and the ways in which resources are allocated among partners. It will set out the criteria for removing placement schools from the partnership, particularly where quality issues arise. The agreement and any associated supplementary documentation should be reviewed and revised by members of the partnership at appropriate intervals.

Accredited ITT providers should satisfy themselves that placement schools have the capacity to undertake their responsibilities. Where a school requires significant improvement or is in special measures, it may still be possible to use the school for placements, especially if the improvements to be made do not affect the subject or age range of the training. The accredited ITT provider needs to be confident that the trainee will not be disadvantaged by the school experience and the situation should be kept under close review.

## Roles and responsibilities

All trainers and trainee teachers need to be clear about who is responsible for elements of training and assessment, how provision is managed and how the elements fit together to ensure that training addresses all of the Teachers' Standards.

Partnership agreements should specify the different roles within the partnership including, for example, programme and course leaders, lead mentors/mentor leadership teams, mentors, and internal and external moderators. They should also set out how partners contribute towards:

- selecting and interviewing applicants;
- moderating assessment judgements of trainees against the Teachers' Standards;
- providing professional development opportunities for colleagues within the partnership;
- trainee access to resources;
- any course and/or programme committees;
- quality assurance including improvement planning and self-evaluation;
- the promotion of equality of opportunity;
- the safeguarding of children and young people.

Accredited ITT providers of salaried routes must ensure that all schools or settings, where trainees have additional teaching experience, are of high quality, understand and agree to the partnership roles and responsibilities and have the capacity to provide the necessary training and support.

### Accountable Officer

Each accredited provider will have a named Accountable Officer who holds overall accountability for ITT in their organisation and across any partnership they may form. The Accountable Officer must have appropriate authority within the legal entity to ensure the accredited provider can fulfil all associated responsibilities for ITT. These responsibilities include ensuring the provision meets the Secretary of State's ITT criteria and complies with all financial expectations as detailed in the grant funding agreement (GFA).

## Changes to partnership structures

Accredited ITT providers must seek DfE approval for any proposed significant changes to their:

- accredited legal entity;
- operating name;
- partnership arrangements, including addition and removal of training partners

The accredited ITT provider must inform DfE of:

- changes to the accredited ITT provider's UKPRN;
- changes to the Accountable Officer (the person with overall accountability for ITT in the organisation);
- details of all partners undertaking any of the following functions:
  - recruitment and / or delivery of ITT on behalf of an accredited ITT provider (training partners);
  - receiving and managing student fees from the Office for Students (OfS)
  - receiving funding for their role in the delivery of teacher apprenticeships (subcontracting)

If an accredited ITT provider is in any doubt as to whether they should advise DfE of any changes, they should do so.

Details of any proposed variations should be sent to [itt.accreditation@education.gov.uk](mailto:itt.accreditation@education.gov.uk).

Further information on the above definitions can be found here - [Initial teacher training \(ITT\): forming partnerships - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/initial-teacher-training-itt-forming-partnerships).

### C3.3 Legislation

#### **All accredited ITT providers must:**

- ensure that they comply with all current legislation relevant to ITT.

Accredited ITT providers must comply with relevant legislation and also satisfy the criteria specified by the Secretary of State and review and update their provision to ensure this. Accredited ITT Providers should make sure that partners are fully aware of their duties under all relevant legislation and have in place arrangements for ensuring that these are met when selecting, recruiting, training, and assessing trainees. This includes:

- [Education \(School Teachers' Qualifications\) \(England\) Regulations 2003 \(SI 1662\)](#) – statutory requirements for QTS in England;
- [Education \(Specified Work\) \(England\) Regulations 2012 \(SI 762\)](#) – requirements that must be satisfied by individuals who are not qualified teachers in order to be able to carry out specified work in schools;
- [Equality Act 2010](#) – legislation relating to equality, discrimination, and employment;
- [Data Protection Act 2018](#);
- [Freedom of Information Act 2000](#).

As of 1 July 2015, specified authorities, including all schools, are subject to a duty under section 26 of the [Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 \(the CTSA 2015\)](#), to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'. Bodies to which the duty applies must have regard to statutory guidance issued under section 29 of the CTSA 2015 ('the [Prevent duty guidance](#)').

The Prevent duty guidance states that schools and other institutions to which the duty applies should make sure that staff have training that gives them the knowledge and confidence to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas, which can be used to legitimise terrorism and are shared by terrorist groups.

## Further information

The following is a sample list of relevant legislation and guidance. This is not intended to be exhaustive and accredited ITT providers will need to ensure that they have identified and comply with all legislation relevant to ITT. The [Equality Act 2010](#) is the governing legislation for all matters relating to all acts of discrimination. Also relevant are:

[Education \(Health Standards\) \(England\) Regulations 2003 \(SI 3139\)](#)

[Disabled Students' Allowances \(DSAs\) in higher education](#)

[Disability Rights UK, education, and skills guidance for people with disabilities](#)

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) provides further guidance on the Equality Act for schools and further and higher education institutions. The EHRC also has information on the [Equality Act codes of practice](#) that relate to equal pay, race, disability, sex and gender discrimination.

The work that is reserved to qualified teachers in maintained schools in accordance with section 133 of the Education Act 2002, subject to limited exceptions, is prescribed by the [Education \(Specified Work\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#).

Other relevant documents include:

- the Health and Safety Executive's [Five Steps to Risk Assessment](#);
- guidance for practitioners and managers from HM Government on [information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners](#).

Accredited ITT providers should familiarise themselves with the Competition and Markets Authority's consumer law advice. Any accredited ITT provider that does not meet its obligations to students may be in breach of consumer protection law. Find out more about [Higher education: consumer law advice for providers](#).

## C3.4 Quality assurance

### All accredited ITT 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 training and the assessment of trainees.

## Overarching requirements

Trainees can only meet the requirements for QTS if they meet all of the Teachers' Standards. Therefore, the assessment of trainees must be accurate and reliable in establishing, consistently over time, whether or not trainees meet the Teachers' Standards.

Accredited ITT providers must develop quality assurance processes to ensure that all aspects of the course meet the high expectations to which all trainees are entitled. Specifically, accredited ITT providers must demonstrate robust arrangements for monitoring:

- the quality and fidelity of all aspects of curriculum delivery to trainees;
- the training and expertise of those involved in curriculum delivery;
- the training and expertise of mentors and lead mentors/mentor leadership teams;
- the quality of mentoring work of all types and levels, including ensuring that time allocations for mentors and trainees are met;
- the quality of regular in-course assessment and feedback and their impact on trainee knowledge and expertise;
- the quality, reliability, and validity of end-of-course summative assessment.

There must be clear systems in place for reporting and taking action to address any shortfalls in quality in a prompt way, to protect the entitlement of trainees to high-quality training.

They must also have clear identification of responsibilities and accountability for quality assurance at all levels, including for accurate record-keeping of quality assurance work.

Clear mechanisms must be in place for trainees to raise concerns or make complaints about the quality of training/mentoring, and for investigating and, where necessary, addressing such concerns or complaints in a timely fashion.

## **Specific requirements**

Accredited ITT providers must have a framework for quality assurance which:

- monitors and assures quality in all required areas of the programme and at all levels;
- sets out suitable monitoring methods;
- sets out clearly the range of specific roles and responsibilities for quality assurance;
- demonstrates how concerns identified by quality assurance will be addressed, including the range of intervention options which will be used;
- specifies how records relating to quality assurance will be kept;
- sets out robust arrangements which enable trainees to raise concerns or make complaints;
- sets out how quality assurance information will be used to improve the quality of all their ITT and make the programme and all aspects of their partnership more resilient.

Accredited ITT providers must put in place an effective system for supervising and quality assuring the initial and ongoing training of mentors, the quality of their work, including their approach to subject- and/or phase-specific mentoring, and systems for securing specific improvements where necessary.

External moderators have an important role in ensuring consistency of standards across, as well as within, ITT partnerships. Accredited ITT providers should ensure that external moderators have relevant expertise and experience to enable them to carry out their roles competently. They should also ensure that the views of external moderators are taken into account fully when reaching decisions about trainees' achievement of the Teachers' Standards.

## Evaluation

Accredited ITT providers should clearly define the arrangements and responsibilities for monitoring and evaluating the quality of training across all the contexts in which it takes place and identify ways in which it could be improved.

Accredited ITT providers may wish to collect and analyse a variety of data to inform their understanding of the effectiveness of their training. For example, they may collect and analyse data or other evidence about:

- training sessions, in order to establish their fitness for purpose and to identify strengths and weaknesses across the different contributions to the programme;
- trainees' evaluations of how their training needs have been met;
- mentors and lead mentors'/mentor leadership teams' evaluations of the training programme and how it is administered;
- trainees' perceptions of their training;
- former trainees, induction tutors and employing schools;
- internal and external moderation about the effectiveness and accuracy of the assessment of trainees against the Teachers' Standards;
- external moderator feedback about the effectiveness of training provision in helping trainees to meet the Teachers' Standards;
- the implementation of equality policies;
- DfE and Ofsted feedback.

## Internal moderation

Internal moderation provides a system of checks and balances within a partnership to ensure that trainees in different settings are assessed accurately and reliably. Accredited ITT providers should ensure that arrangements for internal moderation are in place, and they work effectively. The roles and responsibilities of those carrying out such arrangements are likely to be contained in the partnership agreement.

Internal moderation procedures could include, but are not limited to:

- the involvement of staff with relevant expertise from two or more partners when assessing trainees;
- detailed scrutiny by a moderating panel of a sample of trainees, including any judged by an assessor as on the pass/fail borderline, or likely to fail;
- joint observations of trainees' teaching;

- discussions by relevant staff of all the evidence available, including trainees' previous experience and achievement;
- arrangements for feeding back information to the partnership about the accuracy and consistency of assessment arrangements and about elements of good practice to support improvements.

## External moderation

Accredited ITT providers should appoint suitable external moderators. External moderators should have no direct involvement with the work of the partnership. They should be able to offer an external perspective on the attainment of the accredited ITT provider's trainees in relation to the requirements for QTS, which should help to verify the accuracy of the accredited ITT provider's assessments. Accredited ITT providers should consider how to use external moderators to corroborate and standardise their assessments of trainees.

Accredited ITT providers may wish to consider, when appointing external moderators, whether they have appropriate subject, curriculum, or age-phase expertise to enable them to provide specialist feedback.

The responsibilities of external moderators might include:

- detailed scrutiny of a sample of trainees, including a representative cross-section of trainees together with trainees that internal moderators regard as being on the pass/fail borderline, or likely to fail;
- observation of the teaching of trainees in a designated sample;
- discussion with internal assessors and/or moderators of all the evidence available on whether individual trainees have met the Teachers' Standards. If they have not met all the Teachers' Standards, all assessors and/or moderators should discuss which Standards have not been met and why;
- scrutiny of internal moderation arrangements, drawing on some of the evidence gained from activities above;
- producing a report that includes an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision observed, clearly linked to the Teachers' Standards and ITT criteria, and including an evaluation of the accuracy of the assessments of trainees' attainment against the Teachers' Standards.

In addition, accredited ITT providers should have procedures in place for monitoring and evaluating the management of their programmes including, for example, arrangements for the selection and de-selection of placement schools. They should use evidence exemplified above to inform the work of any committees that serve the partnership.

Accredited ITT providers should have systematic procedures in place in order to demonstrate that monitoring and evaluation have secured improvements in quality and outcomes for trainees. This may mean keeping comparative data and other evidence over a period of time.

Similarly, accredited ITT providers may wish to examine their procedures and practices for enhancing and improving the pedagogical knowledge of all trainees and the knowledge of relevant curriculum areas for primary trainees and evaluate these against the success of trainees in meeting the Teachers' Standards. The evidence will need to be sufficiently robust to enable accredited ITT providers to draw conclusions and act upon them.

All monitoring and evaluation processes and activities should focus on impact and outcomes – particularly in the context of the standards achieved by trainees. Reporting and documenting of these activities should be evaluative rather than descriptive. These activities and processes might feed into improvement plans.

## **Employment-based criteria**

All accredited ITT providers of employment-based ITT must additionally ensure that for the period of training all applicants must be employed as unqualified teachers<sup>12</sup> at a school<sup>13</sup> or academy, and (except applicants employed in academies or independent schools) must be paid in accordance with at least the minimum of the unqualified teacher pay range for the period of their training. Further information on pay and conditions can be found here: [School teachers' pay and conditions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/282222/school_teachers_pay_and_conditions.pdf).

All accredited ITT providers offering employment-based ITT must ensure that applicants are only admitted to employment-based programmes by either DfE or by an accredited ITT provider<sup>14</sup>.

All accredited ITT providers offering employment-based ITT must additionally ensure that no applicant will be required to perform more than 90 per cent of the teaching duties normally required of a full-time qualified teacher.

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<sup>12</sup> As defined by the latest school teachers' pay and conditions document.

<sup>13</sup> Or 'other institution' as defined by the Education (School Teachers' Qualifications) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI 2003/1662) as amended.

<sup>14</sup> Teach First (ITT) programme applicants must be admitted only with the agreement of the Teach First organisation.

## Legislation

This advice refers to:

[The Education \(School Teachers' Qualifications\) \(England\) Regulations 2003 \(S.I. 2003/1662\)](#)

[The Education \(Health Standards\) \(England\) Regulations 2003](#)

[The Education \(Specified Work and Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#)

[Higher Education \(Fee Limits and Fee Limit Condition\) \(England\) Regulations 2018](#)

[Higher Education and Research Act 2017](#)

[Equality Act 2010](#)

[Data Protection Act 2018](#)

[Freedom of Information Act 2000](#)

[The Childcare \(Disqualification\) Regulations 2009](#)

[Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015](#)



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