



BRIEFING PAPER

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Initial teacher training in England

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Summary

This note outlines the current arrangements for the initial training of school teachers in England. It covers degree and school-based training routes, and provides background on recent policy developments. It also outlines the qualification requirements for teachers in different types of schools.

In recent years, there has been an increase in the proportion of teacher training that is 'school-based'. This is proving controversial, and some in the university sector have claimed that their training expertise is being sidelined and that the changes risk creating imbalances in the supply and demand for teacher training places.

The note also covers other initiatives, such as the Government's *Troops to Teachers* programme, and offers a brief overview of financial support available for teachers in training.

1. Government policy on teacher training

1.1 Developments under the Coalition Government

In November 2010, the Coalition Government published a White Paper, [The Importance of Teaching](#), which proposed significant reforms to teacher training and development, as well as to the wider school system.¹ Further detail on the plans were provided in a consultation document published in June 2011, [Training our next generation of outstanding teachers](#). An [implementation plan](#) followed in November 2011, which provided a timetable of the changes.² Key announcements included:

A significant expansion of the Teach First programme

Launch of the School Direct programme and increased prioritisation of ITT funding on providers that are successful at involving schools in training programmes.

The launch of the Troops to Teachers programme for ex- service personnel

Ongoing reform of Ofsted's inspection framework for ITT providers

Making successful completion of professional skills tests (literacy and numeracy qualifications) a prerequisite for beginning an ITT course.

More targeting of student financial support on student teachers in particular subject areas, and on those with higher pass marks for their first degrees.

Launching a small number of University Training Schools, which will deliver three core functions: teaching children; training teachers; and undertaking research.

Carter review of initial teacher training

On 1 May 2014, the then Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, appointed Sir Andrew Carter to chair an independent review of ITT courses. The purpose of the review was to:

- define effective ITT practice
- assess the extent to which the current system delivers effective ITT
- recommend where and how improvements could be made

¹ DfE, [The Importance of Teaching. The Schools White Paper](#), November 2010, Cm 7980. A summary of the key changes is provided on page 20.

² DfE, [Training our next generation of outstanding teachers. An improvement strategy for discussion](#), June 2011.
DfE, [Training our next generation of outstanding teachers. An implementation plan](#), November 2011, p15-16.

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- recommend ways to improve choice in the system by improving the transparency of course content and methods.³

A [call for evidence was issued](#) on 20 August 2014 and the consultation closed on 22 September 2014.⁴ The review [published its report](#) on 19 January 2015.

The report concluded that the ITT system generally performs well and that it is difficult to draw conclusions about whether one training route is better than another. The report also made a number of conclusions and recommendations for improvement in particular areas. These included:

- There is considerable variability in ITT course content and potentially significant gaps in a range of courses. There may be a case for a better shared understanding of what the essential elements of good ITT content look like. The Department for Education should commission a sector body to develop a framework of core content for ITT.
- Of all areas of ITT content, the most significant improvements are needed for training in assessment. A central repository of resources and guidance on assessment should be developed.
- There is some reluctance towards practical approaches to training in behaviour management. Behaviour management should be prioritised within ITT programmes and it is vital that trainees receive practical advice and strategies.
- Mentoring across England is not as good as it should be. The Department for Education should commission a sector body to develop some national standards for mentors.
- Providers and trainees have expressed frustration about the skills tests (see section 3.7 below), arguing that they can lead to otherwise good candidates being lost from ITT. The Department for Education should review the effectiveness of the skills tests in selecting high quality trainees.
- The current information about routes into teaching is confusing. The NCTL's "Get into Teaching" website should be developed and expanded to signpost information that applicants should consider when making choices about ITT courses.⁵

Coalition Government's response

The [Coalition Government's response to the Carter Review](#) was published on 19 January 2015. The response stated that, amongst other things, the Government would:

- commission an independent working group made up of expert representatives from the sector to develop a core ITT framework;⁶
- commission the Teaching Schools Council to develop a set of national standards for mentors;⁷ and

³ DfE, [Carter Review of Initial Teacher Training \(England\): Call for Evidence](#), 20 August 2014, para 2.1.

⁴ *Ibid*

⁵ Sir Andrew Carter OBE, [Carter Review of Initial Teacher Training \(ITT\)](#), January 2015, pp5-15

⁶ Department for Education, [Government response to the Carter review of initial teacher training \(ITT\)](#), January 2015, p3.

⁷ *Ibid*, p6

- develop a page on the Get into Teaching website which will signpost relevant information for applicants to consider.⁸

On 24 March 2015, the DfE announced that Stephen Munday, Chief Executive of Comberton Academy Trust, had been appointed to chair a working group to lead on developing a core ITT framework.⁹ The announcement additionally stated that the Teaching Schools Council had been commissioned “to develop a new set of aspirational standards for school-based ITT mentors”. It is expected that the working group and the Teaching Schools Council will report to ministers by spring 2016.¹⁰

1.2 Developments under the current Government

Conservative Party 2015 Manifesto

The 2015 Conservative general election manifesto outlined a number of commitments on the training of teachers:

In the next Parliament, we will expect every teacher to be trained not just in how to tackle serious behaviour issues, but also in how to deal with the low level disruption that stops children from learning properly. This generation of teachers is already the best-qualified ever. In future, we will recruit and keep the best teachers by reducing the time they spend on paperwork, introducing bursaries for the most in-demand subjects, paying good teachers more, further reducing the burden of Ofsted inspections and continuing to encourage the growth of Teach First.¹¹

The manifesto also re-iterated a commitment made in December 2014 to “train an extra 17,500 maths and physics teachers over the next five years”.¹²

Changes to allocation of postgraduate places for ITT providers

On 23 June 2015, the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) announced that for the 2016-17 academic year eligible schools and ITT providers will be able to recruit as many postgraduate trainees as they wish up to a national limit. This will, however, be subject to certain controls that will place a stop on recruitment when certain thresholds are met. Currently, the NCTL allocates places to schools and ITT providers on a course-by-course basis using bids received from the schools and providers. The NCTL’s announcement explained:

We will continue to use a national estimate of the number of trainees required to meet the needs of the school system and we will manage recruitment at a national level. This means that eligible schools and ITT providers will be able to recruit (subject to

⁸ *Ibid*, p7.

⁹ Department for Education, [Carter Review recommendations get underway](#), 24 March 2015.

¹⁰ Department for Education, [New experts appointed to help improve initial teacher training](#), 24 September 2015.

¹¹ [The Conservative Party Manifesto 2015](#), p34.

¹² *Ibid*

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a limited number of controls) as many trainees as they feel they need – until the system has recruited sufficient trainees.¹³

The NCTL's announcement stated that it also reserved the right to control recruitment in particular regions.¹⁴ Places on undergraduate teacher training courses will continue to be allocated as normal.¹⁵

Appointment of Tom Bennett

On 16 June 2015, the Secretary of State for Education, Nicky Morgan, announced that she was appointing behaviour expert, Tom Bennett, to lead a new group to develop better training for new teachers on how to tackle low-level classroom disruption.¹⁶

On 25 June 2015, Lord Nash, Parliamentary-Under Secretary at the Department for Education, responded to a parliamentary question on Tom Bennett's appointment:

The government is committed to ensuring that all teachers are trained to tackle serious behaviour issues as well as low-level classroom disruption. We have not undertaken a formal assessment of any correlation between classroom behaviour and classroom seating arrangements; however Sir Andrew Carter's recent review of initial teacher training (ITT) content identified that some training courses are insufficiently robust in terms of training teachers to manage poor pupil behaviour. That is why we have invited Tom Bennett, a renowned behaviour expert, to lead an expert group to develop core content on behaviour management for ITT. His group will consider how best to promote their recommendations to ITT providers.¹⁷

1.3 Recruitment and effect on pattern of ITT provision

Some of the changes to ITT outlined in the previous two sub-sections have been controversial, in particular the increased focus on school-led training via the expansion of Schools Direct (see section 3.1 below for more information about Schools Direct). Concerns have been raised about the potential for local mismatches of supply and demand of training places, and the sustainability of some university-centred provision.¹⁸

On 22 March 2013, the schools' inspectorate, Ofsted, published a [press release](#) and accompanying headline data reporting the outcome of recent ITT provider inspections.¹⁹ The inspections in question were undertaken after the introduction of a new inspection framework in

¹³ [Registering initial teacher training places 2016 to 2017](#), National College for Teaching and Leadership, 23 June 2015.

¹⁴ *Ibid*

¹⁵ *Ibid*

¹⁶ [New reforms to raise standards and improve behaviour](#), Department for Education, 16 June 2015.

¹⁷ [PO HL588, 25 June 2015](#).

¹⁸ For example, see Chris Husbands, [Teacher training and teacher supply](#), IOE London Blog, 1 July 2015.

¹⁹ Ofsted, ['School-led partnerships setting benchmark for high quality teacher training'](#), 22 March 2013.

September 2012. In the press release, Ofsted commented on the apparent success of school-centred training programmes:

Every one of the providers to have received the highest grade is a small employment-based partnership with schools centrally involved. Some of these have recently achieved school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) status from the Teaching Agency. Their training programmes are designed and delivered by groups of neighbouring schools.

None of the higher education institutions - which have traditionally provided the majority of teacher training - inspected so far has been awarded an outstanding judgement for overall effectiveness. However, one of the outstanding employment-based partnerships, the London East Consortium, is part of the University of Cumbria's initial teacher training provision.

No provider previously judged outstanding under the old framework has retained this top grade to date....

'Those providers which have earned the highest grade since last autumn really stand out from the rest. It is significant that all the outstanding training our inspectors have found so far is being led by consortia of neighbouring schools, with trainees taught by experienced, practising teachers.

'This suggests that the Government is right to put greater emphasis on new teachers being trained in schools where they can best develop the practical skills they will need as teachers – rather than in higher education institutions, which have traditionally trained the majority of trainees.²⁰

On 25 March 2013, the umbrella body, the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET), wrote a [letter](#) to Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools, Sir Michael Wilshaw, criticising the press release as "misleading, inaccurate and inappropriately political".²¹ A [further letter](#) was sent by UCET to the then Secretary of State, Michael Gove, and the Minister for Schools, David Willets, on 27 March 2013 asking for clarification on universities' role in teacher education.²²

In October 2014, Universities UK published [a report on the impact of initial teacher training reforms on higher education institutions](#). The report raised concerns regarding the effect on teacher supply of the expansion of schools direct. An article on the TES website summarised the report's concern:

In a new report, Universities UK raises concerns about the impact of the government's decision to give schools more say in the recruiting and training of staff. It says that if the pace of change continues, it could create problems in training enough teachers.

Since 2012/13, initial teacher training has undergone a radical shake-up, with an increasing number of training places going to the new School Direct programme, rather than universities.

Under School Direct, schools take the lead in taking on trainees. But this has led to "instability" for many universities, with the

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ UCET, '[UCET objects to Ofsted press release](#)', 23 March 2013

²² UCET, '[UCET seeks urgent ministerial clarification on universities and teacher education](#)', 27 March 2013

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numbers of training places allocated directly to institutions falling by 23 per cent in three years, says Universities UK.

While School Direct has been more successful in recruiting trainee English and history teachers, it has been less successful for science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) subjects, the report says.

"This has contributed to a shortfall in the number of trainee teachers recruited into several subject areas, such as mathematics and physics," it says.

"There are concerns, therefore, that, as the government pursues its ambition for a school-led system, the pace of change could create teacher supply issues in the future if university-delivered training becomes unsustainable."²³

In addition, following the June 2015 announcement that schools and ITT providers will be able to recruit as many trainees as they wish in 2016-17, *Schools Week* reported comments from Chris Husbands, director of the Institute of Education, that this would likely lead to a further expansion of Schools Direct and a decline in university-led provision:

Chris Husbands, director of the Institute of Education, said: "The immediate likelihood is the further expansion, despite the challenges, of School Direct.

"The recent hints are that school and school group bidding for School Direct places for 2016-2017 will account for the vast majority of (initial teacher education), with very loose regional monitoring of demand.

"Essentially, this means higher education allocations will be residual, mopping up numbers not allocated to schools, which is in turn likely to be the hard to recruit areas.

"It's unlikely higher status universities will remain in this highly uncertain market for long, which means the de facto transfer of teacher supply to several thousand competing small businesses. Recent evidence suggests that the outcomes are likely to be unpredictable."²⁴

Information about teacher supply more generally is available in Library Briefing Paper 7222, [Teachers: supply, retention and workload](#).

Coalition Government's position

In response to a parliamentary question on 18 November 2014 the then Schools Minister, David Laws, stated that higher education institutions continued to play a lead role in ITT:

Universities continue to play a lead role in initial teacher training. Higher education institutions (HEIs) are expected to be involved in 82% of all teacher training places for 2014-15.

As well as 22,900 provider places provisionally allocated to HEIs for the academic year 2014-15, they are also in partnership with schools to deliver seven out of 10 School Direct places, for which they receive funding.

²³ [School Direct causing shortage of maths and science teachers, report claims](#), TES, 30 October 2014.

²⁴ [Teacher training changes will pit providers against each other](#), *Schools Week*, 23 June 2015.

There are many strong partnerships in place between schools and HEIs, with HEIs providing in-depth subject knowledge and access to research, and schools providing rich placements and opportunities to partner trainees with outstanding teachers.

This provides opportunities for HEIs to maintain or even increase their market share of ITT if they deliver programmes schools want, and work with them to establish high-quality and sustainable courses.

Many HEI providers have already significantly increased their ITT places due to their engagement with School Direct.²⁵

In response to a further parliamentary question, Mr Laws provided details on the number of ITT places allocated to Schools Direct providers compared to higher education based providers since 2011/12:

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
HE Providers	28,669	28,841	26,790	23,095	22,224
Schools Direct	0	772	9,586	15,254	17,609

(Table from [PQ 212886 \[on teacher training\], 3 November 2014](#))

Current Government's position

On 4 November 2015, Baroness Evans of Bowes Park, a Government Whip, responded to concerns that some universities may stop offering teacher education:

Baroness Donaghy (Lab): I thank the Minister for her reply, and I know that this is not her area of direct responsibility. However, she must be aware that we have an unstable teacher supply framework, that there are going to be shortages of teachers in some regions in both the short term and the medium term and that the unstable income stream for higher education might mean that some universities—particularly those in the Russell Group—will opt out of the connection with teacher education altogether. Does she really think that that adds up to a good policy for this Government?

Baroness Evans of Bowes Park: I thank the noble Baroness for her question. She is right that we are moving to a school-led teacher training system, but that involves collaboration between universities and schools. A teacher-led or school-led system does not mean a university-excluded system, and we are seeing great collaboration whereby, for example, 70% of School Direct places are actually being delivered by universities. It is improving the link between schools and universities, but also putting in charge of teacher training those who know best what they want in their schools—the head teachers.²⁶

²⁵ [HC Deb 18 November 2013 c747-8W](#)

²⁶ [HL Deb 4 November 2015 c1634-5](#)

2. Qualification requirements for teachers in schools in England

Teachers employed in local authority maintained schools in England are required to have Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), although certain exemptions and special arrangements apply in relation to overseas-trained teachers and some other staff – for example, those employed as ‘instructors’.²⁷ Relevant regulations include the *Education (School Teachers) Qualifications Regulations 2003*, as amended, and the *Education (Specified Work) (England) Regulations 2012*, as amended.²⁸

The same requirement to hold QTS is not in place for free schools or for academies, unless an academy’s funding agreement retains a clause to that effect. Funding agreements are agreements between the Secretary of State and the particular academy trust/body running the school and can vary between academies. On 27 July 2012, the DfE announced that new academies would be able to employ teachers without QTS, putting them in the same position as free schools. In addition, existing academies whose funding agreements retain a clause requiring the employment of qualified teachers could apply to have this condition removed.

The DfE’s [Governor’s Handbook](#) (published January 2015) explains the rules as follows:

5.4 Teacher qualifications

The governing body of a maintained school or non-maintained special school should be aware that teachers must hold qualified teacher status (QTS) (unless the teacher satisfies one of the requirements or conditions specified in the Schedule to the appropriate regulations). This also applies to academy trusts whose funding agreement states that any teachers that it employs must hold QTS.

Since 1 April 2012, further education teachers who have been awarded Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) by the Institute for Learning (IfL) and are members of the IfL are recognised as qualified teachers in schools. This will allow them to be appointed to permanent posts in maintained schools in England and they will be paid on the qualified teachers’ pay scale. They will continue to be recognised as qualified school teachers providing they remain a member of the IfL.

The same statutory requirement to hold QTS is not in place for teachers employed by academies unless the academy’s funding agreement retains a clause to that effect. An academy may be required through its funding agreement to employ teachers with QTS, but the department may agree to relax this requirement if requested by an academy. Even in academies, special educational needs coordinators and designated teachers for looked after

²⁷ Instructors are defined in regulation as those who “give instruction in any art or skill or in any subject or group of subjects (including any form of vocational training), where special qualifications or experience or both are required” (2[1] of Schedule to SI 2012/762)

²⁸ The *Education (School Teachers) Qualifications Regulations 2003*, SI 2003/1662; the *Education (Specified Work) (England) Regulations 2012* SI 2012/762

children must have QTS. All teachers in special academies must hold QTS. There is no requirement for teaching staff in free schools to hold QTS.²⁹

Teachers in the independent sector are not required to hold QTS – it is up to the schools in question to assess the teaching and other skills of the staff they employ.

In March 2011, the Secretary of State for Education announced a review of teachers' standards – the standards that qualified teachers in maintained schools are required to meet in the course of their work. The new [Teachers' Standards](#) were published in July 2011 and came into force in September 2012.³⁰

²⁹ DfE, [Governors' handbook: For governors in maintained schools, academies and free schools](#), January 2015, para 5.4.

³⁰ DfE, [Teachers' Standards](#), 22 May 2012.

3. Teacher training pathways

There are currently several routes into teaching, and the terminology used to describe different training models can be confusing. ITT courses are often described as either being 'school-centred' (for example, the School Direct programme) or 'higher education-centred' (for example, a university-based B.Ed. course). The National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) allocates and funds teacher training places.

A Statistical First Release from the DfE, dated 27 November 2014, gives details on the number of new entrants who have started, or expected to start, an initial teacher training programme in England in the academic year 2014/15.³¹

General information about current teacher training routes is available on the [Get into Teaching](#) section of the DfE's website. A summary of the key features of each route is given below.

3.1 School Direct

The School Direct programme accepted its first cohort of students in September 2012, and it was the Coalition Government's intention that the number of places on this programme would be significantly expanded from the 2013/14 academic year.

School Direct offers two types of training places: School Direct and School Direct (salaried). The latter of these replaces the earlier Graduate Teaching Programme, which the DfE closed to new applicants in October 2012.

The DfE [website](#) gives further details on the two options:

School Direct

School Direct courses are designed by groups of schools – with a university or a SCITT – based on the skills they are looking for in a newly qualified teacher (NQT). The schools recruit you as a trainee onto their School Direct course with a job in mind just for you. This is a popular choice for those who hope to secure a role in the network of schools where they train.³²

[...]

School Direct (salaried)

If you're a graduate and have been working for around three years in any career, School Direct (salaried) courses are available exclusively for you. On this school-led option, you're selected directly by the school or partnership of schools you apply to – and you'll earn a salary during your training. Schools recruit you as a trainee with a job in mind just for you.

School Direct (salaried) courses normally take a year to complete. This is a great choice if you want to stay in the world of work, as you'll be employed as an unqualified teacher during your training while you learn 'on the job'. But that doesn't mean you'll be

³¹ DfE, [Statistical first release, Initial teacher training census for the academic year 2014 to 2015](#), 27 November 2014.

³² [School Direct](#), DfE, last accessed 10 November 2015.

thrown straight in at the deep end or expected to work things out for yourself.³³

3.2 School-centred initial teacher training (SCITT)

SCITT programmes are designed and delivered by groups of neighbouring schools and colleges. They provide practical, hands-on teacher training delivered by practising teachers based in their own school or at a school in their network.

Students are usually based in one school from the consortium – the lead school – while completing teaching practices at others within the group. Training programmes generally last for one academic year full-time, running from September to June, and result in QTS. Many also award a PGCE from a university.³⁴

3.3 Teach First

Teach First is an independent charity which states its vision as “working towards a day when no child’s educational success is limited by their socio-economic background”.³⁵ Its Learning and Development Programme is for those interested in an employment-based route into teaching. Since September 2012 it has placed trainee teachers in primary as well as secondary schools.

Trainees join Teach First and their university partners for six weeks of intensive training before teaching in a school in a low-income community for two years, where they achieve a postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) and earn a full-time salary.³⁶

The qualification and experience requirements for Teach First are as follows:

- 2.1 degree or above, 300 UCAS points (or equivalent, excluding General Studies)
- A degree or A-levels that satisfy our teaching requirements
- Grade C in GCSE Maths and English (or equivalent).
- Flexibility to work in any of the Teach First locations.
- Candidates also need to demonstrate certain competencies linked to the values of Teach First, including resilience, humility, respect and empathy.³⁷

Teach First receives grant funding from the Government, and additional income from fees paid by schools, charitable donations, and other sources.³⁸ The Government has allocated 2,000 training places to Teach First for 2015/16, a 33% increase on its allocation for 2014/15.³⁹

³³ [School Direct \(salaried\)](#), DfE, last accessed 17 November 2015.

³⁴ UCAS, “[School-led teacher training](#)” and DfE, “[SCITT](#)”, last accessed 8 January 2015.

³⁵ Teach First, “[Our Vision](#)”, last accessed 17 November 2015.

³⁶ Teach First, “[How Does it Work?](#)”, last accessed 17 November 2015.

³⁷ Teach First, “[Requirements](#)”, last accessed 17 November 2015.

³⁸ For a breakdown of *Teach First* funding, see p15 of the organisation’s [Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 August 2014](#).

³⁹ [PQ HL2805 \[on teacher recruitment\], 10 November 2014](#).

3.4 Troops to Teachers

In its November 2010 White Paper, *The Importance of Teaching*, the Government announced plans to encourage more ex-servicemen and women to train as teachers as part of a scheme to be called Troops to Teachers:

We will [...] encourage Armed Forces leavers to become teachers, by developing a 'Troops to Teachers' programme which will sponsor service leavers to train as teachers. We will pay tuition fees for PGCEs [Post-Graduate Certificate in Education] for eligible graduates leaving the Armed Forces and work with universities to explore the possibility of establishing a bespoke compressed undergraduate route into teaching targeted at Armed Forces leavers who have the relevant experience and skills but may lack degree-level qualifications. We will encourage Teach First to work with the services as they develop Teach Next, so that service leavers are able to take advantage of new opportunities to move into education [...].⁴⁰

A similar initiative, also called Troops to Teachers, has been running in the USA since 1984. More information on the US scheme can be found on the [DANTES](#) website.

The Troops to Teachers training route is open to service leavers who do not hold a first degree and who are in the two years before discharge or in the two years after discharge. The University of Brighton is contracted to run the programme, which lasts two years and is school-based. Trainees are paid on the unqualified teacher pay scale during both years of the programme.

There have been three cohorts for the Troops to Teachers programme. The first cohort of 41 trainees under the Troops to Teachers programme started training in January 2014 and the second cohort of 54 began training in September 2014.⁴¹ The third cohort began training in September 2015.⁴²

Further information on the programme is available on the [Troops to Teachers](#) page on the Get Into Teaching website.

3.5 Researchers in schools

Researchers in Schools (RIS) is a route into teaching for researchers who have completed, or are finishing, a doctorate.

It is a two-year, salaried training programme and has been designed with Ofsted-rated 'Outstanding' teacher training schools, universities, and third sector organisations. It "seeks to help schools increase subject expertise, promote research, and champion university access while allowing researchers to return to academia after completing the programme should they choose to".⁴³

⁴⁰ DfE, *The Importance of Teaching – The Schools White Paper 2010*, November 2010, Cm 7980, p22, para 2.15.

⁴¹ [PO 216826 \[teachers: veterans\], 2 December 2014.](#)

⁴² [Troops to Teachers](#), University of Brighton, last accessed 2 November 2015.

⁴³ DfE, "[Researchers in Schools](#)", last accessed 17 November 2015.

RIS offers trainees a salaried training scholarship in the first year and they then work as a newly qualified teacher in their second year, typically with a salary of between £22,000 and £27,000. Candidates who train to teach in shortage subjects, such as maths and physics, may be eligible for an uplift to their salary of up to £36,000.⁴⁴

3.6 University and college-based routes – undergraduate and postgraduate degrees with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)

Undergraduate Initial Teacher Training (ITT) degrees usually last 3-4 years (full time), while Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) courses usually last for one year (full time). They are offered by many universities and some other higher education providers.

All applicants for Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) courses need to have already obtained an undergraduate degree or recognised equivalent qualification. Further information about the application procedure, and detailed information about eligibility and prior qualification requirements, can be found on the DfE [Get into teaching](#) website.

In July 2013, the DfE published additional separate [guidance](#) on 'assessment only' routes to achieving QTS for experienced teachers.⁴⁵

3.7 General entry requirements for ITT and the professional studies tests

Since September 2013, students entering ITT in England have had to meet a number of minimum standards. All students, regardless of training pathway, are required to hold GCSEs in English and Maths at grade 'C' or higher, or be able to demonstrate they have reached an equivalent standard. Those enrolling on primary ITT courses are also required to hold GCSE science at C or above. Generally, those enrolling on postgraduate courses (as the name suggests) also need to have a first degree or equivalent.⁴⁶

Additionally, entrants to all courses from September 2013 have been required to sit and pass professional skills tests (in literacy and numeracy) before beginning their course. Previously, trainees were able to complete these tests during the course of their studies. Trainees are able to make three attempts at the tests; if they are unsuccessful, they are then required to wait two years at which point they may make another three attempts.⁴⁷

Individual ITT providers may also set their own requirements for entry onto courses which are more stringent than the national requirements.

⁴⁴ DfE, "[Researchers in Schools](#)", last accessed 17 November 2015.

⁴⁵ DfE, [The assessment-only route to achieving QTS](#), July 2013.

⁴⁶ [Have you got what it takes?](#), DfE, last accessed 10 November 2015.

⁴⁷ [Professional skills tests](#), DfE, last accessed 10 November 2015.

In a written ministerial statement on 6 March 2014, the then Schools Minister, David Laws, announced that there had been errors in the marking of some professional studies tests dating back at least as far back as April 2010. As a result, 721 candidates were awarded a pass in error in the 2012-13 academic year and between October 2012 and March 2014 27 candidates were incorrectly awarded a fail. The then Minister stated that the errors had been rectified by the Standards and Testing Agency and so the current tests were not affected.⁴⁸

3.8 Cost effectiveness of different teacher training routes – IFS report

In November 2014 the Institute for Fiscal Studies published a report into the costs and benefits of different initial teacher training routes. The report found that:

- There are few differences in the characteristics of trainees across different routes, suggesting that the most effective trainees are not attracted to a particular route.
- The average cost to government of providing student finance is between £13,000 and £18,000 per trainee for postgraduate training and between £10,000 and £27,000 for undergraduate training.
- Not accounting for non-monetary benefits, the net costs to schools are largest for Teach First (around £11,000 per placement) and lowest for university-based routes (between £400 and £1,600 per placement).
- School-based routes are thought to have a higher net benefit to the host school than university-based routes.
- For most routes, the net benefit to schools is small in comparison with the costs for central government. Teach First, where the largest net benefit to schools is reported, is an exception.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ [HC Deb 6 March 2014, c52-3WS](#)

⁴⁹ Institute for Fiscal Studies, [The Costs and Benefits of Different Initial Teacher Training Routes](#), November 2014, p1-3.

4. Financial support for trainee teachers

The system of financial support for teacher trainees in England is complex; individuals considering applying for teacher training programmes should establish what support they are likely to qualify for by contacting the DfE's *Teaching Line* (0800 389 2500), their H.E. institution, or [Student Finance England](#).

4.1 Undergraduate trainees

For undergraduate ITT students, the financial arrangements are the same as for other students undertaking a first degree course – that is, eligible students can apply for student loans to cover fees and maintenance, and grants for living costs.⁵⁰ They may also be eligible for bursaries or other support offered by their institution.

4.2 Postgraduate trainees

For postgraduate trainees, the amount and type of support depends on personal eligibility and financial circumstances, prior qualifications, type of course (particularly, subject specialism) and mode of study. As the name suggests, those enrolled on the School Direct (Salaried) scheme earn a salary and may not qualify for a bursary or other student support. Similarly, those enrolled on Teach First programmes are paid a wage while training.

Bursaries

Eligible non-salaried trainee teachers on postgraduate programmes may qualify for a training bursary – an incentive payment designed to attract highly-qualified trainees in shortage subject areas. Trainees do not need to apply for a bursary – if they meet the eligibility criteria, payments will start when they begin their course.

On 1 October 2015, the Government announced the [bursary levels](#) for eligible students in 2016-17. There were increases on 2015-16 levels for some bursaries for secondary subjects and reductions to the bursaries for primary. The table on the next page provides an overview. Where the bursary level was changed from the previous year, the 2015-16 level is included in brackets.

⁵⁰ Some students may be eligible for additional support dependent on personal circumstances- e.g., student parents may qualify for help toward childcare costs.

	Trainee with 1st/PhD	2:1/Master's	2:2	Other
Physics	£30,000 (£25,000)	£25,000	£25,000 (£15,000)	£9,000
Maths	£25,000	£25,000 (£20,000)	£25,000 (£15,000)	£9,000
Chemistry, computing	£25,000	£20,000	£20,000 (£15,000)	£0
Languages⁵¹	£25,000	£25,000 (£20,000)	£20,000 (£15,000)	£0
Biology	£20,000 (£15,000)	£15,000 (£12,000)	£15,000 (£10,000)	£0
Primary maths⁵²	£6,000 (£12,000)	£6,000 (£12,000)	£6,000 (£12,000)	£3,000 (£9,000)
Geography	£15,000 (£12,000)	£15,000 (£9,000)	£15,000 (£4,000)	£0
D&T	£12,000	£9,000	£0 (£4,000)	£0
Music	£9,000	£4,000	£0 (£4,000)	£0
English, history, RE	£9,000	£4,000	£0	£0
Primary	£3,000 (£9,000)	£3,000 (£4,000)	£0	£0

(Table adapted from DfE web page article "[Funding for postgraduate teacher training](#)".)

Scholarships

There are also a number of specialist competitive scholarships of £30,000 for trainees in physics and £25,000 for trainees in chemistry, maths and computing. Scholarships are awarded by professional bodies for these subjects, and selection is through an additional application and

⁵¹ Bursaries are available to train to teach modern foreign languages, community languages and ancient languages including Latin and Ancient Greek.

⁵² Bursaries are available to trainees on either primary maths specialist courses or primary general (with mathematics) courses. Trainees on other primary courses will be eligible for the standard primary bursary.

assessment process. Each scholarship also comes with a package of non-financial benefits, such as early career support and membership of the appropriate professional body.⁵³ Trainees awarded a scholarship cannot also claim a standard DfE bursary.⁵⁴

Other loans and grants

In addition, postgraduate trainees on non-salaried programmes may also be eligible to apply for mainstream student loans and grants. More information is available on the [Get into teaching](#) website, and on the [Gov.uk](#) website.

⁵³ [Bursaries and funding](#), DfE, last accessed 17 November 2015.

⁵⁴ [Finalising your funding](#), DfE, last accessed 17 November 2015.

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