



BRIEFING PAPER

Number 6710, 16 December 2019

Initial teacher training in England

By David Foster

Contents:

1. Background
2. Teacher training routes
3. Financial support for trainee teachers
4. Policy developments in ITT



Contents

Summary	3
1. Background	4
1.1 Qualified Teacher Status	4
Introduction of the Early Career Framework	5
1.2 Content of ITT	5
1.3 Inspection of ITT	6
1.4 Allocation of ITT places	6
2. Teacher training routes	7
2.1 Introduction	7
2.2 Higher education institution-led training	7
Undergraduate teacher training	7
Postgraduate teacher training	8
2.3 School-led routes	8
School Direct	8
School-centred initial teacher training (SCITT)	9
Teacher apprenticeships	9
2.4 Part-time and accelerated training	10
2.5 Specialist training routes	10
Teach First	10
Troops to Teachers	10
Researchers in schools	11
Future teaching scholars	12
2.6 Training to teach pupils with SEND	12
2.7 General entry requirements for ITT	13
Professionals Skills Test	13
3. Financial support for trainee teachers	15
3.1 Undergraduate trainees	15
3.2 Postgraduate trainees	15
Mainstream student support	15
Bursaries and scholarships	16
3.3 Teachers' student loan forgiveness	17
4. Policy developments in ITT	18
4.1 The Coalition Government	18
4.2 Carter Review of ITT	18
Coalition Government's response	19
4.3 Reports of working groups on ITT	19
Framework of core content for ITT	19
Behaviour management content for ITT	20
National standards for school-based ITT mentors	20
4.4 March 2016 White Paper proposals on ITT	20
4.5 A strengthened QTS	21
4.6 Teacher recruitment and retention strategy	23
4.7 Review of ITT core content	24

Summary

This briefing provides information on initial teacher training (ITT) for school teachers in England, focusing on the different ITT routes, the sources of financial support for trainees, and recent policy developments. A separate Library Briefing, [Teacher recruitment and retention in England](#), provides information on teacher supply and retention more generally.

Over 30,000 individuals enter ITT in England each year through several routes. Although they vary in other ways, key distinctions between the different ITT routes are whether they are school-centred or higher education led, and whether the trainee pays tuition fees or receives a salary. All ITT courses include time spent teaching in at least two schools and lead to an award of qualified teacher status (QTS).

All teacher trainees, regardless of route, are required to meet a number of minimum standards. They must, for example, hold GCSEs in English and Maths (and science for enrolment on primary ITT) at grade C / grade 4 or higher. Up to April 2020 individuals entering training are also required to pass professional skills tests in literacy and numeracy before beginning their course. The skills tests will be abolished from April 2020 and replaced with a new system whereby providers assure the fundamental English and maths skills of trainees before the end of their ITT.

The system of financial support for teacher trainees is complex. Broadly, eligible undergraduate and postgraduate trainees on non-salaried routes can apply for funding under the standard undergraduate student support system. In addition, a range of bursaries and scholarships are available for postgraduates, depending on the subject they are training in and the class of their first degree. Since 2018-19, the Department for Education (DfE) has also been piloting the use of early career-payments as a means of encouraging teacher retention. Payments are available to certain teachers starting their ITT in the 2018-19, 2019-20 or 2020-21 academic years.

In addition, in October 2017 the Government announced that it would pilot a student loan reimbursement scheme for science and language teachers in the early years of their careers. To be eligible teachers must, among other things, have completed their ITT between 2013-14 and 2020-21 and be employed in one of 25 specified local authorities.

The briefing's final section provides brief information on policy developments in ITT since 2010, including:

- The 2014 [Carter Review of ITT](#) and the subsequent working group reports published in July 2016 on: [a framework of core content for ITT](#); [behaviour management content for ITT](#); and standards for school-based ITT mentors.
- Proposals in the 2015 Government's White Paper, [Educational Excellence Everywhere](#), published in March 2016.
- The [consultation](#) on proposals strengthening QTS. The [response](#) to the consultation was published in May 2018.
- Proposals relating to ITT in the DfE's [Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy](#), published in January 2019.

1. Background

1.1 Qualified Teacher Status

Teachers in local authority maintained schools in England are required to have Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), although certain exemptions apply in relation to some staff (e.g. those employed as instructors).¹

The same general requirement to hold QTS is not in place for mainstream free schools and academies, unless their funding agreement requires it. If an academy's funding agreement does require the employment of qualified teachers, the Department for Education (DfE) may agree to relax the requirement if the school requests it. Of the 453,000 FTE teachers in 2018, 21,500 (5%) were unqualified.²

Even in academies, special educational needs coordinators and designated teachers for looked after children must have QTS. All teachers in special academies must also hold QTS.³

Individuals with Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) status and membership with the Society for Education and Training are also eligible to work as a qualified teacher in schools. It is up to schools and local authorities to determine if they are suitable for a post and to teach a particular subject.⁴

Awarding of QTS

The Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) is responsible for the awarding of QTS, with the award usually made at the end of teacher training. Only accredited initial teacher training (ITT) providers can recommend trainees for QTS.

Box 1: Closure of the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL)

In November 2017, the Government announced that the NCTL would close from April 2018, with its teacher recruitment functions merged into the DfE. A new executive agency, the Teaching Regulation Agency, has taken on the NCTL's functions relating to the regulation of the teaching profession, including the awarding of QTS.⁵

The [Teachers' Standards](#) define the minimum level of practice expected of teachers from the point of being awarded QTS. They are also used to assess trainees working towards QTS, with [DfE guidance](#) stating that ITT providers should assess trainees against the standards "in a way that is consistent with what could reasonably be expected of a trainee teacher prior to the award of QTS".⁶

Box 2: Qualified teachers from overseas

Teachers who are fully qualified in the European Economic Area and, since 2012, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States, can be awarded QTS in England with no requirement for further training. In the 2018-19 financial year (the latest available data), 3,103 QTS awards were made to qualified teachers from the EEA – a decrease of 35% since a peak in 2015-16, but an increase of 15% compared to 2011-12. 1,530 QTS awards were made to teachers from Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States in 2018-19 – a 25% decrease from a peak in 2015-16.⁷

Introduction of the Early Career Framework

A [consultation](#) launched by the DfE in December 2017 proposed that QTS should be awarded following a two-year induction period as a new teacher rather than at the end of ITT. However, in its response to the consultation, published in May 2018, the DfE stated that, while the induction period for new teachers would be extended to two years as proposed, QTS would continue to be awarded at the end of ITT. It added that an Early Career Framework of support and mentoring for the induction period would be introduced.

The [Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy](#) provided more detail on the Early Career Framework, which will be rolled out nationally from September 2021, with early rollout from September 2020 in the North East and other selected areas. Guidance on the Early Career Framework, published in October 2019, states that during the first year of early rollout there will be no changes to statutory induction, which will continue to take one year (although the support package will last for two years). Following national rollout, early career teachers will do a two-year statutory induction, following which they will be assessed against the Teachers' standards. QTS will continue to be awarded, as now, at the end of ITT and before the start of statutory induction.⁸

1.2 Content of ITT

While it is the responsibility of individual providers to design an ITT curriculum that is "appropriate for the subject, phase and age range that the trainees will be teaching", an [ITT Core Content Framework](#) sets out "the minimum entitlement of all trainee teachers". Providers are expected to "ensure that their curricula encompasses the full entitlement described in the...Framework, as well as integrating additional analysis, and critique of theory, research and expert practice as they deem appropriate." The Framework is presented around the teachers' standards, but it is not an assessment framework. Trainee teachers are assessed against the Teachers' Standards only.⁹

In May 2019, the DfE announced that an expert group had been appointed to review the content of teacher training and recommend ways to align this with the Early Career Framework. The revised Core Content Framework was

¹ *Education (Specified Work) (England) Regulations 2012*, SI 2012/762.

² Department for Education, [School workforce in England: November 2018](#), last updated October 2019, table 3a.

³ Department for Education, [Governance handbook: For academies, multi-academy trusts and maintained schools](#), March 2019, pp70-71.

⁴ Teaching Regulation Agency, [Qualified teacher status \(QTS\): qualify to teach in England](#), 3 October 2019.

⁵ National College for Teaching and Leadership, [TSM and initial teacher training allocations: 2018 to 2019](#), last updated 30 November 2017.

⁶ Department for Education, [Teachers' Standards: Guidance for school leaders, school staff and governing bodies](#), July 2011, p6.

⁷ Teaching Regulation Agency, [Annual report and accounts for the year ended 31 March 2019](#), 5 August 2019, pp76-7.

⁸ Department for Education, [Rollout of Early Career Framework support package](#), 11 October 2019.

⁹ Department for Education, [ITT Core Content Framework](#), November 2019, pp3-4.

published in November 2019.¹⁰ It replaces an earlier version – A framework of core content for initial teacher training – which was published in response to the Carter Review of ITT (see section 4.2 below).

The DfE has also published advice on [developing behaviour management content](#) for ITT and on [addressing teacher workload in ITT](#).¹¹

1.3 Inspection of ITT

Ofsted is responsible for inspecting all providers of ITT programmes leading to QTS. Further information is available in Ofsted's [Initial teacher education inspection handbook](#).

Amanda Spielman, Ofsted's Chief Inspector, has announced that Ofsted will amend the framework for inspecting ITT to align it with the [revised education inspection framework](#), which has been used for inspections of schools, further education providers and early years settings since September 2019. A consultation on the proposed changes, which it has been reported will include an increased focus on behaviour management, is expected to be published early in 2020.¹²

1.4 Allocation of ITT places

The DfE uses a statistical model – the Teacher Supply Model – to estimate the number of teacher trainees required in England in each subject and phase for one year in advance.¹³ These estimates are used to allocate training places to ITT providers and Schools Direct Lead Schools. Initial teacher training is largely focused on postgraduate courses, which make up 90% of training places.

Since the 2016-17 academic year, changes have been made to the process of allocating training places to ITT providers involving the progressive removal of controls on recruitment for certain providers and subjects.

In the 2019-20 and 2020-21 academic years, ITT providers have had fixed allocations for recruitment to undergraduate, Early Years and some physical education ITT courses. Recruitment controls have been lifted for all other postgraduate courses, meaning that providers can recruit as many trainees as they wish, with no-cap.¹⁴

¹⁰ Department for Education, [New support for trainee teachers](#), 20 May 2019.

¹¹ Department for Education, [Addressing teacher workload in Initial Teacher Education \(ITE\)v](#), November 2018, p3; Department for Education, [Developing behaviour management content for initial teacher training \(ITT\)](#), July 2016.

¹² Ofsted, [HMCI commentary: the initial teacher education curriculum](#), 16 October 2019; [Ofsted to rewrite ITT inspection framework with focus on behaviour](#), Schools Week, 12 September 2019.

¹³ Department for Education, [Initial teacher training census for the academic year 2016 to 2017, England](#), 24 November 2016, pp3-4.

¹⁴ Department for Education, [Initial teacher training allocations methodology: 2019 to 2020](#), September 2018; Department for Education, Initial teacher training allocations methodology for 2020 to 2021

2. Teacher training routes

2.1 Introduction

Over 30,000 individuals enter one of several ITT routes each year. Although they vary in other ways, the main distinctions between the different ITT routes are:

- **Whether they are ‘school-centred’ (for example, the School Direct programme and Teach First) or ‘higher education-centred’ (for example, a university-based PGCE course).** The policy of recent governments has been to move toward “an increasingly school-led ITT system.”¹⁵ In line with this, the general trend has been an increasing proportion of trainees entering school-led routes. 56% of postgraduate ITT entrants in 2019-19 were on school-led routes).¹⁶
- **Whether they are undergraduate or postgraduate.** The vast majority of ITT trainees (85% in 2018-19) are enrolled on postgraduate courses.
- **Whether the trainee pays tuition fees or receives a salary.**

All ITT courses include time spent teaching in at least two schools and lead to QTS. They can also all (except undergraduate) include a postgraduate qualification, usually a Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE).

The Department for Education’s (DfE) [Get Into Teaching](#) website provides information on the different training routes. A summary of each is provided below.

Statistics on ITT routes, including the number entrants to each route and the proportion of trainees on each route awarded QTS, is available in the following DfE publications:

- DfE, [Initial teacher training performance profiles: 2017 to 2018](#), last updated 19 September 2019.
- DfE, [Initial teacher training: trainee number census 2019 to 2020](#), last updated 28 November 2019.

2.2 Higher education institution-led training

Universities and colleges offer teacher training courses for both graduates and undergraduates.

Undergraduate teacher training

There are three types of undergraduate degrees that lead to QTS, all of which generally last 3-4 years (full time):

- Bachelor of Education (Bed) degrees: most common for undergraduates hoping to become primary school teachers.

¹⁵ Department for Education, [Educational Excellence Everywhere](#), March 2016, p28.

¹⁶ Department for Education, [Initial teacher training: trainee number census 2019 to 2020](#), November 2019, table 1a.

- Bachelor of Arts (BA) or Bachelor of Science (BSc) degrees: most common for individuals hoping to become secondary school teachers.

There are also now a limited number of undergraduate degrees that allow the student to incorporate teacher training partway through the degree course, after an experience of classroom teaching. Successful students graduate with both a degree in their chosen subject and a recommendation for QTS. The length of the degree course is unaffected as the school placements are incorporated within the original course length. Degrees with QTS opt-in all focus on secondary school teaching and BA, BSc and Integrated Masters courses are available. A [list of universities offering these courses](#) is available on the Get Into Teaching website.

Postgraduate teacher training

Postgraduate teacher training courses last one year (full-time) and lead to QTS and a postgraduate qualification, usually a [Post-Graduate Certificate in Education](#) (PGCE). As well as studying at university or college, trainees also spend a minimum of 24 weeks in placement schools.

2.3 School-led routes

There are currently two main categories of school-led ITT routes for graduates in England: School Direct and School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT). A teaching apprenticeship has also been introduced from September 2018.

School Direct

School Direct courses are designed by schools in partnership with a university or a school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) provider who certify successful trainees. Candidates are recruited as trainees by the School Direct Lead School. Courses generally last one year.

Two types of School Direct training places are available: School Direct (tuition fee) and School Direct (salaried). The latter of these replaced the earlier Graduate Teaching Programme, which was closed to new applicants in October 2012.

As the name suggests, trainees on the School Direct (tuition fee) route are required to pay tuition fees and are eligible for the standard student support package along with any bursaries and scholarships where available (see section four below).

Trainees on the School Direct (salaried) route are employed as an unqualified teacher and are paid a salary while they train, the level of which is dependent on the school and the subject they teach.¹⁷ They are not eligible for student support funding, bursaries or scholarships.

¹⁷ School Direct partnerships are required to meet the full costs of training to qualified teacher status (QTS) and the trainee's salary as they are employed whilst undertaking their training. Grant funding is provided to School Direct lead schools as a contribution to these costs. For further information, see the DfE's [School Direct \(salaried\) funding manual](#).

School-centred initial teacher training (SCITT)

School-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) courses are designed and delivered by groups of schools that have been given government approval to run their own ITT. They are similar to the School Direct (tuition fee) route.

Students are usually based in one school from the consortium – the lead school – while completing teaching practices at other schools within the group. As with the School Direct (tuition fee) route, courses generally last for one academic year full-time and result in QTS. Many also award a PGCE from a university.¹⁸

Box 3: Assessment only route to QTS

Experienced teachers with a degree can achieve QTS without having to do any further training through the assessment only route. This is only available to unqualified teachers who have taught in at least two schools. To achieve QTS through the assessment only route, individuals are required to present evidence that they meet the QTS standards. Their teaching is assessed in a school by an accredited assessment only provider. Further information is available on the [Get Into Teaching website](#) and on the Gov.uk website at: [Assessment only route to QTS](#).

Concerns have been raised that the assessment only route may be being used as a shortcut to QTS, with some providers allowing teaching assistants without the necessary teaching experience to qualify as teachers.¹⁹

Teacher apprenticeships

Following a commitment in the party's 2017 manifesto that a Conservative government would “ensure that teaching assistants can become qualified teachers...via a degree apprenticeship route”, in October 2017 the Government announced that a postgraduate teaching apprenticeship would be launched in September 2018.²⁰

The apprenticeship is a school-led ITT route and mirrors the entry criteria and course content of other postgraduate teacher training routes. All apprentices are paid as unqualified teachers.²¹

[Guidance](#) published by the DfE provides further information, including that:

- ITT providers and schools will decide the overall structure of the apprenticeship, but the apprentice must spend 20% of their time in off-the-job training.
- Apprentices will work towards attaining QTS, and will need to meet the [apprenticeship standard](#) and pass an [end-point-assessment](#) as required for all apprentices.
- Schools will employ apprentices, but only accredited ITT providers can deliver the off-the-job-training.
- Employers that pay the apprenticeship levy will be able to use up to £9,000 of funding from their apprenticeship service account to cover the cost of training and assessing the apprentice. Schools that do not

¹⁸ [School-centred initial teacher training](#), UCAS, last accessed 25 November 2019.

¹⁹ [Teaching assistants allowed to gain QTS through assessment-only route](#), *Schools Week*, 4 November 2017.

²⁰ Conservative Party, [Forward, Together: The Conservative and Unionist Party Manifesto 2017](#), May 2017, p53.

²¹ [New route into classroom for aspiring teachers](#), Department for Education, 19 October 2017.

pay the levy will receive Government funding to cover up to 95% of training costs.²²

There were 155 entrants to the Postgraduate Teaching Apprenticeship in 2019-20.²³

2.4 Part-time and accelerated training

Although the majority of trainees take ITT courses full-time, accelerated and part-time courses are also available.

A limited number of accelerated courses are available under both the School Direct (tuition fee) and SCITT routes, which allow for QTS to be achieved in two terms rather than a year. Part-time courses are available under both university-led and school-led routes. Under the courses, training is spread over a longer period, usually two years.

2.5 Specialist training routes

Teach First

Teach First is a charity that since 2002 has run a two-year training programme for individuals interested in an employment-based route into teaching. There were 1,646 entrants to the Teach First training route in 2018-19, 6% of the year's total number of postgraduate ITT entrants.²⁴

Under the training programme, trainees receive five weeks of training at a summer institute before teaching in a school in a low-income community for two years, first as an unqualified teacher and then as a NQT during the second year. Trainees are [paid a full-time salary](#) and gain a Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE). They are also given the opportunity to work towards a Masters qualification after they have achieved QTS and the PGDE.

To be eligible for Teach First candidates must, among other things, have a 2:1 degree or higher. Further information is available on the Teach First website at: [Training Programme](#).

Troops to Teachers

Following the 2010 general election, the Coalition Government announced that it would develop a 'Troops to Teachers' programme to encourage more ex-service personnel to train as teachers.²⁵

The programme was a two-year employment-based route open to service leavers who did not hold a first degree, which led to the award of an honours degree with QTS.

²² Department for Education, [Provide training for postgraduate teaching apprenticeships](#), last updated 19 June 2019.

²³ Department for Education, [Initial teacher training: trainee number census 2019 to 2020](#), November 2019, table 1a.

²⁴ As above.

²⁵ Department for Education, [The Importance of Teaching – The Schools White Paper 2010](#), November 2010, Cm 7980, p22, para 2.15.

This version of the Troops to Teachers training programme has ceased to operate and, since 2018-19, has been replaced with bursaries of £40,000 for ex-service personnel to train as teachers.

The bursary is available to eligible veterans who study for an undergraduate degree with QTS in England in secondary biology, physics, chemistry, computing, maths or modern foreign languages.²⁶ It has been reported that the money will not be recouped if veterans do not enter teaching after completing their degree.²⁷

To be eligible, a person must, among other things:

- not already have an undergraduate degree; and
- have left full time employment in the British Army, Royal Air Force or Royal Navy in the last five years.
- Be entitled to support under the student support eligibility criteria.

The DfE has stated that the bursary will give veterans greater flexibility than the earlier training programme by “enabling them to train with any Initial Teacher Training provider.”²⁸

In October 2019, Schools Week reported that 22 ex-service personnel took up the bursaries in 2018-19.²⁹

Researchers in schools

Researchers in Schools (RIS) is an employment-based teacher training programme delivered by the charity, The Brilliant Club, for individuals who have completed or are finishing a PhD.

The programme runs over an initial two years, with trainees achieving QTS in their first year and completing their NQT year by the end of year two. In an optional third year, participants continue teaching and are eligible to undertake a leadership qualification.

As part of the programme, trainees have one day a week off timetable to work towards the RIS aims (to increase and disseminate subject expertise, to promote research, and to champion university access). This includes delivering Uni pathways – interventions aimed at supporting pupils from under-represented groups to successfully apply for university – and carrying out their own educational or academic research and maintaining their academic profile.

More information is available on the [Researchers in Schools website](#).

Maths and Physics Chairs programme

The Government-supported Maths and Physics Chairs Programme is part of RIS and was launched in May 2014. The programme originally only covered postdoctoral trainees in maths and physics, but in 2018 it was expanded to cover trainees in all English Baccalaureate subjects.

²⁶ [Troops to Teachers - undergraduate initial teacher training bursary](#), Troops to Teachers, last accessed 25 November 2019.

²⁷ [£40k bursaries for veterans to replace doomed £10m Troops to Teachers scheme](#), *Schools Week*, 6 March 2018.

²⁸ [New bursary to get veterans into teaching](#), Department for Education, 6 March 2018.

²⁹ [Rebooted Troops to Teachers fails to take off](#), *Schools Week*, 18 October 2019.

12 Initial teacher training in England

The programme is similar to RIS but the third year of the programme is compulsory rather than optional. In addition, the DfE funds a salary uplift for trainees on the salaried route on top of what other RIS trainees receive.³⁰

More information is available on the Get Into Teaching website at:

[Researchers in Schools: Maths and Physics Chairs programme.](#)

Future teaching scholars

Future Teaching Scholars is a six-year training route for maths and physics undergraduates with an interest in teaching; the first cohort of trainees entered the programme in September 2016.

During years one to three, participants complete their undergraduate degree and receive a £5,000 grant at the start of each year, in addition to early preparation for teaching. In year four, they undertake postgraduate employment-based teacher training and are paid a salary on the [unqualified teacher pay scale](#). For the final two years, participants are employed as a maths or physics teacher and are paid on the [qualified teacher pay scale](#).

Further information is available on the [Future Teaching Scholars website](#).

2.6 Training to teach pupils with SEND

Some ITT courses offer a particular focus on ensuring that trainees have the opportunity to develop further skills for working with pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). This can, for example, include specific modules on SEND and/or more opportunities to work in special schools, SEND units and resourced provision. An individual can apply for a job in a mainstream school, special school or alternative provision whether or not their ITT included a focus on SEND.

Individuals wishing to become a Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) need to be a qualified teacher and complete the National Award in Special Educational Needs Coordination within three years of taking up a SENCO post.³¹

There is also a mandatory qualification for individuals wishing to teach pupils with sensory impairments.³²

Box 4: Education Committee report

In February 2017, the Education Committee published a [report on the recruitment and retention of teachers](#). The report mainly focused on broader issues of teacher supply, but concerning ITT it stated that the “number of different routes into teaching are not always well understood by applicants and can be confusing”. It added that “the absence of a central application system for school-led ITT leads to inefficient application systems and does little to address regional shortages”.³³

In its response, the 2015 Government recognised “that there is more to do to help candidates navigate the options available to them” and set out the work it was doing to “improve the support available and to simplify the teacher training application process.” It also noted the large number of school-based training

³⁰ Researchers in Schools, [Researchers Brochure 2018](#).

³¹ [Training to teach pupils with SEND](#), Get Into Teaching, last accessed 25 November 2019.

³² Department for Education, [Mandatory qualifications: specialist teachers](#), 3 October 2016.

³³ Education Committee, [Recruitment and retention of teachers](#), February 2017, HC199, pp9-10.

providers in the ITT marketplace and encouraged them to work collaboratively at a regional level to “provide candidates with a more coherent view of the market.”³⁴

2.7 General entry requirements for ITT

Students entering ITT in England must meet a number of minimum standards. All students, regardless of training pathway, are required to hold GCSEs in English and Maths at grade C / grade 4 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 grade C / grade 4 or above.

A degree is required to gain QTS and for those enrolling on postgraduate courses. Individuals without a degree can train on university-led undergraduate ITT courses and graduate with QTS.³⁵

Individual ITT providers may set their own more stringent requirements for entry onto their programmes. The majority of providers will also, for example, require applicants to have some school experience. This can be arranged directly with a school or, alternatively, the DfE runs a school experience programme (SEP). Further information is available on the Get Into Teaching website at: [Getting school experience](#).

Box 5: Subject knowledge enhancement courses

ITT providers who feel that an applicant’s subject knowledge is not sufficient may require them to take a subject knowledge enhancement (SKE) course. This could, for example, be the case if the applicant’s degree wasn’t in their chosen subject but it is closely related, or if they studied the subject at A level but not at university.

SKE courses are available in maths, physics, languages, biology, chemistry, computing, English, geography, religious education, design and technology, and primary maths. They are provided by universities, schools, or third parties and range in length from 8-28 weeks. Courses are fully funded and bursaries of up to £200 per week may be available, which are paid by the training provider.

Applicants for ITT in modern foreign languages can complete two fully funded SKE courses in order to allow them to refresh their main teaching language and to study another language.

Further information is available on the Get Into Teaching website at: [Subject knowledge enhancement \(SKE\) courses](#).

Professionals Skills Test

From September 2012, entrants to all ITT courses were required to sit and pass professional skills tests in literacy and numeracy before beginning their ITT course. Previously, trainees could complete these tests during the course of their studies.

Previously, if trainees were unsuccessful in three attempts at the tests they were required to wait two years before they could make another three attempts. The first attempt at each test was free of charge. However, since 15 February 2018 trainees have been eligible to take three free tests rather

³⁴ Education Committee, [Recruitment and retention of teachers: Government Response to the Committee’s Fifth Report](#), May 2017, HC 638, pp4-5.

³⁵ [Eligibility for teacher training](#), Get Into Teaching, last accessed 6 June 2017.

14 Initial teacher training in England

than one. In addition, the two-year lock-out period has been removed, with no limit on the number of tests a candidate can take.³⁶

In July 2019, the DfE announced that the skills tests would be abolished and replaced with a new approach to assessing numeracy and literacy for trainees starting ITT from April 2020 onwards. Under the new system, ITT providers will assure that trainees have a set of fundamental English and maths skills by the end of their ITT. Individuals starting ITT courses before 1 April 2020 must still pass the professional skills tests before they start their training.³⁷

Further information on the new approach is available in guidance published by the DfE in October 2019: [Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice](#).

³⁶ [Measures announced to ensure talented trainees get into teaching](#), Department for Education, 22 February 2018.

³⁷ [Changes to the professional skills test for teachers](#), Department for Education, 16 July 2019; [Preparing for the professional skills tests](#), Get Into Teaching, last accessed 25 November 2019.

3. Financial support for trainee teachers

The system of financial support for teacher trainees in England is complex. Individuals considering applying for ITT may like to contact a Get Into Teaching adviser (0800 389 2500 or [online chat service](#)), their higher education institution, or Student Finance England for advice on the funding that could be available.

Further information is available on the [Get Into Teaching website](#) and in [guidance published by the DfE](#).

3.1 Undergraduate trainees

For undergraduate ITT students, the financial arrangements are the same as for other students undertaking a first degree course. Eligible students can apply for student loans to cover fees and maintenance costs, and may be eligible for additional support – for example, help towards childcare costs. Further information is available on the Gov.uk website at: [Student finance](#).

In addition, a bursary of £9,000 is available to undergraduate trainees on secondary maths and physics courses that lead to QTS. The bursary is paid in monthly instalments in the final year of the course. A £9,000 bursary is also available for trainees in opt-in secondary undergraduate mathematics, physics, computing or languages courses that lead to QTS.

Undergraduate students may also be eligible for bursaries or other support offered by their institution. They should contact the institution they are studying at, or considering applying to, for further information.

For further information, see the [funding for undergraduate teacher training page](#) on the Get Into Teaching website.

3.2 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.

The information below relates to trainees on unsalaried postgraduate ITT routes (for example, university-led postgraduate, School Direct (tuition fee) and SCITT). Those enrolled on training routes that include a salary (for example, School Direct (Salaried), Researchers in Schools and Teach First), are not eligible for bursaries or other student support.

Mainstream student support

Individuals on non-salaried postgraduate ITT courses are generally eligible for tuition fee and maintenance loans from Student Finance England under the standard undergraduate student support system (see above). Trainees who are eligible for undergraduate support are not also able to receive a

[postgraduate masters loan](#).³⁸ Further information is available on the Get Into Teaching website at: [Postgraduate tuition fee and maintenance loans](#).

Bursaries and scholarships

Postgraduate trainees may also qualify for a training bursary in addition to mainstream student support. The bursaries available depend on the trainee's subject and the class of their undergraduate degree. Trainees do not need to apply for a bursary, if they meet the eligibility criteria payments will start when they begin their course.

There are also a number of specialist competitive scholarships available to recruits in certain subjects. Scholarships are jointly awarded by the Government and professional bodies, and selection is through an additional application and 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.³⁹

A [table on the Get Into Teaching Website](#) provides an overview of bursary and scholarship levels for the 2020-21 academic year.⁴⁰

Early-career payments and phased bursaries

Since 2018-19, the Government has been piloting the use of early career-payments as a means of encouraging teacher retention. Payments are available to the following teachers starting their ITT in the 2018-19, 2019-20 or 2020-21 academic years:

- Maths teachers who started postgraduate ITT in 2018-19 or 2019-20 will receive early career payments of £5,000 each in their third and fifth years of teaching. The payments are increased to £7,500 for teachers in specified local authorities.
- Maths, physics, chemistry and languages teachers starting postgraduate ITT in 2020-21 will receive early-career payments of £2,000 in each of their second, third and fourth years of teachers. The payments are increased to £3,000 for teachers in specified local authorities.⁴¹ This is partly supported by £10 million of funding announced at Budget 2016 to “test how to improve retention of early career maths and physics teachers.”⁴²

The early career payments are in addition to any bursaries or scholarships received during ITT.

The [Teacher Recruitment and Retention Plan](#), published in January 2019, stated that the DfE would reform bursaries more widely to a “phased, retention payment approach.” The DfE expects around 40% of bursary spend in phased subjects to be on retention following the reforms.⁴³

³⁸ [Postgraduate Loan](#), Student Finance England, last accessed 10 January 2018.

³⁹ [Scholarships](#), Get Into Teaching, last accessed 25 November 2019.

⁴⁰ The Government has published more detailed guidance on bursaries: [Initial teacher training bursary guide: academic year 2018 to 2019](#).

⁴¹ Department for Education, [Early-career payments: guidance for teachers and schools](#), last updated October 2019.

⁴² HM Treasury, [Budget 2016](#), HC 1629, October 2016, p76

⁴³ Department for Education, [Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy](#), January 2019, p22.

3.3 Teachers' student loan forgiveness

On 1 October 2017, the Government announced that it would pilot a student loan reimbursement programme for science and languages teachers in the early years of their careers. The announcement said that a typical teacher in their fifth year of work would benefit by around £540 through reimbursement.⁴⁴

Eligible teachers completing their ITT between 2013-14 and 2020-21 may apply for reimbursements for the 10 academic years after their award of QTS. To be eligible, teachers must, among other things:

- Be employed in a maintained secondary school, a secondary academy or free school, or a maintained or non-maintained special school.
- Be employed at a school in one of 25 participating local authorities.
- Be teaching an eligible subject: languages, physics, chemistry, biology, and computer science.

The application round opened in September 2019.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ [New education and skills measures announced](#), Department for Education, 1 October 2017.

⁴⁵ Department for Education, [Teachers: claim back your student loan repayments - eligibility and payment details](#), 5 November 2019.

4. Policy developments in ITT

This section provides a very brief overview of ITT policy since 2010. A short summary of ITT policy before 2010 is provided in the Higher Education Policy Institute's April 2017 report, [Whither teacher training?](#) (pages 5-12).

4.1 The Coalition Government

The Coalition Government made a number of significant reforms to ITT.⁴⁶ Key changes included:

- A significant expansion of the Teach First programme.
- Launch of the School Direct programme and an increasing prioritisation of ITT funding on providers that involved 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 the professional skills tests a prerequisite for *beginning* an ITT course.
- Increased targeting of financial support in particular subject areas, and on those with higher class first degrees.

4.2 Carter Review of ITT

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.⁴⁷

The [review's report](#), published in January 2015, 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 DfE 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.

⁴⁶ Department for Education, [The Importance of Teaching. The Schools White Paper](#), November 2010, Cm 7980; Department for Education, [Training our next generation of outstanding teachers. An improvement strategy for discussion](#), June 2011; and Department for Education, [Training our next generation of outstanding teachers. An implementation plan](#), November 2011

⁴⁷ Department for Education, [Carter Review of Initial Teacher Training \(England\): Call for Evidence](#), 20 August 2014, para 2.1.

- Mentoring across England is not as good as it should be. The DfE should commission a sector body to develop some national standards for mentors.
- Providers and trainees have expressed frustration about the professional skills tests, arguing that they can lead to otherwise good candidates being lost from ITT. The DfE 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.⁴⁸

Coalition Government's response

In its [response to the Carter Review](#), the Coalition Government stated that it would, among other things:

- Commission an independent working group made up of expert representatives from the sector to develop a core ITT framework. In March 2015, it was announced that Stephen Munday, Chief Executive of Comberton Academy Trust, had been appointed as chair of the group.⁴⁹
- Commission the Teaching Schools Council to develop a set of national standards for mentors.⁵⁰
- develop a page on the Get into Teaching website which will signpost relevant information for applicants to consider.⁵¹

In June 2015, it was additionally announced that the Education Secretary, Justine Greening, 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.⁵²

4.3 Reports of working groups on ITT

The reports of the three groups – on ITT core content, behaviour, and standards for mentors – were published in July 2016 along with a response from the 2015 Government.

Framework of core content for ITT

The report of the working group led by Stephen Munday set out a framework of core content for ITT (included as an appendix to the report) and recommended that it should be adopted by the DfE and used as one of the measures of quality when allocating ITT places to providers.

The framework gave direction to ITT providers on what should be prioritised in order to ensure that their programmes “enable trainees to

⁴⁸ Sir Andrew Carter OBE, [Carter Review of Initial Teacher Training \(ITT\)](#), January 2015, pp5-15.

⁴⁹ Department for Education, [Government response to the Carter review of initial teacher training \(ITT\)](#), January 2015, p3.

⁵⁰ As above, p6.

⁵¹ As above, p7.

⁵² [New reforms to raise standards and improve behaviour](#), Department for Education, 16 June 2015.

meet the Teachers' Standards in full at the level appropriate to the end of a period of initial teacher training."⁵³

The 2015 Government accepted the recommendation to adopt the framework of core content, which it stated meant that "ITT providers will need to ensure that their programmes align with the new framework, and are able to demonstrate this when submitting their requests for ITT places."⁵⁴ In November 2019, the framework was replaced with the [ITT Core Content Framework](#).

Behaviour management content for ITT

[The report of the working group](#) chaired by Tom Bennett set out a number of recommendations aimed at providing "a broad and practical introduction to the understanding and craft of behaviour management." It stated that the recommendations were "a minimum requirement for ITT providers" and should be made mandatory.⁵⁵

In response, the 2015 Government endorsed the recommended approaches and methods and stated that it strongly expected ITT providers to "take account" of them. It stated, however, that it did not wish to make the recommendations mandatory.⁵⁶

National standards for school-based ITT mentors

[The report of the Teaching Schools Council](#) outlined a set of non-statutory standards (pages 11-12) which it recommended should be adopted by ITT providers and used by them to "inform the selection, training, and resourcing of mentors." The report additionally recommended that:

- Ofsted should have regard to the standards in their inspections of ITT providers.
- In light of the proposals in the *Educational Excellence Everywhere* White Paper, the role of mentor should extend beyond initial training to teacher accreditation and early career.⁵⁷

The then Government welcomed the new standards and encouraged ITT providers to adopt them and "give the mentoring role the status and recognition it deserves." It also noted the recommendation concerning Ofsted inspections.⁵⁸

4.4 March 2016 White Paper proposals on ITT

The 2015 Government's White Paper, [Educational Excellence Everywhere](#), published in March 2016, included a number of proposed reforms to ITT alongside the subsequently dropped proposal to convert all remaining maintained schools to academy status by 2022.⁵⁹

⁵³ [A framework of core content for initial teacher training \(ITT\)](#), July 2016, pp

⁵⁴ [Government response letter](#), 12 July 2016.

⁵⁵ Tom Bennett, [Developing behaviour management content for initial teacher training \(ITT\)](#), July 2016, pp4-8.

⁵⁶ [Government response letter](#), 12 July 2016.

⁵⁷ [National Standards for school-based initial teacher training \(ITT\) mentors](#), July 2016, pp5-6.

⁵⁸ [Government response letter](#), 12 July 2016.

⁵⁹ HM Government, [Educational Excellence Everywhere](#), 17 March 2016.

The proposals relating to ITT included:

- Continuing the move toward “an increasingly school-led ITT system” while also strengthening university-led training.⁶⁰
- Accrediting new school-led ITT providers, and a major expansion of SCITT-led training with a focus on shortage subjects and areas where recruitment was most difficult.
- The introduction of new quality criteria for ITT providers to inform the allocation of training places and to give “greater certainty to the best providers – both school-led and HEI – by giving them allocations over several years”.⁶¹
- Withholding future allocations from providers who cannot meet the new quality criteria.
- Reforming the content of ITT to include a greater focus on subject knowledge, behaviour management, evidence-based practice and adapting the needs of pupils from different groups.
- Finalising the new framework for ITT core content being developed by the independent working group.
- Support for the best universities to establish ‘centres of excellence’ in ITT.

The White Paper additionally proposed the replacement of QTS with “a stronger, more challenging accreditation based on a teacher’s effectiveness in the classroom, as judged by great schools”.⁶² The Government stated that this would “raise the bar” and bring teaching into line with other professions such as law and chartered accountancy, which require trainees to undertake a relatively long phase of work experience.⁶³ The White Paper said that detailed proposals on the replacement of QTS would be published shortly.

The White Paper also proposed measures to improve continuing professional development for teachers through:

- Better support for schools to improve the quality and availability of CPD.
- Examining the feasibility of incentivising teaching schools to publish their materials on an open-source basis.
- Introducing a new Standard for Teachers’ Professional Development. The [new standard](#) was published in July 2016.

4.5 A strengthened QTS

In a speech at the Chartered College of Teaching conference in February 2017, the then Secretary of State, Justine Greening, announced that QTS would not be replaced, but that a “newly strengthened” QTS route would be introduced from 2019.⁶⁴

On 15 December 2017, the DfE launched a [consultation](#) on proposals to introduce a strengthened QTS for introduction from September 2019. The

⁶⁰ As above, p28.

⁶¹ As above, p31.

⁶² As above, p32.

⁶³ As above.

⁶⁴ [Justine Greening: teachers - the experts driving social mobility](#), Department for Education, 17 February 2017.

consultation also sought views on other areas, including how to support teachers at the beginning of their career, and how to improve career progression.

The consultation proposed that the current one-year induction period for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) should be lengthened to two years, and that an early-career content framework for NQTs should be introduced covering what new teachers need to know or be able to do. It added that stronger mentoring should be provided for all new teachers and that there should be access to high-quality continuing professional development.

Under the proposals, teachers who completed ITT would have the same rights and protections as current NQTs. Salaries post-ITT would still be on the qualified teacher pay scale, and teachers in their second year would have the same entitlements to pay progression that they currently have.

The consultation did not propose any changes to ITT other than to change the name of the award granted at the end of teacher training from 'QTS' to 'QTS (Provisional)'. QTS would then be awarded at the end of the longer, two-year induction period.⁶⁵

Government response

The Government published its [response](#) to the consultation in May 2018. The response confirmed that the induction period for NQTs would be lengthened to two years as proposed, but that QTS would continue to be awarded at the end of ITT. It was clear from the feedback received, the response said, that the award of QTS did not need to be moved to deliver the intended benefits. "A well-designed two-year induction period with enhanced support", it said, "will have a more substantial impact on improving the quality of teaching than moving the point at which QTS is awarded."

Given that the award of QTS would not move, the response also confirmed that the Government would not be proceeding with the proposal to introduce a QTS(P) at the end of ITT. It did, however, state that the Government would explore the idea that an "Endorsed QTS" should be introduced to mark the end of induction.

As well as extending the induction period the consultation response stated that the Government would, among other things:

- Introduce an Early Career Framework of support and mentoring for the induction period in order to make sure that teachers get more support in this stage of their career.
- Publish mentor standards for NQT mentors, based on the existing ITT mentor standards.
- Support the development of new specialist qualifications, which will build on the Early Career Framework and complement Chartered Teacher status.

⁶⁵ Department for Education, [Strengthening Qualified Teacher Status and improving career progression for teachers: Government consultation](#), December 2017, pp12-13.

- Undertake work to consider how the CPD market can be made easier to navigate for schools and teachers.⁶⁶

4.6 Teacher recruitment and retention strategy

On 28 January 2019 the DfE published a [Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy](#). The Secretary of State made a [written ministerial statement](#) outlining the key elements of the strategy on the same day.⁶⁷

The strategy outlined the steps that the Government would take to “begin to overcome” four key barriers to improving teacher recruitment and retention, including that “the process to become a teacher is too complicated and burdensome.”⁶⁸

The strategy’s central reform, which it described as “the most significant reform to teaching in a generation”, was the introduction of the [Early Career Framework](#) (as set out in the earlier consultation on QTS and teacher CPD (see section 4.5)).⁶⁹ The framework will underpin an entitlement to “a fully-funded, 2 year package of structured support for all early career teachers” including 5% funded off timetable time in the second year of teaching. The Framework will be rolled out nationally from September 2021, with early rollout from September 2020 in the North East and other selected areas.⁷⁰

Other steps outlined in the strategy relevant to ITT include:

- Following on from the pilot of early career payments for maths teachers in 2018-19, reforming bursaries more widely to a “phased, retention payment approach.”⁷¹
- The launching of a new Discover Teaching initiative with the aim of giving more people the opportunity to experience teaching. This will include a new virtual reality classroom and an expansion of the Teaching Internship Programme and school taster days.⁷²
- To avoid individuals from being put off applying for ITT by “cumbersome systems” the Government will introduce a “one-stop application service for ITT”. The DfE will also review the ITT market “to support it to work more efficiently and effectively.”⁷³
- The DfE will work with universities and school to explore how more teaching assistants can become teachers. The strategy states that the DfE wants to provide a pathway for teaching assistants to study part-time for a degree with QTS whilst continuing to work.⁷⁴

⁶⁶ Department for Education, [Strengthening Qualified Teacher Status and improving career progression for teachers: Government consultation response](#), May 2018, pp9-13; [HCWS669](#), 8 May 2018.

⁶⁷ [HCWS1278](#), 28 January 2019.

⁶⁸ Department for Education, [Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy](#), January 2019, p7.

⁶⁹ As above, p6.

⁷⁰ As above, p21.

⁷¹ As above, p22.

⁷² As above p32.

⁷³ As above, p31.

⁷⁴ Department for Education, [Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy](#), January 2019, p33.

4.7 Review of ITT core content

In May 2019, the DfE announced that an expert group had been appointed to review the content of teacher training and recommend ways to align this with the Early Career Framework.⁷⁵ The revised [Core Content Framework](#) was published in November 2019. It replaces the framework of core content for ITT published in response to the Carter Review of ITT (see section 4.3 above).

⁷⁵ Department for Education, [New support for trainee teachers](#), 20 May 2019.

About the Library

The House of Commons Library research service provides MPs and their staff with the impartial briefing and evidence base they need to do their work in scrutinising Government, proposing legislation, and supporting constituents.

As well as providing MPs with a confidential service we publish open briefing papers, which are available on the Parliament website.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in these publicly available research briefings is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

If you have any comments on our briefings please email papers@parliament.uk. Authors are available to discuss the content of this briefing only with Members and their staff.

If you have any general questions about the work of the House of Commons you can email hcenquiries@parliament.uk.

Disclaimer

This information is provided to Members of Parliament in support of their parliamentary duties. It is a general briefing only and should not be relied on as a substitute for specific advice. The House of Commons or the author(s) shall not be liable for any errors or omissions, or for any loss or damage of any kind arising from its use, and may remove, vary or amend any information at any time without prior notice.

The House of Commons accepts no responsibility for any references or links to, or the content of, information maintained by third parties. This information is provided subject to the [conditions of the Open Parliament Licence](#).