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Coronavirus (COVID-19): additional temporary guidance for Initial Teacher Education (ITE) partnerships January 2021

GUIDANCE

Coronavirus (COVID-19): additional temporary guidance for Initial Teacher Education (ITE) partnerships January 2021

This guidance is for Initial Teacher Education (ITE) partnerships and is based on existing UK advice related to the Coronavirus pandemic. We are working closely with the other UK governments to ensure a consistent, public health-led approach to the Coronavirus situation.

Part of: [Providing initial teacher education](#)
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Overview

General Coronavirus guidance is issued by us and Public Health Wales on our respective websites and this guidance is updated regularly to reflect the latest developments.

The **Education Workforce Council** has been advised of actions that will need to be undertaken, and it is considered that any changes that need to be implemented will not impact on the requirements for accreditation of programmes given the exceptional circumstances that COVID-19 presents.

This guidance is an update to the guidance for **Coronavirus (COVID-19): temporary guidance for Initial Teacher Education (ITE) partnerships 2020** published 9 April 2020 and updates will continue to be provided if there are any changes.

This guidance must be read in conjunction with the previous guidance published in **April 2020** and **June 2020** and is intended to set out detail on the additional amendments to requirements for ITE partnerships in light of the ongoing COVID-19 situation:

We will continue to have discussions with ITE partnerships on specific issues that will not be covered within the guidance published, and further guidance will be issued as required.

Admissions: entry requirements 2021 to 2022

Recruitment to the 2021/22 cohort will continue to ensure continuity of provision.

The amendments to processes and entry requirements that were brought into force for the **2020/21 recruitment cycle** will continue for the 2021/22 cycle.

School placements and school experience

The Criteria for Accreditation set out a requirement for students to undertake 24 weeks (120 days) school experience and under normal circumstances this would be delivered through face-to-face learning. This requirement has been reduced to a minimum of 90 days school experience for the 2020/21 academic year. ITE partnerships should continue to endeavour to exceed the 90 days minimum wherever possible. Additionally the requirement for school experience to be undertaken in two different settings will be temporarily suspended.

The delivery of school experience does not require only face-to-face learning experience. Students can undertake school experience through a blend of face-to-face, wherever possible, but also through the delivery of synchronous or asynchronous lessons. ITE partnerships have discretion to define the school experience although there must be an appropriate proportion of classroom experience through whatever means are available. ITE partnerships should continue to ensure that the focus remains on the quality of the experience that students are able to have and the opportunities to develop their teaching identity and knowledge, skills and understanding of learning and teaching.

ITE partnerships should:

- ensure that the observation and scrutiny of evidence needed to demonstrate the standards is rigorous and robust, the methods employed are to be decided upon by individual partnerships
- have the flexibility to redesign programmes to meet students' needs whilst adhering to the principles of the learning experience as set out in the criteria
- continue to work closely with partner schools in developing plans to enable this delivery to be undertaken
- inform us and Education Workforce Council of any significant amendments they intend to make to their programmes to meet these challenges, there remains a requirement for ongoing dialogue between partnerships, Welsh Government and EWC to address any emerging issues

This guidance is based on an assumption that there will be an opportunity for students to undertake face-to-face classroom experience before the end of the academic year. Should there be an extended closure of schools for face-to-face learning then classroom experience should continue through synchronous/asynchronous methods and further guidance will be issued.

Safeguarding issues

Please read our guidance on the [delivery of online lessons](#).

This guidance requires delivery of online lessons to be undertaken only using school based equipment. In order to address issues around the availability of school-based equipment for ITE students it has been agreed that they may use personal equipment to participate in online lessons providing that the session is led by a qualified teacher who has access to school-based equipment.

Preparing for induction: assessment arrangements and the award of QTS in academic year 2020 to 2021

ITE partnerships:

- remain responsible for assessing students for their suitability for the award of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)
- will undertake this assessment using their professional skill and judgement as to whether students are able to evidence meeting the standards required, it is acknowledged that students may not be able to fully evidence the requirements against all standards but Partnerships should satisfy themselves that sufficient evidence is available to support the award of QTS

In order to ensure this cohort of NQTs are provided with the appropriate support on commencement of their induction year (2021/22), ITE partnerships will need to follow the steps set out below prior to the end of this academic year (2020/21):

- The assessment of gaps, and required action to resolve, in the student teachers' knowledge and skills will be at the ITE partnership's discretion, and partnerships are able to undertake such assessments based on their professional judgement and expertise
- ITE partnerships will ensure any gaps in a student teacher's knowledge and skills due to the COVID-19 pandemic are identified, with recommended actions and targets that are clear and manageable. This will allow the appropriate support to be available on commencement of induction
- ITE partnerships will support students to complete the Career Entry Profile (CEP) online, ensuring a student's CEP is co-authored and is a true reflection of the student's individual development needs
- ITE partnerships will communicate to their students the actions they need to take to ensure they receive the individual support from the regional consortia they will require during their induction year. It is for student teachers to ensure they have taken the appropriate action required in order to access the support provided by the regional consortia

Support for students entering Induction September 2021

It is acknowledged that students entering induction in September 2021 will require additional support to meet the requirements set out in their enhanced [Career Entry Profile](#). We will continue to work with ITE partnerships and regional consortia Induction leads to develop a package of support for these students. We will identify the additional resources that schools will require to provide dedicated support for incoming NQTs and will seek to provide financial support to schools to enable them to deliver this.

Support for student teachers not awarded QTS in academic year 2020 to 2021

The assessment of suitability for the award of QTS will be at the ITE partnership's discretion, and partnerships are able to undertake such assessments based on their institution's assessment processes as detailed in their professional judgement and expertise.

ITE partnerships have the discretion to not award QTS to a student based on the level of achievement, or clear trajectory of achievement, in either/both their:

- academic work
- evidence of meeting, wholly or partially, the QTS descriptors of the standards from their teaching experience, even where these do not reach the 24-week threshold

We do not wish any student to be disadvantaged by the impact of COVID-19 and we will seek to provide support for those students who are required to undertake further experience in order to achieve QTS. Further details will be made available when the evidence of this cohort is available.

Support for student teachers not awarded QTS and unable to return to their ITE partnership's locale

There may be student teachers who have not achieved QTS and are unable to take the opportunity to finish their teaching experience placement as detailed in the above section. These may be student teachers domiciled at some distance from their ITE partnership, such as international students.

We want to support our student teachers as much as possible and will continue to work with ITE partnerships to identify this specific cohort and how best we can support them on a case by case basis under an agreed common approach to ensure consistency and fairness.

NQTs who do not obtain employment status

We will continue to work with stakeholders to ensure that any NQT who is not able to secure employment or enter the supply sector is able to be offered the opportunity to complete any additional requirements that are agreed by ITE partnerships in their CEP.

ITE students and schools

Local authorities and schools have been reminded that ITE students are allowed access to schools where appropriate and should be regarded as part of the workforce and not as visitors. To this end they should be afforded the same provisions that the existing workforce can access in relation to arrangements for COVID-19.

We have published a [list of critical workers](#), this includes teaching staff and for the purposes of this guidance this includes ITE students.

Following the announcement of the partial re-opening of schools for face-to-face learning from 22 February this is to re-confirm that students who are on placement should be regarded as part of the workforce. This means that the twice-weekly Lateral Flow Testing being made available will also apply to them.

ITE students: rapid testing in schools during their placement

This is to confirm that there is no requirement on ITE students to undertake COVID testing of school learners during their school placement. The only exception is those on a Salaried PGCE route as they are under contractual employment by their school; any testing work must only be conducted during their 'employment' time and not during their allocated PGCE time.

Considerations for the 2020 to 2021 cohort

We are monitoring the situation on a regular basis in line with the latest scientific advice and recognise that certain flexibilities, as applied to the 2020/21 cohort, may also be required by the 2021/22 cohort. We will continue to action appropriate support for our partnerships and/or our student teachers.

Next steps

We will continue to monitor the situation on a regular basis in line with latest scientific advice.

Further guidance will be issued in line with any changes to advice from the relevant bodies.

We will continue to work with ITE partnerships to develop further guidance where required. We will host fortnightly meetings with ITE partnerships, and may include other members of the middle tier, in order to effectively address developments, updates and any emerging issues.

ITE partnerships must advise us immediately of any further issues that arise during this period so that further guidance can be issued.

For the very latest advice, please check [gov.wales/coronavirus](#)

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