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> [Initial Teacher Training \(ITT\)](#)

Guidance

School Direct: guidance for schools

How to request and manage school-led initial teacher training (ITT) places for School Direct.

From: [National College for Teaching and Leadership](#) and [Department for Education](#)

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Contents

- [Overview](#)
- [Types of training places and funding](#)
- [Get involved](#)
- [Applying to become a lead school](#)
- [Formal partnership agreement](#)
- [Requesting and receiving places](#)
- [Recruiting trainees](#)
- [Training](#)
- [Employment](#)
- [Audit and evaluation](#)
- [Contact us](#)

 [Print this page](#)

Overview

This information is for schools. If you are interested in applying for teacher training, go to the [Get into Teaching website](#) or call the Teaching Line on 0800 389 2500.

School Direct is a school-led route into initial teacher training (ITT). It is run by a partnership between a lead school, other schools and an accredited teacher training provider.

Training places are allocated to the lead school on behalf of the partnership, usually for one year. The lead school has overall responsibility for requesting places from the Department for Education (DfE) and for ensuring that the criteria for School Direct are met.

School Direct enables schools to:

- select and recruit their own trainees – with an expectation that trainees will be employed by the school or partnership of schools once they are qualified
- choose which teacher training provider to work with
- agree the content and focus of the training programme depending on the needs of both the trainees and the school
- decide how funding will be split between the school and the training provider

Types of training places and funding

There are 2 types of School Direct training places available.

School Direct (tuition fee) places

These places are open to all graduates and are funded by tuition fees paid by the trainee. Trainees may be eligible for a [training bursary or scholarship](#).

School Direct (salaried) places

These places are aimed mainly at graduates with 3 or more years' work experience. However, schools can decide to accept applications from people with less work experience to attract high quality candidates in hard to fill subjects. Prospective candidates are expected to be career changers who can bring valuable skills and experience to the teaching profession. This experience does not have to be from an educational setting. For example, experience could have been gained in the financial, engineering or manufacturing sectors.

Trainees are employed as an unqualified teacher. DfE provides [funding to lead schools](#) to cover training costs and subsidise the trainee salaries.

Both routes carry the award of qualified teacher status (QTS) and some may lead to the award of a postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE).

When you are deciding on the number and type of places to request, you should consider:

- any previous School Direct recruitment you have undertaken and future employment needs for your school partnership
- what training you want to provide for your future teachers, including whether you offer a postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) or Master's-level credits in addition to QTS

- how much you want your school partnership to deliver and which accredited provider or providers can best deliver the training you require

You should also take a look at the [School Direct: plan your programme](#). This publication contains a set of questions for your school partnership to consider as well as questions to ask training providers.

Get involved

You need to decide if you want to join an existing partnership or become a lead school. If you are part of an academy chain, you should consider whether to request places through your chain's central office rather than as an individual school.

Joining an existing School Direct partnership is recommended. This is because it enables greater opportunities to share expertise, meet the employment expectation, and implement efficient management and administration of the programme. It also brings economies of scale in negotiations with teacher training providers.

The lead school has to be Grade 1 (outstanding) or Grade 2 (good) for overall effectiveness and must be a local authority maintained school, special school, academy, free school or Sixth Form College.

Partnerships led by outstanding schools such as teaching schools or academy chains are encouraged.

Private schools can only be lead schools if they are also designated teaching schools. In these cases:

- any places requested should benefit a wider partnership that includes state maintained schools
- trainees should be employed in a maintained school in the partnership rather than in the private school

You could also consider offering placements in your school to existing School Direct providers to gain an insight into how the scheme works.

Applying to become a lead school

To become a lead school, contact us at becomingateacher@digital.education.gov.uk.

Formal partnership agreement

You need to set up a formal partnership agreement with your partner schools and ITT provider. The partnership agreement should specify:

- the roles and responsibilities of each partner
- whether you will award PGCE as well as QTS
- how funding will be distributed between the lead school, partner schools and ITT provider and how it would be recovered by DfE if trainees withdraw or complete early
- the tuition fee to be charged for School Direct (tuition) places, what this includes, and how and when fees will be shared between the lead school and ITT provider
- whether the training fees for School Direct (salaried) places will just cover the cost of training to achieve QTS and whether trainees will be

expected to pay for any further academic qualifications, such as PGCE

- how administration costs are covered
- how recruitment and selection decisions will be made and who is responsible for communicating with applicants
- which parts of the training schools will provide and which parts the ITT provider should cover
- the schools in which training will take place
- who is responsible for fulfilling DfE data requirements (see the next section on recruiting trainees for more on this)

Requesting and receiving places

The opportunity to bid for 2018 to 2019 closed on 22 June 2017. If you are interested in being involved in ITT in 2019 to 2020, please contact an existing School Direct lead school or an ITT provider.

Recruiting trainees

All initial teacher training places – including for School Direct – are advertised through a single application system, operated by the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). You will manage your training places through this system and you must agree who will handle the process for applications.

Before applications open on UCAS Teacher Training, you should agree your overall approach with your partner schools and ITT provider so that your recruitment process is open and fair and you have a clear and effective marketing strategy. You should consider:

- what type of candidates you wish to target and the minimum entry requirements – for example, if you are accepting applications from candidates with less than 3 years' work experience for School Direct (salaried places) in hard to fill subjects
- how you will attract high-quality candidates – for example, using your own website, working with your ITT provider, making the most of any local marketing opportunities or by offering the [School Experience Programme](#)
- how you will fulfil the expectation of employment after trainees have qualified
- what national marketing opportunities you can take advantage of – for example DfE-run [Train to Teach](#) and [Premier Plus](#) events
- what salary levels you will offer for any School Direct (salaried) places – for maintained schools, this should be at least point 1 of the unqualified teacher pay scale and for academies and free schools, whatever you agree to set (which must be advertised)
- whether to offer [subject knowledge enhancement courses](#) to trainees – these can be made available (with funding from us) in hard to fill subjects such as maths, physics and computing to help potential trainees gain the depth of subject knowledge required prior to starting training
- what career opportunities and post-ITT training your partnership can offer to attract the best candidates

You should also take a look at our marketing resource bank. This contains lots of useful information and practical resources to help you run a successful recruitment campaign.

Candidates must meet the [ITT eligibility criteria](#) as well as the requirements

for the relevant School Direct place.

When considering making an offer, please refer to the [UCAS Teacher Training guidance](#).

Training

School Direct enables you to develop a tailored training programme, customised to suit the needs of your school and your trainees. With trainees in school from day one, working alongside your existing team, it is a great opportunity for them to gain insight into life as a teacher and to be supported by those already doing the job.

As part of the partnership agreement with your ITT provider, you should decide which elements of the training are going to be provided by the lead school, partner schools and your chosen provider. This should include any fixed locations or days, for example, trainees are always in school on a Monday. You should also think about the best use of expertise available across the school partners and from your ITT provider. For example, you may choose to involve outstanding teachers to provide subject knowledge training and your provider for assessment and quality assurance. You will need to ensure you have the capacity to deliver the aspects of training that you will take on.

Employment

There is an expectation that trainees will be employed as newly qualified teachers (NQTs) in your school partnership once they are qualified. In determining how many School Direct places to request, you should bear this in mind.

Trainees can be employed within an individual school or group of schools in which they have been trained.

Trainees do not need to be employed in addition to your regular teaching staff numbers; they can be employed in an established post provided there are no risks to the quality of their training.

Audit and evaluation

Lead schools and ITT providers are responsible for ensuring that the funding being received is spent for the purposes intended and providing independently audited accounts each year.

[Find out more about the financial requirements](#).

Contact us

- School Direct lead schools who require support or need to make changes to contact details – refer to our [Data Management System Guidance](#)
- General School Direct queries – use our [contact us form](#)
- Funding queries – itt.funding@education.gov.uk
- UCAS School Direct queries – email partnership@ucas.ac.uk

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