Part of
Education and childcare during coronavirus

Department for Education

Guidance
Coronavirus (COVID-19): initial teacher training (ITT)

Updated 19 November 2020

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The guidance is for initial teacher training (ITT) providers. It includes actions you may wish to consider for ITT courses disrupted by coronavirus (COVID-19). It is based on current public health advice.

These actions will help:

- to ensure the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) on year ITT provision
- give trainees a fair opportunity to qualify
- safeguard teachers and pupils
- ensure those awarded qualified teacher status (QTS) are of the highest possible quality

We may amend or update this guidance as necessary.

November 2020 updates

We have:

- replaced the 120 days in schools section with the sufficient time in schools to demonstrate the Teachers' Standards guidance
- added the remote observations and moderation section

Trainees not recommended for QTS in 2019 to 2020

You should extend trainees beyond their original planned end date for trainees you identify as:

- not meeting the Teachers' Standards
- not on a track to meet the Teachers' Standards

This gives these trainees an opportunity to show they meet the Teachers' Standards in their final placement.

It is your responsibility to determine the content and duration of training for any trainees whose courses extend into the autumn term. This should be done with current arrangements.

It is unlikely suitable for trainees and providers where courses extend owing to coronavirus (COVID-19). See guidance on ITT postponement (COVID-19) course extensions 2019 to 2020.

Recruitment and selection 2020 to 2021

Recruitment to the 2020 to 2021 cohort will continue. You should consider how you can adapt your recruitment and selection processes to minimise disruption.

Consider which parts of the process candidates can complete:

- online
- over the phone
- using written tasks
- via video calling (for example, for individual interviews or group sessions)

Observing a candidate interacting with children is not an entry requirement. Instead, consider gaining additional evidence of suitability, such as references.

Advise partner schools to:

- exercise greater vigilance during the early stages of school based training
- not immediately place subsequently concerns that might have been identified in the process set out in their partnership agreement

Ratifying panels should be encouraged to carry out interviews on behalf of School Direct partnerships, subject to this being agreed across the wider partnership.

Supporting documentation (for example, examination certificates) can be provided after the interview, but should be checked before a place is offered and supplied. You must continue to comply with statutory guidance set out in keeping children safe in education.

Continue using the Apply for initial teacher training service and UCAS to manage your applications.

UCAS has extended its deadline for teacher training decision-making deadlines, decline by default (DBDs) and reject by default (RBD). See the UCAS guidance for further information.

All upcoming train to teach events have been set up as online question and answer sessions. For more information and to register for these events visit Get into Teaching.

Entry criteria: GCSE and degree requirements 2020 to 2021

Continue to allow candidates to provide evidence before they start their ITT courses that they have GCSE grade 4 (or equivalent) in:

- English
- maths
- a science subject (for primary)

You can consider other evidence if statement of you judge this to be at least equal to GCSE grade 4 in the relevant subject. This can include an equivalence test.

Candidates who are not able to demonstrate the required standard due to the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, have until 30 November 2020 to demonstrate the standard.

For entry to graduate programmes ITT, where there is a delay in the award of candidates' first degrees, candidates have until 30 November 2020 to provide evidence of the completion of their first degree.

Before admitting them to ITT, you must consider the likelihood of a candidate achieving the requirements in the permitted timeframe. Trainees are not considered to have met the requirements for entry until they have met the requirements by 30 November 2020.

Trainees who begin courses ITT on or 01 2 entry requirements still pending will not be eligible for financial incentives (bursaries or grants). On providing evidence of meeting the requirements, they will be eligible for the bursary for the course. Further guidance for trainees who will follow in the funding manual.

See initial teacher training (ITT) criteria and supporting advice for the full criteria.

School experience

School experience is not an entry requirement for ITT. Lack of school experience should not be a cause for rejection of an otherwise suitable applicant. However, school experience may be helpful for those considering training to teach.

Using the get school experience service

We have marked schools on the get school experience service as inactive. Email getting-school-experience@education.gov.uk if you're considering offering a virtual experience for candidates. This could include:

- videos of lessons
- digital classrooms
- online training sessions for candidates

We will then make such a school active again.

ITT funding and bursaries

Bursary, scholarship, School Direct salaried and postgraduate teaching apprenticeship payment arrangements are normal.

You should continue to follow the relevant funding guidance. This includes making payments to trainees where applicable.

Student number controls will only apply to domestic and EU domiciled full-time undergraduate students in the 2020 to 2021 academic year.

ITT trainees from overseas

International travel

Although global travel may be affected by coronavirus (COVID-19), we still encourage overseas candidates to pursue becoming a teacher in England. Candidates should check:

- their country's public health advice and travel restrictions imposed by the UK's advice on travel restrictions and self-isolation requirements
- the guidance about what to do if you need to travel to the UK

Further information is available for those affected by changes to UK immigration and borders due to coronavirus (COVID-19).

Immigration permission for trainees from the European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland

If an EEA or Swiss trainee arrives in the UK on or after 31 January 2020 (days that arrival in the UK until 1 January 2021 or later, they may be affected by the new immigration system.

EEA and Swiss trainees who arrive in the UK by 31 December 2020 can apply to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) to continue their current rights to live and work in the UK after 31 December 2020. Trainees can also continue to apply through the new points-based immigration system.

If a trainee arrives in the UK on or after 1 January 2021 they will need to apply for a visa through the new points-based immigration system. In most circumstances, they will need a sponsorship from their school or training provider. This is a Home Office process. Contact your school or training provider if you are offered a sponsorship.

We recognise that disruption due to coronavirus (COVID-19) may lead to trainees who are EEA nationals who have lived and worked in the UK to experience expenses like rent. Providers should use their professional judgement and discretion to determine the extent to which individual trainees have, through their school-based training, been able to evidence the Teachers' Standards.

ITT trainee consumer protection advice

We expect that universities will be open for the autumn term. You may include some online teaching and in-person teaching provided that they consider appropriate to minimise risk.

To help you make informed decisions about your provision, read:

- guidance for providers on overcoming campuses and universe buildings
- DfE guidance for universities and students on coronavirus and other
- Office for Students' guidance for providers on student consumer rights and expectations

Universities should make every reasonable effort to provide students with clear, accurate and timely information needed to make informed decisions. This includes making sure that students understand their rights and opportunity.

You will need to seek your own legal advice on whether the information you are providing is sufficient for them to do that.

Support for ITT in 2020

We are offering expert ITT associate support for the 2020 to 2021 training year. This is to help providers develop and deliver your courses considering partner school placement processes and ITT criteria requirements.

You can get support in areas such as:

- implementing the core content framework for September 2020
- Ofsted ITT Inspection Framework
- securing placements
- mentoring
- recruitment for 2021

Accredited ITT providers wishing to access this support should email ITT.accreditation@education.gov.uk.

Whole associate capacity is limited, we will try to provide support for as many accredited ITT providers as possible.

Critical workers

ITT trainees are included in the definition of a critical worker. ITT mentors and tutors are considered workers to a school and are not critical workers.

Assessment only

We have required the requirement for the assessment process to be completed within 12 consecutive weeks. The aggregate time spent on the route, discounting periods of interruption of the trainee's attendance.

This regulations state a candidate should have undertaken a period of practice teaching in a school. Providers should consider how to provide sufficient evaluation as meeting the required standards. Any assessments recognising prospective candidates should be minutiae of this expectation.

Candidates cannot be given any additional allowance in terms of reduced assessments because of coronavirus (COVID-19). This is because assessment only courses include no training so candidates cannot be deemed to be making adequate progress to meeting the standards.

See the assessment only criteria for more information.

Academic qualifications

Provision and assessment for the award of academic qualifications will be at the discretion of individual awarding bodies through existing arrangements.

Undergraduate ITT

Try to adapt ongoing delivery programmes in the remaining years of the course. This will help give trainees the opportunity to demonstrate the standards across the full course and to benefit from their training programme.

If you're struggling to provide placement opportunities across the full age and ability range, consider adapting your course. For example, a 3 to 11 course may be redesignated to a 5 to 11, or 3 to 7. The training must still take place across a minimum of 4 school years.

Early years ITT

We have temporarily relaxed 1 and 2 of the early years ITT criteria and amended the accompanying advice.

ITT providers will need to consider what can be provide evidence of meeting the required GCSE equivalent standard or degree requirement before starting a course, due to coronavirus (COVID-19) impact the course. To continue and complete the course, they must provide evidence by 30 November 2020.

See the early years ITT requirements and supporting advice for more information.

Remote observations and moderation

It is for ITT providers to agree with schools in their partnership if it is appropriate to remotely observe and/or moderate trainees' teaching in schools.

They will need to come to an agreement that:

- respects the school's policies
- is consistent with the partnership agreement
- meets safeguarding and data protection requirements

DfE resources that may be helpful to partners in their discussions with schools:

- Keeping children safe in education guidance is statutory guidance for schools and colleges on safeguarding children (annex C of the document has information relation to online safety)
- Safeguarding and remote education during coronavirus (COVID-19) explains how schools and colleges and other providers can safeguard children, pupils, students and teaching remotely, including advice on virtual classrooms and live streaming and the data protection toolkit for schools
- Get help with remote education guidance provides information and support for teachers and leaders on educating children during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak

The following resources may be useful:

- National Cyber Security Centre guidance on choosing video conferences services and using video conferencing separately
- Guidance on safeguarding security published by the UK Safer Internet Centre (a list for both charitable trust)