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Department for Education

Guidance

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

Updated 30 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:

- reduce the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) on your ITT provision
- give trainees a fair opportunity to qualify
- safeguard teacher supply
- 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

Assessment only
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Print this page

We have:

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

# Trainees not recommended for QTS in 2019 to 2020

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

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

This gives these trainees an opportunity to show they meet the Teachers' Standards in the autumn term.

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 in line with current arrangements.

Funding is available for trainees and providers where courses extend owing to coronavirus (COVID-19). See guidance on ITT coronavirus (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 process 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 getting additional evidence of suitability, such as references.

Advise partner schools to:

- exercise greater vigilance during the early stages of school-based training
- act immediately on any safeguarding concerns that might arise by following the process set out in their partnership agreement

Ratifying university providers already have scope to interview on behalf of School Direct partnerships, subject to this being agreed across the wider partnership.

Supporting documentation (for example, examination certificates) can be submitted in electronic format pending the opportunity for originals to be supplied. You must continue to comply with statutory guidance set out in keeping children safe in education.

Continue using the apply for postgraduate teacher training service and UCAS to manage your applications.

UCAS has reinstated all UCAS teacher training decision-making deadlines, decline by default (DBDs) and reject by default (RBDs). See the UCAS guidance for the latest 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 of attainment if 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 coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, have until 30 November 2020 to demonstrate the standard.

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

Before admitting them to an ITT course, consider the likelihood of a candidate achieving the requirements in the permitted timeframe. Trainees are not allowed to continue on courses without providing evidence of meeting the requirements by 30 November 2020.

Trainees who begin courses with C1.1 or C1.2 entry requirements still pending will not be eligible for financial incentives (bursaries or grants). On providing the required evidence, any financial incentive will be backdated to the start of the course. Further guidance on this will follow in the funding manuals.

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 reason 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 organise.school-experience@education.gov.uk if you're considering offering a virtual experience for candidates. This could include:

- videos of lessons
- digital conferences
- online training materials for candidates to use

We will then make your school active again.

# ITT funding and bursaries

Bursary, scholarship, School Direct salaried and postgraduate teaching apprenticeship grant payments will continue as 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 nationals to pursue becoming a teacher in England. Candidates should check:

- their country's advice on travel restrictions and self-isolation requirements
- the UK's advice on travel restrictions and self-isolation requirements
- the guidance about what to do if you need a visa 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 undertaking an ITT course in 2020 to 2021 delays their 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. If successful, this will allow them to continue living, working and studying in the UK after 30 June 2021 without having to apply through the new points-based immigration system.

EEA and Swiss trainees who arrive in the UK from 1 January 2021 may need to apply for a visa through the new points-based immigration system. In most cases, this will be a student visa or if undertaking a salaried course, a skilled worker visa. These visa routes require the educator/employer to sponsor the visa applicant. The educator/employer will need to have a sponsor licence to do this. State-funded schools cannot sponsor individuals on student visas.

# Changes to the ITT criteria for 2020 to 2021

## Meeting the GCSE equivalent standard or degree requirements

We have temporarily relaxed C1.1 and C1.2 of the ITT criteria and amended the accompanying advice. This allows candidates who are not able to provide evidence of meeting the required GCSE equivalent standard or degree requirement before starting a course, due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, to start the course. To continue and complete the course, they must provide evidence by 30 November 2020.

For ITT courses starting from September 2020, we have also suspended the:

- expectation that trainees train to teach in at least 2 schools
- requirement for a trainee to have met the standards across the full age and ability range of training
- expectation that training programmes cover no fewer than 4 school years

Trainees should receive training that is as complete as possible. You should only use these flexibilities when necessary. We expect you to assess trainees as fully meeting the Teachers' Standards.

## Sufficient time in school to demonstrate the Teachers' Standards

C2.3 of the ITT criteria requires programmes to be designed to provide trainees with enough time in school to demonstrate that they have achieved all the Teachers' Standards. It outlines the typical periods of time for training in schools, early years, or further education settings, but these are not mandatory. These typical periods of time are set out in the ITT criteria and supporting advice.

Consider how you will structure school placements for courses starting from September 2020. You should design your course to provide trainees with the time they need training in school to demonstrate the Teachers' Standards. For most courses, this will typically be 120 days. In the event of disruption due to coronavirus (COVID-19), courses with fewer than 120 days physically in school are acceptable. This will not result in non-compliance in relation to C2.3 of the ITT criteria.

You should also consider the impact any further disruption would have on placements, such as the introduction in your area of any local restrictions on education settings. You should have plans in place to introduce or extend provision of remote school-based training where required. For example, trainees could form part of schools' plans to support remote education, through the use of video conferencing software, should pupils need to remain at home. You should facilitate and support trainees to undertake remote school-based training as you would in-school training.

We recognise that disruption due to coronavirus (COVID-19) may lead to discrepancies in the length and consistency of trainees' school placement experience this year. 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. This may include a blend of online teaching and in-person tuition that they consider appropriate to minimise risk.

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

- guidance for providers on reopening campuses and university buildings
- Universities UK's principles for reopening of campuses to students and staff
- Office for Students' guidance for providers on student consumer rights during the pandemic

Universities should make sure continuing and prospective students receive clear, accurate and timely information needed to make informed decisions. This includes making them aware of any potential for changes at the earliest 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 you develop and deliver your courses considering partner school placement pressures and ITT criteria relaxations.

You can get support in areas such as:

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

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

While 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 visitors to a school and are not critical workers.

## Assessment only

We have relaxed the requirement for the assessment process to be completed within 12 consecutive weeks. The aggregate time spent on the route, discounting periods of interruption, should not exceed 12 weeks.

The regulations state a candidate should have undertaken a period of practical teaching experience, such that the person is assessed by the accredited institution as meeting the specified standards. Any providers managing prospective candidates should be mindful 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 undergraduate programmes in the remaining years of the course. This will help give trainees the opportunity to demonstrate the standards across the full age and ability range of their training programme.

If you're struggling to provide placement opportunities across the full age and ability range, consider redesignating 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 1.1 and 1.2 of the early years ITT criteria and amended the accompanying advice.

This will allow candidates who are not able to provide evidence of meeting the required GCSE equivalent standard or degree requirement before starting a course, due to coronavirus (COVID-19), to start 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 school.

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 providers 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 related to online safety)
- Safeguarding and remote education during coronavirus (COVID-19) explains how to follow safeguarding procedures when planning remote education strategies and teaching remotely, including advice on virtual lessons 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 also be useful:

- National Cyber Security Centre guidance on choosing video conferencing services and using video conferencing securely
- guidance on safe remote learning published by the UK Safer Internet Centre (a not-for-profit charitable trust)

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