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Guidance

Early career teacher induction: COVID-19 absence exemption

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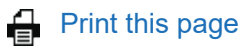
Applies to England

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This guidance provides information on coronavirus (COVID-19) related absences during the statutory induction of early career teachers (ECTs).

Absences related to COVID-19

The vast majority of ECTs will continue to progress their induction and move into their second year of induction as expected. However, we recognise the Omicron COVID-19 variant may have had an impact on the number of absences ECTs have taken during the 2021 to 2022 academic year.

We have laid regulations that, subject to parliamentary procedures, and once in force, will mean that ECTs absent for reasons related to the COVID-19 pandemic will not have their induction period automatically extended.

Induction arrangements state that ad hoc absences totalling 30 days or more per year of induction (or equivalent for part-time teachers), automatically extend the relevant year of induction by the aggregate number of days absent.

In May 2020 and August 2020 we laid regulations that amended existing provisions. Any absence related to the COVID-19 pandemic, including school closures, sickness or self-isolation, that was taken before 1 September 2021 would not count towards this limit. We have now laid new regulations that will reinstate this provision until 1 September 2022.

This means that after the new regulations come into force, ECTs can continue into their second year of induction as expected, without automatic extensions relating to COVID-19 absence.

Transitional ECTs who began induction before 1 September 2021 can complete induction without any automatic extension relating to COVID-19 absence, provided that those completing their induction are on track to meet the [Teachers' Standards](#).

Ad hoc absences totalling 30 days or more that are not related to COVID-19 will continue to extend the induction period.

Application of the COVID-19 absence exemption provision

Subject to parliamentary procedures, we estimate that the date in which this provision will come into force will be 18 April 2022.

There may be a small number of ECTs who will complete their induction period before this exemption is reinstated on 18 April 2022. They will continue to have any COVID-19 related absences since 1 September 2021 count towards the 30-day or more limit, and could potentially have their induction period automatically extended.

However, we expect the vast majority of current ECTs to be in scope of the reinstatement of this provision because most will complete their induction period after this provision comes into force. For those completing induction once the new regulations are in force, any absence related to COVID-19 that occurred during this academic year (2021 to 2022) including as a result of school closures, sickness, recommended isolation or caring responsibilities, will not count towards the 30-day per year absence limit.

Extending the induction period for those completing their statutory induction

If there are concerns that an ECT or transitional ECT has not achieved the Teachers' Standards at the end of their induction, regardless of COVID-19 related absences exemptions, we would encourage appropriate bodies to consider exercising their discretion to recommend an extension. This will allow the ECTs further time and opportunity to demonstrate their ability to meet the standards.

Headteachers, induction tutors and appropriate bodies should refer to the [2021 statutory induction guidance](#) for more detailed information on the formal assessment process, as well as guidance on extensions and non-COVID-19 related absences.

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