



Department  
for Education

# **International qualified teacher status (iQTS): inspection policy**

**June 2022**

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## Introduction

The Department for Education (DfE) has launched a new international teaching qualification, [international qualified teacher status \(iQTS\)](#). It will:

- provide opportunities for accredited English initial teacher training (ITT) providers to expand into the growing international teacher training market
- make high quality training accessible around the world, allow trainees to benefit from evidence-based ITT and allow schools to develop local talent
- increase the global pool of quality teachers and support global mobility within the teaching profession

Six training providers have now been appointed to deliver iQTS in pilot ([Introducing international qualified teacher status \(iQTS\)](#)) and applications are now being submitted by candidates to begin courses starting later this year.

In developing iQTS, DfE consulted widely with stakeholders, experts in the education sector and potential candidates for iQTS. If you participated in this process, thank you for your contribution, which has been invaluable.

As part of this [public consultation](#), we asked stakeholders for their views on inspection. There was strong consensus among participants that the inspection standards set for iQTS should be equal to those used for domestic teacher training. This document explains how we intend to make this happen.

By developing our own iQTS inspection policy and testing it in pilot, DfE will promote the reputational value of iQTS as a UK government-backed qualification. This will instil confidence across the international education sector in the DfE's role of maintaining the rigour and quality of iQTS.

## Who this document is for

This document is for iQTS pilot providers and organisations considering applying to join the inspection pilot. It will also be of interest to applicants to the iQTS training programme, mentors, schools, other overseas partners and ITT providers considering applying to deliver iQTS in the future.

## Applicants to the iQTS inspectorate pilot

This document sets out DfE's policy for the iQTS inspection regime and how DfE will appoint a limited number of organisations to become iQTS inspectorates as we roll out the programme. It also outlines how iQTS inspections will be carried out.

Inspections will take place every three years. iQTS providers will be required to arrange their own inspections with a DfE-approved inspectorate. The cost of inspection will be met directly by the ITT provider.

Email us at [iqts.pilot@education.gov.uk](mailto:iqts.pilot@education.gov.uk) to register your interest in joining our iQTS inspectorate pilot.

## DfE's iQTS inspection policy

The inspection requirement will ensure that the quality of iQTS provision is upheld and that trainees are receiving the highest standard of training. It will ensure the qualification is provided consistently through adherence to the [iQTS Teachers' Standards](#), [iQTS Core Content Framework](#) and [iQTS criteria for providers](#).

We have worked with educational inspection experts to develop DfE's policy for iQTS inspection. The policy defines the iQTS inspection outcomes and criteria and has a numeric rating system of grade 1 through to grade 4. Grade 1 is the highest marking available and grade 4 is the lowest.

The inspection criteria will be guided by the [iQTS criteria for providers](#) and assess evidence of its implementation. It will also look at the outcomes we want from iQTS. These outcomes have been developed by our inspection experts. The inspection criteria will be published in due course.

## How iQTS inspections will be carried out

iQTS inspections will be hybrid, with evidence and data provided both in person and via remote technology. Only the provision of iQTS will be inspected; providers' domestic initial teacher training provision is not in scope. Inspections will be thorough and comprehensive. They will ensure minimum standards are being met and there are sound and effective safeguarding mechanisms in place.

The inspection will last approximately 4 to 5 days, working around time zone differences, and following the same principles as domestic QTS inspection. Prior to the first day of inspection, there will be an agreement on when discussions with trainees and mentors will take place and how they will be conducted. Opportunities for trainee observations will also be agreed, though timing of individual observations will be at the discretion of inspectors. There will also be an explanation of what further evidence will be required and agreement on when this must be provided.

On the last day of iQTS inspection, inspectors will give the provisional grade rating and feedback on the key findings. Following this, the inspectorate will confirm when the report will be sent to DfE and the provider. A date for publication of the inspection report and grade rating on the inspectorate website and the provider's website will also be agreed. It will then be published on GOV.UK.

## Inspection grade rating

Following the inspection, the iQTS provision will be given a grade from 1 to 4, with 1 being the highest and 4 the lowest. On receipt of the final report, providers must produce an improvement action plan. If the provider receives a rating of grade 4 they will be subject to a reinspection. They must schedule regular meetings following a grade 4 rating with DfE to show how they are making progress on their improvement plan ahead of reinspection. If significant failures on procedure, practice and/or outcomes are presented as a result of inspection, DfE will follow up immediately with providers and discuss actions for remedy or withdrawal of approval status. This process is described in full in the [Withdrawing iQTS provider approval status](#).

After the initial inspection, providers will need to arrange inspection with an approved inspectorate every three years in order to retain approved status.

## Complaints

If there are any concerns about the behaviour or conduct of the inspectorate or its inspectors before or during the inspection, providers should raise these directly with the lead inspector at the earliest opportunity. If this cannot be done, or issues emerge following the inspection, providers can email [iqts.policy@education.gov.uk](mailto:iqts.policy@education.gov.uk). We will investigate and write back to the provider with our findings.

## **iQTS inspection pilot**

We intend to pilot the iQTS inspection policy with a small number of independent inspectorates who have experience of inspecting overseas education and teacher training. Participants in the pilot will be appointed using an application process currently in development. We will invite pilot inspectorates to design their own inspection framework, which must work within the policy set out in this guidance, the iQTS inspection criteria and the approvals guidance which will be published in late summer 2022. The inspection frameworks developed by inspectorates should evaluate the quality of provision and outcomes against the iQTS criteria and must be agreed by DfE before publication. This pilot phase will allow us to test and learn, iterating the iQTS inspection policy and guidance where appropriate.

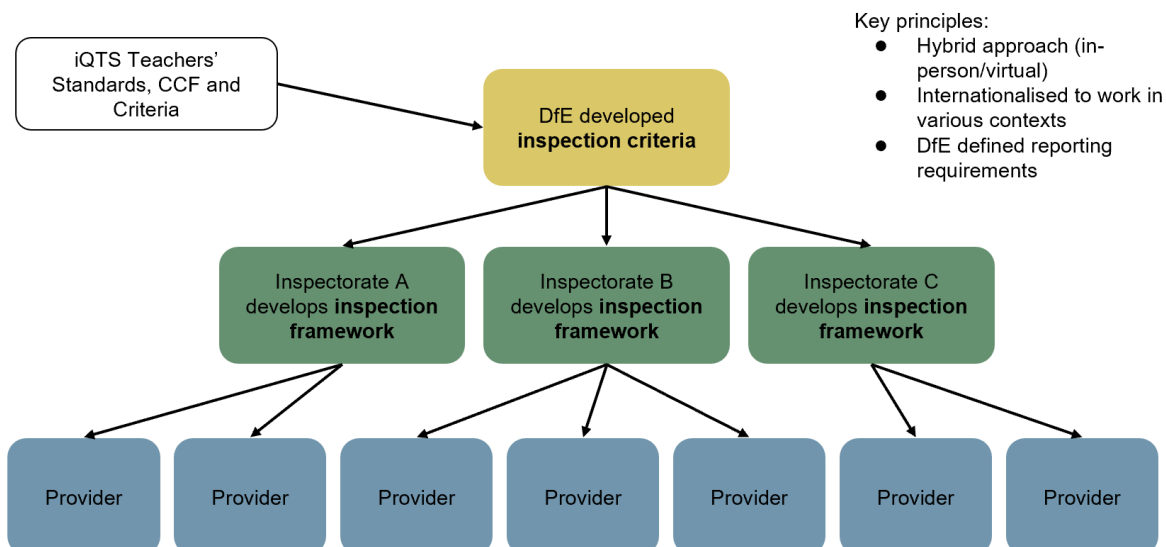
The inspection regime for iQTS is self-funding. Inspection costs are to be met by those seeking approval as recognised providers of iQTS. In turn, the approved inspectorates will need to fund the necessary quality assurance of their inspections. More information on this will follow in due course.

We aim to open applications for the iQTS inspection pilot in late 2022 and announce the successful inspectorates in early 2023. There will be no inspections in the first year of iQTS training programme delivery (2022/2023). Over this period, DfE will monitor and evaluate iQTS delivery with the support of initial teacher training experts. iQTS inspections, conducted by the pilot inspectorates, will start in early 2024.

Each inspectorate in the pilot will inspect against their published inspection framework during the pilot inspection year (2023/2024). At the end of the pilot, DfE will evaluate the success of the different frameworks and discuss any amendments as necessary, based on the feedback we receive, including from our iQTS pilot providers and other partners. If the pilot inspectorates wish to continue to work with us, they will have to demonstrate they have made these amendments to their inspection frameworks. At the end of this process, a small number of independent iQTS inspectorates will be formally appointed by DfE, and will be available to providers seeking inspection.

We will work with Ofsted to request that iQTS pilot providers are not subject to a domestic and iQTS inspection at the same time. If this occurs, we will work with the iQTS inspectorates to rearrange the iQTS inspection. We will also develop an escalation route to advise Ofsted if the iQTS inspectorate's report has implications for domestic provision.

## **The iQTS inspection model**



- Key principles:
- Hybrid approach (in-person/virtual)
  - Internationalised to work in various contexts
  - DfE defined reporting requirements

## iQTS inspectorate training

We are working with our sector experts to establish what training and support we may need to provide. This would potentially be available both for inspectorates which may have experience overseas but not in initial teacher training, and vice versa.

## iQTS inspection assurance

In the pilot year of inspection, DfE will oversee inspections. We are currently developing a quality assurance process to ensure that inspectorate standards are consistent and maintained over time.

## Next steps

We will hold events in late summer 2022 to share more information about iQTS inspection with organisations interested in joining the pilot. Applications for the inspectorate pilot will open in autumn of 2022. We plan to announce the successful inspectorates in early 2023.