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Guidance

International qualified teacher status: criteria and supporting information

Updated 18 November 2022

Applies to England

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Overview

This document contains mandatory guidance and accompanying information for international qualified teacher status (iQTS) teacher training providers from the Department for Education (DfE). Approved iQTS providers must ensure they meet the criteria set out in this mandatory guidance when carrying out their duties relating to iQTS.

DfE reserves the right to amend iQTS requirements in line with any domestic changes in initial teacher training (ITT) provision.

This document applies to approved providers delivering iQTS until 31 August 2024. After this date new published iQTS criteria and quality requirements will be in place.

Partnerships

iQTS is delivered via partnerships between iQTS providers in England and one or more placement schools. Although some may be in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, the majority will be located outside the UK.

[Introducing iQTS](#) has general information about iQTS, including the role of partner schools and the award of QTS upon successful completion of iQTS.

Apply to deliver iQTS

In order to be approved to offer iQTS, a potential new provider must demonstrate in a proposal to DfE:

- how its provision at the outset is likely to score at least a 2 in DfE's iQTS inspection [\[footnote 1\]](#)
- how it will meet all of the iQTS criteria

Only existing providers who are accredited by DfE to deliver ITT leading to QTS in England may [apply to offer iQTS](#).

All approved providers must continue to meet these criteria.

How to apply

Applications for approval to offer iQTS in academic year 2023 to 2024 are now closed. The application window will open again in spring 2023.

Withdrawal of approved status

iQTS providers must comply with the iQTS criteria and supporting advice. DfE may [withdraw approved status](#) if providers fail to comply with the requirements of the approval process and the iQTS criteria set out here.

Ending iQTS provision

If a provider wishes to voluntarily pause or end their iQTS provision, they must follow the guidance set out in [withdrawing iQTS provider approval](#).

Fee charging for iQTS

Full-time and part-time courses may be offered. Individual providers are responsible for setting their own fees, however we expect prices to be affordable in a number of global settings, so that iQTS is an attainable qualification worldwide.

Applicants for iQTS are not eligible for student finance, or any other type of financial support from the UK government.

Entry criteria

[ENIC-NARIC](#) provides advice on the equivalence of overseas qualifications in the European region, including GCSE and university degree qualifications.

C1.1 GCSE standard equivalent

All approved iQTS providers must ensure that all entrants have:

- a standard equivalent to a grade 4^{[\[footnote 2\]](#)} in GCSE mathematics
- a standard equivalent to a grade 4 in a GCSE science subject, if they intend to teach pupils aged 3 to 11

Examples of equivalents to non-UK qualifications include:

- high school diploma
- higher secondary school certificate
- Baccalauréat Général
- Título de Bachiller

DfE does not provide an exhaustive list of qualifications that can be considered equivalent to the GCSE examinations in mathematics and science. When providers look for evidence that a qualification is of a standard equivalent to GCSE grade 4, they should look at the content not only in terms of its level, but also in terms of its breadth.

To check applicants' qualifications meet the standard of an English GCSE, we suggest you refer them to [UK ENIC](#), where they can apply for a statement of comparability.

Where applicants do not have equivalent qualifications, they can be invited to sit a proficiency test, as international applicants for English QTS currently do.

The aim of this criterion is to ensure that iQTS candidates have demonstrated their achievement of a minimum standard of educational attainment. Primary trainees need to also demonstrate an acceptable level of subject knowledge in the core subjects of the curriculum in the context where iQTS is being delivered.

It is the standard, not the certificate, that matters. Applicants who are otherwise suitable but have not successfully achieved a GCSE grade 4 (or local equivalent) may be given an opportunity to show that they can meet the required standard. They could do this by taking an equivalence test or by offering other evidence of attainment which should demonstrate a similar level and breadth. Providers should consider making similar arrangements for candidates who cannot provide original certificates as evidence.

C1.2 Degree criteria

All approved iQTS providers must ensure that all entrants hold a bachelor's degree from a UK or non-UK institution of higher education, or an equivalent qualification [\[footnote 3\]](#).

Examples of equivalents to non-UK degrees include:

- bachelor's degree
- bachelor of Arts
- diplôme
- licenciatuira

To check applicants' qualifications meet the standard of an English degree, refer them to [UK ENIC](#), where they can apply for a statement of

comparability.

The aim of this criterion is to ensure the graduate status of teaching. All entrants must have attained a qualification that demonstrates the level of knowledge, understanding and transferable intellectual skills associated with graduate status.

iQTS is a postgraduate qualification. Any equivalent qualification must be one single qualification, not an aggregation of a number of separate qualifications. Those entering iQTS programmes need to have attained a degree before they start the programme.

iQTS providers should view original certificates in order to validate an applicant's degree status. However, they should exercise discretion for recent graduates where there is a delay in receiving the original certificate. In these cases, providers should obtain written confirmation from the relevant degree-awarding institution that the applicant has achieved graduate status. Providers should view the original certificate as soon as it is available.

In cases where an original certificate is no longer available, providers must gain assurance of graduate status and must keep an audit trail of the evidence obtained.

Degree subjects

iQTS trainees do not need to have a degree in a particular subject or discipline. It is the [iQTS Teachers' Standards](#) that specify the subject knowledge required for the award of iQTS. All trainee teachers must meet these standards by the time they complete their training.

There is no statutory requirement for:

- primary trainee teachers to have a degree in a national curriculum subject
- secondary trainee teachers to have a degree in a specified subject

However, they must meet all of the iQTS Teachers' Standards, including

those that relate to subject and curriculum knowledge, by the end of their training.

Information on degree-level qualifications

Providers will need to make sure that those responsible for decisions on entry understand, or have access to, advice on the range of qualifications generally regarded as equivalent to a bachelor's degree in the UK, including:

- overseas qualifications
- professional or vocational qualifications
- qualifications no longer available but held by mature applicants

For example, the MEng is a four-year bachelor's degree, the BPhil is usually a research degree, and some taught master's degrees may be open to people without a bachelor's degree.

It is for the provider to decide whether an applicant's qualification meets this criterion, and whether a particular master's degree demonstrates the breadth and type of academic engagement that would be expected from first degree study. Providers who are not degree-awarding bodies may wish to seek advice from those that are.

Further information

The [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies](#) describes the higher education qualifications awarded by UK higher education institutions (HEIs) at 5 levels.

C1.3 English language proficiency

To demonstrate proficiency in the English language, candidates will need to evidence an average [IELTS](#) score of 6.5 or higher (or equivalent score in another English language testing system), or to have completed some of their education in English, for example a degree studied in English.

Providers will have the discretion to choose which tests they accept as long as there is an equivalent minimum score of 6.5 or higher. Providers should share which tests they accept on their website so that this information is available to candidates.

Additional preparatory courses

Where the entry criteria cannot be met initially, there may be an opportunity for providers to offer preparatory courses to help some candidates meet these requirements. This is at the provider's discretion. iQTS providers must offer every opportunity for trainees to demonstrate the standard through, for example, additional support and training.

C1.4 Suitability

All approved iQTS providers must ensure that all entrants, as part of the provider's selection process, have taken part in a rigorous selection process designed to assess their suitability to train to teach.

Providers and school partners must ensure that, before anyone is admitted

to an iQTS programme, they have been deemed suitable to train to teach. This will help to protect children and young people from trainee teachers who might put them at risk of harm because their previous conduct shows they are unsuitable for teaching. iQTS partnerships should conduct interviews, run background checks, and assess if an applicant has the potential to meet the iQTS Teachers' Standards by the end of their training programme.

Providers should consider a wide range of evidence to judge applicants' suitability to train to teach, drawing on some or all of the following sources:

- information from application forms
- referees' reports
- results of any entry tests or tasks
- a portfolio of the applicants' teaching experience (if they have taught previously)
- interviews

Prior experience in a school is not required. However, where candidates have been able to gain experience in schools, providers might find reports from those schools helpful. Lack of school experience should not be a reason for rejecting an otherwise suitable applicant.

Interviews

Providers should consider how information from interviews can help to identify and take account of trainees' specific needs during training, including any exemptions from programme requirements on the basis of prior achievement. The interview process might include discussions of professional portfolios and discussions of prior achievement.

Equality

To comply with equality legislation, providers must ensure that interview

procedures promote equality of opportunity and avoid discrimination.

The [Equality Act 2010](#) requires providers to ensure they are not discriminating against applicants with protected characteristics, for example disabilities or special educational needs (SEN). iQTS providers should comply with the requirements of this legislation notwithstanding the fact that they are delivering services overseas.

Applicants with disabilities are under no obligation to disclose their disabilities. Providers must ensure that their provision does not place applicants with declared disabilities at a disadvantage. Providers must also consider making anticipatory adjustments to promote positively equality of access for disabled applicants, including access to benefits, facilities and services. They should provide as many opportunities as possible for applicants to identify any special arrangements they may require, for example when inviting them for interview or making arrangements for any entrance tests.

Intellectual and academic capabilities

iQTS providers should consider the full range of applicants' knowledge, skills, academic background and prior experience to judge whether they have the capability to meet the iQTS Teachers' Standards in the time planned for their training.

Prior to the award of iQTS, providers must assure the trainees' English and mathematics. Providers must assure that trainees demonstrate competence in the following areas.

1. Speaking, listening and communicating are fundamental to a teacher's role. Teachers should use standard English grammar, clear pronunciation and vocabulary relevant to the situation to convey instructions, questions, information, concepts and ideas with clarity. Teachers should read fluently and with good understanding. Where iQTS trainees are in a bilingual or non-English medium setting, the requirements in this paragraph apply to the relevant language, in addition to their English proficiency.

2. Writing by teachers will be seen by colleagues, pupils and parents and, as such, it is important that a teacher's writing reflects the high standards of accuracy their professional role demands. They should write clearly, accurately, legibly and coherently using correct spelling and punctuation.
3. Teachers should use data and graphs to interpret information, identify patterns and trends and draw appropriate conclusions. They need to interpret pupil data and understand statistics and graphs in the news, academic reports and relevant papers. Teachers should be able to complete mathematical calculations fluently with whole numbers, fractions, decimals and percentages. They should be able to solve mathematical problems using a variety of methods and approaches including: estimating and rounding, sense checking answers, breaking down problems into simpler steps, and explaining and justifying answers using appropriate language.

Any work to address shortfalls in English and mathematics must be undertaken by the trainee teacher in addition to other aspects of their training. It is the trainee's responsibility to secure Fundamental English and mathematics, whereas responsibility for assurance lies with the provider. Fundamental English and mathematics may be implemented, supported and assured in different ways by different providers.

Health and physical capacity to train to teach

Providers and school partners have a responsibility to ensure that trainees have the health and physical capacity to train to teach and will not put children and young people at risk of harm.

In England, the activities that a teacher must be able to perform are set out in the [Education \(Health Standards\) \(England\) Regulations 2003](#). Providers are responsible for ensuring that only trainees who have the capacity to train to teach remain on the programme.

People with disabilities or chronic illnesses may have the capacity to train to teach, just as those without disabilities or medical conditions may be unsuitable to train to teach.

Successful applicants may be asked to complete a fitness questionnaire prior to commencing the programme. iQTS providers should not ask all-encompassing health questions but should ensure they only ask targeted and relevant health-related questions which are necessary to ensure that a person is able to train to teach. iQTS providers should be guided by the approach taken to assess the fitness of applicants for QTS.

Providers should check local regulations related to disability and chronic illness in the workplace. Regardless of whether applicants can be asked to disclose these details, they will have to meet certain standards of physical fitness to be able to care for children, as per iQTS and [Teachers' Standards](#) requirements.

Safeguarding children in school

iQTS providers must safeguard and promote the welfare of children. They must adopt robust recruitment procedures preventing people who are unsuitable to work with children from securing a place on an iQTS training course.

iQTS providers should be guided by the safer recruitment policy outlined in the statutory safeguarding guidance for schools [Keeping children safe in education](#) (KCSIE). They should also carry out additional checks related to international recruitment and training.

In this section, we outline some of the sources of information and evidence iQTS providers can use as part of their safeguarding procedures. It is good practice to carry out a risk assessment recording the evidence you have gathered to reach your decision and show you have no grounds for concern about the applicant.

Agreeing a protocol with your partner schools

Providers should establish clear safeguarding procedures and protocols that are agreed by all partners and set out in the partnership agreement. This should include an agreed understanding of convictions, offences, cautions and warnings which do not bar an applicant from the iQTS programme.

You should provide written confirmation to partner schools that you have carried out all relevant safeguarding checks, and in return, the school should provide you with written confirmation of any checks they have carried out. Together, you should agree in writing that the trainee has been deemed suitable to work with children. You should maintain a single central record of safeguarding checks.

We recognise that certain checks may be difficult for providers to carry out if they are not in the same country as the trainee, so some checks can be delegated to partner schools. For checks carried out by the partner school, providers should obtain written confirmation from the school that it has carried out those specific checks (including any checks required to ensure compliance with a partner's local safeguarding obligations) and that the trainee has been judged by the school to be suitable to work with children. This confirmation should be added to your single central record.

Safeguarding checks for applicants to the iQTS training programme

The following procedures and evidence will help you assess the suitability of applicants for iQTS. This list is not exhaustive, and providers should satisfy themselves that all necessary checks are carried out to comply with their safeguarding obligations.

UK-based checks to be carried out by providers

1. Use [Keeping children safe in education](#) 'Part 3: safer recruitment' as a guide to best practice when conducting checks to assess suitability.
2. Carry out identity checks (using notarised copies of documents or asking school partners to confirm in person). [How to prove and verify someone's identity](#) offers advice on best practice.
3. Where the applicant is already teaching, check that they are not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State for Education in England, (the 'Prohibited List') via the [Teaching Regulation Agency](#).
4. Make further checks appropriate to applicants from outside the UK. This could include carrying out [criminal records checks for overseas applicants](#). Where this information is not available, schools should seek alternative methods of checking suitability, some of which we list below.
5. Non-UK countries have different policies relating to the types of offences

on a criminal record, and how long they are stored for. Due to this varied international approach to criminal records, you should consider performing an online search on shortlisted applicants – anything you're concerned about can then be raised at interview.

6. References are an integral part of safeguarding processes, and should be used to assess a candidate's suitability to work with children. References should be obtained before an offer of training is confirmed. Where applicable, references should be obtained from the candidate's current employer and the relevant employer from the last time the candidate worked with children. References must be obtained directly from the referee, who should be a senior person with appropriate authority. 'To whom it may concern' references must not be accepted unless they are validated as genuine by the referee. You should ensure references obtained by email are from a legitimate source. Concerns arising from the reference should be discussed with the referee and, where appropriate, the applicant.
7. Request an employment history to investigate any inconsistencies and unexplained gaps in employment and, if the applicant is currently unemployed, contact their most recent employer to find out why they left their last job. Recent graduates do not need to supply an employment history, unless they have carried out part-time work, which they should declare.
8. Check that the applicant has not previously been removed from a teacher training programme (partner schools and the local regulating authority, usually the Department or Ministry of Education, can help with this). If the applicant left a teacher training course, you should check whether the training provider would have removed them, had they not left.
9. Where the applicant is already teaching, request evidence of professional standing – for example, a letter from the organisation that regulates teachers in the country where the applicant qualified, confirming their status as a teacher. Ideally, this document should also confirm that the applicant's authorisation to teach has never been suspended, barred, cancelled, revoked or restricted, and that they have no sanctions against them. For countries where teachers are automatically eligible for QTS, 'Teacher Qualifications, Professional recognition: evidence required' available from the [Teaching Regulation Agency](#) lists relevant documentation. For everywhere else, the [UK](#)

[Centre for Professional Qualifications](#) can give advice on the organisations to contact.

10. If the candidate has ever lived or worked in the UK, apply for an [International Child Protection Certificate \(ICPC\)](#). If a candidate has never been to the UK, you do not need to apply for an ICPC.
11. DBS checks are not a requirement for iQTS, but iQTS holders who wish to work in England after completing the qualification will be subject to a DBS check as a condition of their employment in an English school.

Local checks to be carried out by placement schools

Confirm with your partner school that they have carried out the local safeguarding checks they would perform for any other employee. These could include:

- in-person ID checks
- local police checks
- obtaining a local version of a DBS certificate
- checking the local equivalents of the Prohibited List and the Children's Barred List

Selection process

Applicants should be properly supervised in school during the selection process. You must report any concerns about an applicant that arise during the selection process to the local authorities.

Providers should also be guided by regional regulations and processes designed to safeguard the wellbeing of children.

Actions to take if you uncover a safeguarding concern

If, as a result of these checks, you find information which is a safeguarding concern, you should share this information with the relevant placement school. You should include this sharing of information in your partnership agreements with schools and ensure that you comply with your obligations under applicable data protection law.

Safeguarding during training

Providers should ensure that all trainee teachers, at the start of their training in a school, are provided with:

- the child protection policy
- the staff behaviour policy (sometimes called a code of conduct)
- information about the role of the designated safeguarding lead, where applicable
- a copy of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (particularly 'Part one: Safeguarding information for all staff') in addition to local and regional safeguarding policies

Removing an applicant from your programme

If you need to remove a trainee from your programme because of safeguarding concerns, you have a duty to report this to the relevant local authorities in your placement school region, and to the DfE.

Childcare disqualification

When carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, iQTS providers should have regard to:

- disqualification guidance within the local and regional context
- the English requirements for [Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006](#) statutory guidance and related obligations under the Childcare Act 2006

Where a trainee becomes disqualified from a childcare role, providers should inform all relevant parties in the partnership as well as the relevant local authority.

Further advice on the childcare disqualification arrangements in England can be obtained from the DfE at mailbox.disqualification@education.gov.uk or on 01325 340 409.

Further information

Providers should be aware of formal guidance within the local and regional context to ensure that they are carrying out their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Providers should also look to the statutory guidance within England, although this guidance is only applicable to England and is not applicable in other jurisdictions:

- [Supervision of activity with children](#)
- [Working together to safeguard children](#)
- [Keeping children safe in education](#)

Training criteria

C2.1 Programmes

All approved iQTS providers must ensure that the content, structure, delivery and assessment of programmes are designed to:

- enable iQTS trainees to meet all the standards for iQTS across the age range of training
- ensure that no iQTS trainee is awarded iQTS until they have met all of the standards for iQTS
- take into account the trainee's local context in line with the guidance for international use on the iQTS Teachers' Standards and the Core Content Framework

iQTS programmes must be delivered in English.

At the outset, iQTS providers should make clear to trainees, and to all those involved in the partnership, the scope and coverage of the programme, including subject and local curriculum knowledge and the anticipated training outcomes.

Programme design underpins all the training criteria and should be flexible enough to meet the needs of every trainee, taking into account their local requirements. Providers should look particularly at the extent to which their provision and assessment practices are designed to ensure that trainees meet the iQTS Teachers' Standards by the end of the course.

iQTS providers should offer trainees specialist subject training to develop the necessary knowledge and understanding of their subjects and related pedagogy, which will enable them to teach their subjects, across the full age and ability range of training. Trainees that are training to teach a subject that is always or predominantly taught in only one age range (for example post-16) may, where possible, be offered the opportunity to demonstrate subject knowledge in a related subject if they do not have the opportunity to teach their subject across the full age range of training.

Prior to the award of iQTS, providers must assure the trainees' English and mathematics. Providers must assure that trainees demonstrate competence in the areas set out in [C1.4 Suitability](#).

Trainee assessment procedures should be rigorous and robust, supporting consistent and accurate judgements. The approved provider remains accountable for all assessment judgements and recommendations and should ensure that this is understood across the partnership, through the partnership agreement. Providers should ensure that placement schools feed into assessment judgements.

Training may be delivered remotely, in schools or in other settings ([subject to C2.3](#)) and is likely to include a combination of unobserved and observed teaching, taught sessions, seminars, workshops, tasks and assignments, and engagement with academic or professional research. Course content delivered by providers can be delivered flexibly at the discretion of each individual provider, with no limits on the use of distance learning.

Face-to-face mentor support must be provided at the trainee's placement school. Further detail is set out in [C2.2](#).

Providers must ensure their curricula encompass the full entitlement described in the iQTS version of the [ITT Core Content Framework \(2021\)](#).

Providers should:

- design curricula appropriate for the subject, phase and age range that the trainees will be teaching
- ensure the curricula reflect the trainee's local requirements
- ensure trainees have adequately covered the foundational knowledge and skills that are a prerequisite for the content defined in the ITT Core Content Framework
- integrate additional analysis and critique of theory, research and expert practice as they deem appropriate
- ensure trainees receive clear and consistent mentoring and support from mentors and other expert colleagues, by providing mentor training to school-based mentors

C2.2 Mentoring requirements

Given the largely remote nature of iQTS provision, the role of the mentor is essential for the trainee. An in-school mentor in the trainee's placement school is a mandatory requirement for iQTS.

iQTS providers are expected to deliver mentor training to all of their school-based mentors to allow them to effectively support iQTS trainees. DfE does not require that mentors meet a particular standard in English language – however, when working with partner schools to appoint mentors, providers will need to be mindful of the need to assess and communicate an applicant's progress. DfE also does not require iQTS mentors to hold QTS.

Providers should be guided by the [National standards for school-based initial teacher training \(ITT\) mentors](#),

These mentor standards set out the minimum expectations for those working as a school-based ITT mentor. Providers are expected to provide robust and rigorous support to iQTS mentors to help them meet these standards.

Providers and school partners are expected to provide the following mandatory support for iQTS mentors:

- training on the iQTS Teachers' Standards and the Core Content Framework led by the provider, and expectations of the trainee
- one-to-one meetings (frequency to be determined by the provider) between the mentor and the iQTS lead to share trainee progress and any concerns the mentor may have
- weekly interaction between the mentor and the trainee (these interactions could take the form of an observation or discussion of the trainee and mentor's choosing)
- access to learning and development opportunities (frequency to be determined by the provider) to enhance the skills and effectiveness of the iQTS mentor

Providers and school partners may also provide additional support for mentors as they see fit. This is at the discretion of the provider and the school partnership.

C2.3 Age ranges

All approved iQTS providers must ensure that they prepare all trainees to teach within one of the following age phases (to note that these are specific to England and age phases may differ internationally):

- ages 3 to 11 (primary)

- ages 7 to 14 (middle)
- ages 11 to 19 (secondary)

Training must enable trainees to acquire the knowledge and skills they need to teach within the phase for which they are training. Typically training will take place across the following age ranges in England, although there will be variation internationally:

- 3 to 7, 5 to 11, or 7 to 11 for primary training
- 7 to 14 for middle training
- 11 to 16, 11 to 18, or 14 to 19 for secondary training, depending on the subjects of training

Where providers are offering middle phase iQTS programmes, they should record trainees on these programmes as 'secondary' for DfE data purposes. Programmes should enable trainees on middle phase programmes to demonstrate they have met the iQTS Teachers' Standards across the relevant curriculum in the primary element of training, and in their specialist subject in the secondary element of training.

We recognise that for iQTS, phases of education will vary internationally in terms of specific age ranges and may not match exactly to the above ranges. Programmes should be designed to enable trainees to acquire the knowledge and skills they need for their specific age range. Where age ranges do not align with the phases above, providers should record the nearest equivalent range for DfE data purposes.

Providers should specify in their recruitment literature and programme design documentation the age range of training for each of their programmes. Trainees should be assessed as meeting the standards in the specified age range.

Providers should ensure that trainees have the opportunity to develop a comprehensive understanding of progression across, and before and after, the age range they are training to teach. This might include enhanced experiences in other age ranges.

C2.4 Training in schools

All approved iQTS providers must ensure that training programmes are designed to provide trainee teachers with sufficient time being trained in schools^[footnote 4], to enable them to demonstrate that they have met all the standards for iQTS. This means that iQTS programmes would typically be structured to include at least 120 days training in schools^[footnote 5].

iQTS is delivered in partnership with placement schools where applicants can gain teaching experience. These partner schools are located outside England and are approved by iQTS providers. [Information for schools outside the UK wishing to offer an iQTS placement](#) has more information.

Time spent in schools should be part of a coherent training programme that is designed to enable trainees to meet the iQTS Teachers' Standards.

Time spent training in settings other than schools can form a valuable part of programmes but cannot be counted towards meeting this criterion.

Applicants to iQTS with teaching experience might not need to spend as much time in schools or other settings as long as programmes are designed to provide trainees with enough time to demonstrate that they have achieved all the iQTS Teachers' Standards.

Trainees in England are required to train in at least two schools prior to the award of QTS. To allow some flexibility in this requirement for iQTS, recognising the challenges that some providers and trainees will face in sourcing a second placement internationally, the 2 school requirement is encouraged wherever possible but not mandatory. DfE does not specify how the 120 days of teaching experience is divided between the 2 placements, as long as that threshold is met.

Experience of more than one setting is an essential part of trainees'

development and there can be flexibility in how this experience is achieved. Where a physical second placement may not be possible, advances in technology provide other ways of getting experience of a different setting.

If every effort has been made to facilitate a second placement, but it has not been possible, providers must show evidence of trainees gaining experience of another setting in an alternative way. This could be virtually, via observations and remote teaching through providers' existing partnerships internationally or in England.

Any prior experience the trainee has of teaching in another school before beginning an iQTS programme should also be taken into account by the provider.

Training may take place in a special school or in a pupil referral unit (PRU), or overseas equivalents, particularly where a provider chooses to offer an additional specialism in special educational needs. In these cases, providers should ensure that the design of the overall training programme enables trainees to demonstrate all of the iQTS Teachers' Standards across the age and ability range of training.

iQTS providers should satisfy themselves that partner schools have the capacity to undertake their responsibilities.

It is the responsibility of providers to conduct risk assessments of placement schools to ensure that:

- relevant support structures are in place, the school can provide suitable mentor support, and the mentor is willing to undergo training delivered by the provider
- the environment is a suitable setting to allow trainees to meet the iQTS Teachers' Standards and apply the Core Content Framework (CCF)
- there are appropriate safeguarding mechanisms in place

Where a school has serious weakness or is underperforming, it may still be possible for providers to use the school, especially if the improvements to be made do not affect the subject or age range of the training. The partnership needs to be confident that the trainee will not be disadvantaged by the school experience and the situation should be kept under close review.

C2.5 Awarding iQTS

In England, providers recommend trainees for the award of QTS to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) and the TRA grants this status. As iQTS is a teaching qualification, not a status, iQTS providers are approved to award the qualification themselves.

If an iQTS candidate has met all of the iQTS Teachers' Standards they will be awarded iQTS by their provider.

Providers must submit annual candidate data to DfE on the number of:

- iQTS applications
- successful applicants starting the course
- successful iQTS awards

Automatic award of QTS

DfE intends to bring forward regulations to allow holders of iQTS to be awarded QTS. Those who have successfully completed the iQTS qualification with an approved provider will be automatically awarded QTS.

If the iQTS holder then wishes to teach in a maintained school or non-maintained special school in England, they will need to complete an induction period^{[\[footnote 6\]](#)}.

They will be able to complete their induction either in a DfE-accredited British School Overseas (BSO) or in a relevant school in England^{[\[footnote 7\]](#)}. During their induction they will be assessed against English Teachers' Standards.

Management and quality assurance criteria

C3.1 Management

All approved iQTS providers must ensure that their management structure ensures the effective operation of their training programme.

Providers must plan their training programme to ensure that they comply with the current iQTS criteria and provide the opportunity for trainees to demonstrate they meet the iQTS Teachers' Standards. Training should be of high quality and providers should seek continuing improvement.

Schools should play a significant role in the delivery of training provision, crucially through the school-based mentor. The management structure is encouraged to facilitate a central role for placement schools in all aspects of provision, from selection and recruitment through to delivery and training, and the assessment of trainees for the award of iQTS as appropriate.

Partnerships should ensure that the workload of trainee teachers is manageable, while being mindful that local expectations related to workload may be different from those in England. Providers should plan workload to meet local needs. Guidance is available to support partnerships to address [trainee teacher workload](#) using the [teacher workload toolkits](#). Everyone across the partnership should be clear about their role in reducing trainee teacher workload.

Providers must contact DfE to seek approval for any proposed significant changes to their governance and/or operational structure. This includes, for example, the loss or removal of a partner organisation or a change in the

accounting officer. If a provider is in any doubt as to whether they should advise DfE of any changes, they should do. If a provider makes significant changes to their governance and/or operational structures, DfE reserves the right to withdraw approved status and require the newly configured organisation to seek approval as a new provider.

Details of any proposed variations should be sent to

iqts.pilot@education.gov.uk.

C3.2 Partnerships

All approved iQTS providers must ensure that partners establish a partnership agreement setting out the roles and responsibilities of the iQTS provider, the placement school and any other partners.

The partnership agreement should be a clear, working document that can be used to guide and inform the contributions of each partner and help to support coherent arrangements across the various contexts in which the training takes place. The partnership agreement should be underpinned by other practices, such as well-understood procedures for communication between the partners and agreed arrangements for the coordination of the training.

In some cases, providers will source placement schools for trainees and in others the trainee may secure their own placement or already be working in a school. In all cases, there should be a partnership agreement between the provider and the placement school along with any other involved partners.

Providers must assure that schools are involved in training and assessing trainees as a minimum. For cases where the provider sources a placement school for the trainee, the school should be involved in recruitment and selection processes. The roles and responsibilities of all partners should be clearly defined in the partnership agreement.

The partnership agreement should also include details of the:

- partnership's quality assurance procedures
- content and delivery of the iQTS programme
- safeguarding checks
- policies for equality of opportunity
- organisation and management of the partnership
- the role of each partner in addressing and managing trainee teacher workload
- the role of all partners in protecting trainees' mental health and well-being
- mentoring training provision by the provider, and responsibilities and expectations of the school-based mentor

The partnership agreement may make reference, for example, to the functions of groups and committees in managing the partnership and the ways in which resources are allocated among partners. It will set out the criteria for removing schools from the partnership, particularly where quality issues arise. The agreement and any associated supplementary documentation should be reviewed and revised by members of the partnership at appropriate intervals.

Roles and responsibilities

All trainers and iQTS trainees need to be clear about who is responsible for elements of training and assessment, how provision is managed, and how the elements fit together to ensure training addresses all the iQTS Teachers' Standards.

Partnership agreements should specify the different roles within the partnership including, for example, programme and course leaders, mentors, tutors, training managers, and internal and external moderators.

They should also set out how partners contribute towards:

- selecting and interviewing applicants

- moderating assessment judgements of trainees against the iQTS Teachers' Standards
- providing professional development opportunities for colleagues within the partnership
- trainee access to resources
- any course and/or programme committees
- quality assurance including improvement planning and self-evaluation
- the promotion of equality of opportunity
- the safeguarding of children and young people

Providers should ensure that there is a feedback loop between trainees and providers to allow for direct communication.

C3.3 Legislation

In England, all accredited ITT providers must ensure that they comply with all current legislation relevant to ITT. Approved iQTS providers must also be aware of relevant local legislation for their trainees' context.

In order to be approved to offer iQTS, a provider must satisfy the criteria specified by the Secretary of State. iQTS partnerships must review and update their provision so that it continues to meet these criteria and associated legislation. Where there is evidence of an iQTS provider's non-compliance with current iQTS criteria, DfE will consider withdrawal of approval.

In England, providers should make sure that partners are fully aware of their duties under all relevant legislation and have in place arrangements for ensuring these are met when selecting, recruiting, training and assessing trainees.

This includes:

- [Equality Act 2010](#) - legislation relating to equality, discrimination and employment
- [Data Protection Act 2018](#) (read the [Guide to the General Data Protection Regulation](#))
- [Freedom of Information Act 2000](#)

While iQTS providers should be aware of and guided by the above, these duties cannot be imposed in other jurisdictions. Providers should work with local requirements where appropriate. Providers will not lose their approval to deliver iQTS when they abide by local regulations which are in conflict with the requirements of the Equality, Data Protection and Freedom of Information Acts. Protocols for information sharing and secure data storage, in line with local regulations, should be included in the partnership agreement.

Further information

The following is a sample list of legislation and guidance relevant to England. iQTS providers should be aware that this cannot be imposed on other jurisdictions and that they should take into account local requirements.

The [Equality Act 2010](#) is the governing legislation for all matters relating to all acts of discrimination.

Also relevant are:

- [Education \(Health Standards\) \(England\) Regulations 2003 \(SI 3139\)](#)
- [Special Educational Needs and Disability Act \(2001\)](#)

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) provides further guidance on the Equality Act for schools and further and higher education institutions. The EHRC also has information on the [Equality Act codes of practice](#) that relate to equal pay, race, disability, sex and gender discrimination.

Other relevant documents include:

- the Health and Safety Executive's [Five Steps to Risk Assessment](#)
- guidance for practitioners and managers from HM Government on information [sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners](#)

iQTS providers should familiarise themselves with the Competition and Markets Authority's consumer law advice. Any ITT provider that does not meet its obligations to students may be in breach of consumer protection law. Find out more about [Higher education: consumer law advice for providers](#).

C3.4 Quality assurance

All approved iQTS providers must ensure that they monitor, evaluate and moderate all aspects of provision rigorously and demonstrate how these contribute to securing improvements in the quality of the training and assessment of trainees.

Trainees can only be awarded iQTS if they meet the iQTS Teachers' Standards. Therefore, the assessment of trainees must be accurate and reliable in establishing consistently over time whether or not trainees meet the iQTS Teachers' Standards.

In order to ensure accuracy and reliability providers should have clear and robust assessment and moderation arrangements in place, informed by appropriate criteria for the various aspects and stages of the training.

External moderators have an important role in ensuring consistency of standards across and within iQTS partnerships. Providers should ensure that external moderators have relevant expertise and experience to enable them to carry out their roles competently. They should also ensure the views of external moderators are taken into account fully when reaching

decisions about trainees' achievement of the iQTS Teachers' Standards.

Evaluation

iQTS providers should clearly define the arrangements and responsibilities for monitoring and evaluating the quality of training across all the contexts in which it takes place and identify ways in which it could be improved.

iQTS providers may wish to collect and analyse a variety of data to inform their understanding of the effectiveness of their training.

For example, they may collect and analyse data or other evidence about:

- training sessions, in order to establish their fitness for purpose and to identify strengths and weaknesses across the different contributions to the programme
- trainees' evaluations of how their training needs have been met
- tutors' evaluations of the training programme and how it is administered
- trainees' perceptions of their training
- former trainees, induction tutors, mentors and employing schools
- internal and external moderation about the effectiveness and accuracy of the assessments of trainees against the iQTS Teachers' Standards
- external moderator feedback about the effectiveness of training provision in helping trainees to meet the iQTS Teachers' Standards
- the implementation of equality policies
- DfE and iQTS inspectorate feedback

Internal moderation

Internal moderation provides a system of checks and balances within a partnership to ensure that trainees in different settings are assessed accurately and reliably. ITT providers should ensure that arrangements for internal moderation are in place and they work effectively. The roles and

responsibilities of those carrying out such arrangements are likely to be contained in the [partnership agreement](#).

Internal moderation procedures could include for example:

- the involvement of staff with relevant expertise from two or more partners (for example, the provider and placement school, or the provider and several placement schools) when assessing trainees
- detailed scrutiny by a moderating panel of a sample of trainees, including any judged by an assessor as on the pass/fail borderline, or likely to fail
- joint observations of trainees' teaching
- discussions by relevant staff of all the evidence available, including trainees' previous experience and achievement
- arrangements for feeding back information to the partnership about the accuracy and consistency of assessment arrangements and about elements of good practice to support improvements

External moderation

iQTS providers should appoint suitable external moderators (these can be providers' existing examiners as long as they are external to the organisation). External moderators should have no direct involvement with the work of the partnership. They should be able to offer an external perspective on the attainment of other providers' trainees being assessed for the award of iQTS, which should help to verify the accuracy of the provider assessments. Providers should consider how to use external moderators to corroborate and standardise their assessments of trainees.

Providers may wish to consider, when appointing external moderators, whether they have appropriate subject, curriculum or age-phase expertise to enable them to provide specialist feedback.

The responsibilities of external moderators might include:

- detailed scrutiny of a sample of trainees, including a representative cross-section of trainees together with all trainees that internal moderators regard as being on the pass/fail borderline, or possible

failures

- observation of the teaching of all trainees in a designated sample, such as those assessed as being borderline satisfactory to good, or borderline good to outstanding
- discussion with internal assessors and/or moderators of all the evidence available on whether individual trainees have achieved the Teachers' Standards and at what level
- scrutiny of internal moderation arrangements, drawing on some of the evidence gained from activities above
- producing a report that includes an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision observed, clearly linked to the iQTS Teachers' Standards and iQTS criteria, and including an evaluation of the accuracy of the assessments of trainees' attainment against the iQTS Teachers' Standards

In addition, providers should have procedures in place for monitoring and evaluating the management of their programmes. They should use evidence exemplified above to inform the work of any committees that serve the partnership.

Providers should have systematic procedures in place in order to demonstrate that monitoring and evaluation have secured improvements in quality and outcomes for trainees. This may mean keeping comparative data and other evidence over a period of time.

Similarly, providers may wish to examine their procedures and practices for enhancing and improving the pedagogical knowledge of all trainees and the knowledge of relevant curriculum areas for primary trainees, and evaluate these against the success of trainees in meeting the iQTS Teachers' Standards. The evidence will need to be sufficiently robust to enable providers to draw conclusions and act upon them.

All monitoring and evaluation processes and activities should focus on impact and outcomes, particularly in the context of the standards achieved by trainees. Reporting and documenting of these activities should be evaluative rather than descriptive. These activities and processes might feed into improvement plans. When monitoring and evaluating programmes, providers should compare their own provision with that of providers of similar and different size and type.

C3.5 Inspection

iQTS providers will not be inspected by Ofsted. Instead, DfE is currently developing an independent inspection regime. [iQTS: inspection policy](#) has more information and details of how to apply to join the inspectorate pilot.

Approved iQTS providers will not be inspected in year one of their provision. Instead, there will be monitoring and evaluation of the provision by the DfE.

Relevant legislation

This advice refers to:

- [The Education \(Health Standards\) \(England\) Regulations 2003](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Data Protection Act 2018](#)
- [Freedom of Information Act 2000](#)
- [Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015](#)

Notes

1. As determined by the iQTS inspection regime criteria (currently in development, find out more from [iQTS: inspection policy](#).)↵

2. For the equivalent of grades awarded under the new GCSE grading structure, refer to [Grading new GCSEs](#).
3. A first degree comprises 300 HE credit points of which 60 must be at level 6 of the QCF. Applicants with a foundation degree will need to supplement this qualification with at least 60 credits at level 6 (HE level 3) in order to attain an equivalent single qualification.
4. Section 4 of the Education Act 1996 defines a school as ‘an educational institution which is outside the further education sector and the higher education sector and is an institution for providing (a) primary education, (b) secondary education or (c) both primary and secondary education’.
5. Time in schools may be completed on a part-time basis to make up the full-time equivalent amounts.
6. A relevant school includes: a maintained school; a non-maintained special school; a maintained nursery school; a nursery school that forms part of a maintained school; a local authority maintained children’s centre; and a pupil referral unit (PRU).
7. For a full list of institutions in which induction can be served, see paragraph 2.1 of [Induction for early career teachers \(England\) 2021](#).

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