



Department
for Education

Outcomes of the review of the Initial Teacher Training Core Content Framework and Early Career Framework

January 2024

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Introduction

The quality of teaching is the single most important in-school factor in improving outcomes for pupils – and it is particularly important for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. No one is born a great teacher, and evidence shows that high quality professional development is the best way to help teachers improve.

That is why, despite the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Department for Education (DfE) implemented the Early Career Framework (ECF) reforms nationally in autumn 2021 – building on the introduction of the Initial Teacher Training (ITT) Core Content Framework (CCF), which took effect from 2020. Together, these create an entitlement to three or more years of evidence-informed, structured training and support for all entrants to the profession.

Two academic years later, we have made significant progress. All ITT courses now incorporate the CCF, and 96% of schools are using the fully funded training on offer to provide an ECF-based induction programme for their early career teachers (ECTs). All the lead providers of ECF-based training were rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted in 2023.

We have always been clear that transforming the training and support that all new teachers receive is a long-term commitment, requiring continued investment and improvement. That is why we committed to a review of the CCF and ECF as the evidence base evolves and, importantly, so too do the experiences and needs of trainees and ECTs. And it is also why evaluation and continuous improvement are hardwired into the design of the ECF programme – both as part of lead providers' programme delivery and through the process evaluation of national rollout commissioned by the DfE.

We have now finished our review, combining an EEF-assured review of the 'Learn that' statements and underpinning CCF and ECF evidence with evaluation data, lessons learned from the first years of implementation, and extensive expert and sector feedback. Based on this, we are making important changes to the design and content of the frameworks and to ECF-based training delivery to improve the support all trainees and ECTs receive from September 2025.

Key changes and improvements

This section sets out the 5 key areas for improvement that were highlighted in the review of the CCF and ECF and the actions we are taking to address them.

Repetition

The sector told us that elements of the ECF programmes can feel repetitive of ITT.

The most substantial change we are making in response to feedback is a move to a combined framework for ITT and ECF-based training: the Initial Teacher Training and Early Career Framework (ITTECF). This recognises that we now have a 3 or more year introduction to the core body of knowledge, skills and behaviours that define great teaching, and that the role of ITT and ECF providers is to appropriately support all new teachers to build their expertise across all aspects of the framework.

The CCF and ECF's similar but separate nature sometimes meant that there was unintentional repetition of ITT elements in ECF-based training. The ITTECF includes new wording on progression, setting out how knowledge and skills should develop across ITT and through ECF-based induction, to reduce unnecessary repetition. We know that a teacher's understanding and confidence with the elements of teaching develops as they grow in experience, and that they require less expert support over time. But we also know that this is not a linear process and ECTs should purposefully revisit the components of great teaching throughout their training to strengthen and deepen their expertise. ECF programmes will be consciously designed to build on prior learning, with delivery tailored to what each ECT needs to develop their expertise.

Alongside the move to a combined framework, we will ensure ECF lead providers pitch their programmes in recognition that most ECTs will begin induction with a greater understanding of the framework, having completed ITT courses that incorporate it. We will introduce a new requirement for ECF lead providers to create diagnostic tools that ECTs will use alongside their mentors to appraise their expertise. We will give ECF mentors greater flexibility to focus on the aspects of self-study most needed to support their ECT's development while continuing to cover all areas of the training curriculum in sequence. ECF lead providers will develop high quality resources to support this tailored delivery, such as extension materials to deepen expertise and resources to support mentors to break down teaching skills further for ECTs to practice.

Contextualisation to subject and phase

The sector told us that more tailoring to specific contexts and subjects would strengthen the ECF programme.

The CCF and ECF were designed to work for all teachers, across all phases and subjects – and this is an important principle. As such, the new framework does not include increased subject-specific content. ITT providers have the autonomy to incorporate the ITTECF as part of a full curriculum appropriate for the subject and phase that the trainee is training to teach. This is also vital in early career training – in line with the feedback received and emphasis on the need for greater tailoring – that ECTs are able to relate their training directly to their own specific contexts and needs. As such, ECF lead providers will develop enhanced subject-specific materials, designed specifically for their programmes. Mentors will continue to play a vital role in supporting tailoring in their school and their resources will help them to do this. In addition, subject-specific materials to support trainees, ECTs and their mentors are freely available via Oak National Academy. Oak will work with ITT and ECF providers to support them to enhance their existing provision with more subject-specific content.

While the framework remains applicable across different phases, in response to feedback on the content relating to younger primary-age pupils in the CCF and ECF, we have included additional statements in the framework with an emphasis on, but not restricted to, younger pupils.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

The sector told us that trainees and ECTs need further support in supporting pupils with SEND.

The ITTECF has been designed in the knowledge that high quality teaching is the most important way to improve outcomes for pupils – particularly those with additional needs. The framework is designed to enable trainees and ECTs to take their first steps towards becoming expert teachers who can transform the lives of their pupils.

Our review of content for the ITTECF paid particular attention to the needs of trainees and ECTs when supporting pupils with SEND. There is now significantly more content related to adaptive teaching and supporting pupils with SEND, some of which has been adapted from the new National Professional Qualification (NPQ) for SENCOs to be relevant for trainees and ECTs. We have also made some edits to existing statements to improve inclusivity for SEND throughout the framework.

Recognising the importance of ensuring trainees and ECTs are confident in supporting pupils with SEND to succeed, we will also be enhancing the requirements on ECF lead providers when creating SEND exemplification materials.

Evidence underpinning the framework

The sector told us the frameworks need to evolve as the underpinning evidence evolves.

The content of the ITTECF has been updated based on a [Call for Evidence](#) launched in spring 2023 which invited submissions from across the sector. The outcomes of the Call for Evidence have been considered alongside feedback from experts, including lessons learned from the first few years of CCF implementation and delivery of ECF-based induction. The changes include updates and enhancements regarding supporting pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), high quality oral language (sometimes known as oracy), and early cognitive development. In addition, a new statement has been added to the body of the framework to address trainees' and ECTs' evidence literacy.

The framework sets out a minimum entitlement to training and is not a full curriculum. It remains for accredited ITT providers and ECF lead providers to integrate additional analysis and critique of theory, research, and expert practice as they deem appropriate for their curriculum.

Mentoring

The sector told us that mentoring is vital but workload is too high.

High quality mentoring is deliberately at the heart of our ITT and ECF reforms; we know that trainees and ECTs value mentoring as a core element of their training and development. But we have heard feedback about the workload and demands of the role for mentors. To support ITT mentoring capacity, we have introduced a new ITT lead mentor role and have made up to £25 million available to schools and accredited ITT providers in AY 2024/25 to support this, and to allow mentors time off timetable to access high quality mentor training. ITT providers will consider any prior learning that mentors might have completed, including as an ECF mentor, in order to avoid unnecessary repetition of training.

We will also make a number of changes to ECF mentoring to reduce the workload for mentors while ensuring they continue to receive high quality support. ECF mentors will continue to provide support to ECTs throughout their two year induction, but training for mentors will be shortened to one year. A new ECF provider-led training programme for ECF mentors will bring together all of the training elements mentors said they found most valuable and remove any unnecessary workload. It will also allow more flexibility in how training for new mentors is delivered.

From 2025, ECF lead providers will support mentors with more detailed resources for use in preparing and delivering one-to-one sessions with ECTs. This will ensure mentors use their time to support their ECT without having to create materials. These resources will include content on how to support ECTs who need extra help to master a topic, and how to effectively contextualise the learning for their ECT. Mentors who have already undertaken ECF mentor training will have full access to these resources, and live

sessions will be held for new mentors to cement and deepen their understanding in their first year in the role.

These changes will continue to place mentors at the centre of these reforms to teacher development and build the role of mentoring as integral within the profession.

Ongoing improvement

These changes to design, content and delivery will make a difference for trainees and ECTs – and for everyone involved in supporting them through these crucial first years in the profession. We will continue to listen, learn and adapt ITT and ECF-based training to make sure every new teacher is equipped to deliver great teaching.



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