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[Department
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Guidance

International qualified teacher status: criteria and supporting information - 2024 to 2025

Updated 26 February 2024

Applies to England

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Overview

This document contains mandatory guidance and accompanying advice from the Department for Education (DfE).

Providers should also refer to the following documents:

- [iQTS Teachers' Standards](#)
- [Initial teacher training \(ITT\) core content framework \(CCF\) for iQTS](#)
- [International qualified teacher status \(iQTS\): pilot inspection framework](#)

Approved international qualified teacher status (iQTS) providers must have regard to the mandatory guidance when carrying out their duties relating to iQTS.

iQTS courses that begin on or prior to 31 May 2024 and are scheduled to finish after the iQTS criteria for 2024 to 2025 academic year come into effect, are subject to the criteria that were in place when the ITT course commenced.

From the 2024 to 2025 academic year, all iQTS courses must incorporate a further set of quality requirements; these iQTS quality requirements have been embedded into the iQTS criteria and supporting advice.

Where reference is made to partnerships or partners, organisations involved in the delivery of iQTS will be classified in one of the following 3 ways:

1. the approved iQTS provider will have full and final accountability for all aspects of training design, delivery, and quality across the partnership
2. lead partners will have an operational or strategic role with responsibilities delegated to them by the approved iQTS provider. These may include trainee recruitment, delivering training, involvement in iQTS curriculum design, supplying

- lead mentors, mentor leadership teams and running [Intensive training and practice](#)
3. placement schools will provide iQTS placements and general mentors

In these criteria we set out mandatory requirements and responsibilities for approved iQTS providers. Where an approved iQTS provider has delegated a role to a lead partner, these mandatory requirements and responsibilities apply to the lead partner, the approved iQTS provider is accountable for ensuring this.

DfE reserves the right to update criteria and guidance to ensure it remains up to date and relevant.

Approval

Approved iQTS providers must ensure that they meet these criteria to remain compliant. Approved iQTS providers who do not comply with these criteria may be subject to withdrawal of approval.

As part of our approach to quality assurance, providers in their first year of delivery will continue to work with DfE on the quality assurance of their iQTS programmes. From year 2 of iQTS delivery providers will be subject to inspection.

Entry criteria

C1.1 GCSE standard equivalent

All approved iQTS providers must ensure that all entrants have:

- a standard equivalent to a grade 4 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

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.

Applicants who are otherwise suitable but have not successfully achieved a GCSE grade 4 (or 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.

DfE does not provide an exhaustive list of qualifications that can be considered equivalent to the GCSE examinations in mathematics and science. When approved iQTS 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.

Examples of equivalents to UK GCSE qualifications include:

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

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

Intellectual and academic capabilities

Approved iQTS providers should consider the full range of applicants' knowledge, skills, academic background, and prior experience to judge whether they have the capability to undertake an iQTS course and meet the [iQTS Teachers' Standards](#) by the end of their training.

Prior to the award of iQTS, approved iQTS providers must assure that trainees demonstrate competence in the following areas.

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.

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.

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 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 mathematics, whereas responsibility for assurance lies with the approved iQTS provider. Fundamental mathematics may be supported and assured in different ways by different approved iQTS providers.

Further information

The [European Network of Information Centres in the European Region](#) (ENIC) provides advice on the equivalence of overseas qualifications.

C1.2 Degree criteria

All approved iQTS providers must ensure that all entrants hold a first degree from a United Kingdom or non-United Kingdom institution of higher education, or an equivalent qualification [\[footnote 1\]](#).

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.

Examples of equivalents to non-UK degrees include:

- bachelor's degree
- Bachelor of Arts
- diplôme
- licenziatura

To check applicants' qualifications meet the standard of a degree from a UK institution, refer them to [UK ENIC](#), where they can apply for a statement of comparability. iQTS is a postgraduate qualification. Any equivalent qualification must be one single qualification, not an aggregation of separate qualifications. The exception to this is where candidates undertake study to extend an existing degree (for example, a foundation level degree) or qualification to secure the required level of academic award to meet degree criteria requirements.

Those entering iQTS programmes need to have attained a degree before they commence the programme.

Approved iQTS providers should view original certificates 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, approved iQTS providers should obtain written confirmation from the relevant degree-awarding institution that the applicant has achieved graduate status. Approved iQTS providers should view the original certificate as soon as it is available.

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

There may be circumstances in which the award of an applicant's degree has been impacted by exceptional delays in the awarding organisation's administrative process (such as a delay to the marking of a final assessment). In these cases, it may not be possible for the applicant to be awarded graduate status before entry to the iQTS programme. Approved iQTS providers should exercise discretion and review other relevant evidence that would demonstrate confidence from the degree-awarding organisation in the applicant's future graduate status. Due consideration should be given where evidence demonstrates that an applicant is unlikely to be awarded graduate status.

Individuals who have been accepted onto an iQTS course in these circumstances must be awarded their degree before they can be assessed as meeting the iQTS Teachers' Standards. It is the responsibility of the provider to confirm this.

Only the approved iQTS provider can award iQTS and make recommendations for the award of QTS.

Degree subjects

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

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.

Information on degree level qualifications

Approved iQTS 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 first (bachelor's) degree in the UK, including:

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

Some master's degrees may provide the necessary breadth and have a similar type of academic engagement as would be expected from a first degree. It is for the approved iQTS 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. Approved iQTS providers whose partnerships do not include degree-awarding bodies may wish to seek advice from those that do.

Further information

The [European Network of Information Centres in the European Region](#) (ENIC) provides advice on the equivalence of overseas degrees.

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

All approved iQTS providers must ensure that all entrants have demonstrated proficiency in the English language, by evidencing an average IELTS score of 6.5 or higher (or equivalent score in another English language testing system), or having 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 and safeguarding

All approved iQTS providers must ensure that all entrants have taken part in a rigorous selection process designed to assess their suitability to train to teach.

Approved iQTS providers 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 that they are unsuitable for teaching. They should conduct interviews, run appropriate pre-selection checks, and assess if an applicant has the potential to undertake an iQTS course and meet the iQTS Teachers' Standards by the end of their training.

Approved iQTS providers should consider a range of evidence to judge applicants' suitability to train to teach prior to offering them a place on a course, for example:

- information from application forms
- results of any entry tests or tasks
- interviews

School experience

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

Interviews

Approved iQTS providers should consider how information from interviews can help to identify and take account of trainees' specific needs during training. This may include exemptions from programme requirements because of prior achievement. The interview process can include discussions of professional portfolios and discussions of prior achievement.

There is no requirement for a face-to-face interview. Interviews can take place virtually, providing suitable applicant identity checks have been conducted.

Approved iQTS providers must ensure that applicants are given every opportunity, before and during the interview, to provide information about any special requirements that require reasonable adjustment.

Equality

To comply with equality legislation, approved iQTS providers must ensure that interview procedures promote equality of opportunity and avoid discrimination.

The [Equality Act 2010](#) requires approved iQTS providers to ensure they are not discriminating against applicants on the basis of any protected characteristic, including disability. Approved iQTS providers should comply with the requirement of this legislation notwithstanding the fact that they are delivering services overseas.

Applicants with disabilities are under no obligation to disclose their disabilities. Approved iQTS providers must ensure that their provision does not place applicants with declared disabilities at a disadvantage. Approved iQTS providers must also consider making anticipatory adjustments to promote positive equality of access for disabled applicants, including access to benefits, facilities, and services.

Health and physical capacity to train to teach

Approved iQTS 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. Approved iQTS providers should have regard to the relevant aspects of [Keeping children safe in education](#) requirements when assessing trainees' health and physical capacity to train to teach, so that children and young people are not 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](#). Approved iQTS providers are responsible for ensuring that only trainees who have the capacity 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. Approved iQTS providers should not ask all encompassing health questions but should ensure that they only ask targeted and relevant health related questions which are necessary to ensure that a person is able to train to teach.

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 [Teachers' standards](#) requirements.

Safeguarding children in school

Approved 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. This will include obtaining and considering an International Child Protection Certificate (ICPC) and/or a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) criminal records checks and children's barred list information or the equivalent to these checks within the local context where a provider is delivering. Providers should also be aware of formal guidance within the local context they are delivering.

Approved iQTS providers should be guided by the safer recruitment policy outlined in the statutory safeguarding guidance for schools [Keeping children safe in education](#). 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 approved iQTS providers can use as part of their safeguarding procedures. It is good practice for approved iQTS providers to carry out a risk assessment recording the evidence they have gathered to reach their decision and show they have no grounds for concern about the applicant.

Agreeing a protocol with your partner schools

We recognise that certain checks may be difficult for approved iQTS providers to carry out if they are not in the same country as the trainee, so some checks can be delegated to partner school however approved iQTS providers remain ultimately responsible for the procedures and practices used to assess whether someone is suitable to work with children.

Approved iQTS providers should establish clear safeguarding procedures and protocols that are agreed by all partners (including lead 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.

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

Safeguarding checks for applicants to the iQTS programme

The following procedures and evidence will help approved iQTS providers assess the suitability of their 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.

Checks to be carried out by iQTS 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. Approved iQTS providers 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. Contact details of regulatory bodies in the EU/EEA and Switzerland can be found on the [Regulated Professions database](#). For everywhere else, they 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 \(ICPC\)](#) or a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) criminal records check . If a candidate has never been to the UK, approved iQTS providers do not need to apply for an ICPC for that candidate.

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
- DBS certificate where appropriate (for example, in Northern Ireland)
- obtaining a local version of a DBS certificate
- checking the local equivalents of the Prohibited List and the Children's Barred List

ICPC and DBS checks

Pre-selection checks will include obtaining and considering an International Child Protection Certificate (ICPC) or a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) criminal records checks and children's barred list information or the equivalent to these checks within the local context where a provider is delivering.

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.

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 a trainee from your programme

Approved iQTS providers have a duty to ensure that trainees are properly managed and supervised. If an approved iQTS provider removes a trainee from a programme because the trainee has harmed or poses a risk of harm to children, or if the approved iQTS provider would have removed the trainee had they not left, the approved iQTS provider has a duty to report this to the relevant local authorities in your placement school region, and to the DfE.

C1.5 iQTS Recruitment practices

All approved iQTS providers must:

- ensure course information is accurate, up to date and provides trainees with the information they need
- provide timely responses to applications

Approved iQTS providers should ensure that applicants are treated fairly throughout the application and recruitment process. While consideration will need to be given to the availability of course places, approved iQTS providers should aim to ensure that as many applicants as possible are given the opportunity to demonstrate their

potential at interview if they have met the entry criteria outlined above. Where places are no longer available, applicants should be advised in a timely manner to allow them to make an application elsewhere.

Relevant course information

When publishing course information, approved iQTS providers should include which countries trainees can apply from, as well as clear contact details for potential trainees to get in touch with providers, ensuring that these are kept up to date.

Approved iQTS providers should ensure that it is clear to applicants when a course is full, and they should be made aware at the earliest opportunity when a course that they have applied to becomes full.

Approved iQTS providers should also give clear information about specific requirements or expectations they have of applicants applying for iQTS courses, including information related to finding placement schools.

Approved iQTS providers should give details of their complaint's procedure on their website. This should be accessible and straightforward.

If more than one organisation is involved in delivering an iQTS programme, it should be clear who the lead provider is, and what they are responsible for. If there is a separate accrediting body, this should also be made clear.

Decisions, offers, feedback and deferrals

Approved iQTS providers should give timely responses to applications. Approved iQTS providers should allow applicants time to consider the outcomes of other applications before accepting or declining offers.

Approved iQTS providers should ensure that applicants are given a deadline to meet any offer conditions that have been set. Applicants apply and are interviewed at different times through the recruitment period, but they should be given the same amount of time to meet the same conditions, where possible. Approved iQTS providers may wish to provide the same deadline to all applicants to meet similar offer conditions.

Interviews must take place before an offer is made. Succeeding at an interview should not be a condition of an offer.

If an application is rejected, feedback should explain the reasons why to the applicant, including advice on how the application can be improved. If an application is rejected because a course is full, where recruitment processes allow, approved iQTS providers should still aim to provide feedback.

If an offer is deferred, approved iQTS providers should ensure that there are sufficient places on the iQTS course for the following year.

Training Criteria

C2.1 Programme structure

All approved iQTS providers must:

- design an evidence-based, sequenced curriculum which encompasses all aspects of the [iQTS Core Content Framework \(CCF\)](#) as well as the programme requirements set out in these criteria
- design courses to enable trainee teachers to meet the iQTS Teachers' Standards
- ensure that no trainee teacher is awarded iQTS and recommended for the award of QTS until they have met all of these Standards
- ensure that the content, structure, delivery, and assessment of programmes are designed to take into account the trainees' local context, in line with the guidance on the international application of the iQTS Teachers' Standards and the iQTS Core Content Framework

iQTS programmes delivered by approved iQTS providers must be taught in the English language. However, iQTS trainees may be teaching in a variety of languages during their placements.

At the outset, approved iQTS providers should make clear to trainees, mentors and those involved in iQTS delivery at lead partners and placement schools:

- the scope and coverage of the programme
- subject and curriculum knowledge and understanding
- 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. Approved iQTS providers should constantly review the effectiveness of their training programme in supporting trainees to meet the [iQTS Teachers' Standards](#). iQTS providers should offer trainees specialist subject training to develop the necessary knowledge and understanding of their subjects and related pedagogy. They should be given experience of teaching across the full age and ability range. When trainees' specialist subject is only or predominantly taught at one age range (for example, post-16 politics), they should, where possible, be given the opportunity to teach a related subject across the full age range (for example, history to younger year groups).

Prior to the award of iQTS, providers must assure trainees' English and mathematics competency. 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. Approved iQTS 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 Age ranges, subject-specific and phase-specific training](#)) 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 Intensive Training and Practice](#).

Providers must ensure their curricula encompass the full entitlement described in [the Initial teacher training core content framework for iQTS](#).

Overarching requirements

Approved iQTS providers must have a fully developed, evidence-based curriculum. It must encompass all aspects of the iQTS Core Content Framework (CCF) as a minimum entitlement. This will ensure that trainees, should they wish to undertake it, are prepared for the next stage in their professional development as teachers.

An approved iQTS provider's curriculum must be sequenced and coherent, supporting trainees to develop their classroom practice. It should be appropriate for the particular subjects, phases, and age ranges which their trainees will teach. Approved iQTS providers should determine an appropriate and robust evidence base for their curriculum. This should include the best evidence for effective teacher training and development, with subject-specific and phase-specific content integrated into the taught curriculum.

The iQTS curriculum should enable trainees to engage in critical analysis of theory, research (including, where appropriate, their own) and expert practice. Trainees must have sufficient feedback and support from expert mentors and colleagues to understand, apply, reflect upon, and develop their teaching practice.

The iQTS curriculum must underpin the programme's components, independent learning, teaching practice and feedback. The iQTS curriculum should provide the opportunity for trainees to consolidate fundamental components of knowledge, understanding and practice. This should be accomplished before they begin to deliver longer sequences of teaching, which themselves draw on a range of knowledge, skills, and behaviours. As trainees move towards more complex, composite sequences and scenarios, they must have sufficient opportunity to identify, re-visit, and isolate areas which require further consolidation.

Those responsible for the professional development of trainees should have a deep understanding of the planned curriculum and its basis in evidence, to ensure that trainees experience consistent training and support at all stages.

Approved iQTS providers must identify how all components of the planned curriculum will be taught, assimilated, and applied to practice in a range of contexts. The iQTS curriculum should encompass a variety of teaching and learning approaches and experiences, including direct explanation, deconstruction, structured and focused observation and targeted practice with systematic analysis, feedback, and mentoring.

Minimum time allocations

Approved iQTS providers must design training programmes which reflect the minimum time allocations for pivotal aspects of iQTS programmes set out in Tables 1 to 4 of these iQTS criteria. Approved iQTS providers should note that these times refer to course design. It is accepted that, at times, and for exceptional reasons such as sickness absence, some trainees, mentors, lead mentors or mentor leadership teams may not meet the full allocation. Approved iQTS providers should continue to exercise appropriate judgement in individual cases where this happens.

These minimum time allocations may be undertaken on a part-time basis but should be satisfied in full.

Table 1: minimum course length

All minimum time allocations are course design requirements. Approved iQTS providers must design iQTS curricula that adhere to the minimum time allocation below:

iQTS minimum time allocations for the duration of the course	Postgraduate
Total weeks of course	36 (180 days)

Specific requirements

Approved iQTS providers must design a sequenced iQTS curriculum which:

- encompasses the iQTS CCF in full, includes further content to be taught that moves beyond the foundation of the iQTS CCF (including subject-specific and phase-specific content), and prepares trainees for the ECF and the broader demands of their teaching career
- reflects the trainees' local requirements
- demonstrates explicitly how it will build the expertise and confidence of trainees, from a focus on fundamental component elements to complex or composite practice
- demonstrates how taught components and classroom practice are integrated over time and across settings, to build systematically towards trainees' fluency in classroom practice

- specifies a range of methods, carefully and intentionally orchestrated across the iQTS curriculum, including, but not limited to, training undertaken with a range of experts, training undertaken with peers, supported independent study, rehearsal, and teaching practice
- identifies the range of settings in which trainees will undertake each part of their training
- includes detailed curriculum planning for teaching trainees evidence-based, subject- and phase-specific approaches to teaching, including the use of systematic synthetic phonics for all primary trainees
- provides subject- and phase-specific approaches delivered by suitably qualified experts and taking full account of the evidence available for subject- and phase-specific teaching
- adequately covers the relevant teaching subjects and must enable trainees to understand the application of general research-based principles
- includes a comprehensive suite of high-quality course materials for trainees and those responsible for curriculum delivery to support all aspects of the training, including evidence-based subject- and phase-specific training
- includes Intensive Training and Practice and identifies those parts of the iQTS curriculum that will be delivered as Intensive Training and Practice
- includes detail of the design of the Intensive Training and Practice element, how it will be delivered and what will be achieved

C2.2 Intensive Training and Practice

All approved iQTS providers must:

- identify parts of the iQTS curriculum that will be the focus of Intensive Training and Practice
- design and implement Intensive Training and Practice to build trainees' knowledge, understanding and classroom practice
- meet the minimum time expectations for Intensive Training and Practice set out in Table 2

Intensive Training and Practice should focus on specific, foundational, or pivotal areas of the iQTS curriculum. It should also demonstrate and build on the interplay between evidence-based theory and practice, engaging trainees in critical analysis, application of learning to classroom practice, and focused feedback on such practice.

As such, some elements of Intensive Training and Practice should take place in a school environment. Other elements may be provided in the approved iQTS provider's institution through virtual and/or face-to-face experiences, and/or through the use of approximations of practice, which allow trainees opportunities to try out parts of teaching in lower-stakes, supportive settings.

Time allocated to the Intensive Training and Practice element should be additional to the 24 weeks (120 days) spent on general school placements.

Focus areas and design of Intensive Training and Practice

Focus areas of Intensive Training and Practice should:

- be pivotal or foundational concepts of the planned iQTS curriculum that trainees can put into practice immediately
- be granular in nature
- have the potential to impact on trainees' classroom practice irrespective of context

It is for approved iQTS providers to decide the foundational or pivotal focus areas of Intensive Training and Practice.

Intensive Training and Practice should be delivered in line with the minimum time allocations across the training year, but does not need to be delivered as a single block. Approved iQTS providers may locate such practice at suitable points to ensure maximum impact on trainees' progress.

Delivery of Intensive Training and Practice

Intensive Training and Practice would typically involve groups of trainees, but

approved iQTS providers may choose to run them individually if a group experience is not possible.

Intensive Training and Practice may take place in one of the general placement schools where a trainee is located (though it must be additional to and distinct from the time allocation of the general placement itself), as long as that is appropriate to the curricular intent of the Intensive Training and Practice.

A range of practice environments can be used to support Intensive Training and Practice and live practice experience can take place in more than one school. Schools supporting Intensive Training and Practice should offer a sufficient range of strengths to support the delivery of strongly curriculum-aligned practice.

Specific requirements

Intensive Training and Practice will consist of:

- 3 to 5 carefully selected pivotal or foundational aspects of the planned curriculum, many are likely to relate to the iQTS CCF, although this is not required, and where possible will be specific to the subject and phase being taught
- structured observation of selected teaching practice (live lessons or recorded content), with those aspects under focus
- critical analysis of observed teaching and relevant teaching materials, guided by an expert, with a focus on understanding the links between theory and practice
- preparation for, and implementation of, classroom teaching practice with deliberate attention to the aspects under focus, with expert feedback and, where necessary, opportunities to repeat and vary such practice for different circumstances
- expert theoretical and practical input by tutors and/or mentors and other expert colleagues (in school or in an iQTS provider's institution)
- critical analysis of relevant teaching materials in the light of theory and evidence (in school, virtually or in an iQTS provider's institution)
- focused observation, reflection upon, and deconstruction of teaching (in school or virtually)
- expert modelling and deconstruction of individual components of teaching practice (in school or virtually)
- live classroom teaching practice (or practice in a rehearsal environment), with deliberate attention to the aspects under focus (in school)

- focused feedback utilising appropriate questioning and opportunities to practise further and improve

The outcomes of Intensive Training and Practice for trainees should include a strong understanding of the evidence base for the area concerned, which they can articulate, justify, and exemplify, and the ability to discuss effective classroom practice and to prepare and apply those aspects of teaching confidently in a range of contexts.

Table 2: minimum time allocations – Intensive Training and Practice

All minimum time allocations are course design requirements. Approved iQTS providers must ensure that courses are designed to provide trainees with Intensive Training and Practice experiences that adhere to the below minimum time allocations:

iQTS minimum time allocations	Postgraduate
Minimum weeks of Intensive Training and Practice (in addition to general school placements, does not need to be delivered in a single block)	4 (20 days)
Minimum planned and supported hours during Intensive Training and Practice ²	25 per week (average of 5 per day)
Minimum hours of expert support per trainee during Intensive Training and Practice ³	5 per week (average of 1 per day)

C2.3 Age ranges, subject-specific and phase-specific training

All approved iQTS providers must ensure that they prepare all trainees to teach within one of the following age phases:

- ages 3 to 11 (primary)
- ages 7 to 14 (middle)
- ages 11 to 19 (secondary)

Please note that these are specific to England and age phases may differ internationally, however iQTS training programmes should cover a minimum of 4 consecutive years.

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:

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

No iQTS training programme should cover fewer than 4 consecutive school years.

Where approved iQTS 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 that 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.

Approved iQTS 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.

Approved iQTS providers should ensure, where possible, that trainees have the opportunity to develop a comprehensive understanding of progression across, and before and after, the age range that they are training to teach. This might include

enhanced experiences in other age ranges.

Subject-specific and phase-specific training

The iQTS CCF emphasises the need for training to be specific to subject and phase. Subject specificity goes beyond subject knowledge. It is critically important that trainees learn about the evidence underpinning effective teaching at a general level and at a subject-specific and phase-specific level. Approved iQTS providers must ensure that their curriculum sets out in detail approaches for each subject and phase.

Approved iQTS providers must:

- have a clear evidence base underpinning each iQTS course
- ensure that trainees have sufficient knowledge of the content of the school curriculum in each subject and phase that they teach, including at the level required by relevant examination courses in secondary
- encompass the iQTS CCF within a subject- and phase-specific context, with sufficient subject-specific and phase-specific exemplification for tutors and mentors to consistently build trainees' knowledge and understanding
- ensure that trainees understand how subject-specific approaches to curriculum and pedagogy are based on both general research and evidence and subject- and phase-specific research and evidence
- ensure that tutors, lead mentors, mentor leadership teams and mentors, (including those supporting the delivery of Intensive Training and Practice), have the relevant subject-specific curricular expertise and close knowledge of the planned curriculum to guide and support trainees effectively
- set out clearly how trainees will learn the subject-specific elements of the planned curriculum, and who will support their learning
- introduce trainees to relevant subject- and phase-specific communities of practice and equip them to contribute in an informed way to relevant debates affecting the teaching of their subjects and phases

C2.4 School placements

All approved iQTS providers must ensure that training programmes are designed to provide trainees with:

- enough time training in school to meet the minimum requirements
- the experience they need to demonstrate all the Teachers' Standards for iQTS

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.

Other experiences, outside of school placements, can form a valuable part of training programmes, but only time spent in schools can count towards the minimum time requirements for school placements. Providers can use their discretion to reduce the school placement requirement for applicants to iQTS with teaching experience in a school setting.

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

Acceptable types of placement

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.

School placements and other training may take place in a special school, or in a pupil referral unit (PRU) or overseas equivalent, particularly where an approved iQTS provider chooses to offer an additional specialism in special educational needs. In these cases, the overall design of the programme must still offer trainees experience teaching a minimum of 4 consecutive year groups.

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.

General advice to accredited ITT providers on placements in special schools, alternative provision, pupil referral units and SEN resource units in mainstream schools can be found in the [Initial Teacher Training special schools and alternative provision guidance](#). Please be aware this guidance may not be applicable in international contexts.

All iQTS courses must be designed so that trainees experience 6 weeks of 80% contact ratio teaching. The 80% refers to a full teaching timetable, as it is typically defined by the school where the experience is taking place, rather than 80% of a full pupil or school timetable. As with other minimum time requirements, this relates to course design. While iQTS courses must be designed to provide this opportunity to every trainee, there may be individual circumstances, such as trainee sickness, which mean some trainees may not fully meet this criterion.

The iQTS curriculum may need to be adapted to provide additional tailored support during these 6 weeks of placement in school. This will ensure that individual trainees have the best opportunity possible to meet, and even exceed, the iQTS Teachers' Standards. This will be particularly beneficial to trainees who are not on trajectory to achieve iQTS before their placement. Approved iQTS providers should have a clear rationale for changing the school placement course curriculum in the case of a particular trainee.

Table 3: minimum time allocations for school placements

All minimum time allocations are course design requirements. Approved iQTS providers must design iQTS curricula that adhere to the below minimum time allocations:

iQTS minimum time allocations throughout the duration of the course	Postgraduate
Minimum weeks in school placements (general placements only, excludes Intensive Training and Practice)	24 (120 days)
Minimum hours in classrooms (including observing, teaching, co-teaching, etc.) each week during general school placements	15 on average (average of 3 per day)

C2.5 Mentoring

All approved iQTS providers must ensure that all trainees have access to expert mentors to support the delivery and practice of training.

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.

The role of mentors and lead mentors and mentor leadership teams

Mentors should have a clear understanding of the mentor's role and skills, the iQTS Core Content Framework, the iQTS curriculum and the evidence that underpins it. This is crucial to ensure that mentors can provide informed, targeted, consistent and actionable input and feedback, aligned with the iQTS curriculum.

Lead mentors and mentor leadership teams should comprise individuals with an advanced level of iQTS knowledge and expertise who will play a lead role in curriculum design and implementation, mentor training, and Intensive Training and Practice. Their overarching role will be to ensure that trainees receive mentoring and support in the placement school which is aligned with the iQTS curriculum and

informed by the lead mentor's own teaching practice. Therefore, lead mentors and mentor leadership teams should play a key role in the training, support and supervision of in-school mentors.

DfE does not require that iQTS 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.

Overarching requirements

Approved iQTS providers must establish a professional network of well-trained and expert mentors who understand the iQTS curriculum, the relevant research base which informs it, and their role in supporting its implementation. All mentors must ensure that in-school experiences align with the iQTS curriculum. Trainees must also have access to mentors who have expertise in the subject-specific and/or phase-specific approaches set out in the iQTS curriculum (encompassing the iQTS CCF), so that trainees are able to learn the best-evidenced ways of teaching their subject or phase.

Approved iQTS providers must ensure observation, reflection, deconstruction, and feedback take place throughout the year in line with the components of the iQTS curriculum. Approved iQTS providers should agree partnership and quality assurance arrangements with placement schools to ensure that all mentors have the time, resources, and the support of their school to discharge the requirements of their role.

Mentor training must be designed in line with the minimum time requirements set out in these criteria. Approved providers should consider the prior learning of their individual mentors in determining the exact emphasis of the mentor training. Approved providers should not require mentors, lead mentors or mentor leadership teams to repeat training but should adapt the delivery of the mentor training curriculum to meet individual needs. Where specific material has already been covered, this may include a reduction in the total hours of training required. In all cases, approved iQTS providers must be able to demonstrate that all mentors have been trained in all areas of the mentor training curriculum.

Training can be delivered face to face or virtually. Some use of asynchronous training may also be appropriate. Approved iQTS providers are expected to ensure that mentors, lead mentors or mentor leadership teams are properly supported

throughout their training, regardless of how it is delivered.

The full mentor or lead mentor training curriculum does not have to be completed before mentors, lead mentors or mentor leadership teams can begin to support trainees. However, approved iQTS providers must ensure that mentor and lead mentor training is aligned to the trainees' needs throughout their iQTS course. This means that mentors, lead mentors or mentor leadership teams must have completed sufficient training to give them the required knowledge, skills and understanding of the iQTS curriculum to support the trainee with the relevant parts of the iQTS curriculum at any given time.

Specific requirements

Approved iQTS providers must ensure that:

- a sufficient number of mentors are recruited and trained so that every trainee receives their entitlement of 1.5 hours per week (5 days) of mentoring support
- mentors have expertise in evidence based subject- or phase-specific approaches to teaching and that they are allocated to trainees as appropriate to their subject or phase needs
- mentor training builds mentors' knowledge and understanding of the iQTS curriculum, and the evidence that underpins it
- mentor training prepares mentors for their role in guiding and supporting trainees through that curriculum
- mentoring practice fully reflects the intent and content of the iQTS curriculum
- mentors receive enough time to attend the required training and discharge the mentoring entitlements according to the minimum set out in these iQTS criteria

Mentor training

Approved iQTS 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 mentor. Providers are expected to provide robust and rigorous support to iQTS mentors to help them meet these standards.

Lead mentors and mentor leadership teams

The role of the lead mentor can be undertaken by mentor leadership teams. Different roles may be allocated to different members of that team to ensure that the full range of lead mentor responsibilities are fulfilled.

Roles of lead mentors and mentor leadership teams include:

- oversight, supervision, and quality assurance of other mentors
- design and delivery of training for other mentors
- close working with trainees during Intensive Training and Practice, and design of such elements
- oversight of trainee progress through the year and identification of interventions or modifications where required

The lead mentor and mentor leadership team must have particular expertise in the evidence base for effective teacher training, including programme design and content selection.

Lead mentors and mentor leadership teams will engage with much of the same training content as mentors but will need to go into greater depth to deliver their responsibilities. They will also have an ongoing role in course development and improvement.

Minimum times for mentoring, and training of mentors and lead mentors and mentor leadership teams, are set out in Table 4.

Table 4: minimum time allocations – mentoring

All minimum time allocations are course design requirements. Approved iQTS providers must design iQTS courses and mentor training curricula that adhere to the below minimum time allocations:

iQTS minimum time allocations	Postgraduate
Minimum hours mentoring each week during general school placements	1.5
Minimum hours initial training time for general mentors ^{[footnote 2]}	20
Minimum hours initial training time for lead mentors	30

Minimum hours annual refresher training for general mentors	6
Minimum hours annual refresher training for lead mentors	12

C2.6 Assessment

All approved iQTS providers must set out an assessment and progression framework which is aligned to the planned and sequenced curriculum and reflects evidence-based principles.

Trainee assessment procedures should be rigorous and robust, supporting consistent and accurate judgements.

An approved iQTS provider's lead partners or placement schools may take a significant role in assessment and making judgements that lead to the award of iQTS. In these cases, the approved iQTS provider should ensure that assessment moderation procedures are robust before partners or schools make recommendations for the award.

The approved iQTS provider remains accountable for all assessments, judgements, and recommendations. This should be reflected in their partnership agreements.

Overarching requirements

Approved iQTS providers must set out a trainee assessment and progression framework which is aligned to the planned and sequenced curriculum. It should draw on evidence-based principles for good quality assessment, which may include those set out in the iQTS CCF and the ECF.

The assessment framework should assess trainees with appropriate frequency on their knowledge and understanding of the curriculum, and how they apply such knowledge and understanding in classroom practice. As ongoing assessment is an important part of the training process, it should include focused feedback to help

trainees improve. Feedback should draw on the content of the iQTS curriculum and should, at each stage, support trainees in understanding how practice is informed and shaped by research and evidence.

Ongoing, formative assessment should be against trainees' progress in relation to the iQTS curriculum, rather than against the level of expertise or standard required by the end of the course. During the course, assessment should help to identify aspects of the iQTS curriculum which trainees are finding challenging and be used to adapt approaches to delivery or reshape practice accordingly. Approved iQTS providers must be able to demonstrate the ways in which this will happen.

Approved iQTS providers must ensure that all those involved in assessment of trainees, including lead mentors and mentors as appropriate, have received sufficient training to enable them to understand and use assessment frameworks accurately and appropriately.

Assessment specifically against the iQTS Teachers' Standards should be reserved for end-of-course assessment to meet the requirements for the award of international qualified teacher status and therefore automatic award of qualified teacher status. This does not prevent approved iQTS providers from referencing or referring to the iQTS Teachers' Standards at key assessment points during the course to help trainees understand their progress against the iQTS curriculum. Approved iQTS providers must demonstrate that end-of-course assessments are objective, valid, and reliable.

Specific requirements

Approved iQTS providers must design an assessment framework which reflects evidence-based principles for good assessment, is straightforward to use, and:

- ensures that ongoing formative assessment and feedback take place throughout the course, focused on trainees' ongoing progress in relation to the component elements of the planned curriculum
- recognises the need for trainees to be assessed and receive feedback on the evidence-based, subject-specific and phase-specific approaches set out in the iQTS curriculum
- clearly defines roles and responsibilities for those conducting assessment and providing feedback at all levels, including arrangements for the robust quality assurance of assessment

- assesses trainees' knowledge and understanding of the iQTS curriculum, and how that is evidenced in their application of such knowledge to classroom practice and in any written assignments
- requires those conducting assessment and providing feedback to gain a rich and developed knowledge of trainees' performance over time and to draw on a range of sources to ensure conclusions are secure and balanced
- requires those conducting assessment to provide feedback to trainees which they can use, and are supported to use, for improvement, and where appropriate, supports trainees' understanding of how practice can be improved in the light of research evidence
- enables insights from assessment to feed into programme delivery so that those responsible for training and mentoring can adapt in response to trainee needs
- includes arrangements for objective, valid, and reliable end-of-course assessment against the iQTS Teachers' Standards prior to the award of international qualified teacher status and recommendation for the award of qualified teacher status

All those responsible for assessment and feedback must receive thorough training on the assessment framework and the ways in which it is intended to be used, to ensure that approaches are of consistently high quality for all trainees.

C2.7 Awarding iQTS

As iQTS is a teaching qualification, not a status, approved iQTS providers are able to award the qualification themselves.

In England, providers recommend trainees for the award of QTS to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) and the TRA grants this status.

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

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

- successful applicants starting the course
- successful iQTS awards

Automatic award of QTS

DfE has brought forward regulations to allow holders of iQTS to be automatically awarded QTS. However, providers must recommend holders of iQTS for the award of QTS through the Register trainee teachers service.

If the iQTS holder then wishes to teach in a maintained school or non-maintained special school in England, they will need to complete the Early Career Framework induction period.

They will be able to complete their induction either in a DfE-accredited British School Overseas (BSO) or in a relevant school in England. During their induction they will be assessed against English Teachers' Standards.

C3.1 Management

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

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

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

Approved iQTS providers should ensure that the workload of trainee teachers is manageable. Guidance is available to support approved iQTS providers to address this using the [teacher workload toolkits](#). Everyone across the iQTS partnership should be clear about their role in reducing trainee teacher workload.

C3.2 Partnerships and structures

All approved iQTS providers must ensure that:

- robust governance arrangements are put in place and exercised effectively, with clearly established structures and partnerships
- 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 and any associated supplementary documentation should be reviewed and revised by members of the partnership at appropriate intervals.

Overarching requirements

Approved iQTS providers must be able to set out the essential features of their

structures and partnerships which will enable them to deliver teacher training in the way described in the preceding sections. Approved iQTS providers must:

- be able to set out at what scale they operate and, recognising the quality level set out in this document, demonstrate that they have sufficient capacity to be able to meet the criteria for training in all subjects and phases offered
- secure and retain placement schools, lead partners and other specialist experts to enable them to deliver their programme in line with these criteria
- secure and retain placement schools, lead partners and other specialist experts to meet the needs of all trainees
- set out how they will develop the training capacity of iQTS lead partners and placement schools in their partnership
- set out which courses are to be run and what target recruitment numbers and minimum and maximum numbers will be in place
- identify and retain lead partners (where appropriate) and be able to articulate what responsibilities have been delegated to lead partners
- establish the structure of their partnership and governance arrangements, including formal arrangements between lead partners and approved iQTS providers, and between placement schools and approved iQTS providers or lead partners
- exercise governance effectively, recognising that accountability for all aspects of the operation of the partnership rests with the approved iQTS provider
- market the course offer, and recruit trainees in line with C1.4
- establish budgetary arrangements that set out how funds are distributed across approved iQTS providers, lead partners and schools to reflect delegated responsibilities
- ensure that trainees are prepared to teach pupils in schools across a broad range of contexts found in the geographical area in which they are training, including areas of high disadvantage, where possible
- consider placing trainees in schools serving disadvantaged communities or judged to require improvement, where the approved iQTS provider has carried out a risk assessment and is satisfied that the trainee will have a high-quality experience
- ensure that, at a local level, schools and other lead partners are well placed to support the recruitment of trainees, given the fact that local recognition and relationships are critical for securing and maintaining the confidence of potential trainees
- have regard for the well-being of trainees and arrangements in place to support their welfare

- establish arrangements for secure and compliant data handling across partnerships

The partnership agreement should also include details of:

- clear quality assurance procedures for every role that a partner undertakes
- content, delivery, and impact of each of the iQTS programmes
- safeguarding checks
- policies for equality of opportunity
- organisation and management of the partnership
- role of each partner in addressing and managing trainee teacher workload
- role of all partners in protecting trainees' mental health and well-being
- mentor training provision by the provider, and responsibilities and expectations of the school-based mentor
- the criteria for removing placement schools from the partnership, particularly where quality issues arise

Roles and responsibilities

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

Partnership agreements should specify the different roles within the partnership including, for example:

- programme and course leaders
- lead mentors
- mentor leadership teams
- mentors
- 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

Approved iQTS providers should ensure there is a feedback loop between trainee and provider to allow for direct communication.

Changes to partnership structures

Approved iQTS providers must seek DfE approval for any proposed significant changes to their:

- partnership arrangements, including addition and removal of lead partners
- accounting officer for the delivery of iQTS

The approved iQTS provider must inform DfE of:

- changes to the approved iQTS provider's UK Provider Reference Number (PRN)
- changes in the lead partners undertaking any of the following functions:
 - recruitment and delivery of iQTS on behalf of an approved iQTS provider;
 - receiving and managing student fees
 - making an academic award for the iQTS course

If an approved iQTS provider is in any doubt as to whether they should advise DfE of any changes, they should do so.

Details of any proposed variations should be sent to iqts.policy@education.gov.uk

For further information, see [Initial teacher training \(ITT\): forming partnerships](#).

C3.3 Legislation

Approved iQTS providers must satisfy the criteria specified by the Secretary of State. They 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. Approved iQTS providers must review and update their provision so that it continues to meet these criteria and associated legislation. Where there is evidence of an approved 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 that these are met when selecting, recruiting, training, and assessing trainees.

This may include:

- [Education \(School Teachers' Qualifications\) \(England\) Regulations 2003 \(SI 1662\)](#) – statutory requirements for QTS in England;
- [Education \(Specified Work\) \(England\) Regulations 2012 \(SI 762\)](#) – requirements that must be satisfied by individuals who are not qualified teachers in order to be able to carry out specified work in schools;
- [Equality Act 2010](#) – legislation relating to equality, discrimination, and employment;
- [Data Protection Act 2018](#)
- [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 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 relevant legislation and guidance relevant to England. iQTS providers should be aware that this cannot be imposed on other jurisdictions and that they should consider 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 \(SI 3139\)](#)

[Disabled Students' Allowances \(DSAs\) in higher education](#)

[Disability Rights UK, education, and skills guidance for people with disabilities](#)

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.

The work that is reserved to qualified teachers in maintained schools in accordance with section 133 of the Education Act 2002, subject to limited exceptions, is prescribed by the [Education \(Specified Work\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#).

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](#).

C3.4 Quality assurance

All approved iQTS providers must:

- ensure that they monitor, evaluate, and moderate all aspects of provision rigorously

- demonstrate how these contribute to securing improvements in the quality of training and the assessment of trainees

Overarching requirements

Approved iQTS providers must develop quality assurance processes to ensure that all aspects of the delivery of the course meet the high expectations to which all trainees are entitled. Specifically, approved iQTS providers must demonstrate robust arrangements for monitoring:

- the quality and fidelity of all aspects of curriculum delivery to trainees
- the training and expertise of those involved in curriculum delivery
- the training and expertise of mentors, lead mentors and mentor leadership teams
- the quality of mentoring work of all types and levels, including ensuring that time allocations for mentors and trainees are met
- the quality of regular in-course assessment and feedback and their impact on trainee knowledge and expertise
- the quality, reliability, and validity of end-of-course summative assessment

There must be clear systems in place for reporting and taking action to address any shortfalls in quality in a prompt way, to protect the entitlement of trainees to high-quality training.

Approved iQTS providers must also have clear identification of responsibilities and accountability for quality assurance at all levels, including for accurate record-keeping of quality assurance work.

Clear mechanisms must be in place for trainees to raise concerns or make complaints about the quality of training and mentoring, and for investigating and, where necessary, addressing such concerns or complaints in a timely fashion.

Specific requirements

Approved iQTS providers must have a framework for quality assurance which:

- monitors and assures quality in all required areas of the programme and at all levels
- sets out suitable monitoring methods
- sets out clearly the range of specific roles and responsibilities for quality assurance
- demonstrates how concerns identified by quality assurance will be addressed, including the range of intervention options which will be used
- specifies how records relating to quality assurance will be kept
- sets out robust arrangements which enable trainees to raise concerns or make complaints
- sets out how quality assurance information will be used to improve the quality of all their iQTS courses and make the programme and all aspects of their partnership more resilient

Approved iQTS providers must put in place an effective system for supervising and quality assuring the initial and ongoing training of mentors, the quality of their work, including their approach to subject-specific and/or phase-specific mentoring, and systems for securing specific improvements where necessary.

External moderators have an important role in ensuring consistency of standards across, as well as within, iQTS partnerships. Approved iQTS providers should ensure that external moderators have relevant expertise and experience to enable them to carry out their roles competently. They should also ensure that the views of external moderators are taken into account fully when reaching decisions about trainees' achievement of the iQTS Teachers' Standards.

Evaluation

Approved 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.

Approved 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, 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
- mentors and lead mentors' 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 assessment 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. Approved iQTS 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, but are not limited to:

- the involvement of staff with relevant expertise from two or more partners (for example the provider and the 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 or 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

Approved iQTS providers should appoint suitable external moderators. 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 the trainees being assessed for the award of iQTS. This will help to verify the accuracy of the approved iQTS provider's assessments. Approved iQTS providers should consider how to use external moderators to corroborate and standardise their assessments of trainees.

Approved iQTS 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 trainees that internal moderators regard as being on the pass or fail borderline, or likely to fail
- observation of the teaching of all the 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 iQTS 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
 - the accuracy of the assessments of trainees' attainment against the iQTS Teachers' Standards

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

Approved iQTS providers should have systematic procedures in place 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, approved iQTS 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. These findings can then be compared with the success of trainees in meeting the iQTS Teachers' Standards. The evidence will need to be sufficiently robust to enable approved iQTS 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.

Withdrawal of approval

This section sets out the circumstances that may lead to the withdrawal of approval, and what we ask of approved iQTS providers during this process.

In all but the most serious cases of non-compliance, DfE will give approved iQTS providers the opportunity to address any problems before starting the formal process of withdrawing iQTS approval. DfE reserves the right to withdraw approval where:

- the approved iQTS provider loses their domestic (English) ITT accreditation
- provision is non-compliant with one or more of the specified iQTS criteria and supporting guidance
- the approved iQTS provider demonstrates impropriety or inadequate controls in its financial management, or does not comply with relevant financial reporting or governance requirements
- the approved iQTS provider fails to comply with DfE data and reporting requirements
- the approved iQTS provider fails to deliver the requirements they have set out in their submitted application
- the approved iQTS provider ceases to offer provision
- DfE has been presented with proof of non-compliance with a provider's submitted application from a third party

Evidence of non-compliance might include:

- DfE monitoring and evaluation
- inspection feedback
- feedback from schools, trainees, or providers themselves

Process for withdrawal

The timeline for the procedures DfE will put in place for the withdrawal of iQTS approval status is as follows:

1. DfE will contact you to tell you we have been presented with evidence of non-compliance and we are starting the withdrawal process.
2. You will have 2 working days to acknowledge receipt of the email and advise us if you intend to ask for the decision to be reviewed. If you do not respond to this email, DfE will assume that you do not intend to challenge the decision.
3. You will have an additional 5 working days to submit your grounds for review. This must directly address the evidence of non-compliance DfE has been presented with and include any evidence you would like DfE to consider. You should email your evidence to iqts.policy@education.gov.uk
4. DfE will review the evidence you have provided within 2 working days. DfE will let you know if a decision can be made based on the documentation only, or if a call should be arranged to discuss.
5. If DfE can make a decision on the documentation only, we will contact you within 2 working days to tell you what we've decided. Either DfE will uphold the decision and your iQTS approval status will be withdrawn, or it will overturn the decision to withdraw your iQTS approval status. The latter may come with conditions that DfE will then arrange to discuss with you.
6. If DfE do need to arrange a call with you to discuss the evidence you've provided, we will contact you with a date and time within 2 working days.
7. Following this call, DfE will contact you within 2 working days to advise you of the outcome. Either DfE will uphold the decision and your iQTS approval status will be withdrawn, or it will overturn the decision to withdraw your iQTS approval status. The latter may come with conditions that DfE will then arrange to discuss with you.
8. If your iQTS approval status is withdrawn, and depending on the reasons for this, DfE may allow you to continue to deliver iQTS until the end of the academic year, or we may arrange for another provider to take over the delivery of iQTS to your trainees.
9. If you wish to request a reconsideration of our decision to withdraw iQTS

approval, you must send your request to iqts.policy@education.gov.uk within 2 working days of DfE informing you of our decision to withdraw approval. Your email should outline the reasons for the request and provide any additional evidence you would like DfE to consider.

10. The reconsideration of the decision will be led by a DfE official not involved in the original decision to withdraw and of at least equal grade to the official who took the withdrawal decision. You will be informed of this decision by email. This decision will be final and there will be no right to a further reconsideration.
11. The decision to withdraw iQTS approval will not impact your domestic ITT accreditation.

C3.5 iQTS Inspection

DfE has developed an independent inspection framework for the inspection of iQTS programmes, which will be tested in pilot in 2024.

Approved iQTS providers who started their programme delivery in the 2022 to 2023 academic year will be inspected as part of the iQTS inspection pilot. The inspection pilot will run from January 2024 to July 2024 and will adhere to the iQTS pilot inspection framework.

Following the iQTS inspection pilot, DfE will publish an update to the iQTS pilot inspection framework and all approved iQTS providers will be subject to inspection using the updated framework. iQTS inspection will take place every 3 years, in line with domestic inspection, from the 2024 to 2025 academic year.

Relevant Legislation

This advice refers to:

- [The Education \(School Teachers' Qualifications and Induction Arrangements\) \(Amendment\) \(England\) Regulations 2022 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- [The Education \(Health Standards\) \(England\) Regulations 2003](#)

- [The Education \(Specified Work and Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#)
- [Higher Education \(Fee Limits and Fee Limit Condition\) \(England\) Regulations 2018](#)
- [Higher Education and Research Act 2017](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Data Protection Act 2018](#)
- [Freedom of Information Act 2000](#)
- [Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015](#)

Approved iQTS providers should familiarise themselves with the Competition and Markets Authority's consumer law advice. Any approved iQTS 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](#).

1. A first degree comprises 300 HE credit points of which 60 must be at level 6 of the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF). 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. [↩](#)
2. Approved iQTS providers should consider the prior learning of their mentors and lead mentors/mentor leadership teams, and adapt the delivery of the mentor training curriculum accordingly. This may include a reduction in the total hours of training required. [↩](#)

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