

Inspection of initial teacher education 2008–11

Consultation on changes to the arrangements for inspecting initial teacher education

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Contents

Foreword	4
A background to the proposals	5
The consultation	7
Proposals in detail	7
Proposal A. A revised framework for the inspection of initial teacher education	7
Proposal B. Tailored inspections	9
Proposal C. A focus on self-assessment, including outcomes for trainees	10
Proposal D. Single inspection events	12
Proposal E. Period of notice	12

Foreword

The inspections of initial teacher education form an important part of Ofsted's work. They provide an essential, independent and external evaluation of quality and standards that provide prospective teachers and teachers in training with timely and relevant information about individual institutions, while helping drive forward improvements throughout the sector as a whole. Over the past few years, the weight of inspection has been reduced in step with improvements that providers have made to the quality of provision.

A great deal is changing in schools, colleges and across the post-16 sector. Fresh thinking is needed about the qualities and standards required in the 21st century of the workforce within schools, colleges and other settings. The introduction of new standards and requirements for those wishing to gain Qualified Teacher Status and/or the new award of Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills and Associate Teacher Learning and Skills, provides Ofsted with an ideal opportunity to build on our achievements under the current inspection frameworks and to make some fundamental changes to the way we inspect. The new arrangements are intended to revisit and raise expectations, bring greater consistency to inspections across the sector, promote high standards for all trainees and concentrate resources where they can have the most impact.

This consultation document outlines our proposals for the inspections of initial teacher education from September 2008. We would like to encourage all of you with an interest in the development of inspections of initial teacher education to consider the proposals and let us know your views.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Miriam Rosen". The script is cursive and fluid.

Miriam Rosen

A background to the proposals

1. Ofsted has a statutory duty to inspect and report on initial teacher education. It currently inspects providers under two different inspection frameworks. One framework focuses on routes that lead to qualified teacher status.¹ The other framework gives attention to the initial teacher education of teachers in the further education system.²
2. Improvements in the quality of initial teacher education over recent years mean that much of the provision is good. There are, however, notable variations in quality and standards across different programmes, even where these are on offer at the same provider. In particular, the provision overall of training for the further education system is not as good as that for schools. There are also employment-based routes to qualified teacher status in schools that have not been looked at in depth, and where there is a need for graded judgements on the quality of provision so that the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) can categorise the training provider and allocate funding.
3. A great deal is changing in schools, colleges and across the post-16 sector, with reforms that are focused on improving educational achievements. Our new generation of teachers needs to be prepared for teaching in an increasingly ethnically and socially diverse society, with growing reliance on technology as a means of communication and learning. New standards for trainees and requirements for programmes have been introduced for those training to teach in schools and for the further education system. With the current inspection cycles for initial teacher education ending in July 2008, it is an ideal opportunity to revisit and raise expectations, and to rethink the evaluation criteria that reflect them.
4. Ofsted is proposing to introduce a new inspection framework for initial teacher education in September 2008. We believe that, in order to achieve better value for money while preserving the rigour of inspection, it is now possible and desirable to build on the success of previous inspection programmes for teacher training and to make some important changes. We intend to develop one framework for inspection which will ensure consistency across all types of provision.
5. We believe that inspection can lead to further improvements in the provision of initial teacher education by focusing resources on providers where there is

¹ *Framework for the inspection of initial teacher training for the award of qualified teacher status 2005–11* (HMI 2446), Ofsted, 2005.

² *Framework for the inspection of initial training of further education teachers* (HMI 2274), Ofsted, 2004.

underachievement and on areas where most improvement is needed. Inspection should move towards becoming a single event for each provider, where different programmes and routes to qualified status are considered at the same time but with scope for separate grade profiles for the primary phase, the secondary phase and the provision for further education. Stronger links should be made between inspection, provider self-assessment, and the capacity of leadership and management at all levels to carry through sustained improvement. Explicit account should be taken of the views of initial teacher education users, including former trainees and their employers, in setting up and carrying out the inspection, and in making judgements.

6. Each inspection should be a focused review, carried out with standard notice by teams of HM Inspectors (HMI) and other specialist inspectors where necessary. Each inspection should have a lead inspector, who will discuss pre-inspection hypotheses and agree the inspection programme with the provider. Inspectors should draw upon evidence and data from a range of sources, including the provider's ongoing self-assessment, which should be at the heart of the inspection process. Ofsted should continue to provide feedback during and at the end of the inspection, as well as accurate and clear written reports.
7. These proposals would reduce considerably the burden on providers, so cutting the costs of inspection. The focus on the outcomes for trainees and less on the process through which they are trained should reinforce the principle that providers are free to determine the structure and content of courses, within the bounds of any requirements and standards set by the Government.
8. The TDA has a statutory responsibility to accredit and fund providers of initial teacher education that fall under its remit, and to improve the quality and efficiency of all routes into the teaching profession that lead to qualified teacher status. In carrying out its functions, the TDA must have regard to any assessment of the quality of the relevant training made by Ofsted. The TDA will consider separately how, when and to what extent inspection grades becoming available through this new inspection framework will be used to determine accredited initial teacher education providers' quality categories and to inform decisions about initial teacher education places and funding allocations.
9. Lifelong Learning UK is the Sector Skills Council responsible for the standards and qualifications for the professional development of those working in the further education system. Standards Verification UK has the responsibility for endorsing awarding bodies' qualifications for initial teacher education, as well as provision in higher education institutions.
10. We need to ensure that the new inspection arrangements take account of the views of initial teacher education users and are most effective in driving improvement, recognising provision and outcomes of the highest quality for

trainees, and promoting the qualities that the workforce requires for the 21st century.

The consultation

11. This consultation paper sets out views of how inspection needs to move forward if it is to continue to stimulate improvement in the teaching profession. Ofsted invites your comments on all aspects of the proposals, but especially on:
 - a revised framework for the inspection of initial teacher education
 - tailored inspections
 - a focus on self-assessment, including an analysis on the outcomes for trainees
 - single inspection events
 - the period of notice.
12. Ofsted will be seeking views on these proposals over the next three months, through this formal written and web-based consultation and through various meetings with representative groups and other interested parties.
13. All responses should be completed using the online consultation form (http://live.ofsted.gov.uk/surveys/inspection_of_initial_teacher_education_08/) by 7 April 2008. Any overall comments on the proposals may be sent by email to ITE@ofsted.gov.uk
14. Ofsted is committed to ensuring that all consultation processes are as open and transparent as possible. An overview of the results will be disseminated via a report to be published on the Ofsted, the TDA and Lifelong Learning UK websites, and will be discussed at dissemination conferences in July 2008.

Proposals in detail

Proposal A. A revised framework for the inspection of initial teacher education

It is proposed that the current framework for the inspection of initial teacher education for the award of qualified teacher status 2005–11 be replaced with a new framework from 2008. There will be a single inspection framework covering all initial teacher education leading to qualified teacher status (including employment-based routes) and initial teacher education in the further education system.

15. It is the right time for change. The first cycle for the inspections of further education teacher training ends in July 2008, so changes to the inspection for the further education system will need to be made no later than September 2008. For the inspection of initial teacher education for schools, there are some providers that have felt severely disadvantaged by an inspection regime that

has focused primarily on confirming that good quality has been maintained, without allowing scope for them to show that they have improved to be outstanding. In a climate where there is a need to reduce the number of places for initial teacher education for schools, this lack of differentiation between providers limits the TDA's ability to make the necessary differential reductions on the basis of quality, as reflected in inspection grades.

16. Moreover, the time is right to introduce a single inspection framework. The use of this single framework will reduce the burden of inspection on those providers offering a range of programmes for initial teacher education. It will also allow these institutions more opportunity to undertake their own assessment of the relative effectiveness of their multiple programmes. In addition, a revised single inspection framework that brings together initial teacher education for schools and teacher education for the further education system will allow Ofsted to report more accurately on the quality of provision across the country.
17. It is intended that the new cycle of initial teacher education inspections will concentrate on the quality and impact of training on the achievements of trainees. The major focus therefore will be on: the quality of the outcomes for trainees; the effectiveness of the training and assessment in securing these outcomes; how well the provision is led, managed and resourced to maximise effectiveness; and the capacity of the leadership and management to secure further improvement and/or sustain high quality. The single framework will set out the inspection schedule and the grade profile. It will also contain guidance that will indicate clearly how the inspection schedule will be interpreted for each type of provision. There will be as much commonality as possible, but at the same time the distinctiveness of provision leading to initial teacher education for schools and that for the further education system will be recognised.
18. The proposed inspection schedule (www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/080004) is based on Ofsted's Common Inspection Framework and is underpinned by commonly agreed principles of inspection. Careful account has also been taken of statutory requirements for initial teacher education.
19. It is intended that all inspections will include reported grades for:
 - trainees' achievements
 - selection and recruitment
 - the quality of training and assessment
 - the effectiveness of provision across the partnership
 - the effectiveness of the monitoring and evaluation of provision across the partnership
 - the effectiveness of actions to ensure consistency and quality across the partnership
 - the extent to which best value for money is achieved
 - the effectiveness and accuracy of the assessment of performance

- the extent to which leadership at all levels anticipates change, and prepares for and responds to national and local initiatives
 - the extent to which the provider plans for future improvement.
20. It is further proposed that there will be two overarching judgements and reported grades for:
- the overall effectiveness of the provision
 - the capacity to secure further improvement and/or sustain high quality.
21. For each of the reported grades, additional guidance will be provided to indicate how the judgements leading to the award of a grade will be made. Where required, specific guidance will be written in relation to the provision for initial teacher education for schools and that in the further education system.
22. For those providers offering a range of initial teacher education programmes, it is intended that there will be a separate grade profile for each of the primary phase, the secondary phase and the provision for further education. In the 2008–11 inspection cycle there will be a separate grade profile for employment-based programmes to provide baseline grades.

Consultation questions

- **Do you agree that there should be a single inspection framework from September 2008? (Yes/No/No preference) – Comment.**
- **Do you agree that the proposed inspection schedule will enable fair and accurate judgements to be made of the quality of provision? (Yes/No/No preference) – Comment.**
- **If no, what changes would you propose? – Comment.**

Proposal B. Tailored inspections

It is proposed that inspections will be tailored to reduce further the burden of inspection on providers by being proportionate to risk. Inspections will be matched closely to the particular nature of the programme, and resources will be focused predominantly on courses needing most improvement.

23. A more tailored approach to inspection will focus resources where they are most needed. Currently, decisions about when providers will be inspected within a cycle of inspection and the level of resource needed are based almost exclusively on the outcome of the previous inspection. However, drawing upon the experience of other Ofsted inspection regimes, there is now scope to develop a more sophisticated approach that uses a wider range of data and information. In particular, working with the TDA, the Department for Children, Schools and Families, and the Department for Innovation, Universities and

Skills, we are exploring the production of a data set which draws together currently available materials to inform provider evaluation and assessment, and thereby inspection. Any data or information used for tailoring inspections will be made available to the provider.

24. We want to lessen the burden on providers. For the majority of courses and programmes, we already have a range of information. Providers are increasingly better at providing information about the outcomes for trainees and we need to draw even more effectively on this expertise. All of these factors have led Ofsted to reconsider the burden of inspection. Providers that have been graded as outstanding or good in previous inspection reports and have outcome data and other indicators that point to continued high performance will receive an even lighter touch inspection than is currently the case. New providers or those that have not previously been graded through Ofsted inspections can expect a more intensive inspection. Our experience with weaker providers indicates that when inspectors make regular contact, there is real improvement for trainees. Provision that has had notable weaknesses or where risks are considered high will have an in-depth inspection. Provision that is judged not to comply with the Government's requirements for initial teacher education, or that is judged to be inadequate, will be liable to a further inspection within the inspection cycle.

Consultation question

- **Do you agree that future inspections should be proportionate to risk and tailored to the context and needs of each provider? (Yes/No/No preference) – Comment.**

Proposal C. A focus on self-assessment, including outcomes for trainees

It is proposed that the provider's assessment of its own performance, with a focus on the outcomes for trainees, be placed at the heart of the new inspection process. This will provide the basis for creating clear inspection hypotheses and for ensuring constructive, professional dialogue between the provider and the inspection team.

25. Ofsted believes that providers are best placed to recognise their own strengths and weaknesses and to demonstrate how successful they are at developing trainees to be highly effective teachers. It is proposed that access to ongoing self-assessment will have a pivotal role in demonstrating to inspectors that: trainees make good progress and by the end of their training programmes reach their full potential; and providers cannot only diagnose where their strengths and weaknesses are, but more crucially, do something about improving and developing them and securing year-by-year improvement. Focusing inspection on the provider's assessment of its strengths and

weaknesses will help to make inspection sharper and more helpful. At the same time, we can lighten the burden of inspection on those institutions providing initial teacher education.

26. Ofsted and the TDA, working together and with other stakeholders and a wide range of providers that offer routes to qualified teacher status for teaching in schools, are producing revised guidance for self-assessment. Also, Ofsted, working with providers and other stakeholders, is producing similar revised self-assessment guidance for those in the further education system. In both cases, the main purpose is to support providers' self-assessment, and give an opportunity for them to explain the context of their provision. These documents are being produced in response to a request from the sector for a more standardised approach to self-assessment, making use of an agreed set of standard data. Their use will not be a statutory requirement. Providers may submit self-assessment in other forms that better suit the nature of their provision. However, although providers may choose not to complete the standardised document for self-assessment, the range of information that it covers will still be required for the inspection. Those offering a variety of training opportunities can decide whether to submit one or a number of self-assessments.

Consultation question

- **Do you agree that provider's assessment of its own performance, with a primary focus on the outcomes for trainees, should be at the heart of the new inspection framework? (Yes/No/No preference) – Comment.**

27. It is proposed that a provider's assessment of its own performance will provide evidence on the quality of the provision by focusing primarily on trainees' successful completion of the training and on an analysis of their achievements. More and more providers are using the views of initial teacher education users (such as trainees, those who have recently completed their training, and their employing institutions) to evaluate the success of their provision. We propose to make this an important feature of future inspections of initial teacher education. It is therefore intended that evidence submitted by providers will include an assessment of how the views of the users of initial teacher education provide confirmation of the success of programmes and inform both the internal review of the quality of provision and subsequent improvement planning.

Consultation question

- **Is it reasonable to expect providers to submit evidence of their use of the views of initial teacher education users as described above? (Yes/No/No preference) – Comment.**

28. It is intended that provider self-assessment with supporting evidence will be used to inform inspection planning and the tailoring of the inspection by determining: the timing of the inspection; those aspects of the provision that will be looked at; and the size and deployment of the inspection team. The information will be used to set up the initial inspection hypotheses and inspection trails. Where updates of the self-assessment are available, these will be used by the provider and the managing inspector to confirm inspection trails and to plan the detail of the inspection. Ofsted will need regular access to provider self-assessments with supporting documents in order to maximise its resources, to focus and tailor inspections, and to reduce the burden of inspection on providers. This will mean an annual submission from all providers as soon as their own internal annual review processes have taken place, and by the end of November at the latest.

Consultation questions

- **Is it feasible to ask for self-assessments to be submitted as soon as the provider's own annual review process has been completed, and by the end of November at the latest? (Yes/No/No preference) – Comment.**

Proposal D. Single inspection events

It is proposed that, wherever possible, providers should receive a single inspection covering training in all of the phases/routes/sectors offered.

29. It is recognised that providers that offer complex provision currently receive separate inspections of primary and secondary qualified teacher status provision, and of provision in the further education system. These often occur in different years within an inspection cycle, and can result in providers being inspected every year of an inspection cycle. As part of the drive to achieve greater coherence for inspection, and to reduce the burden of inspection, it is intended that the new arrangements will move to a single inspection event for providers that offer different routes to qualified teacher status and/or initial teacher education in the further education system.

Consultation question

- **Do you agree in principle that inspections should be planned so that providers receive one inspection event encompassing all phases, routes and sectors simultaneously? (Yes/No/No preference) – Comment.**

Proposal E. Period of notice

It is proposed that the period of notice to the provider for initial teacher education inspections be as short as possible, while still enabling sufficient

time for the provider to plan the logistics and to take account of course organisation and structure.

30. It is recognised that the period of notice must enable the provider to plan the logistics of the inspection, including the arrangements for any visits to partner institutions, but should also reflect Ofsted's commitment to appropriate short notice. It must also allow for any preliminary visit, which many providers see as important for tailoring inspections. For complex partnerships, these preparation activities can require significant organisation. Under normal circumstances therefore, it is felt that the minimum notice approach used for inspections of schools or colleges is not appropriate for inspections of initial teacher education.
31. It is proposed that the standard period of notice for the inspections of initial teacher education should be six working weeks before the inspection visit. The actual date of the notice will be determined using the course outlines sent by providers to ensure that the notice period is six working weeks. **While this standard notice would be the norm, there might be circumstances when there is need for Ofsted to make a visit or conduct an inspection with much shorter notice.**

Consultation question

- **Do you agree that, under normal circumstances, the standard period of notice for initial teacher education inspections should be six working weeks before the inspection visit? (Yes/No/No preference) – Comment.**