



Department  
for Education

# **ITT Reform: accompanying document**

**May 2022**

## Contents

Overview .....	3
Who is this publication for?.....	3
1. ITT curriculum design .....	4
Evidence base beyond the Core Content Framework.....	4
At least 6 weeks of 80% contact ratio teaching.....	4
2. Intensive Training and Practice.....	6
3. Mentors, lead mentors and mentor leadership teams .....	8
The importance of mentors and lead mentors/ mentor leadership teams to our ITT Reform .....	8
Lead mentors/ mentor leadership teams.....	8
Consideration of prior or equivalent mentor/lead mentor training .....	8
Timing of mentor/lead mentor training .....	9
Clarification of how asynchronous training should be incorporated into mentor training....	9
Clarification around freedoms around lead mentor ratios .....	9
4. General school placements .....	11
School contexts.....	11
Minimum time allocations.....	11
5. Partnerships and structures .....	12

## Overview

This document accompanies the new quality requirements, which will form part of the ITT Criteria and Supporting Advice - academic year 2024/25.

This document does not replace the draft ITT criteria but is designed to support the sector by providing further clarity about the policy intention for the new ITT requirements and for how the Department for Education expects the some of those requirements to be implemented.

## Who is this publication for?

This guidance is for:

- organisations seeking ITT accreditation; and
- accredited providers of ITT who wish to remain accredited after September 2024.

# 1. ITT curriculum design

## Evidence base beyond the Core Content Framework

The ITT Core Content Framework (CCF) is a minimum entitlement to training and not a full curriculum. It remains for accredited ITT providers to integrate additional analysis and critique of theory, research, and expert practice as they deem appropriate for their curriculum. The CCF is designed to cover the content required by trainee teachers irrespective of subject and phase. Therefore, it is for providers to ensure that they carefully craft coherently sequenced curricula that meet the phase-, and subject-specific needs of their trainees.

We do not have a list of evidence that we are expecting ITT providers to draw upon when designing their curricula and training materials, although the CCF itself is underpinned by a robust evidence base. Providers should use evidence that builds trainee understanding and expertise of the knowledge, skill and behaviours contained in the CCF. The evidence cited in the CCF is not exhaustive and is not intended to be a reading list. We do not hold a list of evidence that we do not expect to be included. We expect that the evidence used will be wide-ranging, come from a number of different perspectives and based on a robust research methodology. All evidence should be well used and build trainee understanding as part of a carefully sequenced curriculum.

## Minimum time allocations

The new quality requirements set out some minimum time requirements. These relate to programme design. This means that the ITT curriculum, the mentor curriculum and the lead mentor curriculum must be designed to deliver these requirements to all trainees, mentors and lead mentors, respectively.

As set out in Box 2 of the government response to the ITT market review, “it is accepted that at times, and for exceptional reasons such as sickness absence, some trainees, mentors or lead mentors may not meet full attendance”. Providers should continue to exercise appropriate judgement in individual cases where that happens. For the minimum time requirement of 6 weeks of 80% contact ratio teaching, some further information is provided below.

## At least 6 weeks of 80% contact ratio teaching

The new quality requirements include a requirement that by the end of the course, all trainees must have experienced 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.

This experience is designed to support trainees on their journey towards a full teaching timetable.

As with other minimum time requirements, this relates to course design. This means that while ITT courses must be designed to provide this opportunity to every trainee, as set out in the government response, it is accepted that there may be unforeseen individual circumstances such as trainee sickness, which mean some trainees may not fully meet this criterion.

It is also accepted that the planned curriculum may need to be adapted to provide additional tailored support and input during this 6-weeks to ensure that individual trainees have the best opportunity possible to meet, and even exceed, the Standards for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). This will be particularly beneficial to trainees who are not on trajectory to achieve QTS prior to the time the 80% contact ratio teaching experience takes place. Providers should exercise appropriate judgement in individual cases and ensure that they have a clear rationale for why any revision to the planned course curriculum during the 6 weeks of 80% contact ratio teaching was appropriate for a particular trainee.

## 2. Intensive Training and Practice

Intensive Training and Practice should consist of delivery of 3 to 5 carefully selected pivotal or foundational aspects of the planned training curriculum. Many of these are likely to relate to areas of the CCF, but it will be for providers to exercise their judgment about which areas will be most appropriate for their training curriculum.

During Intensive Training and Practice, providers should ensure trainees are given the opportunity to intensify the focus on these foundational aspects of the ITT curriculum; benefit from immediate and targeted feedback focused on improvement; and access appropriate expert support.

Intensive Training and Practice is not a school placement and therefore does not **all** have to take place in a school. Many elements of the Intensive Training and Practice can be held in the training centre or virtually, e.g., recorded lesson observations. If components of Intensive Training and Practice take place in a trainee's general placement school, this experience must be additional to, the placement itself.

During Intensive Training and Practice, providers should ensure that trainees observe and reflect upon expert practice in specific aspects of the trainee curriculum. They should be supported to understand exactly what it is that makes such practice effective and to think about how it could be embedded in their own teaching. Trainees should then have the opportunity to apply what they have learned through, for example, rehearsal and/or live practice, receiving constructive feedback from expert colleagues. The intention is to consolidate trainees' understanding of how the research evidence underpinning the ITT curriculum should shape teaching practice. Use of Intensive Training and Practice should increase coherence between theory and practice.

Providers have the freedom to decide the best way to deliver Intensive Training and Practice, including how the days spent on this element are configured, providing that courses are designed to ensure the full entitlement of 4 weeks (20 days) for postgraduate courses and 6 weeks (30 days) for undergraduate courses. This element does not need to take place in one block and can be divided across the programme, however a provider sees fit.

For trainees on salaried routes, providers may find it more practical, or more appropriate to their curricula, to arrange Intensive Training and Practice to take place in their main school placement or in their second school placement. Overall, providers need to ensure that ITT courses are designed to provide trainees on post graduate courses with 120 days of school placement across two schools, and that a distinct 4-week (20 days) Intensive Training and Practice element occurs in addition to those 120 days.

For undergraduate courses, providers must design courses that provide trainees with 120 days of school placements for 3-year courses and 160 days for 4-year courses.

Undergraduate courses should provide trainees with a distinct 6-week (30 days) Intensive Training and Practice element.

### **3. Mentors, lead mentors and mentor leadership teams**

#### **The importance of mentors and lead mentors/ mentor leadership teams to our ITT Reform**

Ensuring that in-school experiences are seamlessly coherent with the training curriculum, with planned and purposeful trainee engagement with key concepts, is a fundamental aspect of these reforms. Mentors have a critical role in this so it is important that those who undertake the role have dedicated mentor training that is closely aligned to the ITT Curricula that they will be supporting.

#### **Lead mentors/ mentor leadership teams**

We have been clear that the roles of the lead mentor can be carried out by mentor leadership teams and different roles of the lead mentor may be allocated to different members of the mentor leadership team. Providers that choose to do this must ensure that every member of the mentor leadership team completes the required 30 hours of lead mentor training. In cases where roles of the lead mentor/ mentor leadership team are assumed by course leaders, we would expect that they are consolidating their own understanding as they design and deliver their mentor training curricula, and this would be considered part of their lead mentor training.

#### **Consideration of prior or equivalent mentor/lead mentor training**

Each ITT provider must design detailed, high-quality mentor and lead mentor training curricula in line with the minimum time requirements. It is for each provider to determine what should be included in this.

We are clear that the close alignment of mentor training to a provider's ITT curriculum is critical to these reforms. However, we accept that there may be some crossover between different providers' ITT curricula, and therefore their mentor training curricula, and we are clear that prior learning or equivalent learning from another provider can be taken into account, so that training is not unnecessarily repeated. Furthermore, in a situation where multiple providers are working with a particular mentor, we would expect them to ensure their collective ask of each mentor is reasonable, for example, by identifying and maximising synergies across providers' mentor training curricula.

Mentors and lead mentors who have been trained to support early career teachers as part of the ECF will have relevant prior knowledge which will provide a strong foundation for being an ITT mentor. Their ITT mentor or lead mentor training will need to support consolidation and contextualisation of this prior knowledge so that mentors and lead mentors are able to provide high-quality mentoring for ITT trainees who are learning a different curriculum and are at different stages in their development. This same principle



applies to mentors or lead mentors who have undertaken the NPQLTD. This might mean some overall reduction in the hours of training a mentor or lead mentor needs, but it does not mean that they are automatically exempt from aspects of training, and providers must be able to demonstrate that all mentors have been trained in all areas of the mentor training curriculum.

## **Timing of mentor/lead mentor training**

The full mentor or lead mentor training curriculum does not have to be completed before mentors or lead mentors can begin to support trainees.

However, providers must ensure that mentor/lead mentor training is aligned to the trainees' needs throughout their ITT course. This means that mentors/lead mentors must have completed sufficient training to give them the required knowledge, skills and understanding of the ITT curriculum to support the trainee with the relevant parts of the ITT curriculum at any given time.

## **Clarification of how asynchronous training should be incorporated into mentor training**

It is important that all aspects of training have clear learning objectives aligned with the mentor or lead mentor training curricula and that the overall time allocated to an activity is proportionate to the expected learning outcomes. Providers must ensure mentors/lead mentors are properly supported throughout all their training; and that they have the opportunity to discuss learning, check their understanding and ask questions. Mentor and lead mentor training should be designed so that providers are able to reassure themselves that learning outcomes are embedded in mentors' practice, regardless of how training is delivered.

We are clear that this also applies to any asynchronous mentor/lead mentor training. Providers will need to carefully consider how they use asynchronous mentor training, that there is an appropriate balance between synchronous and asynchronous learning, and that the training programme builds on any self-study.

It is important for providers to work with schools to consider how funding can be used to release mentors from other responsibilities; it is important that proper consideration is given to regulating mentors' overall workload.

## **Clarification around freedoms around lead mentor ratios**

Whilst the report from the ITT review expert advisory group set out suggested ratios for lead mentors and trainees, the government response did not set specific ratios for trainees and mentors or lead mentors, and was clear that it is for providers to ensure that every trainee

receives the mentor/lead mentor support that they need.

The new quality requirements are clear that providers must recruit and train sufficient mentors to ensure that every trainee receives their entitlement of 1.5 hours per week of mentoring support.

## **4. General school placements**

### **School contexts**

As set out in the draft ITT Criteria for 2024/25, providers must ensure that trainees are prepared to teach pupils in schools across a full range of contexts found in the geographical area in which they are training, including areas of high disadvantage.

However, we are clear that it is for each provider to determine the geographical area in which they operate, and they should therefore ensure that training takes place in a broadly representative range of school contexts within that area.

### **Minimum time allocations**

For the minimum time allocations outlined in Table 1 of the draft ITT Criteria for 2024/25 we have made clear that the “minimum course length” and “the minimum weeks in school placements” can be delivered in weeks or in the equivalent number of days.

The minimum time allocation for “minimum hours in classrooms each week during a general school placement” is set out as an average of 15 hours each week of the placement, but this could be realised in the equivalent number of hours per day - i.e. an average of 3 hours per day in classrooms (including observing, teaching, co-teaching, etc.) over 120/160 days.

## **5. Partnerships and structures**

Providers should consider whether and how they plan to involve Teaching School Hubs and other relevant specialist hubs, but there is no obligation to do so.

Providers are expected, however, to demonstrate their understanding that local recognition and relationships are critical for securing and maintaining the confidence of potential trainees. Providers should consider this carefully in the make-up of their partnerships, and ensure that at a local level, schools and other partners are well-placed to support the recruitment and training of trainees.



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