



Department
for Education

Initial teacher training (ITT): criteria and supporting advice

**Statutory guidance for accredited ITT
providers**

Academic year 2023/24

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Summary

About this guidance

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

This means that accredited initial teacher training (ITT) providers must have regard to the mandatory guidance when carrying out their duties relating to ITT.

Review date

This guidance is effective for academic year 2023/24.

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

DfE reserves the right to update criteria and guidance to ensure they remain up to date and relevant.

What legislation does this guidance refer to?

- The Education (School Teachers' Qualifications) (England) Regulations 2003 (S.I. 2003/1662)
- The Education (Health Standards) (England) Regulations 2003
- Equality Act 2010

Who is this guidance for?

This guidance is for:

- accredited ITT providers and their partner schools;
- Ofsted.

Accreditation

Accredited ITT providers must ensure that they meet these criteria to remain compliant. Accredited ITT providers who do not comply with these criteria may be subject to withdrawal of accreditation.

Withdrawal of accreditation

This section sets out the circumstances that may lead to the [withdrawal of accreditation](#), and the requirements of accredited ITT providers during this process. DfE reserves the right to withdraw accreditation where:

- provision is non-compliant with one or more of the specified ITT criteria;
- the accredited ITT provider demonstrates impropriety or inadequate controls in its financial management, or does not comply with relevant financial reporting or governance requirements;
- the accredited ITT provider fails to comply with DfE data and reporting requirements;
- QTS provision is consecutively of 'Requires improvement' or lower quality. Typically, this would be failing to achieve a rating of 'Good' or better at reinspection¹;
- the accredited ITT provider ceases to offer provision.

Further information on the process for accredited ITT providers wishing to close ITT provision and the withdrawal of ITT accreditation can be found [here](#).

¹ As determined by Ofsted inspection grade criteria.

Fee charging arrangements

Fee charging in academic year 2023/24 for full-time fee-funded courses

The maximum tuition fee that providers registered in the approved (fee cap) section of the [Office for Students' \(OfS\) register](#) can charge students for the 2023/24 academic year is determined by the Higher Education (Fee Limits and Fee Limit Condition) (England) Regulations 2018, in powers conferred by the Higher Education and Research Act 2017. This act also sets out the requirements for establishing OfS access and participation plans for 2023/24.

OfS-approved (fee cap) providers with a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award for 2023/24 may charge up to £6,165 for a full-time course if they do not have an OfS access and participation plan in place, or up to £9,250 if they have an OfS access and participation plan in place.

OfS-approved (fee cap) providers without a TEF award for 2023/24 may charge up to £6,000 for a full-time course if they do not have an OfS access and participation plan in place or up to £9,000 if they have an OfS access and participation plan in place.

Accredited ITT Providers registering in the approved section of the [OfS register](#) (approved providers) are not subject to maximum fees and are not required to submit an access and participation plan to the OfS.

Organisations who are not registered with the OfS are not subject to the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 and are able to set their own tuition fees without reference to OfS. However, as with higher education institutes, DfE requires that accredited ITT providers must not charge [eligible trainees](#) over £9,250 for full-time programmes of ITT that lead to QTS in 2023/24. This means that accredited ITT providers who are not registered with the OfS can set and publish their own fees for international trainees for full-time programmes.

DfE will write to accredited ITT providers who are subject to OfS fee caps, to provide specific course designation for ITT that leads to QTS and to set tuition fee limits in line with Higher Education (Fee Limits and Fee Limit Condition) (England) Regulations 2018.

Any accredited ITT provider that registers with the OfS should inform DfE via itt.accreditation@education.gov.uk

Student support in academic year 2023/24 for full-time courses

The level of fee loan support available to trainees commencing full-time courses in 2023/24 will, in most cases, be determined by which part of the [OfS register](#) the provider has applied to register in.

Students taking designated courses at approved (fee cap) providers in 2023/24 will qualify for fee loans to meet the full cost of their course subject, up to a maximum full-time higher fee loan limit of £9,250 for [eligible trainees](#). The same full-time fee loan will apply to any accredited ITT providers who are registered with the OfS.

Trainees taking full-time ITT courses with approved providers will only be able to access loans of up to the maximum basic fee amount of £6,000 towards their fees, or up to £6,165 where approved OfS-registered providers have a current TEF award.

Trainees taking part in courses with accredited ITT providers who are not registered with the OfS will also be subject to a maximum fee loan limit of £9,250. DfE will write to accredited ITT providers who are not registered with the OfS annually, to provide course designation for ITT that leads to QTS and to set tuition fee limits in line with Higher Education (Fee Limits and Fee Limit Condition) (England) Regulations 2018. DfE will confirm arrangements with the Student Loans Company.

Fee charging in academic year 2023/24 for part-time fee-funded courses

The maximum tuition fee that providers registering in the approved (fee cap) section of the [Office for Students' \(OfS\) register](#) can charge students for the 2023/24 academic year is determined by the Higher Education (Fee Limits and Fee Limit Condition) (England) Regulations 2018, in powers conferred by the Higher Education and Research Act 2017. This act also sets out the requirements for establishing OfS access and participation plans for 2023/24.

OfS-approved (fee cap) providers with a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award for 2023/24 may charge up to £4,625 for a part-time course if they do not have an OfS access and participation plan in place, or up to £6,935 if they have an OfS access and participation plan in place.

OfS-approved (fee cap) providers without a TEF award for 2023/24 may charge up to £4,500 for a part-time course if they do not have an OfS access and participation plan in place, or up to £6,750 if they have an OfS access and participation plan in place.

Accredited ITT providers registering in the approved section of the OfS register (approved providers) are not subject to maximum fees and are not required to submit an access and participation plan to the OfS.

Organisations who are not registered with the OfS are not subject to the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 and are able to set their own tuition fees without reference to the OfS. However, DfE requires that accredited ITT providers must not charge [eligible trainees](#) over £6,935 for part-time programmes of ITT leading to QTS in 2023/24. This means that accredited ITT providers who are not registered with the OfS, can set and publish their own fees for international trainees for the part-time programmes.

DfE will write to accredited ITT providers who are not registered with the OfS annually, to provide specific course designation for ITT leading to QTS and to set tuition fee limits in line with Higher Education (Fee Limits and Fee Limit Condition) (England) Regulations 2018.

Any accredited ITT provider that registers with the OfS should inform DfE via itt.accreditation@education.gov.uk.

Student support in academic year 2023/24 for part-time courses

The level of fee loan support available to trainees commencing part-time courses in 2023/24 will, in most cases, be determined by which part of the [OfS register](#) the provider has applied to register in.

Students taking designated part-time courses at approved (fee cap) providers in 2023/24 will qualify for fee loans to meet the full cost of their course, subject to a maximum part-time higher fee loan limit of £6,935. The same part-time fee loan will apply to ITT accredited providers who are registered with the OfS.

Trainees taking part-time ITT courses with approved providers will only be able to access loans of up to the maximum basic fee amount of £4,500 towards their fees, or up to £4,625 where approved providers have a current TEF award.

Trainees taking part in ITT courses with accredited ITT providers who are not registered with OfS will also be subject to a maximum fee loan limit of £6,935. DfE will write to accredited ITT providers who are not registered with the OfS annually, to designate courses and set tuition fee limits in line with Higher Education (Fee Limits and Fee Limit Condition) (England) Regulations 2018. DfE will confirm arrangements with the Student Loans Company.

Entry Criteria

C1.1 GCSE standard equivalent

All accredited ITT providers must:

- ensure that all entrants have achieved a standard equivalent to a grade 4² in the GCSE examinations in English³ and mathematics; and
- ensure that those who intend to train to teach pupils aged 3 to 11 additionally have achieved a standard equivalent to a grade 4 in the GCSE examination in a science subject.

The aim of this criterion is to ensure that all entrants to ITT have demonstrated their achievement of a minimum standard of educational attainment, and for primary trainees that they demonstrate an acceptable level of subject knowledge in the core subjects of the National Curriculum.

Applicants who are otherwise suitable but have not successfully achieved a GCSE grade 4, or recognised equivalent, may be given an opportunity to show that they can meet the required standard either by taking an equivalence test or by offering other evidence of attainment, which should demonstrate a similar level and breadth. Accredited ITT providers should consider making similar arrangements for applicants who cannot provide original certificates as evidence.

DfE does not provide a list of qualifications that can be considered equivalent to the GCSE examinations in English, mathematics, and science. When accredited ITT 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.

Accredited ITT providers should look for additional evidence of breadth of knowledge and understanding in applicants who have key and functional skills certificates but do not have GCSEs at grade 4 or above in English and mathematics.

² For the equivalent of grades awarded under the new GCSE grading structure, refer to [Your qualification, our regulation: GCSE, AS and A level reforms](#).

³ An equivalent to grade 4 in English language or English literature fulfils this criterion.

Qualifications in key and functional skills at level 2 are not equivalent to GCSEs in terms of breadth of content.

PGTA-specific qualifications

Those applicants meeting the required GCSE standard by taking an equivalence test or by offering other evidence of attainment, who intend to undertake the postgraduate teaching apprenticeship (PGTA), will additionally need functional skills qualifications or equivalent qualifications at level 2 in mathematics and English to meet the apprenticeship gateway entry criteria.

Intellectual and academic capabilities

Accredited ITT 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 ITT course and meet the [Teachers' Standards](#) by the end of their training.

Prior to the award of QTS, accredited ITT 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 in English and mathematics must be undertaken by the trainee teacher in addition to other aspects of their training. It is the trainee's responsibility to secure such fundamental English and mathematics, whereas

responsibility for assurance lies with the accredited ITT provider. Fundamental English and mathematics may be supported and assured in different ways by different accredited ITT 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 accredited ITT providers must:

- ensure that, in the case of graduate programmes of ITT, all entrants hold a first degree from a United Kingdom higher education institution or equivalent qualification⁴.

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.

[The Education \(School Teachers' Qualifications\) \(England\) Regulations 2003](#) require all qualified teachers in England to have a UK first degree or equivalent qualification. Any equivalent qualification must be one single qualification, not an aggregation of a number 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 postgraduate ITT programmes need to have attained a degree before they commence the programme.

Accredited ITT providers should view original certificates in order to validate an applicant's degree status. However, they should exercise discretion for recent graduates where there is a delay in receiving the original certificate. In these cases, accredited ITT providers should obtain written confirmation from the relevant degree-awarding institution

⁴ A first degree comprises 300 HE credit points of which 60 must be at level 6 of the QCF. Applicants with a foundation degree will need to supplement this qualification with at least 60 credits at level 6 (HE level 3) in order to attain an equivalent single qualification.

that the applicant has achieved graduate status. Accredited ITT providers should view the original certificate as soon as it is available.

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

Where the awarding 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), whereby the applicant cannot be awarded graduate status before entry to the ITT programme, accredited ITT 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.

Where an accredited ITT provider has exercised their discretion to accept an individual onto an ITT course before they have been awarded their degree, the accredited ITT provider must, before confirming to DfE that the individual has completed that course and been assessed as meeting the Teachers' Standards, confirm that they have now been awarded their degree.

Those on undergraduate ITT programmes will, if successful, graduate and meet the standards for the award of QTS at the same time. Only the accredited provider can make recommendations for the award of QTS. Accredited ITT providers may delegate the award of the first degree to a partner organisation registered with the Office for Students (OfS). Compliance with regulatory requirements in respect of academic awards (for example, to the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) and the OfS) can rest with a partner that awards the undergraduate degree rather than with the accredited ITT provider.

Degree subjects

Legislation does not specify that teachers must have a degree in a particular subject or discipline. There is no statutory requirement for primary trainee teachers to have a degree in a National Curriculum subject, or for secondary trainee teachers to have a degree in a specified subject, as long as they meet the Teachers' Standards, including those that relate to subject and curriculum knowledge, by the end of their training.

Information on degree-level qualifications

Accredited ITT 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 (for example, significant taught content, equivalent breadth).

It is for the accredited ITT provider to decide whether an applicant's qualification meets this criterion. Accredited ITT providers whose ITT 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 Suitability

All accredited ITT providers must:

- ensure that all entrants, as part of the accredited ITT provider's selection procedures, have taken part in a rigorous selection process designed to assess their suitability to train to teach.

Accredited ITT providers must ensure that, before anyone is admitted to an ITT 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. Accredited ITT providers should conduct interviews, run appropriate pre-selection checks, and

assess if an applicant has the potential to undertake an ITT course and meet the Teachers' Standards by the end of their training.

Accredited ITT 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.

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

Accredited ITT providers should ensure that applicant selection processes give due regard to relevant aspects of part three of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

Accredited ITT providers should ensure that at least one member of the recruitment panel has undertaken appropriate safer recruitment training.

Interviews

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

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

Accredited ITT 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, accredited ITT providers must ensure that interview procedures promote equality of opportunity and avoid discrimination.

The [Equality Act 2010](#) and [Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001](#) require accredited ITT providers to ensure that they are not discriminating against applicants on

the basis of any protected characteristic, or applicants with special educational needs (SEN).

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

Health and physical capacity to train to teach

Accredited ITT providers should have regard to the relevant aspects of [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(KCSIE\)](#) requirements when assessing trainees' health and physical capacity to train to teach, so that children and young people are not at risk of harm. The activities that a teacher must be able to perform are set out in the [Education \(Health Standards\) \(England\) Regulations 2003](#). Accredited ITT 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. Accredited ITT 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.

Disclosure and Barring Service checks

Accredited ITT providers should have regard to the [Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance](#) when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. They should ensure that all trainees have been subject to appropriate pre-selection checks. This will include obtaining and considering [Disclosure and Barring Service \(DBS\)](#) criminal records checks and children's barred list information.

Accredited ITT providers should confirm in writing to schools that a non-salaried trainee's criminal record check, including a check of the children's barred list, has been completed and that the individual has been judged by the accredited ITT provider to be suitable to work with children. Accredited ITT providers are not required to provide any information to schools in addition to this confirmation. Schools may wish to record this confirmation in their single central record, but they are not required to do so.

When determining an individual's suitability to train to teach, accredited ITT providers, or employing schools for salaried routes, should check, by asking the trainee or using any other data or information they have access to, that a trainee has not previously been removed from an ITT programme because they have behaved in a way that indicates that they may not be suitable to work with children, or if the previous accredited ITT provider would have removed the trainee had they not left.

In the case of salaried routes, the responsibility lies with the employer to ensure that DBS checks have been carried out. The employing school should inform the accredited ITT provider that a satisfactory check has been obtained.

Where a school or college allows an individual to start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available, they should ensure that the individual is appropriately supervised and that all other checks, including a separate barred list check, have been completed.

Accredited ITT providers should establish clear safeguarding procedures and protocols that are agreed by all partners in the partnership. This should include a common understanding of convictions, offences, cautions and warnings that would not pose a barrier to joining or continuing an ITT programme.

Accredited ITT providers should ensure that all trainee teachers, at the start of training in any 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;
- a copy of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

Accredited ITT providers may wish to recommend to applicants, particularly those that are checked early in the recruitment cycle, that they register with the DBS update service.

If an accredited ITT provider removes a trainee from a programme because the trainee has harmed or poses a risk of harm to children, or if the accredited ITT provider would have removed the trainee had they not left, the accredited ITT provider should seek guidance from DBS and inform DfE by contacting itt.safeguarding@education.gov.uk.

Any queries about DBS checks should be referred to DBS at customerservices@dbs.gov.uk or on 03000 200 190.

Other background checks

Applicants who are unsuited to working with children may not have any previous convictions, and accredited ITT providers should ensure that all those involved in the selection process are vigilant. Accredited ITT providers and employing schools for salaried routes have a duty to ensure that trainees are properly managed and supervised and that, if they have concerns, information is referred to the police and DBS.

Applicants who have lived or worked outside the UK must undergo the same checks as all other trainee teachers. In addition, further checks should be carried out so that events that occurred outside the UK can be considered. The Home Office has published guidance on [Criminal record checks for overseas applicants](#) and DfE has published [Changes to checks for EU sanctions on EEA teachers](#) and [Recruit teachers from overseas](#).

Accredited ITT providers and employers must check that applicants are not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State.

Childcare disqualification

Accredited ITT providers should have regard to the [Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 statutory guidance](#) and related obligations under the Childcare Act 2006.

Where trainees are salaried, it is the responsibility of the school to ensure that they comply with the legislation. If a salaried trainee is, or becomes, disqualified from a childcare role, schools should inform the accredited ITT provider of this. Where trainees are fee-funded, it is the responsibility of the accredited ITT provider to ensure that the trainee is not disqualified from childcare or that the trainee has obtained a childcare disqualification waiver from Ofsted.

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

Further information

Statutory guidance:

[Regulated Activity \(children\) - supervision of activity with children which is regulated activity when unsupervised](#)

[Working together to safeguard children](#)

[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

C1.4 ITT Recruitment practices

All accredited ITT providers must:

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

Accredited ITT 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, accredited ITT 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

Accredited ITT providers should include training locations and contact details when publishing course information and ensure that these are kept up to date.

Accredited ITT providers should ensure that courses are closed on Apply swiftly once they are full. It should be 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.

Accredited ITT providers should also give clear information about specific requirements or expectations they have of applicants applying to salaried courses.

Accredited ITT providers should give details of their complaint procedure on their website, which should be straightforward to follow if an applicant wishes to make a complaint.

Decisions, offers, feedback, and deferrals

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

Accredited ITT 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. Accredited ITT 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 reason(s) 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, accredited ITT providers should still aim to provide feedback.

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

Applicants will provide details of references as part of their application. References should be checked only after an offer has been made and the checks outlined in C1.3 Suitability have been undertaken, including to ensure that it is safe for the applicant to work with children.

Accessibility

Accredited ITT providers should check the accessibility requirements of applicants, and make any reasonable adjustments where required.

Training Criteria

C2.1 Programme structure

All accredited ITT providers must:

- design an evidence-based, sequenced curriculum which encompasses all aspects of the [ITT Core Content Framework \(CCF\)](#) as well as the programme requirements set out in these criteria;
- design courses which enable trainee teachers to meet the [Teachers' Standards](#);
- ensure that no trainee teacher is recommended for the award of QTS until they have met all of these Standards.

At the outset, accredited ITT providers should make clear to trainees, and to all those involved in the partnership (including schools and mentors), the scope and coverage of the programme, including subject and curriculum knowledge and understanding, and the anticipated training outcomes.

Programme design should be flexible enough to meet the needs of every trainee. Accredited ITT providers should keep under review the extent to which their provision and assessment practices are designed to ensure that trainees can meet the Teachers' Standards by the end of the course.

Overarching requirements

Accredited ITT providers must have a fully developed, evidence-based curriculum. It must encompass all aspects of the ITT Core Content Framework (CCF) as a minimum entitlement, ensuring that trainees are prepared for the next stage in their professional development as teachers: the Early Career Framework (ECF) induction.

An accredited ITT 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. Accredited ITT providers should determine an appropriate and robust evidence base for their curriculum, including the best evidence for effective teacher training and development with well-evidenced subject- and/or phase-specific content integrated into the taught curriculum.

Specific requirements

Accredited ITT providers must design a sequenced ITT curriculum which:

- encompasses the CCF in full, includes further content to be taught that moves beyond the foundation of the CCF (including subject-specific and phase-specific content), and prepares trainees for the ECF and the broader demands of their early career;
- 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 ITT 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, including the minimum two schools;
- 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. Subject- and phase-specific approaches must be delivered by suitably qualified experts and take full account of the evidence available for subject- and phase-specific teaching. This part of the ITT curriculum must adequately cover all National Curriculum subjects for primary trainees, and the relevant teaching subject(s) for secondary trainees 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.

C2.2 Age ranges, subject- and phase-specific training

All accredited ITT providers must:

- ensure that they prepare all trainee teachers to teach within one of the following age phases: ages 3 to 11 (primary), ages 7 to 14 (middle) or ages 11 to 19 (secondary).

Training must enable trainees to acquire the knowledge and skills they need to teach within the phase for which they are training. Typically training will take place across the following age ranges:

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

No training programme should cover fewer than four consecutive school years.

Where accredited ITT providers are offering middle phase ITT 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 Teachers’ Standards across the relevant curriculum in the primary element of training, and in their specialist subject in the secondary element of training.

Accredited ITT providers should specify in their recruitment literature and programme design documentation the age range of training for each of their programmes. Accredited ITT 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.

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

Subject- and phase-specific training

The 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-/phase-specific level. Accredited ITT providers must ensure that their curriculum sets out in detail approaches for each subject and phase. Accredited ITT providers must:

- have a clear evidence base underpinning each ITT 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;
- ensure that their curriculum encompasses the CCF within a subject- and phase-specific context, with sufficient subject- 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;
- 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 subject(s) and phase(s).

C2.3 School placements

All accredited ITT providers must:

- ensure that training programmes are designed to provide trainees with:
 - at least two school placements⁵;
 - sufficient time being trained in schools, early years, and/or further education settings; and
 - the experience they need to demonstrate all the Teachers' Standards for QTS.

Accredited ITT providers will need to work with a range of schools to ensure a broad range of school placements are available to their trainees. Time spent in schools, either as part of the two school placements, or other experiences or training in schools, should be part of a coherent training programme that is designed to enable trainees to meet the Teachers' Standards by the end of the course.

⁵ Where we refer to schools in the school placement criteria, we also include early years and further education institutions.

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 requirements for school placements.

School placements and other training may take place in a special school, alternative provision, pupil referral units, and mainstream schools with SEN resource units, particularly where an accredited ITT provider chooses to offer an additional specialism in special educational needs. In these cases, accredited ITT providers should ensure that the design of the overall training programme would enable trainees to meet all of the Teachers' Standards by the end of the course, across the specific year groups and phase range of training.

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](#).

Two schools

Trainee teachers need a variety of experience in schools to enable them to meet all of the Teachers' Standards. They need to teach children and young people in their specified age range, from different backgrounds, as well as gaining experience of different approaches to teaching and to school organisation and management.

Trainees must have taught classes to pupils in two schools prior to the award of QTS. It is not sufficient for trainees only to have had non-teaching work experience in these schools. Accredited ITT providers may wish to consider whether a trainee with prior assessed experience of teaching in a school has gained enough relevant teaching experience to allow them to confidently count that previous teaching as one of the two schools specified. Where this is the case, the placement should offer the trainee a contrasting experience from that which they already have.

Salaried trainees will usually need to be released from their employing schools to spend time teaching in another school. Accredited ITT providers should ensure that the other schools are carefully selected to extend the trainees' knowledge, skills and understanding and provide opportunities for them to demonstrate, through their teaching, how they meet the Teachers' Standards.

Legislation requires that practical teaching experience for the purposes of ITT should take place wholly or mainly in England, or in schools administered by the Ministry of Defence's (MOD) Directorate Children and Young People (DCYP). However, there may be circumstances where part of the training could take place outside England.

C2.4 Assessment of programmes

All accredited ITT 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. Where an accredited ITT provider's partners take a significant role in assessment and making judgements that lead to a recommendation for the award of QTS, the accredited ITT provider should ensure that assessment moderation procedures are robust before they make recommendations for the award. The accredited ITT provider remains accountable for all assessment judgements and recommendations and should ensure that this is understood across their ITT partnership, through their partnership agreements.

Overarching requirements

Accredited ITT providers must set out a trainee assessment and progression framework which is aligned to the planned and sequenced curriculum. It should draw on overarching evidence-based principles for good quality assessment, which may include those set out in the CCF, ECF and NPQs relating to the assessment of pupils. The assessment framework should, as such, assess trainees with appropriate frequency on their knowledge and understanding of the curriculum, and how trainees apply such knowledge and understanding in classroom practice. Because ongoing assessment is an important part of the training process, it should include focused feedback designed to enable trainees to improve. Feedback should draw on the content of the ITT curriculum and should 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 ITT 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 ITT curriculum which trainees are finding challenging and be used to adapt approaches to delivery or reshape practice accordingly. Accredited ITT providers must be able to demonstrate the ways in which this will happen.

Accredited ITT providers must ensure that all mentors and others involved in assessment of trainees have received sufficient training to enable them to understand and use the accredited ITT provider's assessment framework accurately and appropriately.

This approach aligns with the assessment principles of the [Ofsted Initial Teacher Education inspection Framework and Handbook](#).

Specific requirements

Accredited ITT providers must design an assessment framework which reflects evidence-based principles for good assessment, is straightforward to use, and meets the following requirements:

- 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- and phase-specific approaches set out in the ITT 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 ITT 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 Teachers' Standards prior to 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.

Accredited ITT providers that offer the postgraduate teaching apprenticeship route should ensure that end-point assessments comply with the arrangements specified for the [postgraduate teaching apprenticeship programme](#). Further guidance is available on the

[register of apprenticeship training providers](#) and the [register of end-point assessment organisations](#).

Management and QA Criteria

C3.1 Management

All accredited ITT providers must:

- ensure that their management structure facilitates the effective operation of the training programme.

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

Schools should play a significant and, often, leading role in the design and delivery of training provision. The management structure should demonstrate the central role that schools should play in all aspects of provision, from selection and recruitment, through delivery and training, to the assessment of trainees for the award of QTS.

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

Accredited ITT providers are responsible for contacting DfE to seek approval for any proposed significant changes to their governance and/or operational structure as set out in C3.2.

C3.2 Partnerships and structures

All accredited ITT providers must:

- ensure that robust governance arrangements are put in place and exercised effectively, with clearly established structures and partnerships.

Detailed guidance can be found in [Initial Teacher Training \(ITT\): Forming Partnerships](#)

Overarching requirements

The roles and responsibilities of all partners should be clearly defined in partnership agreements. Partnership agreements should be clear, working documents 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. Each partnership agreement should be underpinned by other practices, such as well-understood procedures for communication between the partners and agreed arrangements for the co-ordination of the training.

The partnership agreement should also include details of the:

- clear quality assurance procedures for every role that a partner undertakes;
- content, delivery, and impact of each of the ITT programmes;
- 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.

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

Accredited ITT providers should satisfy themselves that partner schools have the capacity to undertake their responsibilities. Where a school has serious weakness or is in special measures, it may still be possible to use the school for placements, especially if the improvements to be made do not affect the subject or age range of the training. The accredited ITT provider needs to be confident that the trainee will not be disadvantaged by the school experience and the situation should be kept under close review.

Roles and responsibilities

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

Partnership agreements should specify the different roles within the partnership including, for example, programme and course leaders, mentors, and internal and external moderators. They should also set out how partners contribute towards:

- selecting and interviewing applicants;
- moderating assessment judgements of trainees against the 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.

Accredited ITT providers of salaried routes must ensure that all schools or settings, where trainees have additional teaching experience, are of high quality, understand and agree to the partnership roles and responsibilities and have the capacity to provide the necessary training and support.

Changes to partnership structures

Accredited ITT providers must seek DfE approval for any proposed significant changes to their:

- accredited legal entity;
- operating name;
- partnership arrangements, including addition and removal of partners;
- Accounting Officer for the delivery of ITT.

The accredited ITT provider must inform DfE of:

- changes to the accredited ITT provider's UKPRN;
- details of all partners undertaking any of the following functions:
 - recruitment and delivery of ITT on behalf of an accredited ITT provider;
 - receiving and managing student fees from the Office for Students (OfS);
 - making an academic award for the ITT course.

If an accredited ITT 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 itt.accreditation@education.gov.uk.

Further information on the above definitions can be found here - [Initial teacher training \(ITT\): forming partnerships - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

C3.3 Legislation

All accredited ITT providers must:

- ensure that they comply with all current legislation relevant to ITT.

In order to become an accredited ITT provider, an organisation must satisfy the criteria specified by the Secretary of State. Accredited ITT providers must review and update their provision so that it continues to meet these criteria and associated legislation. Where there is evidence of an accredited ITT provider's non-compliance with current ITT criteria, DfE will consider withdrawal of accreditation.

Accredited ITT 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 includes:

- [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](#) (read the '[Guide to the General Data Protection Regulation](#)');
- [Freedom of Information Act 2000](#).

As of 1 July 2015, specified authorities, including all schools, are subject to a duty under section 26 of the [Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 \(the CTSA 2015\)](#), to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'. Bodies to

which the duty applies must have regard to statutory guidance issued under section 29 of the CTSA 2015 ('the [Prevent duty guidance](#)').

The Prevent duty guidance states that schools and other institutions to which the duty applies should make sure that staff have training that gives them the knowledge and confidence to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas, which can be used to legitimise terrorism and are shared by terrorist groups.

Further information

The following is a sample list of relevant legislation and guidance. This is not intended to be exhaustive and accredited ITT providers will need to ensure that they have identified and comply with all legislation relevant to ITT. The [Equality Act 2010](#) is the governing legislation for all matters relating to all acts of discrimination. Also relevant are:

[Education \(Health Standards\) \(England\) Regulations 2003 \(SI 3139\)](#)

[Special Educational Needs and Disability Act \(2001\)](#)

[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](#).

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

C3.4 Quality assurance

All accredited ITT providers must:

- ensure that they monitor, evaluate, and moderate all aspects of provision rigorously; and
- demonstrate how these contribute to securing improvements in the quality of training and the assessment of trainees.

Evaluation

Accredited ITT 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.

Accredited ITT providers may wish to collect and analyse a variety of data to inform their understanding of the effectiveness of their training. For example, they may collect and analyse data or other evidence about:

- training sessions, in order to establish their fitness for purpose and to identify strengths and weaknesses across the different contributions to the programme;
- trainees' evaluations of how their training needs have been met;
- mentors' evaluations of the training programme and how it is administered;
- trainees' perceptions of their training;
- former trainees, induction tutors and employing schools;
- internal and external moderation about the effectiveness and accuracy of the assessment of trainees against the Teachers' Standards;
- external moderator feedback about the effectiveness of training provision in helping trainees to meet the Teachers' Standards;
- the implementation of equality policies;
- DfE and Ofsted 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. Accredited ITT providers should ensure that arrangements for internal moderation are in place, and

they work effectively. The roles and responsibilities of those carrying out such arrangements are likely to be contained in the partnership agreement.

Internal moderation procedures could include, but are not limited to:

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

External moderation

External moderators have an important role in ensuring consistency of standards across, as well as within, ITT partnerships. Accredited ITT 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 Teachers' Standards.

Accredited ITT 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 accredited ITT providers' trainees being assessed for the award of QTS, which should help to verify the accuracy of the accredited ITT provider's assessments. Accredited ITT providers should consider how to use external moderators to corroborate and standardise their assessments of trainees.

Accredited ITT 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/fail borderline, or likely to fail;

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

In addition, accredited ITT providers should have procedures in place for monitoring and evaluating the management of their programmes including, for example, arrangements for the selection and de-selection of partner schools. They should use evidence exemplified above to inform the work of any committees that serve the partnership.

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

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

Employment-based criteria

All accredited ITT providers of employment-based ITT must additionally ensure that for the period of training all applicants must be employed as unqualified teachers⁶ at a

⁶ As defined by the latest school teachers' pay and conditions document.

school⁷ or academy, and (except applicants employed in academies or independent schools) must be paid in accordance with at least the minimum of the unqualified teacher pay range for the period of their training. Further information on pay and conditions can be found here: [School teachers' pay and conditions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk).

All accredited ITT providers offering employment-based ITT must ensure that applicants are only admitted to employment-based programmes by either DfE or by an accredited ITT provider⁸.

All accredited ITT providers offering employment-based ITT must additionally ensure that no applicant will be required to perform more than 90 per cent of the teaching duties normally required of a full-time qualified teacher.

Legislation

This advice refers to:

[The Education \(School Teachers' Qualifications\) \(England\) Regulations 2003 \(S.I. 2003/1662\)](#)

[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](#)

[Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001](#)

[Data Protection Act 2018](#)

[Freedom of Information Act 2000](#)

[The Childcare \(Disqualification\) Regulations 2009](#)

[Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015](#)

⁷ Or 'other institution' as defined by the Education (School Teachers' Qualifications) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI 2003/1662) as amended.

⁸ Teach First (ITT) programme applicants must be admitted only with the agreement of the Teach First organisation.



Department
for Education

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