

ITT Criteria Compliance Audit – Academic Year 2026/27 (September 2026)

This version of the ITT Criteria Compliance Audit is aligned to the [Initial teacher training: criteria and supporting advice, 2026 to 2027](#) published on **1st September 2026**.

Please note that text within this audit has been **emboldened** by NASBTT for emphasis.

Completing the ITT Criteria Compliance Audit

When completing this audit, close reference **must** be made to the [Initial teacher training: criteria and supporting advice](#) **in full**.

You may also find it helpful to refer to the guidance referenced within the [Initial teacher training: criteria and supporting advice](#); this is hyperlinked throughout this audit.

You may also find it helpful to refer to NASBTT's publications, guidance and toolkits which have been referenced throughout this audit.

Disclaimer

This guidance has been prepared by NASBTT for the general information and support of Members based in England. It is provided in good faith and is based on NASBTT's current understanding of the relevant legislation, policy, guidance and source materials available at the date of publication. While reasonable care has been taken to ensure accuracy, NASBTT cannot guarantee that the guidance is complete, up-to-date or applicable to every provider's circumstances.

This document does not constitute legal advice. Where a decision has legal, regulatory, contractual or financial implications, Members should seek their own legal or professional advice as required.

This document will be reviewed periodically. However, Members should be aware that source documents, statutory requirements, government guidance, regulatory expectations and policy positions may be amended, withdrawn or superseded outside of NASBTT's normal review cycle. Before relying on this guidance for decision making, Members should check the latest version of the relevant primary source.

NASBTT accepts no liability for any loss arising from reliance on this guidance, except where such liability cannot lawfully be excluded.

Information

The ITT criteria “contains mandatory criteria and supporting advice from the Department for Education (DfE)” that sets out the “requirements and responsibilities that all accredited initial teacher training (ITT) providers should follow as a condition of their accreditation”.

The ITT criteria applies to “all ITT that leads to qualified teacher status (QTS), as defined within the 4 core routes:

- undergraduate fee-funded
- undergraduate salaried
- postgraduate fee-funded
- postgraduate salaried”

“Accredited ITT providers should 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.”

Important note: “As part of our approach to quality assurance, Ofsted will inspect ITT delivery for **all** accredited ITT providers **every 4 years** in line with the [Initial Teacher Education \(ITE\) inspection: toolkit, operating guide and framework](#).”

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

- **Accredited ITT provider:** will have full and final accountability for all aspects of training design, delivery and quality across the partnership and may work with a wide range of partners, including those involved in ITT curriculum design, supply lead mentors or mentor leadership teams, and run intensive training and practice (ITAP)

There are 2 types of partner with specific delivery responsibilities:

- **training partners:** will have an operational or strategic role with responsibilities delegated to them by the accredited provider, and their role will include delivering training and may include trainee recruitment
- **placement school(s)** - will provide placements and general mentors – [school placements](#) and [mentoring](#) include further information

Where an accredited ITT provider has delegated a role to a training partner, these mandatory requirements and responsibilities apply to the training partner. The accredited ITT provider is accountable for ensuring training partners meet these requirements and responsibilities.”

Note: Accredited ITT providers should be aware that “ITT courses that began on or prior to 31 May 2024 are subject to the ITT criteria that were in place when the ITT course commenced (for example, multi-year undergraduate courses beginning in 2022 to 2023 or 2023 to 2024).”

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.

The Secretary of State 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
- the accredited provider does not achieve the expected standard in all Ofsted evaluation areas of provision leading to QTS after Ofsted inspection and subsequent reinspection^[footnote 1]
- the accredited ITT provider ceases to offer provision

[Accredited ITT provider closure and withdrawal of ITT accreditation](#) includes further information on the process for accredited ITT providers wishing to close ITT provision and the withdrawal of ITT accreditation.

¹ As determined by Ofsted on inspection and reinspection.

Key questions – Withdrawal of accreditation	Provider response
• How do you ensure that you demonstrate propriety and adequate control in your financial management? • How do you ensure you comply with relevant financial reporting and governance requirements? • How do you ensure that you comply with DfE data and reporting requirements?	

Fee charging arrangements

This section includes information on fee charging for courses **between September and December 2026**.

For courses starting in January 2027 onwards, existing higher education (HE) student finance loans will be replaced by the [lifelong learning entitlement](#) (LLE). All ITT courses leading to QTS will be eligible for LLE funding, regardless of whether they also award a postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE). This guidance will be updated in due course to reflect the updated regulations.

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Fee charging in academic year 2026 to 2027 for undergraduate ITT courses leading to QTS

The maximum tuition fee that accredited ITT providers registered in the approved (fee cap) section of the [Office for Students' \(OfS\) register](#) can charge students for the 2026 to 2027 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](#).

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Fee charging in academic year 2026 to 2027 for postgraduate courses leading to QTS

Accredited ITT providers who are not registered with the OfS and accredited ITT providers who are registered with the OfS as approved (fee cap) providers can set their own tuition fees without reference to OfS. However, DfE requires that these accredited ITT providers must not charge [eligible trainees](#) over £9,790 for full-time or £7,335 for part-time programmes of ITT that lead to QTS in 2026 to 2027.

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Student support in academic year 2026 to 2027 for full-time and part-time courses

The level of fee loan support available to eligible trainees commencing full-time and part-time courses in 2026 to 2027 will, in most cases, be determined by which part of the [OfS register](#) the provider has applied to register in.

Eligible trainees will qualify for fee loans up to the maximum fee limit the provider charges for their course, as detailed in [Fee charging in academic year 2026 to 2027 for undergraduate ITT courses leading to QTS](#).

Note: The fee information stated below relates to SCITTs. HEIs should refer to the fee information in the [Initial teacher training: criteria and supporting advice, 2026 to 2027](#).

Key questions – Fee charging arrangements	Provider response
Fee charging in academic year 2026 to 2027 for undergraduate ITT courses leading to QTS	
“The maximum tuition fee that accredited ITT providers registered in the approved (fee cap) section of the Office for Students' (OfS) register can charge students for the 2026 to 2027 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 .”	
- Do you adhere to the maximum £9,790 fees for full-time fee-funded courses? - Do you adhere to the maximum £7,335 (per year) fees for part-time fee-funded courses? (Only relevant to programmes starting prior to January 2027.*) - If applicable, have you set and published your own fees for international trainees for full-time and part-time programmes?	

Key questions – Fee charging arrangements	Provider response
Are your tuition fees clearly stated on your marketing and recruitment materials, including on your website?	
Fee charging in academic year 2026 to 2027 for postgraduate courses leading to QTS “Accredited ITT providers who are not registered with the OfS and accredited ITT providers who are registered with the OfS as approved (fee cap) providers can set their own tuition fees without reference to OfS. However, DfE requires that these accredited ITT providers must not charge eligible trainees over £9,790 for full-time or £7,335 for part-time programmes of ITT that lead to QTS in 2026 to 2027.”	
- Do you adhere to the maximum £9,790 fees for full-time fee-funded courses? - Do you adhere to the maximum £7,335 (per year) fees for part-time fee-funded courses? (Only relevant to programmes starting prior to January 2027.*) - If applicable, have you set and published your own fees for international trainees for full-time and part-time programmes? - Are your tuition fees clearly stated on your marketing and recruitment materials, including on your website?	
Welsh designation Note: This sub-heading has been added by NASBTT and is not included in the ITT criteria. Welsh designation is not referred to in the ITT criteria but it is important that you have considered this aspect.	
If you recruit trainees who are domiciled in Wales, have you made yourself aware of the need to be accredited with Welsh government and the limitation on the fees that HEFCW makes available to SCITTs?	

* [Lifelong Learning Entitlement \(LLE\)](#)

The introduction of the Lifelong Learning Entitlement from January 2027, will change the total amount providers can charge trainees on part-time programmes.

The total cost of part-time programmes will be capped at the amount providers may charge for a full-time equivalent course.

Providers can choose how much of the tuition fee they charge in each of the two years according to the following guidance.

For the purpose of calculating the tuition fee limit, the LLE uses a default of 120 credits for a one-year full-time equivalent ITT course. The total cost of the course cannot exceed the cost of a 120-credit FTE course.

Providers can choose how much of this fee to charge each year based on the number of default credits for that year of study. The default annual amount is set at 90 credits, subject to the remaining 120 credit course cap.

The following are just two examples of how providers might choose to ‘charge’ fees:

- spread the default credits equally into 60 default credits per year for two years. This would mean the provider charges 50% of the tuition fee per academic year of the course:

- frontload 90 default credits in the first year of study, leaving 30 default credits for the second year. This would mean the provider charges 90 credits – 75% of the fee limit for the first year of study and 30 credits – 25% of the fee limit for the second year.

Year	Maximum tuition fees	60 credits in each year of study		90 credits in first year of study and 30 credits in second year of study	
		First year	Second year	First year	Second year
2026-2027 (from January 2027)	£9,790	£4,895	£4,895	£7,342.50	£2,447.50
2027-2028	£10,050	£5,025	£5,025	£7,537.50	£2,512.50

Tuition fees

DfE confirmed tuition fees for the 2026-2027 and 2027-2028 academic years on 26th November 2025:

[Changes to tuition fees: 2026 to 2027 academic year and 2027 to 2028 academic year](#)

Entry criteria: C1.1 GCSE standard equivalent

All accredited ITT providers should:

- ensure that all entrants have achieved a standard equivalent to a grade 4^[footnote 2] in the GCSE examinations in English^[footnote 3] and mathematics
- 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

² For the equivalent of grades awarded under the GCSE grading structure, refer to [What qualification levels mean: England, Wales and Northern Ireland](#).

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

Note: “DfE does not provide a list of qualifications that can be considered equivalent to the GCSE examinations in English, mathematics, and science. It is the provider’s role to determine the equivalency of a qualification.”

Key questions – C1.1 GCSE standard equivalent	Provider response
“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 of the core subjects of the National Curriculum.”	
• How do you ensure that “all entrants have achieved a standard equivalent to a grade 4 in the GCSE examinations in English and mathematics”? • Additionally, how do you ensure that primary trainees “have achieved a standard equivalent to a grade 4 in the GCSE examination in a science subject”? • Where is this information recorded? Do you have a secure audit trail? • Are original certificates seen and verified as authentic? Where is evidence of this recorded? • Are certified copies of the original certificate(s) kept? If so, where are these stored? • Do you accept equivalence tests* or other evidence of attainment? If so, how do you satisfy yourselves that these “demonstrate a similar level and breadth”? • Where applicants “cannot provide original certificates as evidence”, what evidence of attainment are you willing to accept? • When considering if “a qualification is of a standard equivalent to GCSE grade 4”, do you “look at the content not only in terms of its level, but also in terms of its breadth”?	

Key questions – C1.1 GCSE standard equivalent	Provider response
- Where an applicant has key and functional skills certificates but does not have GCSEs at grade 4 or above in English and mathematics, do you “look for additional evidence of breadth of knowledge and understanding”? Note: “Qualifications in key and functional skills at level 2 are not equivalent to GCSEs in terms of breadth of content.” - Is ENIC evidence used to ensure the equivalence of international qualifications? Note: Find out more about NASBTT's UK ENIC Information Service. - What are the requirements of your HEI partner for accessing the PGCE component of your course?	
Teaching apprenticeship English and mathematics requirements	
For apprenticeship trainees, how do you evidence you have consulted with the employing school in the event the applicant has met “the required GCSE standard by taking an equivalence test or by offering other evidence of attainment”?	
Intellectual and academic capabilities	
- How do you fully assess applicants’ intellectual and academic capabilities, including their ability to communicate? - Do you 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”? - How are you assessing applicants’ competence in the following as part of your recruitment process: “speaking, listening and communicating”? “writing”? “the use of data and graphs to interpret information, identify patterns and trends and draw appropriate conclusions”? - How are you ensuring that trainees work (and are suitably supported) to address any shortfalls in these three areas during their training? - How are you assuring that trainees “demonstrate competence” in these three areas “prior to confirming a trainee meets the requirements for QTS”?	

* **Note:** Equivalence tests can be undertaken with an external organisation or providers can opt to set their own internal equivalence tests if they can demonstrate they have expertise to set and assess robust tests. In the case of the latter, the applicant should be informed that the result may not be transferable to other providers.

Entry criteria: 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 UK HE institution or equivalent qualification ^[footnote 4].

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

Note: “It is for the accredited ITT provider to decide whether an applicant’s qualification meets this criterion.”

Key questions – C1.2 Degree criteria	Provider response
“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 transferrable intellectual skills associated with graduate status.” Note: “The Framework for HE Qualifications of UK degree-awarding bodies describes the HE qualifications awarded by UK HE institutions (HEIs) at 5 levels.”	
How do you ensure that all entrants have “attained a degree before they commence the programme”?	
Notes: “The Education((School Teachers’ Qualifications) (England) Regulations 2003 require all qualified teachers in England to have a UK first (bachelor’s) degree or equivalent qualification.” “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), the applicant may be unable to attain graduate status before entry to the ITT programme. In such cases 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.”	
- Where is this information recorded? Do you have a secure audit trail? - Are original certificates seen and verified as authentic? Where is evidence of this recorded? - Are certified copies of the original certificate(s) kept? If so, where are these stored? - Are applicants’ degrees comprised of “300 HE credit points of which 60 must be at level 6 of the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF)”?	

Key questions – C1.2 Degree criteria	Provider response
- Do you ensure that any equivalent qualification is “one single qualification, not an aggregation of a number of separate qualifications” except “where candidates undertake study to extend an existing degree”? - Is ENIC evidence used to ensure the equivalence of international qualifications? Note: Find about more about NASBTT's UK ENIC Information Service. - What are the requirements of your HEI partner for accessing the PGCE component of your course?	
Information on degree-level subjects	
- What expert advice do you draw on when assessing the equivalence of: “overseas qualifications”? “professional or vocational qualifications”? “qualifications no longer available but held by mature applicants”? “master’s degrees”?	
Note: NASBTT strongly recommends that non-HEI providers seek advice from their HEI partner in determining the equivalence of qualifications: “Accredited ITT providers whose ITT partnerships do not include degree-awarding bodies may wish to seek advice from those that do.”	

Entry criteria: 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**.

Key questions – C1.3 Suitability	Provider response
“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.”	
• What is your recruitment process? • How do ensure that your “applicant selection processes give due regard to relevant aspects of part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)”? • When selecting applicants, is there always “at least one member of the recruitment panel” who “has undertaken appropriate safer recruitment training”? • How do you ensure that “all those involved in the selection process are vigilant” and know how to record any concerns? Note: This quote appears in the ‘Other background checks’ section of C1.3. • How do your procedures and protocols ensure that applicants are selected on the basis that they demonstrate “the potential to undertake an ITT course and meet the Teachers’ standards by the end of their training”? • How does your recruitment process “consider a range of evidence to judge applicants’ suitability to train to teach prior to offering them a place on a course”? • How do you ensure that “suitable applicant identity checks are conducted” and that these are sufficiently robust? Note: This quote appears in the ‘Interviews’ section. • For salaried trainees, if the employing school has set additional recruitment requirements, have you ensured these are clearly outlined when “advertising the course”?	
Interviews	
• How do you consider if “information from interviews can help to identify and take account of trainees’ specific needs during training”?	
Equality	
• How do you ensure that “interview procedures promote equality of opportunity and avoid discrimination”?	

Key questions – C1.3 Suitability	Provider response
• How do you ensure that your interview procedure is an equitable process compliant with The Equality Act 2010 to “ensure that [you] are not discriminating against applicants on the basis of any protected characteristic, or applicants with special educational needs (SEN)”? • What opportunities do you provide for applicants to identify any “special arrangements” that they may require? • How do you ensure that trainees with disabilities are not disadvantaged, including through making any “anticipatory adjustments to promote positive equality of access for disabled applicants, including access to benefits, facilities and services”? • How do you ensure you give all trainees “the opportunity to disclose a disability before and during their training”?	
Health and capacity to train to teach “Accredited ITT providers should have regard to the relevant aspects of the KCSIE requirements when assessing trainees’ health and capacity to train to teach so that children and young people are not at risk of harm.” Note: You may find it helpful to refer to the information about health and capacity to train to teach in chapter 5 of NASBTT’s Administration Handbook for Schools-Led Initial Teacher Training (ITT). Note: Find out more about NASBTT’s Occupational Health Services with Corazon Health.	
• How do you ensure “that only trainees who have the capacity to teach remain on the programme”? • Are fitness questionnaires completed before the programme commences “to ensure that a person is able to train to teach”? • For trainees who require reasonable adjustments, do you advise them that they are “able to train to teach”, but that the same reasonable adjustments cannot be guaranteed into employment?	
Disclosure and Barring Service checks “Accredited ITT providers should have regard to KCSIE when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.”	
• Have you established “clear safeguarding procedures and protocols that are agreed by all training partners and placement schools” including a “common understanding of convictions, offences, cautions and warnings that would not pose a barrier to joining or continuing an ITT programme?” Where is this information recorded? • Have there been any instances where these procedures and protocols have been tested? If so, how has the partnership dealt with these?	

Key questions – C1.3 Suitability	Provider response
• Have you obtained and considered all “appropriate pre-selection checks” for all trainees including a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) enhanced criminal records check and the children’s barred list information? • Do you follow ‘best practice’ in relation to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) enhanced criminal records check and children’s barred list check ensuring that these are completed no more than three months prior to the commencement of the programme, or are applicants whose checks are completed early in the recruitment cycle required to “register with the DBS update service”? • Have you given consideration to carrying out an online search on applicants as per the guidance in Keeping children safe in education? If so, what is your process for conducting online searches of applicants? • How do you check 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”? • Is a Single Central Record (SCR), or the partnership’s equivalent, kept to record that the appropriate checks have been undertaken and deemed acceptable? Who quality assures that this is in place prior to the beginning of the programme? • Do you “confirm in writing to placement 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”? • How do you ensure that the relevant checks have been completed and are satisfactory for trainees on salaried routes where “the responsibility lies with the employer to ensure that DBS checks have been carried out”? • Do you seek guidance from DBS if you remove “a trainee from a programme because the trainee has harmed or poses a risk of harm to children” or if you “would have removed the trainee had they not left”? In this event, do you also routinely inform the DfE? • Where a trainee’s DBS certificate has not been received prior to commencement of the course, how do you “ensure that the individual is appropriately supervised and that all other checks, included a separate barred list check, have been completed”? Note: NASBTT is aware that recent changes to KCSIE have created some uncertainties around the status of trainees awaiting a DBS check. NASBTT awaits clarification from the DfE and will update this document with further advice when we are able. • Are all trainees, “at the start of training in any school”, provided with:	

Key questions – C1.3 Suitability	Provider response
○ a copy of the school's "child protection policy"? ○ a copy of the "staff behaviour policy (sometimes called a code of conduct)"? ○ "information about the role of the designated safeguarding lead" (DSL)? ○ "a copy of KCSIE"?	
Other background checks	
• What procedures do you have in place during the selection process to identify applicants who may be "unsuited to working with children"? • How do you ensure that trainees are "properly managed and supervised"? If you have a concern, what processes are in place to "refer[red] to the police and DBS"? • What further checks do you conduct for applicants who have lived or worked outside the UK "so that events that occurred outside the UK can be considered"? Note: "The Home Office has published guidance on Criminal record checks for overseas applicants, and there is DfE guidance on recruiting individuals who have lived and worked outside the UK in KCSIE and Recruit teachers from overseas." • For fee-paying trainees, do you conduct the necessary checks regarding the right of the person to be studying in the UK? • For salaried trainees, do you conduct the necessary checks regarding the right of the person to be working in the UK? • Where a visa is required, have you confirmed the trainee has the right to study or work in the UK and that your institution is able to accept their specific visa? Note: SCITTs cannot sponsor student visas. Note: You may find it helpful to refer to NASBTT's curated visa information. • Have you checked "that applicants are not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State"?	
Childcare disqualification	
"Accredited ITT providers must have regard to the Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 statutory guidance and related obligations under the Childcare Act 2006."	
• Where required, how do you ensure that trainees are not disqualified from childcare under the Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006, or that trainees have "obtained a childcare disqualification waiver from Ofsted"? • Where required for salaried trainees, have you received confirmation from the employing school that they have checked that trainees are not disqualified from	

Key questions – C1.3 Suitability	Provider response
childcare under the Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006, or that trainees have “obtained a childcare disqualification waiver from Ofsted”?	
References Note: This sub-heading has been added by NASBTT and is not included in the ITT criteria. See also C1.4 ITT recruitment practices – Decisions, offers, feedback and deferrals for further detail	
• Are you confident that the referees’ recommendation regarding the suitability of the applicant to work with children and young people has been fully validated? • What systems do you have in place to ensure that referees are genuine?	

Entry criteria: C1.4 ITT recruitment practices

All accredited ITT providers should:

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

Key questions – C1.4 ITT recruitment practices	Provider response
• How do you ensure that your equality and equity policies and procedures “ensure that [all] applicants are treated fairly throughout the application and recruitment process”? • How do you ensure that “as many applicants as possible” have the opportunity to “demonstrate their potential at interview if they have met the entry criteria”?	
Digital services	
• Do you ensure that all “available postgraduate ITT courses leading to QTS, and TDA courses” are advertised on “Find via Publish”? • Do you ensure that you process all “applications from Apply via Manage”? • Do you ensure that “all candidates submit applications via Apply, even where a candidate enquires directly with the accredited ITT provider”? • Do you ensure that all outcomes “where a candidate is rejected or given an offer” are recorded on Manage?	
Relevant course information	
• What systems do you have in place to ensure that your course information is reviewed and regularly updated? Note: Providers will want to pay careful attention to information about fees as they relate to any programmes starting after January 2027 due to the introduction of the LLE. • Do you routinely provide information about “training locations and contact details” within your published course information? • How do you ensure that “courses are closed on Apply swiftly once they are full” and how do you inform applicants not yet interviewed that your course is full in a timely manner? • Do you provide “clear information about specific requirements or expectations” for applicants who apply for any salaried courses you offer?	

Key questions – C1.4 ITT recruitment practices	Provider response
Do you provide “details of [your] complaint procedure on [your] website”? Is your complaint procedure “straightforward to follow if an applicant wishes to make a complaint”?	
Decisions, offers, feedback, and deferrals	
- How do you ensure that applicants receive “timely responses” to all queries regarding their applications? - How do you ensure that applicants have sufficient time to “attend interviews for other courses, and to consider the outcomes of other applications before accepting or declining offers”? - Do you ensure that applicants are given a deadline “to meet any offer conditions that have been set”? - How do you ensure that, regardless of the timing of an application within the recruitment cycle, applicants are “given the same amount of time to meet the same conditions, where possible”? - How do you ensure that all interviews “take place before an offer is made”? - What arrangements do you have in place to provide feedback to applicants who are rejected “including advice on how the application can be improved”? Are you able to extend this to individuals whose applications are rejected because your course is full? - If an offer is withdrawn, how do you “make reasonable efforts to inform the applicant and provide a clear explanation of the reasons for the withdrawal, including any feedback where appropriate”? - In the case of deferrals, how do you ensure that “sufficient places” are available for the following year?	
Accessibility	
How do you ensure that the “accessibility requirements of applicants” are checked to enable any reasonable adjustments to be made where required?	

Training criteria: C2.1 Programme structure

All accredited providers should:

- design an evidence-based, sequenced curriculum that encompasses all aspects of the [Initial teacher training early career framework \(ITTECF\)](#), as well as the programme requirements set out in these criteria
- design courses that enable trainee teachers to meet the [Teachers' standards](#)
- ensure that no trainee teacher is confirmed as having met the requirements for QTS until they have met all of these standards

Note: You may find it helpful to refer to NASBTT's [Curriculum Design and Assessment Toolkit: 2024 and Beyond](#).

Key questions – C2.1 Programme structure	Provider response
• Are all relevant elements of the programme fully compliant with all of the specific aspects listed in the Initial teacher training criteria and supporting advice? • How do you “make clear to trainees, and to all those involved in ITT from their training partners and placement schools (including mentors)” know “the scope and coverage of the programme, including subject and curriculum knowledge and understanding, and the anticipated training outcomes”? • How is the programme designed to “be flexible enough to meet the needs of every trainee”? • How do you “keep under review the extent to which [your] provision and assessment practices are designed to ensure that trainees can meet the Teachers’ standards by the end of the course”?	
Overarching requirements	
• How do you ensure that you have a “fully developed, evidence-based curriculum” which encompasses “all aspects of the ITTECF as a minimum entitlement, ensuring that trainees are prepared for the next stage in their professional development as early career teachers”? • How have you ensured that your curricula are appropriately “sequenced and coherent, supporting trainees to develop their classroom practice”? • How have you ensured that your curricula are “appropriate for the particular subjects, phases and age ranges that [your] trainees will teach”? • How do you demonstrate that your curricula are based on the “best”, robust evidence underpinning effective teacher training paying due regard to subject -and phase-specific content?	

Key questions – C2.1 Programme structure	Provider response
• How do you ensure that your curricula enable “trainees to engage in critical analysis of theory, research (including, where appropriate, their own) and expert practice”? • How do you ensure that your curricula are “closely integrated throughout with appropriate opportunities to ensure that trainees have sufficient feedback and support from expert mentors or colleagues to understand, apply, reflect upon and develop their teaching practice”? • How do you ensure that your curricula “closely inform”: ○ “taught components”? ○ “independent learning”? ○ “teaching practice”? ○ “feedback”? • How do you ensure that your curricula provide “the opportunity for trainees to consolidate fundamental components of knowledge, understanding and practice before they begin to deliver longer sequences of teaching (which themselves draw on a range of knowledge, skills and behaviours)”? • As your trainees “move towards more complex, composite sequences and scenarios”, how do you ensure that they “have sufficient opportunity to identify, re-visit and isolate areas that require further consolidation”? • How do you ensure that “those responsible for the professional development of trainees ... have a deep understanding of the planned curriculum and its basis in evidence, to ensure that trainees experience consistent training and support at all stages”? • How do you identify “how all components of the planned curriculum will be taught, applied to practice in a range of contexts and assimilated”? • How do you ensure that your curricula encompass “a variety of teaching and learning approaches and experiences, including direct explanation, deconstruction, structured and focused observation and targeted practice with systematic analysis, feedback and mentoring”?	
Minimum time allocations – minimum course length	
Note: “All minimum time allocations are course design requirements. Accredited ITT providers should note that these times refer to course design.”	
• Are you compliant with the “minimum time allocations” stated in Table 1: minimum course length?	
Specific requirements	

Key questions – C2.1 Programme structure	Provider response
• How do your “sequenced” ITT curricula: ○ “encompass[es] the ITTECF in full”? ○ include “further content to be taught that moves beyond the foundation of the ITTECF (including subject-specific and phase-specific content)”? ○ “prepares trainees for the Early career teacher entitlement (ECTE) and the broader demands of their early career”? DfE guidance: Early career teacher entitlement, DfE (2025) ○ demonstrate “explicitly how it will build the expertise and confidence of trainees, from a focus on fundamental component elements to complex or composite practice”? ○ demonstrate “how taught components and classroom practice are integrated over time and across settings, to build systematically towards trainees’ fluency in classroom practice”? ○ specify the “range of methods, carefully and intentionally orchestrated across the ITT curriculum”, for example “including, but not limited to: • “training undertaken with a range of experts”? • “training undertaken with peers”? • “supported independent study” • “rehearsal”? • “teaching practice”? ○ identify “the range of settings in which trainees will undertake each part of their training, including the minimum 2 placement schools”? ○ include “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”? ○ include “ITAP and identifies those parts of the ITT curriculum that will be delivered as ITAP”? ○ include “detail of the design of the ITAP element, how it will be delivered and what will be achieved”? ○ include “detailed curriculum planning for teaching trainees evidence-based, subject- and phase-specific approaches to teaching” including:	

Key questions – C2.1 Programme structure	Provider response
• “the use of systematic synthetic phonics for all primary trainees”? ○ demonstrate adequate coverage of “all National Curriculum subjects, and the other compulsory subjects of religious education and relationships and health education for primary trainees”? ○ “cover the relevant teaching subjects for secondary trainees”? ○ are delivered “by suitably qualified experts and take full account of the evidence available for subject- and phase-specific teaching”? ○ enable “trainees to understand the application of general research-based principles”?	

C2.1 Table 1: minimum course length

Minimum time allocations

Accredited ITT providers should design training programmes that reflect the minimum time allocations^[footnote 5] for pivotal aspects of ITT programmes ...

Accredited ITT providers should note that these times refer to course design. It is accepted that, at times, and for exceptional reasons, such as sickness absence, some trainees, mentors, lead mentors or mentor leadership teams may not meet the full allocation. Accredited ITT providers should continue to exercise appropriate judgement in individual cases where this happens.

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

Table 1: minimum course length

All minimum time allocations are course design requirements. Accredited ITT providers should design ITT curricula that adhere to the following minimum time allocation:

ITT minimum time allocations for the duration of the course	Postgraduate	Undergraduate
Total weeks of course	36 (180 days) ^[footnote 6]	Not applicable

⁵ Time in schools may be completed on a part-time basis to make up the full-time equivalent time allocations.

⁶ 36 weeks or 180 days of delivered content, which can include some self-study. Any self-study should have clear learning objectives for the trainee and the provider should have processes to check that self-study has had the envisioned impact on the trainees' development. Bank holidays that fall within the 36 weeks (180 days) of delivered content can count towards the overall course length

Training criteria: C2.2 Intensive training and practice

All accredited ITT providers should:

- identify those parts of the ITT curriculum that will be the focus of ITAP
- design and implement ITAP to build trainees' knowledge, understanding and classroom practice
- meet the minimum time expectations for ITAP set out in [table 2](#).

Key questions – C2.2 Intensive training and practice	Provider response
• What is your rationale/overview for your ITAP focus areas? Is this understood by all involved? • How do you ensure that your ITAP “build the interplay between evidence-based theory and practice, engaging trainees in critical analysis, application of learning to classroom practice and focused feedback on such practice”? • How do you ensure that at least “some elements of ITAP ... take place in a school environment”? • Are your ITAP “additional to the 24 weeks (120 days) spent on general school placements”?	
Focus areas and design of ITAP	
• How do your ITAP focus on “pivotal or foundational concepts of the planned ITT curriculum that trainees can put into practice immediately”? • How do you ensure that your ITAP are “granular in nature” and demonstrate the “potential to impact on trainees’ classroom practice irrespective of context”? • How do you ensure you have chosen ITAP “focus areas that are foundational or pivotal ... have a high impact on trainees’ classroom practice ... [and are] immediately practicable and can be utilised in multiple contexts”?	
Delivery of ITAP	
• If ITAP takes place in a general placement school, how do you ensure that it is “additional to and distinct from the general placement itself”? • How do you ensure that any school supporting ITAP can “offer a sufficient range of strengths to support the delivery of strongly curriculum-aligned practice”?	
Specific requirements	
• Where do your ITAP demonstrate inclusion of:	

Key questions – C2.2 Intensive training and practice	Provider response
○ “three to five carefully selected pivotal or foundational aspects” from your “planned curriculum” “specific to the subject and phase being taught”? ○ “structured observation of selected teaching practice (live lessons or recorded content), with those aspects under focus”? ○ “critical analysis of observed teaching and relevant teaching materials, guided by an expert, with a focus on understanding the links between theory and practice”? ○ “preparation for, and implementation of, classroom teaching practice with deliberate attention to the aspects under focus, with expert feedback and, where necessary, opportunities to repeat and vary such practice for different circumstances”? ○ “expert theoretical and practical input by tutors or mentors and other expert colleagues (in school or in an ITT institution)”? ○ “critical analysis of relevant teaching materials in the light of theory and evidence (in school, virtually or in an ITT institution)”? ○ “focused observation, reflection upon and deconstruction of teaching (in school or virtually)”? ○ “expert modelling and deconstruction of individual components of teaching practice (in school or virtually)”? ○ “live classroom teaching practice (or practice in a rehearsal environment), with deliberate attention to the aspects under focus (in school)”? ○ “focused feedback utilising appropriate questioning and opportunities to practise further and improve”? ● How have you ensured that the “outcomes of ITAP for trainees” include: ○ “a strong understanding of the evidence base for the area concerned, which they can articulate, justify and exemplify”? ○ “the ability to discuss effective classroom practice and to prepare and apply those aspects of teaching confidently in a range of contexts”?	
Table 2: Minimum time allocations – ITAP	
Note: “All minimum time allocations are course design requirements. Accredited ITT providers should note that these times refer to course design.”	
● Are you compliant with the “minimum time allocations” stated in Table 2: minimum time allocations – ITAP?	

C2.2 Table 2: minimum time allocations – ITAP

Table 2: minimum time allocations – ITAP

All minimum time allocations are course design requirements. Accredited ITT providers should ensure that courses are designed to provide trainees with ITAP experiences that adhere to the following minimum time allocations:

ITT minimum time allocations	Postgraduate	Undergraduate
Minimum weeks of ITAP (in addition to general school placements) does not need to be delivered in a single block	4 [weeks] (20 days)	6 [weeks] (30 days)
Minimum planned and supported hours during ITAP ^[footnote 7]	25 [hours] per week (average of 5 per day)	25 [hours] per week (average of 5 per day)
Minimum hours of expert support per trainee during ITAP ^[footnote 8]	5 [hours] per week (average of 1 per day)	4 [hours] per week (average of 1 per day)

There are some specific undergraduate ITT courses where it may be more appropriate for the ITAP element to be 4 weeks rather than 6 weeks. These are:

- undergraduate courses that are 6 terms or fewer in length (or the equivalent for part-time courses) and where the degree content is to extend a foundation degree in order to meet the degree requirements
- courses where students opt-in to ITT during their undergraduate degree and achieve QTS during the final year of their course

For these specific types of course, it is for the accredited ITT provider to determine whether a 4- or 6-week ITAP element is most appropriate.

⁷ This means 25 hours of the trainees' time during this ITAP period should be planned activity, but that does not necessarily mean that the expert should directly lead delivery of all 25 of these hours. The 25 hours should be a full and demanding timetable, which may include expert input, group work, lesson preparation, lesson delivery, observation and feedback.

⁸ This expert support time does not need to be 1:1 and may take place in groups. Support could be provided by mentors, the lead mentor or mentor leadership team, or by experts under the coordination of the lead mentor or mentor leadership team.

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

All accredited ITT providers should ensure that they prepare all trainee teachers to teach within one of the following age phases:

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

Key questions – C2.3 Age ranges, subject- and phrase-specific training	Provider response
• Do the programmes you offer match the profiles on the DfE Find service? • Does your “recruitment literature”, including your website, specify “the age range of training for each of [your] programmes”? • Does your “programme design documentation” specify “the age range of training for each of [your] programmes”? • How does your training “enable trainees to acquire the knowledge and skills they need to teach within the phase for which they are training”? • How do you ensure that trainees are clearly aware which programme they are enrolled on and against which they will be assessed? • Does the information in Register match the programmes the trainees are enrolled on? • Do your training programmes cover no “fewer than 4 consecutive school years”? • If you are offering “middle phase ITT programmes”, do you ensure that you “record trainees on these programmes as ‘secondary’ for DfE data purposes”? • If you are offering middle phase ITT programmes, how do you demonstrate that trainees “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”? • How do you ensure that trainees’ placement experiences are fully compatible with the programme they are enrolled on? • How do you ensure that all 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”? Note: There is no requirement for trainees to teach on these ‘out of phase’ training experiences.	

Key questions – C2.3 Age ranges, subject- and phase-specific training	Provider response
• How does your planned programme develop trainees’ “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”? • Where you trainees “are training to teach a subject that is always or predominantly taught in only one age range (for example post-16)” how do you ensure that they “offered the opportunity to demonstrate subject knowledge in a related subject”?	
Subject- and phase-specific training	
• How does your ITT curriculum “set[s] out in detail approaches” for training in “each subject and phase” by addressing all of the following: ○ having a “clear evidence base underpinning each ITT course”? ○ ensuring 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”? ○ ensuring that your “curriculum encompasses the ITTECF 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”? ○ ensuring 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”? ○ ensuring that “tutors, lead mentors or mentor leadership teams and mentors, including those supporting the delivery of ITAP, have the relevant subject-specific curricular expertise, and close knowledge of the planned curriculum, to guide and support trainees effectively”? ○ setting out “clearly how trainees will learn the subject-specific elements of the planned curriculum, and who will support their learning”? ○ introducing “trainees to relevant subject- and phase-specific communities of practice and equip them to contribute in an informed way to relevant debates affecting the teaching of their subjects and phases”?	

Training criteria: [C2.4 School placements](#)

All accredited ITT providers should:

- ensure that training programmes are designed to provide trainees with:
 - at least 2 in-person school placements at physical school settings^[footnote 9];
 - sufficient time for training in schools in line with the [minimum time requirements](#)
 - the experience they need to demonstrate all the Teachers' standards for QTS.

⁹ Where we refer to schools in the school placement criteria, we also include early years and further education institutions.

Key questions – C2.4 School placements	Provider response
• How do you ensure trainees are provided with “at least 2 in-person school placements at physical school settings”? • How do you ensure that you “work with a range of schools to ensure a broad range of school placements are available to [your] trainees”? • How do you ensure that all training placements are part of a “coherent training programme that is designed to enable trainees to meet the Teachers’ standards by the end of the course”? • What risk assessments does the partnership undertake to ensure the quality of placements, particularly for schools in a category? • Where “special school[s], alternative provision, pupil referral units (PRUs) and mainstream schools with inclusion bases” are used as placements, how do you ensure that these “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”? Note: “Advice to accredited ITT providers on placements in special schools, alternative provision, PRUs and inclusion bases in mainstream schools can be found in Initial teacher training: special schools and alternative provision.” • How do you ensure that your “trainees can experience 6 weeks (30 days) of 80% contact ratio teaching” regardless of whether they are on a full-time, flexible or part-time programme? Note: “The 80% refers to a full teaching timetable, as it is typically defined by the school where the experience is taking place.” DfE guidance notes that there may be circumstances where this might not be possible.	
Minimum time allocations – school placements Note: “Accredited ITT providers should design training programmes that reflect minimum time allocations for pivotal aspects of ITT programmes.”	

Key questions – C2.4 School placements	Provider response
Are you compliant with the “minimum time allocations for school placements” stated in Table 3: minimum time allocations for school placements?	
Two schools - How do you ensure that: - trainees teach classes of “children and young people in their specified age range” in at least two schools? - trainees teach classes of children and young people from “different backgrounds”? - trainees gain “experience of different approaches to teaching and to school organisation and management”? - What processes do you have in place to establish if the second placement is not required for any of your trainees? Note: “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 2 schools specified. Where this is the case, the placement should offer the trainee a contrasting experience from that which they already have, and their course should still be designed in line with the minimum time requirements for school placements.” - How are second placements managed for salaried trainees to ensure they “extend the trainees’ knowledge, skills and understanding and provide opportunities for them to demonstrate, through their teaching, how they meet the Teachers’ standards”? - Have you ensured that “practical teaching experience ... take[s] place wholly or mainly in England”? Note: DfE states that “there may be circumstances where part of the training could take place outside England”.	

C2.4 Table 3: minimum time allocations for school placements

Table 3: minimum time allocations for school placements		
ITT minimum time allocations throughout the duration of the course	Postgraduate	Undergraduate
Minimum weeks in school placement (general placements only, excludes ITAP)	24 [weeks] (120 days)	24 [weeks] (120 days) (for courses up to 3 years) 32 [weeks] (160 days) (4-year course)
Minimum hours in classrooms (including observing, teaching and co-teaching) each week during general school placements	15 [hours] on average (average of 3 per day)	15 [hours] on average (average of 3 per day)

Training criteria: C2.5 Mentoring¹⁰

All accredited ITT providers should ensure that all trainees have access to expert mentors^[footnote10] to support the delivery and practice of training.

¹⁰ Mentoring is defined here as in the ITTECF: “receiving structured feedback from expert colleagues on a particular approach – using the best available evidence – to provide a structured process for improving the trainee’s practice”.

Key questions – C2.5 Mentoring	Provider response
The roles of mentors and lead mentors or mentor leadership teams	
• How do you ensure that your mentors have a “clear understanding of their role and the skills required to undertake it”? • How do you ensure that your mentors are “familiar with”: ○ “the ITTECF and the evidence that underpins it”? ○ your “ITT curriculum”? • How do you monitor the work of your mentors to ensure that they offer trainees “informed, targeted and consistent and actionable input and feedback, aligned with [your] ITT curriculum”? • How do you ensure that your mentors demonstrate “Excellent practice” which is “modelled and exemplified in a way that is matched to the sequenced curriculum”? • How do you ensure that your “Lead mentors or mentor leadership teams” have: ○ “an advanced level of ITT knowledge and expertise”? ○ the skills to “play a lead role in curriculum design and implementation, mentor training and ITAP”? ○ the skills “to ensure that trainees receive mentoring and support across placement schools” – including supervision of mentors as necessary?	
Overarching requirements	
• How are you establishing “a professional network of well-trained and expert mentors”? • How do you ensure that mentors provide “in-school experiences” that are coherent with your “ITT curriculum, with opportunities for purposeful practice in relation to key concepts and high-quality feedback”?	

Key questions – C2.5 Mentoring	Provider response
• How do you ensure that trainees “have access to mentors with expertise in the subject- or phase” so that “trainees are able to learn the best-evidenced ways of teaching their subject or phase” from suitably experienced mentors? • How do you “ensure observation, reflection, deconstruction and feedback take place throughout the year in line with the components of [your] ITT curriculum”? • Do your “partnership agreements and quality assurance arrangements in place with placement schools ... ensure that all mentors have the time, resources and the support of their school to discharge the requirements of their role”? • How do you ensure your “mentors ... receive sufficient high-quality training to ensure they can effectively support a trainee teacher to obtain the knowledge and skills they need”? • How does your “mentor training ... provide mentors with the knowledge and skills they need to undertake this role” including “knowledge and understanding of”: ○ “the ITTECF and its underpinning evidence”? ○ “[your] ITT curriculum which the trainee will be following”? • What annual refresher training do you provide so that your “mentor’s understanding of the ITT curriculum and their role is up to date”? • How do you ensure that the “prior learning of [your] individual mentors” is taken into full account and is suitably tailored to determine “the exact emphasis of the mentor training”? • How do you monitor and assure that “all mentors have been trained in all areas of the mentor training curriculum”? • How are you ensuring that mentors and lead mentors/mentor leadership teams are “properly supported throughout their training”? • How do you ensure that “mentors and lead mentors or mentor leadership teams ... have completed sufficient training to give them the required knowledge, skills and understanding of the ITT curriculum” to support trainees “with the relevant parts of the ITT curriculum at any given time”?	
Specific requirements	
• How do you ensure that: ○ “mentors have expertise in evidence-based subject- or phase-specific approaches to teaching and that they are allocated to trainees as appropriate to their subject or phase needs”?	

Key questions – C2.5 Mentoring	Provider response
○ “mentor training builds mentors’ knowledge and understanding of the ITT curriculum, and the evidence that underpins it” and “prepares mentors for their role in guiding and supporting trainees through that curriculum”? ○ “mentoring practice fully reflects the intent and content of the ITT curriculum”? ○ “mentors receive enough time to attend the required training to discharge their responsibilities as set out in these ITT criteria”? See C2.5 Table 4: minimum time allocation – mentoring. ○ “a sufficient number of mentors are recruited and trained so that every trainee receives their entitlement of 1.5 hours per week (5 days) of mentoring support”? • How do you ensure that all trainees receive the minimum mentoring time allowance regardless of whether they are on a full-time, flexible or part-time programme? • How do you take individuals’ prior training and experience into account when designing mentor training programmes?	
Lead mentors and mentor leadership teams	
See C2.5 Mentoring – Lead mentors and mentor leadership teams for further detail regarding the roles of lead mentors and mentor leadership teams.	
• Do you have a rationale/overview document that clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of your lead mentors or lead mentor teams? • How do you demonstrate that your lead mentors have: ○ “particular expertise in the evidence base for effective ITT, including programme design and content selection”? ○ received training which goes into “further depth” than general mentor training? ○ “an ongoing role in course development and improvement”? • How do you take individuals’ prior training and experience into account when designing lead mentor training programmes?	
Minimum time allocation – mentoring	
Note: “All minimum time allocations are course design requirements. Accredited ITT providers should design ITT courses that adhere to the ... minimum time allocations.”	
• Are you compliant with the “minimum time allocation” stated in Table 4: minimum time allocation – mentoring?	

C2.5 [Table 4: minimum time allocation – mentoring](#)

Table 4: minimum time allocation – mentoring

All minimum time allocations are course design requirements. Accredited ITT providers should design ITT courses that adhere to the following minimum time allocations:

ITT minimum time allocations	Postgraduate	Undergraduate
Minimum hours mentoring each week during general school placements ^[footnote 11]	1.5 [hours]	1.5 [hours]

¹¹ Accredited ITT providers should use their discretion, where appropriate, to provide flexibilities for trainees who do not spend a full week in school placements.

Training criteria: C2.6 Assessment

All accredited ITT providers should set out an assessment and progression framework that is aligned to the planned and sequenced curriculum and reflects evidence-based principles.

Key questions – C2.6 Assessment	Provider response
• Do you have an assessment framework that outlines your procedures for ensuring secure “rigorous and robust ... consistent and accurate” assessment judgements? • How do you ensure that contributing judgements made by partners are “robust” and moderated appropriately? • Do your partnership agreements specify partners’ responsibilities for the assessment of trainees? • How do you ensure that your partners understand “the accredited ITT provider remains accountable for all assessment judgements”?	
Overarching requirements	
• How do you demonstrate that your “trainee assessment and progression framework”: ○ is “aligned to the planned and sequenced curriculum”? ○ draws on “overarching evidence-based principles for good quality assessment”? ○ assesses “trainees with appropriate frequency on their knowledge and understanding of the curriculum, and how trainees apply such knowledge and understanding in classroom practice”? ○ includes “focused feedback designed to enable trainees to improve”? • How do you ensure that the feedback trainees receive draws on “the content of [your] ITT curriculum and ... support[s] trainees in understanding how practice is informed and shaped by research and evidence”? • How do you ensure that your formative assessment measures “progress in relation to the ITT curriculum, rather than against the level of expertise or standard required by the end of the course”? • How do you assure yourselves that assessment helps to “identify aspects of the ITT curriculum that trainees are finding challenging” and is “used to adapt approaches to delivery or reshape practice accordingly”? • How do you ensure that “assessment specifically against the Teachers’ standards” does not take place until your end-of-course assessment process?	

Key questions – C2.6 Assessment	Provider response
Note: Accredited ITT providers are not prevented from “referencing or referring to the Teachers’ standards at key assessment points during the course to help trainees understand their progress against the ITT curriculum at that point”. • How do you demonstrate that “end-of-course assessments are objective, valid and reliable”? • How do you ensure that all those involved in the assessment of trainees, including lead mentors and mentors receive “sufficient training to enable them to understand and use [your] assessment frameworks accurately and appropriately”?	
Specific requirements	
• Have you designed “an assessment framework that reflects evidence-based principles for good assessment, [which] is straightforward to use”? • How does your assessment framework: ○ “ensure[s] that ongoing formative assessment and feedback takes place throughout the course” and appropriately “focused on trainees’ ongoing progress in relation to the component elements of [your] planned curriculum”? ○ “recognise[s] the need for trainees to be assessed and receive feedback on the evidence-based, subject- and phase-specific approaches set out in [your] ITT curriculum”? ○ “clearly define[s] roles and responsibilities for those conducting assessment and providing feedback at all levels, including arrangements for the robust quality assurance of assessment”? ○ “assess[es] trainees’ knowledge and understanding of [your] ITT curriculum, and how that is evidenced in their application of such knowledge to classroom practice and in any written assignments”? ○ “require[s] 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”? ○ “require[s] those conducting assessment to provide feedback to trainees that 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”? ○ “enable[s] insights from assessment to feed into programme delivery so that those responsible for training and mentoring can adapt in response to trainee needs”? ○ “include[s] arrangements for objective, valid and reliable end-of-course assessment against the Teachers’ standards to assess if trainees meet the requirements for QTS”?	

Key questions – C2.6 Assessment	Provider response
• How do you demonstrate that all those responsible for assessment and feedback have been trained in the use of your assessment framework thus ensuring “that approaches are of consistently high quality for all trainees”? • If providing a teaching apprenticeship route, how do you demonstrate your compliance with the assessment requirements of this route?	

Management and quality assurance criteria: C3.1 Management

All accredited ITT providers should ensure that their management structure facilitates the effective operation of the training programme.

Note: You may find it helpful to refer to NASBTT's publication [Governance for Initial Teacher Training \(ITT\)](#).

Key questions – C3.1 Management	Provider response
• How do you demonstrate that key personnel have the requisite expertise to conduct their roles? • Do you plan and periodically review your “training programmes to ensure that they comply with the current ITT Criteria and provide the opportunity for trainees to demonstrate that they meet the Teachers’ standards”? • How do you demonstrate the you “seek continuous improvement” in the quality of your training? • How do schools “play a significant and, often, leading role in the design and delivery of training provision”? • How do you evidence that your “management structure ... demonstrate[s] 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 against the requirements for QTS”? • How do you and “everyone across the ITT partnership” “ensure that the workload of trainee teachers is manageable”? Note: You may find it helpful to refer to the improve workload and wellbeing for school staff resource (DfE, 2024). • Do you seek approval from the DfE for “any proposed significant changes to [your] governance or operational structure as set out in the following section”? For example, lead school becoming a MAT/Academy/transfer from LA control resulting in a change of Accounting Officer.	

Management and quality assurance criteria: C3.2 Partnerships and structures

All accredited ITT providers should ensure that robust governance arrangements are put in place and exercised effectively, with clearly established structures and partnerships.

“Further information on partnerships, governance structures and changes can be found in [Initial teacher training \(ITT\): forming partnerships](#).”

Key questions – C3.2 Partnerships and structures	Provider response
Who is responsible for reviewing and implementing your provision’s policies? Note: Policies are not explicitly referred to in the ITT criteria but it is important for you to have decided on the policies you require and that robust policies are in place. Note: You may find it helpful to refer to NASBTT’s publication Policies and Procedures for Initial Teacher Training (ITT).	
Overarching requirements “Accredited ITT providers should be able to set out the essential features of their structures and partnerships that will enable them to provide teacher training in the way described in the preceding sections.”	
- How do you demonstrate the scale of your operation and that you have “sufficient capacity to be able to meet the criteria for training in all subjects and phases offered”? - What arrangements do you have in place to “secure and retain placement schools, any training partners and other specialist experts to enable them to deliver their programme[s] in line with these criteria”? - How do you ensure that you “meet the needs of all trainees”? - Where do you outline how the “training capacity of any ITT training partners and placement schools in [your] partnership” are developed to best effect? - Where do you outline “which courses are to be run and what target recruitment numbers and minimum and maximum numbers will be in place”? - How do you “identify and retain training partners (where appropriate)”? - Where do you outline “what responsibilities have been delegated to training partners”? - How have you “establish[ed] the structure of [your] partnership and governance arrangements, including formal arrangements between any training partners and accredited ITT providers, and between placement schools and accredited ITT providers or training partners, and exercise[d] governance effectively, recognising that	

Key questions – C3.2 Partnerships and structures	Provider response
accountability for all aspects of the operation of the partnership rests with the accredited ITT provider”? • Do your marketing and recruitment practices fully comply with C1.4 ITT recruitment practices of the ITT criteria and supporting advice? • Where do you outline the “budgetary arrangements” to show “how funds are distributed across a partnership”? • How is funding “distributed across a partnership and adequately reflect[s] the distribution of delegated responsibilities”? • How do you demonstrate “that ITT funding is used for intended purposes at all levels” in your partnership and “that these arrangements contribute both to quality provision for trainees and to the retention of placement schools and training partners”? • How do you “ensure that trainees are prepared to teach pupils in schools across a broad range of contexts found in the geographical area in which they are training, including areas of high disadvantage” (subject to appropriate necessary risk assessments)? • How do you “ensure that, at a local level, schools and other training partners are well placed to recruit trainees or support the recruitment of trainees, given the fact that local recognition and relationships are critical for securing and maintaining the confidence of potential trainees”? • How do you ensure that all in your partnership “have regard for the well-being of trainees and arrangements in place to support their welfare”? • How do you ensure that you have established “arrangements for secure and compliant data handling across partnerships”?	
Partnership agreements “The roles and responsibilities of all partners should be clearly defined in partnership agreements.” • Are your partnership agreements “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”? • Are your partnership agreements underpinned by “well-understood procedures for communication between the partners and agreed arrangements for the co-ordination of the training”? See also NASBTT’s Curriculum Design and Assessment Toolkit: 2024 and Beyond, pages 12 and 13. • How do your partnership agreements encompass all of the following:	

Key questions – C3.2 Partnerships and structures	Provider response
○ “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”? ○ where relevant, “the functions of groups and committees in managing the partnership and the ways in which resources are allocated among partners”? • Do your partnership agreements include the “criteria for removing placement schools from the partnership, particularly where quality issues arise”? • What processes do you have in place to review and revise partnership documentation at appropriate intervals? • How do you satisfy yourselves “that placement schools have the capacity to undertake their responsibilities”? • How do you ensure that appropriate ‘risk assessments’ are undertaken and “kept under close review” “where a school requires significant improvement or is in special measures” to ensure that “the trainee[s] will not be disadvantaged by the school experience”?	
Roles and responsibilities	
• How do you ensure that all trainers and trainees are “clear about”: ○ “who is responsible for elements of training and assessment”? ○ “how provision [i.e. the planned ITE curriculum] is managed”? ○ “how the elements fit together to ensure that training addresses all of the Teachers’ standards”? • Do your partnership agreements “specify the different roles within the partnership including, for example”: ○ “programme and course leaders”? ○ “lead mentors or mentor leadership teams”?	

Key questions – C3.2 Partnerships and structures	Provider response
○ “mentors internal and external moderators”? • How do your partnership agreements “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 or programme committees”? ○ “quality assurance, including improvement planning and self-evaluation”? ○ “the promotion of equality of opportunity”? ○ “the safeguarding of children and young people”? • For salaried routes, how do you “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”? ○ “have the capacity to provide the necessary training and support”?	
Accountable officer “Each accredited ITT provider will have a named accountable officer who hold overall accountability for ITT in their organisation and across any partnership they may form.”	
• Who is your accountable officer? • Does your accountable officer understand that: ○ they hold “overall accountability for ITT in [your] organisation and across any partnership [you] may form”? ○ they “should have appropriate authority within the legal entity to ensure the accredited ITT provider can fulfil all associated responsibilities for ITT”?	

Key questions – C3.2 Partnerships and structures	Provider response
○ that their “responsibilities include ensuring the provision meets the ITT Criteria and complies with all financial expectations as detailed in the grant funding agreement (GFA)”?	
Changes to partnership structures See C3.2 Partnerships and structures – Changes to partnership structures for further detail regarding changes to partnership structures.	
• Do you “seek DfE approval for any proposed significant changes” to your partnership structures?	

Management and quality assurance criteria: C3.3 Legislation

All accredited ITT providers must ensure that they comply with all current legislation relevant to ITT.

Key questions – C3.3 Legislation	Provider response
• What processes do you have in place to ensure that you regularly “review and update [your] provision” to ensure that you “comply with relevant legislation and also satisfy the criteria specified by the Secretary of State”? • How do you ensure all partners are “fully aware of their duties under all relevant legislation”? • What arrangements are in place to ensure all relevant legislation is met when “selecting, recruiting, training and assessing trainees”? • Have you ensured that you have identified and comply with all legislation and guidance relevant to ITT including the following: ◦ 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”/“governing legislation for all matters relating to all acts of discrimination”? Note: “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 pay, race, disability, sex and gender discrimination.” ◦ Data Protection Act 2018? • Are you registered with the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) as either the Single Legal Entity or as the Lead School? ◦ Freedom of Information Act 2000? ◦ Lifelong Learning (Higher Education Fee Limits) Act 2023? ◦ Education (Health Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI 3139)?	

Key questions – C3.3 Legislation	Provider response
○ Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) in higher education? ○ Disability Rights UK, education and skills guidance for people with disabilities? ○ Health and Safety Executive's 5 steps to risk assessment? ○ guidance for practitioners and managers from HM Government on information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners? ● How do you ensure your 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”? ● How are you implementing the Prevent duty guidance? ● How do you ensure that you meet your obligations under the Competition and Markets Authority's Higher education: consumer law advice for providers?	

Management and quality assurance criteria: C3.4 Quality assurance

All accredited ITT providers should:

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

Key questions – C3.4 Quality assurance	Provider response
Overarching requirements	
• How do you demonstrate that the assessment of trainees is “accurate and reliable in establishing, consistently over time, whether or not trainees meet the Teachers’ standards”? • How do your quality assurance processes “ensure that all aspects of the course meet the high expectations to which all trainees are entitled”? • How do you demonstrate that you have “robust arrangements for monitoring” all of the following: ○ “the quality and fidelity of all aspects of curriculum delivery to trainees”? ○ “the training and expertise of those involved in curriculum delivery”? ○ “the training and expertise of mentors and lead mentors or mentor leadership teams”? ○ “the quality of mentoring work of all types and levels, including ensuring that time allocations for mentors and trainees are met”? ○ “the quality of regular in-course assessment and feedback and their impact on trainee knowledge and expertise”? ○ “the quality, reliability and validity of end-of-course summative assessment”? • What systems do you have “in place for reporting and taking action to address any shortfalls in quality in a prompt way, to protect the entitlement of trainees to high-quality training”? • How do you clearly identify the “responsibilities and accountability for quality assurance at all levels, including for accurate record-keeping of quality assurance work”? • What mechanisms do you have “in place for trainees to raise concerns or make complaints about the quality of training or mentoring, and for investigating and, where necessary, addressing such concerns or complaints in a timely fashion”?	

Key questions – C3.4 Quality assurance	Provider response
Have you submitted the required documentation to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) and ensured that your complaints and appeals processes are compliant with their guidance? Note: Your responsibility to register with the OIA does not appear in the ITT criteria but it is important you are aware of this requirement.	
Specific requirements	
- Have you developed a “framework for quality assurance” that: “monitors and assures quality in all required areas of the programme and at all levels”? “sets out suitable monitoring methods”? “sets out clearly the range of specific roles and responsibilities for quality assurance”? “demonstrates how concerns identified by quality assurance will be addressed, including the range of intervention options that will be used”? “specifies how records relating to quality assurance will be kept”? “sets out robust arrangements that enable trainees to raise concerns or make complaints”? “sets out how quality assurance information will be used to improve the quality of all their ITT and make the programme and all aspects of their partnership more resilient”? - What systems do you have “in place [for] an effective system for supervising and quality assuring the”: “initial and ongoing training of mentors”? “quality of their work, including their approach to subject- or phase-specific mentoring”? “systems for securing specific improvements where necessary”? - How do you ensure that your external moderators “have relevant expertise and experience to enable them to carry out their roles competently”? - How do you “ensure that the views of external moderators are taken into account fully when reaching decisions about trainees’ achievement of the Teachers’ standards”?	
Evaluation	

Key questions – C3.4 Quality assurance	Provider response
“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.” • Do you have a clear self-evaluation/improvement planning/quality assurance process and cycle? • Are improvement plans informed by self-evaluation and/or internal and external moderation outcomes/priorities? How are these monitored and disseminated to relevant partners? • How are improvement plans reviewed for impact? • How is data used “to inform [your] understanding of the effectiveness of [your] training”? • How do you ensure that there is sufficient variety to the data you “collect and analyse”? See C3.4 Quality assurance – Evaluation for further detail regarding the data it may be helpful to collect and analyse.	
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.” See C3.4 Quality assurance – Internal moderation for further detail regarding possible internal moderation procedures. • Is there a secure, well-articulated and disseminated internal moderation process in place? • What “arrangements for internal moderation” do you have “in place”? • Are the roles and responsibilities for internal moderation clearly set out and shared with all relevant parties? (These might be “contained in the partnership agreement”).) • What is your process for reviewing your internal arrangements “work effectively”? • How do you translate the findings from your internal moderation process into clear improvement priorities?	
External moderation See C3.4 Quality assurance – External moderation for further detail regarding possible external moderator responsibilities. • Has a suitably experienced and appropriately qualified external moderator(s) been appointed who is not directly involved with the work of the partnership? Note: You may find it helpful to refer to NASBTT’s Management Handbook for Schools-Led Initial Teacher Training (ITT) for further information about the role of the external moderator.	

Key questions – C3.4 Quality assurance	Provider response
• How do you ensure that external moderators “have no direct involvement with the work of the partnership” and are “able to offer an external perspective on the attainment of [your] trainees in relation to the requirements for QTS, which should help to verify the accuracy of [your] assessments”? • How do you ensure that your external moderators have “appropriate subject, curriculum or age-phase expertise to enable them to provide specialist feedback”? • How are you utilising the external moderator(s) to “corroborate and standardise [your] assessments of trainees”? • Are external moderators’ views and recommendations taken into account and implemented? How is the impact measured? • How often do you replace your external moderator(s) to ensure objectivity? • How do you translate the findings from your external moderation process into clear improvement priorities?	
Additionally	
Note: This sub-heading has been added by NASBTT and is not included in the ITT criteria.	
• What procedures do you have “in place for monitoring and evaluating the management of [your] programmes”? For example, having transparent processes for “the selection and de-selection of placement schools”. • How do you ensure that you “have systematic procedures in place in order to demonstrate that monitoring and evaluation have secured improvements in quality and outcomes for trainees”? For example, to your curriculum and, as a consequence, to trainees’ knowledge. • How do you ensure that “all monitoring and evaluation processes and activities ... focus on impact and outcomes – particularly in the context of the standards achieved by trainees”? • How do you compare your own provision with that of providers of similar and different size and type for benchmarking purposes? • If relevant, how have Ofsted/DfE suggestions for improvement been acted upon and evaluated? • How do you ensure that your evaluation processes and activities are “evaluative rather than descriptive”? • How do you ensure that the evidence you gather is “sufficiently robust to enable [you] to draw conclusions and act upon them”?	

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 teachers^[footnote 12] at a school^[footnote 13] 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. [School teachers' pay and conditions](#) includes further information.

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 provider^[footnote 14].

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

¹² As defined by the latest [school teachers' pay and conditions](#) guidance.

¹³ Or 'other institution' as defined by the Education (School Teachers' Qualifications) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI 2003/1662) as amended.

¹⁴ Teach First (ITT) programme applicants should be admitted only with the agreement of the Teach First organisation.

Key questions – Employment-based criteria	Provider response
- Does the partnership agreement (for employment-based routes) with all schools (including academies and independent schools) include, within the contract, compliance with employment legislation? Note: Contracts for salaried trainees must cover the whole period of the training. - Are trainees on employment-based routes “paid in accordance with at least the minimum of the unqualified teacher pay range for the period of their training” or in the case of academies and independent schools on a published pay scale? - Do you ensure that admissions processes are followed routinely and without exception? - How do you ensure that trainees on employment-based programmes are not undertaking “more than 90% of the teaching duties normally required of a full-time qualified teacher”?	