



## **Coronavirus (COVID-19) Additional temporary guidance for Initial Teacher Education (ITE) partnerships**

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.  
This document is also available in Welsh.



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## Background

The Welsh Government is working closely with the other UK governments to ensure a consistent, public health-led approach to the Coronavirus situation.

This guidance is for Initial Teacher Education (ITE) partnerships and is based on existing UK advice related to the Coronavirus pandemic. This guidance is an update to the guidance for ITE published 9 April 2020 (available at [gov.wales/coronavirus-covid-19-temporary-guidance-initial-teacher-education-ite-partnerships](https://gov.wales/coronavirus-covid-19-temporary-guidance-initial-teacher-education-ite-partnerships)) and updates will continue to be provided if there are any changes.

## General guidance

General Coronavirus guidance is issued by the Welsh Government and Public Health Wales on their respective websites [gov.wales/coronavirus](https://gov.wales/coronavirus) and <https://phw.nhs.wales/>. This guidance is updated regularly to reflect the latest developments.

The Education Workforce Council has been advised of actions that will need to be undertaken, and it is considered that any changes that need to be implemented will not impact on the requirements for accreditation of programmes given the exceptional circumstances that COVID-19 presents.

This guidance must be read in conjunction with the previous guidance found at [gov.wales/coronavirus-covid-19-temporary-guidance-initial-teacher-education-ite-partnerships](https://gov.wales/coronavirus-covid-19-temporary-guidance-initial-teacher-education-ite-partnerships).

This guidance is an update to the guidance for ITE partnerships published 9 April 2020 and is intended to set out more specific detail on the steps ITE partnerships will need to undertake with reference to:

- supporting student teachers to enter their induction year (applying to student teachers scheduled to achieve Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) by Summer 2020 through full-time postgraduate or undergraduate ITE programmes, the Graduate Teacher Programme or Teach First)
- returning 2019/20 students, as appropriate
- the admissions process for the 2020/21 cohort
- and further considerations for the 2020/21 cohort.

Discussions will continue between the Welsh Government and ITE partnerships on specific issues that are not covered within the guidance documents published, and further guidance will be issued as required.

## Preparing for induction: assessment arrangements and the award of QTS in academic year 2019/20

Student placements for ITE in Wales ceased with effect from week commencing 16 March 2020, and some student teachers were therefore unable to complete the number of required school placement weeks.

The high-level assessment arrangements for the award of QTS under these circumstances were set out in the previous guidance to ITE partnerships.

Where students are identified as being on a clear trajectory to meet the QTS descriptors of the professional standards for teaching and leadership, ITE partnerships have the discretion to award QTS. The Welsh Government recognises that these Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) may require support in addition to the normal induction professional learning programme all NQTs in Wales receive.

In order to ensure this cohort of NQTs are provided with the appropriate support on commencement of their induction year (2020/21), ITE partnerships will need to follow the steps set out below prior to the end of this academic year (2019/20):

- The assessment of gaps, and required action to resolve, in the student teachers' knowledge and skills will be at the ITE partnership's discretion, and partnerships are able to undertake such assessments based on their professional judgement and expertise.
- ITE partnerships will ensure any gaps in a student teacher's knowledge and skills due to the COVID-19 pandemic are identified, with recommended actions and targets that are clear and manageable. This will allow the appropriate support to be available on commencement of induction.
- ITE partnerships will support students to complete the Career Entry Profile (CEP) online, ensuring a student's CEP is co-authored and is a true reflection of the student's individual development needs.
- ITE partnerships will communicate to their students the actions they need to take to ensure they receive the individual support from the regional consortia they will require during their induction year. It is for student teachers to ensure they have taken the appropriate action required in order to access the support provided by the regional consortia.

## **Support for student teachers not awarded QTS in academic year 2019/20**

The assessment of suitability for the award of QTS will be at the ITE partnership's discretion, and partnerships are able to undertake such assessments based on their institution's assessment processes, professional judgement and expertise.

ITE partnerships have the discretion to not award QTS to a student based on the level of achievement, or clear trajectory of achievement, in either/both their:

- academic work
- evidence of meeting the QTS descriptors of the standards from their teaching experience, even where these do not reach the 24-week threshold.

The Welsh Government recognises that this cohort of student teachers has not been able to complete the normal period of teaching experience (placements) ITE students are normally allocated to evidence their achievement of the required standards (QTS). To support the cohort, partnerships will need to follow the steps set out below:

- The ITE partnership should afford these student teachers the opportunity to evidence being on the trajectory to meet the required standards for the award of QTS by allowing them the opportunity to finish any remaining weeks (as determined by their ITE programme's normal placement length) unutilised due to the school closures. The student teachers have typically one term to utilise any remaining placement time and evidence their achievement of the required standard for award of QTS. This will be reviewed as required depending on the emerging situation in the autumn term.

- ITE partnerships will be able to undertake assessment of a student's suitability for the award of QTS based on their achievement in either/both their academic work and teaching experience (placements) undertaken, even where these do not reach the full 24-week threshold.
- At the end of either the 24-week teaching experience threshold, or the one term allotted to complete, whichever comes first, should a partnership determine the student teacher is not suitable for the award of QTS, then the student teacher will be given the opportunity to access the institution's normal processes.
- The processes in place for the non-achievement of a qualification is at the discretion of the ITE partnership as an autonomous institution.

### **Support for student teachers not awarded QTS and unable to return to their ITE partnership's locale**

There may be student teachers who have not achieved QTS and are unable to take the opportunity to finish their teaching experience placement as detailed in the above section. These may be student teachers domiciled at some distance from their ITE partnership, such as international students.

The Welsh Government want to support our student teachers as much as possible and will continue to work with ITE partnerships to identify this specific cohort and how best we can support them on a case by case basis under an agreed common approach to ensure consistency and fairness.

### **Financial support for 2019/20 cohort entering induction**

The Welsh Government recognises that the circumstances may require additional financial support for schools to provide enhanced mentoring support and/or for students who may be required to undertake additional placement or study. The Welsh Government will consider any additional financial support required in conjunction with ITE partnerships and regional consortia induction leads when more information is available.

### **NQTs who do not obtain employment status**

The Welsh Government will continue to work with stakeholders to ensure that any NQT who is not able to secure employment or enters the supply sector is able to be offered the opportunity to complete any additional requirements that are agreed by ITE partnerships in their CEP.

### **Admissions: entry requirements 2020/21**

Recruitment to the 2020/21 cohort will continue to ensure continuity of provision.

The Welsh Government recognises the existing required admission processes will not be deliverable under the current circumstances. As set out in the previous guidance to partnerships, the revised process includes amendments to the normal entry requirements of ITE provision in Wales.

In order to ensure equity of entry to ITE provision in Wales, the Welsh Government requests that partnerships review any applicant previously declined in this year's admission cycle to ascertain whether the temporary admissions and entry processes would affect the offer outcome. This would apply for entry in 2020/21 only; applicants seeking to defer entry to

2021/22 would be subject to the standard entry requirements as set out in the accreditation criteria.

Equivalency tests – it is expected that these would take place later in the summer if the situation at that time allows, or as early as possible in the year of study in 2020/21. The GCSE requirements set out in the accreditation criteria currently state that these should be met on entry to a programme. In recognition of the exceptional circumstances, for admission to this cohort the Welsh Government will waive this entry point requirement if circumstances do not allow for this to be achieved.

Any offers made for entry 2020/21 must include clear guidance to students:

- that fulfilment of current entry requirements remains and failure to do so may lead to students being withdrawn from programmes
- on the level of support students will be given to meet the entry requirements within the required timeframe
- that the level of support is at the partnership's discretion.

Where candidates will be required to work towards the entry requirements, in addition to the normal requirements of the ITE programme, the partnership must do the following.

- Prior to making an offer, use their professional judgement and expertise to assess the capability of the candidate to meet all the requirements of entry and QTS within the required timeframes. This includes discretion as to the 'gap' to be bridged for each entry requirement and/or the number of requirements to be met.
- Offer the student teacher three opportunities to meet the required entry requirements
  - Full and Part-time PGCE students have the duration of their programme to achieve the requirements
  - Undergraduate ITE students have until the end of the first year of their programme.

Literacy and numeracy entry tests – further to the previous guidance the Welsh Government has determined that these tests are to be suspended for entry in 2020/21 and that partnerships will assess a student teacher's attainment over the course of their ITE programme.

## **Considerations for the 2020/21 cohort**

The Welsh Government is monitoring the situation on a daily basis in line with advice from Public Health Wales and recognises that certain flexibilities, as applied to the 2019/20 cohort, may also be required by the 2020/21 cohort. These flexibilities may include, for instance, continuing to waive the accreditation criteria requirements on teaching experience placement length. Other yet unidentified issues may also arise and the Welsh Government will continue to action appropriate support for our partnerships and/or our student teachers at this unprecedented time.

## **Next steps**

- The Welsh Government will continue to monitor the situation on a daily basis in line with advice from Public Health Wales.
- Further guidance will be issued in line with any changes to advice from the relevant bodies.
- The Welsh Government will continue to work with ITE partnerships to develop further guidance where required. The Welsh Government will host fortnightly meetings with ITE partnerships, and may include other members of the middle tier, in order to effectively address developments, updates and any emerging issues.
- ITE partnerships must advise the Welsh Government immediately of any further issues that arise during this period so that further guidance can be issued.

**For the very latest advice from the Welsh Government, please check [gov.wales/coronavirus](https://gov.wales/coronavirus)**