



Coronavirus (COVID-19) 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 Training (ITE) providers and is based on existing UK advice related to the Coronavirus pandemic. Updates will be provided if there are any changes.

General guidance

General Coronavirus guidance is issued by Welsh Government and Public Health Wales on their respective websites 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 sets out the general steps that ITE providers will need to undertake with particular reference to any returning students, as appropriate, and to the admissions process for the 2020/21 cohort. Discussions will continue between Welsh Government and ITE providers on specific issues that are not covered within this document and further guidance will be issued.

General steps ITE providers will need to undertake

Temporary guidance for ITE providers is provided below according to the student group. The appropriate accreditation criteria for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) is also outlined in the next section.

Student group	Advise for ITE providers
Existing PGCE students	<p>Student placements for ITE have ceased with effect from week commencing 16 March 2020.</p> <p>Students are unable to complete the number of required school placement weeks. This should be taken into account when undertaking the assessment for the suitability for the award of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and the arrangements are set out below.</p>
Existing undergraduate students	<p>Student placements for ITE have ceased with effect from week commencing 16 March 2020.</p> <p>For Level 4 and Level 5 students, (typically those in year 1 and 2) of undergraduate programmes, it is recognised that students have been unable to complete the required level of school-based assessment. Welsh Government will work with ITE providers to agree a methodology to address this shortfall in subsequent years of study.</p>

	For Level 6 students, (typically year 3), providers will be able to undertake assessment of a student's suitability for the award of QTS based on their academic work and teaching experience (placements) undertaken, even where these do not reach the 24-week threshold.
International students	<p>There are specific requirements for international students and the Welsh Government will work with ITE providers to address these issues.</p> <p>ITE providers should notify the Welsh Government of the numbers affected and the issues that need to be addressed. Further guidance will be issued.</p>
Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP)/Teach First (TF) students	<p>There are students who are undertaking the GTP and are unable to complete their training period.</p> <p>As with PGCE and undergraduate students, ITE providers have the discretion to assess these students' suitability for the award of QTS as at the date of their home-school closure.</p> <p>If there are individual cases, where this assessment will not lead to the award of QTS, providers will notify the Welsh Government and further guidance will be issued.</p> <p>There are students who are undertaking TF programmes. Although these are remote from the Welsh Government, the accrediting body is a Welsh provider. It is therefore expected that for these students the accrediting body applies the same discretionary assessment on the award of QTS as for others. Arrangements for any academic study and award should also be in line with guidance detailed elsewhere in this document.</p>

Accreditation criteria for QTS

Whilst the accreditation criteria for QTS includes a requirement for school placements to be

- 32 weeks for all four-year primary undergraduate programmes
- 24 weeks for all two- and three-year undergraduate programmes
- 24 weeks for all secondary postgraduate programmes
- 24 weeks for all primary postgraduate programmes

the Welsh Government recognises that the existing cohort across all ITE accredited programmes will be unable to meet these placement terms and providers will need to follow the steps set out below.

1. ITE providers will be able to undertake assessment of a student's suitability for the award of QTS based on their achievement in both their academic work and teaching experience (placements) undertaken, even where these do not reach the 24-week threshold.

2. Where students are identified as already meeting the required standards, or as being on a clear trajectory to meet the standards, then ITE providers have the discretion to award QTS.
3. ITE providers through the Universities and Schools Council for the Education of Teachers (USCET) will agree a common approach for undertaking this assessment to ensure consistency and fairness.
4. ITE providers will advise the Welsh Government of the numbers of students who currently are assessed as not meeting the requirements set out above. The Welsh Government and ITE providers will continue to work together to develop an agreed approach to addressing the requirements of these students.
5. The assessment of suitability for the award of QTS will be at the ITE provider's discretion and providers are able to undertake such assessments based on their professional judgement and expertise.

Provision of QTS certification

As per existing arrangements, the Education Workforce Council will continue to issue certificates to those students that have been notified to them as having met the standards required to be awarded QTS.

Academic qualifications

All ITE providers should continue to deliver all other elements of their ITE programmes through their locally arranged remote channels.

Assessment of the award of academic qualifications will be at the discretion of individual awarding bodies through existing arrangements.

Individual cases

Where individual students contract the virus or are required to self-isolate then ITE providers will need to assess these cases on an individual basis.

ITE providers should notify the Welsh Government of any individual cases where students are unable to complete the programme.

Any student that is unable to complete their academic qualification or achieve QTS within the current academic year will need to be assessed on an individual basis.

Admissions process

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

The Welsh Government recognises that the existing process will not be deliverable under the current circumstances and for this cohort a revised process is set out below.

- Application assessment – as normal.
- Individual interview – to be undertaken remotely.

- Written task – to be undertaken remotely if required. The use of a written task to support interview is at the provider’s discretion.
- Group interview – the requirement to undertake a group interview is suspended.
- Literacy and Numeracy tests and 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 admissions to this cohort the Welsh Government will waive this entry point requirement if circumstances do not allow for this to be achieved.

Following the above process for admissions, ITE providers will have the discretion to offer places on programmes based on interview and written task (if used). Any offers made 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.

The Welsh Government will issue further guidance to clarify the length of time and number of attempts that will be available to achieve these requirements.

Next steps

1. The Welsh Government will continue to monitor the situation on a daily basis in line with advice from Public Health Wales.
2. Further guidance will be issued in line with any changes to advice from the relevant bodies.
3. The Welsh Government will continue to work with ITE providers to develop further guidance where required. The Welsh Government will host weekly meetings with ITE providers to address developments, updates and any emerging issues.
4. ITE providers must advise Welsh Government immediately of any further issues that arise during this period so that further guidance can be issued.
5. **For the very latest advice from the Welsh Government, please check gov.wales/coronavirus**