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DfE’s Apply for teacher training: FAQs

Partner with us and join the team transforming teacher training for candidates, providers and policy-makers

In November 2019, the Department for Education (DfE) launched a new teacher training application service, [Apply for teacher training](https://www.apply-for-teacher-training.education.gov.uk/candidate).

[Apply for teacher training](https://www.apply-for-teacher-training.education.gov.uk/candidate) is now live, and is already being used by [110 providers to recruit candidates to over 1500 courses](https://www.apply-for-teacher-training.education.gov.uk/provider).

Apply forms an important part of DfE’s teacher [recruitment and retention strategy](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teacher-recruitment-and-retention-strategy), meeting our commitment to ‘design a new, easy-to-use one-stop application system to work seamlessly with our [Get Into Teaching](https://getintoteaching.education.gov.uk/) website and the new [Find](https://www.gov.uk/find-postgraduate-teacher-training-courses) service’.

We’re confident that Apply will support passionate and dedicated potential teachers from diverse backgrounds to showcase their invaluable skills and experience.

By October 2021, all teacher training applications will be made through Apply.

We are already welcoming early adopter teacher training universities to the service. Early adopter HEIs have the opportunity to help us shape Apply to meet the needs of both providers and candidates – to sign up, email us at [becomingateacher@digital.education.gov.uk](mailto:becomingateacher@digital.education.gov.uk).

However, whenever you choose to join the service, you will have the department’s full support. Our focus throughout has been on minimising disruption to your process and streamlining our onboarding process.

We’ve therefore prepared this document to answer some of the most frequently asked questions from training providers.

For more help and information, please contact [becomingateacher@digital.education.gov.uk](mailto:becomingateacher@digital.education.gov.uk)

**Contents**

[**1. About Apply**](#_t4nv0d89gj34)

* What is Apply?
* How has this all come about?
* What are the benefits of Apply?
* Will there be any fees?
* WiIl Apply 1 and Apply 2 work the same? Will RBD/DBD dates differ from UCAS Teacher Training?
* How many providers are currently on the service?

[**2. Transitioning to Apply**](#_6rcag0nz3bum)

* When will I have to join Apply?
* How will Apply work while UCAS Teacher Training is still running? Will we still be able to take applications through UCAS Teacher Training?
* How will the service work with my existing student record system?
* How will we be updated on the service?
* How do I sign up to be an early adopter?

[**3. Candidates & Apply**](#_6nnlta43q8c8)

* How will candidates know I am on Apply?
* Will I get duplicate applications? Can candidates apply to more than 3 courses?
* How do you intend to attract a wider pool of candidates?

[**4.**](#_4655bmmx9nr) **Working with your IT and Student Record Systems**

[**5. Covid-19**](#_e7jrsqfd3po9)

* Will the pilot still be going ahead in October 2020?
* Will Apply still be the only application route into teacher training in England in October 2021?
* How will RBD/DBD dates change as a result of Covid-19?

## **About Apply**

**What is Apply?**

Apply for teacher training (‘Apply’) is a new GOV.UK teacher training application service, built and launched by the Department for Education in November 2019.

The new service allows candidates to apply to training providers in England, and training providers to manage and process those applications.

By October 2021, all teacher training applications will be made through Apply.

For a quick overview of the service, take a look at [Manage teacher training applications start page](https://www.apply-for-teacher-training.education.gov.uk/provider).

**How has this all come about?**

Every day, teachers get the chance to inspire children and young people, shaping thousands of lives. But the growing number of pupils means we need to attract even more people into the profession, and then make sure they are supported not just to stay, but to thrive. Our first ever ‘[Teacher Retention & Recruitment Strategy](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teacher-recruitment-and-retention-strategy)’, published in January 2019, set out our vision to make sure careers in teaching are attractive, rewarding and sustainable.

Our approach is focused around four priorities, identified through in-depth and wide-ranging conversations with the teaching profession. One of these priorities was to make it easier for great people to become teachers.

We went part of the way to accomplishing this with the launch of [Find Postgraduate Teacher Training](https://www.gov.uk/find-postgraduate-teacher-training-courses). Which has, since its launch, helped over 1 million potential candidates to identify the right teacher training course for them. Apply is Find’s sister service, and simplifies the process of applying for initial teacher training (ITT) once candidates have selected their chosen training providers.

**What are the benefits of Apply?**Since the start of the Apply project in 2018, we’ve conducted extensive user research with both training providers and candidates to co-design a service which meets their needs. The service is now in its pilot phase, and we are continuing to adapt and improve iteratively, incorporating changes based on feedback from candidates and providers.

A DfE-owned and run application service allows us to provide a streamlined and joined-up service to candidates, supporting them throughout their journey into teaching and connecting them seamlessly to DfE’s [Get into Teaching](https://getintoteaching.education.gov.uk/) and [Get school experience](https://schoolexperience.education.gov.uk/)

We will also be able to collect more granular data on candidate journeys, helping us detect pain points within the process and make better informed ITT policy in the future.

**Will there be any fees?**

The Apply for Teacher Teaching service is free to use for both candidates and providers.

**WiIl Apply 1 and Apply 2 work the same? Will RBD/DBD dates differ from UCAS Teacher Training?**

The ‘business rules’ that UCAS Teacher Training currently operates under, such as Reject/Decline by Default dates and those surrounding Apply 1 and 2, will all stay the same throughout the transition period. These rules can then be re-examined later down the line to reflect what works best for users. Any changes would be grounded in research with candidates and providers.

**How many providers are currently on the service?**

In November 2019, we began piloting the new service with a small group of providers.

Since the start of 2020, we’ve had a steady flow of providers opting to join the service, with numbers increasing weekly ([view our onboarded providers](https://www.apply-for-teacher-training.education.gov.uk/candidate/providers)). We are also working with HEIs across the country to support them in becoming early adopters of the service, ready for onboarding in October 2020.

By October 2021, all applications for postgraduate teacher training in England will come through Apply for Teacher Training.

## **Transitioning to Apply**

**When will I have to join Apply?**

We are rolling the service out gradually so that we can continue to learn from user feedback.

Apply launched with a small group of providers in November 2019, but since the start of 2020 [many more providers](https://www.apply-for-teacher-training.education.gov.uk/candidate/providers) have opted to use Apply. At present, the majority of the providers using Apply are SCITTs (School-centred initial teacher training). However, from October 2020, we are opening up the service to a group of early adopter HEIs.

From the start, Apply has been developed according to principles of user-centred design. Ongoing user research allows us to check in with our end users to ensure our product meets their needs. We’ll continue to update and improve the service as we roll out to ever greater numbers of providers. By becoming an early adopter, you can help co-create the service so it suits you and your candidates. For more information on the benefits of early adoption, please contact [becomingateacher@education.gov.uk](mailto:becomingateacher@education.gov.uk)

From October 2021, Apply for Teacher Training will be the only application route for postgraduate teacher training in England. We are here to offer you support and guidance so that you’re ready to integrate with Apply by October 2021. To discuss how to start preparing for Apply please contact [becomingateacher@education.gov.uk](mailto:becomingateacher@education.gov.uk)

**How will Apply work while UCAS Teacher Training is still running? Will we still be able to take applications through UCAS Teacher Training?**

Until October 2021, UCAS Teacher Training and DfE Apply will run alongside each other as application routes into postgraduate teacher training.

If you are an early adopter, we want to support you to transition in a way that works for you. We will explore options with you (and your student record system vendor, if you have one) to determine if you would like to switch solely over to Apply or have your courses on both Apply and UCAS Teacher Training for the transition period.

We will be sharing data with UCAS Teacher Training to ensure that candidates are not applying for more than 3 courses across both services.

**How will the service work with my existing student record system?**

We are working with software vendors used by HEIs to ensure that Apply will be ready to integrate with your existing student record system (SRS). This means that you will be able to accept applications via your SRS just as you normally would.

You can find out what your software vendor’s timeline for integration is by emailing [becomingateacher@digital.education.gov.uk](mailto:becomingateacher@digital.education.gov.uk), or by contacting your vendor directly.

**How will HEIs be supported on the service?**

We are keen to provide you with all the support you need as you transition on to Apply. We have an experienced user support team on hand to help with any queries or concerns, contactable at [becomingateacher@education.gov.uk](mailto:becomingateacher@education.gov.uk). Early adopters will also have a specific, personal point of contact on the Apply team during their transition to the service. We’re committed to responding to emails within 5 working days.

**What can HEIs expect from DfE as early adopters?**

Should you wish to become an early adopter, we will host a workshop where we will jointly define our ways of working to ensure that you receive the level of support you need.

We are also offering fortnightly show-and-tells that update you on the service as it is being iterated and deep-dive into any topics that you would like to learn more about.

**How do I sign up to be an early adopter?**

If you would like to become an early adopter, please contact us at [becomingateacher@digital.education.gov.uk](mailto:becomingateacher@digital.education.gov.uk), and we will arrange a call to discuss next steps.

## **Candidates & Apply**

**How will candidates know I’m on Apply?**

Once your courses are live on Apply for Teacher Training, a link to Apply will be added to your course pages on Find.

We also have a full communication package with responses to common candidate questions. If you are interested in receiving this document, please email: [becomingateacher@digital.education.gov.uk](mailto:becomingateacher@digital.education.gov.uk).

**Will I get duplicate applications? Can candidates apply to more than 3 courses?**

Candidates will still have 3 choices when they use Apply. We have a data-sharing agreement with UCAS Teacher Training that allows us to monitor user behaviour and data coming through on both services during the transition period. Should a candidate submit duplicate applications, we’ll contact them and instruct them to withdraw one of the applications.

**How do you intend to attract a wider pool of candidates?**

We know that large numbers of those who express an interest in teaching never manage to complete the application process. For instance, in 2017/18, over 150,000 people registered on the Get Into Teaching website but only 45,000 people went on to apply for postgraduate teacher training.

From extensive rounds of research, we’ve learnt that recent graduates are relatively likely to succeed because they:

* are familiar with UCAS
* have their certificates and degree modules close to hand
* have a limited work history to explain
* are familiar with personal statements
* can easily supply an academic reference

However we also want to other types of candidate to complete their application, including:

* career changers
* international candidates
* disabled candidates
* older candidates
* candidates who’ve been taken out of the workplace by caring responsibilities
* candidates who need to top up missing qualifications

We believe these candidates have the potential to make excellent teachers. However, they need a flexible application form which allows them to showcase their talents, gives them guidance where needed and removes roadblocks.

As we process applications from increasing numbers of candidates, we’ll understand whether we’re successfully widening the pool of possible teachers.

Greater insight into a candidate’s entire journey (thanks to information gleaned from our marketing campaigns, Get into Teaching, Find postgraduate teacher training and finally Apply for teacher training) will help us improve all these services over time. This vital data will support better recruitment and ultimately retention of a diverse body of excellent teachers.

# **Working with your IT and Student Record Systems**

Integrating with DfE Apply may require input from your IT or SRS teams. We’re happy to help facilitate any internal conversations and can support you in communications with your software vendor.

We know that you may have questions about the data you’ll receive from Apply and how it may differ from what you currently process.

You may wish to refer to our:

* [technical documentation](https://www.apply-for-teacher-training.education.gov.uk/api-docs)
* d[ata mapping](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1aJTR9uldjHZ_L6eJ9383XxWeOXjlaYu3cDcCRzqomwE/edit) comparing the information collected by Apply and UCAS Teacher Training

If you would like us to attend a workshop with your teams, or set up a three-way call with your vendor to discuss the work they are doing towards integration with Apply, please contact [becomingateacher@digital.education.gov.uk](mailto:becomingateacher@digital.education.gov.uk)

# **Covid-19**

**Will the HEI pilot still be going ahead in October 2020?**

Yes, DfE are continuing to work to the same delivery timeline and are available to provide support on any queries or concerns you may have.

**Will Apply still be the only application route into teacher training in England in October 2021?**

Yes, DfE are continuing to work to the same delivery timeline and are available to provide support on any queries or concerns you may have.

**How will RBD/DBD dates change as a result of Covid-19?**

DfE and UCAS Teacher Training have taken the decision to suspend RBD/DBD dates until 31 May 2020. This means that no offers will be automatically rejected or declined during this period, in order to give you and your candidates more time to make decisions.

This deadline may be extended to a later date. If it is extended, we will update you via email.

If you have any further questions on Covid-19, please send an email to [dfe.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk](mailto:dfe.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk) or call us at 0800 046 8687.

Opening times are: 8am to 6pm (Monday to Friday) 10am to 4pm (Saturday and Sunday).