



**Robin Walker MP**

Minister of State for School Standards

Sanctuary Buildings Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT

tel: 0370 000 2288 [www.education.gov.uk/contactus/dfe](http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus/dfe)

27 September 2021

To all those working in teacher training,

I am delighted to have joined the Department for Education (DfE) as Minister of State for School Standards and I am looking forward to working with you all on a brilliant initial teacher training (ITT) offer to attract even more high-quality, future teachers.

I know the difference an excellent teacher can make. Teaching represents one of the biggest in-school determinants of pupil outcomes, and a strong ITT pipeline is essential for schools to secure the teachers they need. As we approach the start of the next recruitment cycle (ITT2022), with your help we can capitalise on the progress made over the past couple of cycles.

I recognise the outstanding job you have done to recruit our future teachers during these challenging times, and to meet the needs of schools and trainees during the training year. I have been impressed to learn how quickly the sector responded to the move to online recruitment and tuition, ensuring a continued flow of trainees into the profession. Thank you for your hard work.

**Transforming the candidate journey: world-class digital services**

Upon joining DfE, it is great to see the department's work developing and delivering user-centred digital services. Modern government must be responsive to the changing needs and expectations of the citizens we serve. Our future teachers should experience a modern, streamlined application journey that reflects what they have rightly come to expect from government services. I have encouraged my officials to continue and build upon the improvements that have been made to the experience for candidates, and to work with the sector to deliver an application journey that rivals the best services across government and the private sector.

I am also encouraged by the team's work to deliver new data and insights to the sector. By working together and homing in on what the data is telling us, we can collectively transform ITT recruitment delivery and policy to ensure that more great people apply to and start teacher training courses.

I would also like to thank you all for the work you have done so far, working with my teams on the rollout of the new Apply for Teacher Training service

through research, feedback, and testing – partnership with the sector has been key to the successful development and delivery of this new service.

I look forward to our continued collaboration as we approach the new recruitment cycle. As you will know, Find Postgraduate Teacher Training will open on 5 October, before Apply for Teacher Training opens for applications on 12 October.

**Transforming the candidate journey: attracting the best candidates through marketing and personalised support**

As well as world-class digital services, it is vital that our candidate pipeline is supported with a marketing campaign that attracts the best candidates into teaching, and with personalised support to help them secure a place on the right course for them.

With this in mind, during ITT2022, we will continue to support your recruitment activity with our successful national marketing campaign 'Every Lesson Shapes A Life' and our Train to Teach events programme. I encourage you to promote our Teacher Training Adviser (TTA) service to potential ITT applicants. During ITT2021, TTAs supported more than 25,000 candidates. In a challenging recruitment context, I am very supportive of the efforts of our expert advisers to bring excellent trainees into the profession.

Please do make your candidates aware of this support. They can contact the team via telephone on 0800 389 2500 or register on the [Get into Teaching](#) website.

**Driving recruitment where we need it most: targeting our incentives and interventions**

Despite the increase in interest in teaching we saw during the COVID-19 pandemic, we have longstanding challenges in some subjects. I have tasked my officials with renewing the focus on these subjects and considering where innovative, new interventions might be needed. They will work with you on this.

Financial incentives are an important lever in supporting recruitment to the more challenging subjects. The financial incentives that will be offered for ITT2022 are being finalised and we will announce the details in due course.

Subject Knowledge Enhancement (SKE) courses can support candidates to switch from over to undersubscribed subjects and can act as an important tool to improve quality. Eligible candidates can start accessing these when the cycle opens on 12 October. The subjects funded and the SKE candidate bursary remain the same as academic year 2020/21.

The [SKE course directory on GOV.UK](#) will be updated for academic year 2021/22 before 12 October, confirming the SKE providers and the courses offered.

**Supporting quality ITT: our criteria for candidates and providers**

In response to the pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic, the department previously suspended elements of the ITT criteria. The ITT Criteria and supporting advice page on GOV.UK was updated on 1 September, reverting to the full criteria requirements for the 2021/22 academic year. ITT providers should continue to design programmes with the full ITT Criteria in mind for the 2021/22 academic year.

**The ITT Market Review**

Finally, you will have seen that on 5 July this year the report from the ITT Market Review was published, along with a public consultation on the recommendations.

I am considering the responses to the consultation carefully and I am very grateful to those of you who shared your views. Ensuring there are sufficient, well-trained teachers, with the ability to inspire and challenge the next generation of learners, is a key priority for me and I will work closely with the sector to ensure this is maintained.

Thank you again for your hard work to recruit and train our next generation of high-quality teachers. I look forward to working with you to drive recruitment and provision that meets the needs of trainees, schools and, ultimately, children.

I wish you all the best for this academic year and the upcoming recruitment cycle.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robin Walker', with a stylized, cursive script.

**Robin Walker MP, Minister of State for School Standards**