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|  | Dear colleagues,  Thank you for keeping us updated on Initial teacher training (ITT) delivery this year. This has helped to inform our response to disruption caused by COVID-19. **Living with COVID-19** On Monday 21 February the Prime Minister set out the next phase of the government’s COVID-19 response: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-living-with-covid-19>.  COVID-19 continues to be a virus that we learn to live with and the imperative to reduce the disruption to children and young people’s education remains. This move, coupled with the evidence we have received from the sector has led to the decision not to introduce any wholesale changes to the ITT criteria this year.  However, we are aware that some of you may be finding it difficult to fulfil the below two elements of the ITT criteria due to ongoing and historic COVID-19 disruption.  a. No training programme should cover fewer than 4 consecutive school years (C2.2).  b. All accredited ITT providers must ensure that each trainee teacher has taught in at least 2 schools (C2.4). **How to request support** We are introducing a two-step process so that you can request additional support from DfE.  You can apply to the Department for Education (DfE) to have one or both of these elements of the ITT criteria relaxed for a specified number of trainees. You will need to provide evidence of significant COVID-19 disruption and evidence of other options having been exhausted.  We expect that most of you will be able to fulfil all the ITT criteria this year and provide trainees with as full a training experience as possible. **Step one** First, you can continue to get support from DfE to find the placements you need to fulfil the two ITT criteria for your trainees. To request this support, please complete this form: <https://forms.office.com/r/Y4sakPVxrW>  Before submitting the form, we expect you to have taken the below steps:   |  | | --- | | * use the Get Information about Schools (GIAS) service to search for and contact schools in the areas you are looking for placements in: <https://get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/> |      |  | | --- | | * consider contacting your local Teaching School Hubs to see whether they can provide support sourcing placements: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teaching-school-hubs> |      |  | | --- | | * consider working with partner schools to introduce paired placements |      |  | | --- | | * consider using online learning and teaching which could form part of a trainee’s required teaching experience. For example, to help with observing, deconstructing, analysing and adapting lessons, Oak Academy have produced a range of lessons for ITT: <https://teachers.thenational.academy/lessons-for-itt> |  **Step two** If step one does not generate the placements you need to fulfil the ITT criteria, you can apply to the DfE for relaxations to the above two elements of the ITT criteria for a specific group of trainees.  To apply for this, you must have already completed step one (so will already be in contact with us) and be prepared to provide evidence that COVID-19 disruption was a driving factor.  When relaxations to the ITT criteria have been agreed by the DfE for a specified number of trainees, the details of this will be included in an agreement document prepared by DfE and shared with you and Ofsted.  This process will only be in place for this academic year 2021 to 22. The ITT criteria will remain in place in full for all providers for the academic year 2022 to 23. **What happens next** Once you have completed step two of the process, the DfE will share the name of your organisation and high-level information about the scope of the application with Ofsted. This is to make sure that any approved relaxations to the ITT criteria for a specified number of trainees can be taken into consideration during any future inspection, while these relaxations apply.  Engaging in this process will not negatively impact any scheduled Ofsted inspection, nor will it result in an unplanned inspection.  The process of moving from step one to step two may take several weeks because all options to find placements will be explored fully first. If your organisation is notified about an inspection during this period, Ofsted may not be able to consider any relaxations, which may impact on the inspection outcome.  If you have any questions about the two-step process please contact us at [itt.engagement@education.gov.uk](mailto:itt.engagement@education.gov.uk). |  |