Department for Education

Initial Teacher Training (ITT): Accreditation Process

Frequently Asked Questions

November 2024

This frequently asked questions (FAQs) document is to support the Initial Teacher Training (ITT) accreditation process and is aimed at those providers who are eligible to apply for accreditation to deliver ITT courses leading to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) as an accredited provider.

This document will be updated throughout the ITT accreditation process.

Q1: Why are you running a round of accreditation?

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises the considerable investment that both accredited ITT providers and their lead partners have made in developing partnerships to deliver the new Quality Requirements from September 2024. These partnerships are ensuring high-quality training is available, whilst retaining invaluable local connections, experience and expertise in the ITT sector. However, we know that some lead partners and their representative organisations are calling for another accreditation opportunity for those high-quality delivery partners to become accredited bodies where it is more cost effective and beneficial for the trainee teacher to do so.

The targeted accreditation round in 2025 will provide an opportunity for these organisations to demonstrate their ability to meet new quality requirements and provide a smooth transition from any existing partnership arrangements.

Q2: Do we need to submit an Expression of Interest?

On Thursday 14th November, the department opened an Expression of Interest for those organisations who are considering applying. Submitting an Expression of Interest aids efficient delivery of the accreditation process but does not commit eligible organisations to apply when the process opens. It will also mean you will be kept up to date with the process. DfE will accept applications from eligible organisations who have not completed an Expression of Interest. More information on this can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/initial-teacher-training-itt-accreditation-expression-of-interest

Q3: When does the accreditation round open and what does the application process look like?

We expect that a process for those seeking to start delivery in September 2026 will start in spring term 2025 with a subsequent process later in 2025 for those seeking to deliver from September 2027.

We have listened to feedback from the sector on the previous accreditation process and have used this feedback to inform plans for the forthcoming accreditation round. We plan to deliver this round in collaboration with sector experts, to allow for rigorous assessment and professional dialogue between applicants and assessors. We will be releasing further detail

on the application process, including the opening and closing dates of the accreditation round, in early 2025.

Guidance for providers seeking ITT accreditation will be published on gov.uk in due course.

Q4: You previously indicated that you expected the next accreditation round to take place during the 2025/26 academic year. Why is this accreditation round taking place earlier than expected?

DfE has previously advised that we expected the next accreditation round to take place during the 2025/26 academic year, for delivery from September 2027. However, we have heard that for some organisations, an opportunity to deliver from September 2026 will be beneficial to ITT delivery. The early delivery option will only be for those high-quality delivery partners who can demonstrate their readiness to deliver in that timeframe.

We support the efficient delivery of high-quality ITT and have designed an accreditation process that is timed for providers to begin delivering ITT from September 2027, as DfE has previously indicated. The process also offers the option to begin delivery in September 2026. Where providers wish to begin delivery in September 2026, we will require evidence that the provider can transition from current partnership agreements smoothly.

We expect that a process for those seeking to start delivery in September 2026 will start in spring term 2025 with a subsequent process later in 2025 for those seeking to deliver from September 2027.

Q5: What are the eligibility criteria for this round of accreditation?

To be eligible to apply in this round, providers must meet all of the following criteria:

- have previously held accreditation to deliver ITT leading to QTS
- be delivering as a lead partner during academic year 2024/25
- not have received two consecutive ‘requires improvement’ or ‘inadequate’ judgements from Ofsted in the previous inspection cycle (2021-24).

Q6: We were previously unsuccessful, were judged ‘Good’ or above by Ofsted but are not a lead partner for an accredited provider. We operate in an area where provision is limited. Why are we ineligible to apply?

Ofsted assesses the effectiveness of existing ITT provision, in line with the principles set out in its ITE inspection framework. The accreditation process assessed provider’s potential to deliver high-quality ITT in line with the new Quality Requirements from the 2024/25 academic year. These two processes were distinct, and, therefore, Ofsted inspection judgements and accreditation scores did not align in some instances.

Organisations that have not partnered with an accredited provider may have evidenced adherence to the Core Content Framework through inspection, however, are unlikely to currently be well placed to deliver the new quality requirements.

The department will continue to monitor market data and insights closely, to assess when and where future rounds of accreditation for new entrants to the market or returning ITT providers might be needed.

Q7: We do not meet all three eligibility criteria. Why can't we apply?

After the accreditation process in 2021, accredited providers were encouraged to partner with previously accredited providers who were unsuccessful to maintain ITT supply and grow strong ITT partnerships across England. These partnerships are ensuring a good supply of high-quality training is available across the regions, subjects and phrases, whilst retaining invaluable local connections, experience and expertise in the ITT sector.

This round of accreditation is intended to offer an opportunity for high-quality delivery (lead) partners to become accredited bodies where it is more cost effective and beneficial for the trainee teacher to do so. It is not intended to accredit new entrants to the market so soon after the previous accreditation round, as market coverage across regions, subjects and phases has remained stable in recent years.

The department will continue to monitor the supply of places and candidate demand closely, to assess when and where future rounds of accreditation for new entrants to the market or returning ITT providers might be needed.

We expect existing lead partners to have a good understanding of the new quality requirements already, as they are delivering these currently as a lead partner. As previously accredited providers, these organisations have experience of developing curricula and delivering programmes which meet the ITT Core Content Framework. This particular accreditation process will be designed with this in mind.

Q8: We are a lead partner for an accredited provider but have not previously been accredited ourselves, can we apply?

This accreditation round is only open to those providers who have previously been accredited and are currently delivering ITT as a lead partner. This round of accreditation is intended to address concerns around the efficiency of delivery of ITT arising from new partnerships that were not in existence before the recent ITT reforms.

Previously accredited providers who have been inspected by Ofsted in the last cycle have evidenced their ability to deliver the Core Content Framework (CCF). This allows us to focus this accreditation round on the delivery of the new Quality Requirements and means

the accreditation process can be delivered in a timely manner without compromising on the rigorous assessment of providers' ability to deliver the Quality Requirements.

The department will continue to monitor market data and insights closely, to assess when and where future rounds of accreditation might be needed. Future rounds may offer lead partners who have not previously held accreditation the chance to apply.

Q9: Will the application process be any different depending on what routes, phases and subjects we want to deliver?

You will not be required to submit multiple applications if you intend to offer multiple routes, phases, and subjects. The Secretary of State accredits providers of courses or programmes of ITT as opposed to accrediting individual courses.

Q10: Due to the terms of our Partnership Agreement, we will not be able to deliver ITT until 2028, will we be able to apply for accreditation then?

DfE have previously advised that we expected the next round of accreditation to open in 2025/26, for delivery from September 2027. Although the accreditation window is now opening a year earlier than previously advised, the start date for delivery remains unchanged. This round of accreditation allows successful applicants to begin delivery as an accredited provider from either September 2026 or September 2027.

We know that many ITT partnerships are creating efficiencies, and collaboration is supporting high quality delivery so ITT partners should carefully consider the best approach for their partnership. We may open further accreditation rounds in the future, if our data and insights suggest that current supply is not meeting candidate demand.

Q11: Will there be any DfE support available to help us with our application?

We will work with sector representatives to produce detailed guidance on the application process for this round, which will be published in early 2025. This round will be assessed in collaboration with sector experts, who will be familiar with the specific concerns and challenges of initial teacher training providers This FAQ document will also be updated throughout the ITT accreditation process.

Whilst you should refer to this FAQ document in the first instance, if there are any questions which are not covered, please email itt.accreditation@education.gov.uk.

Q12: What happens if our application is not successful?

Providers who are not successful in gaining accreditation during this round should ensure they have plans in place, to work with an accredited provider as a lead partner. Further guidance on the application process will be available in early 2025.

The department will continue to monitor market data and insights closely, to assess when and where future rounds of accreditation might be needed.

Q13: Why is our recent Ofsted judgement relevant?

In the last accreditation round, providers were assessed against their ability to deliver the Quality Requirements and the Core Content Framework (CCF). Ofsted have now completed an inspection cycle whereby providers could only be awarded a ‘Good’ or higher judgement if they demonstrated delivery of the CCF. By targeting this round of accreditation at those with ‘Good’ or higher Ofsted judgements from the last inspection cycle, accreditation can focus on delivery of the new Quality Requirements, particularly mentoring and Intensive Training and Practice.

Q14: We were not inspected by Ofsted during the last inspection cycle, can we still apply?

Providers who were previously accredited but not inspected by Ofsted during the last inspection cycle on the recommendation of DfE, are eligible to apply during this round of accreditation. They will be required to go through an additional process regarding their ability to develop and deliver curriculum which adheres to the Initial Teacher Training Early Career Framework (ITTECF). We will provide more information on the process for any affected providers in the new year.

Department for Education

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