Last Updated: 14/02/25

PGTA announcements – Q and A

Announced changes

Shorter duration apprenticeships

The government is reforming the current apprenticeships offer into a growth and skills offer, that will deliver greater flexibility for employers and learners, including the introduction of shorter apprenticeships from August 2025.

The changes announced will mean providers can deliver apprenticeships over less than 12 months. We will be working closely with ITT providers to explore how we can deliver these changes to impact the PGTA for future cohorts. These reforms present an opportunity for providers to align the PGTA with the academic year and the award of QTS.

Assessment reforms

We are also improving the way assessment works in apprenticeships as part of our continuous drive to deliver greater value and a better experience for apprentices and employers, while retaining the high levels of rigour and quality associated with the programme.

Guided by a new set of assessment principles published today [add link], we will streamline the assessment process for apprenticeships by enabling more delivery flexibility. For example, where appropriate, there will no longer be a requirement for assessments to occur at the end of a programme. Instead, assessment can happen at the right time and place to ensure apprentices are assessed on what matters most to employers, removing any unnecessary duplication.

Under the improved plans, EPAOs will be able to delegate assessment to the provider, where appropriate, in line with the assessment plan. Where this is the case, End Point Assessment Organisations (EPAOs) will continue to shape the assessment and ensure the validity of outcomes.

Taken together, these changes will deliver greater value by making the system more efficient and improving the experience for employers and apprentices, while retaining rigour, quality and ensuring consistency in outcomes, so that employers can be confident that apprentices have met the standards employers require.

Existing assessment plans will be rewritten on a standard-by-standard basis to reflect these changes, with the first plans being revised from April 2025. Further detail on implementation, including which assessment plans will be revised and when, will follow in due course.

These changes will apply to all apprenticeships, at all levels. Ofqual, OfS and the relevant industry bodies will continue to regulate the quality and validity of the assessments undertaken. Ofqual is reviewing its regulatory framework in support of these changes.

This is the type of flexibility the ITT sector has been asking for and we are committed to working with them to deliver these changes.

English and maths requirements for apprentices

The government has also announced changes to English and maths apprenticeship exit requirements. All apprentices will continue to be required to secure and be assessed on the job-specific English and maths skills they need as part of the apprenticeship standard. Moving forward employers will have more flexibility over whether adult apprentices (those aged 19+ at the start of the apprenticeship) are required to achieve a standalone English and maths qualification on top of that. We will continue to fund English and maths qualifications for learners of all ages as part of the apprenticeship, including where the adult apprentice or employer has decided the standalone English and maths qualifications are necessary as part of the apprenticeship. The policy change is effective from 11 February 2025 and will apply to new starts and existing learners currently on programme. The apprenticeship funding rules will be published shortly and will set out more details regarding how providers and employers should implement this policy change.

Q and A

How does the recent announcement on shorter duration apprenticeships affect the PGTA?

The changes announced will mean providers can deliver apprenticeships over less than 12 months in future. We will be working closely with ITT providers to explore how we can deliver these changes to the PGTA.

For the PGTA, we know that shortening the duration would align this apprenticeship with the academic year and the award of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), as well as bringing this route into teaching in line with other postgraduate ITT routes.

How does the recent announcement on End Point Assessment (EPA) affect the PGTA?

Existing assessment plans will be rewritten on a standard-by-standard basis to reflect the changes announced, with the first plans being revised from April 2025. Further detail on implementation, including which assessment plans will be revised and when, will follow in due course.

Last Updated: 14/02/25

We are working with IfATE to establish what the PGTA EPA will look like and will keep the sector updated. We expect these changes to address some of the feedback we have heard from the sector about a lack of alignment between the end point assessment, and the award of QTS.

Why are you making these changes now?

During National Apprenticeship week, the Education Secretary announced reforms to the growth and skills offer, that will deliver greater flexibility for apprenticeship employers and learners. This includes the introduction of shorter duration apprenticeships from August 2025.

These reforms give an opportunity to assess the design of the current PGTA and look to make it more deliverable for providers and schools.

We will continue to consult with the sector on how the recent announcement can positively impact the PGTA.

When will the changes come into effect?

The first shorter duration apprenticeships are expected to come into effect from August 2025. Current trainees are not affected by this change, and we will be working with you on how this can benefit future cohorts.

The policy change to English and maths requirements is effective from 11 February 2025 and will apply to new starts and existing learners currently on programme. The apprenticeship funding rules will be published shortly and will set out more details regarding how providers and employers should implement this policy change.

We are working closely with internal and external stakeholders to understand the timeframe for reforms to the PGTA duration and EPA. We will update the sector to ensure clarity ahead of the next 25/26 cycle and academic year.

What do these changes mean for the occupational standards for the TDA and PGTA?

Whilst in the longer term, we will be working with you on what a single, umbrella occupational standard would mean, in the meantime we will be retaining both the undergraduate (TDA) and post-graduate (PGTA) occupational standards (the TDA and the PGTA). We will communicate further with the sector about this over the coming weeks and to be clear, no changes will be made on this in the 25/26 academic year.

Will the changes to English and Maths requirements affect the PGTA and TDA? Will Teaching apprentices no longer have to sit their English and Maths GCSE/ L2?

Last Updated: 14/02/25

The government has made changes to the English and Maths in apprenticeship exit requirements. All apprentices will continue to be required to secure and be assessed on the job-specific English and maths skills they need as part of the apprenticeship standard. Moving forward employers will have more flexibility over whether adult apprentices (those aged 19+ at the start of the apprenticeship) are required to achieve a standalone English and maths qualification on top of that.

ITT criteria around English and Maths requirements remain, and under ITT requirements, all accredited ITT providers must ensure that all entrants have achieved a standard equivalent to a grade 4 in the GCSE examinations in English and mathematics. The aim of this criterion is to ensure that all entrants to ITT have demonstrated their achievement of a minimum standard of educational attainment.

Applicants who are otherwise suitable but have not successfully achieved a GCSE grade 4, or recognised equivalent, may be given an opportunity to show that they can meet the required standard either by taking an equivalence test or by offering other evidence of attainment, which should demonstrate a similar level and breadth. Accredited ITT providers should consider making similar arrangements for applicants who cannot provide original certificates as evidence.

DfE does not provide a list of qualifications that can be considered equivalent to the GCSE examinations in English and mathematics for ITT entry. When accredited ITT providers look for evidence that a qualification is of a standard equivalent to GCSE grade 4, they should look at the content not only in terms of its level, but also in terms of its breadth. Accredited ITT providers should look for additional evidence of breadth of knowledge and understanding in applicants who have key and functional skills certificates but do not have GCSEs at grade 4 or above in English and mathematics.

Will changes to EPA affect the quality of the assessment or the apprentice coming through the apprenticeship?

No, all assessment will continue to be high quality, rigorous and provide valid outcomes as required by employers. By streamlining the assessment, we will reduce unnecessary duplication and focus on the core requirements for occupational competence. This will make the assessment timelier for apprentices and employers and eliminate unnecessary duplication, while maintaining the quality and rigour employers and apprentices rely on.

Will these changes apply to new learners only or will existing leaners also be required to sit the improved assessment plans?

The implementation phase of this work will consider on a standard-by-standard basis what the arrangements are for new and existing apprentices and will be set out in the assessment plans as they are developed.

Will this create a bigger burden for providers?

Each assessment plan will be revised on an individual basis, outlining what assessment can be done and when. A key part of this will be ensuring assessment can be delivered in the most efficient way possible.

We will work closely with the sector to ensure that the revised assessment plans for PGTA and TDA meets their needs.