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PGTA announcements – Q and A

Contents

What is the PGTA? 2

What changes have been announced? 2

What does the announcement on the 9th May mean for delivery of the PGTA? 4

How does February's announcement on End Point Assessment (EPA) affect the PGTA? 4

Why are you making these changes now? 5

When will the changes come into effect? 5

What do these changes mean for the PGTA and TDA occupational standards? 5

You recently removed requirements for maths and English - does this apply to this apprenticeship when they should be teaching children maths and English? 5

Will changes to EPA affect the quality of the assessment or the apprentice coming through the apprenticeship? 6

Why are most of your apprentices primary teachers, when we need more secondary teachers? 6

What about Further Education (FE) teachers? Does this apprenticeship cover them? 7

Schools are facing pressure with capacity, how can they deliver this? 7

What else is the department doing to reach its target of 6,500 new teachers? 7

What is the PGTA?

- The postgraduate teaching apprenticeship (PGTA) is an initial teacher training (ITT) route that combines paid work with off-the-job training and leads to qualified teacher status (QTS).
- For AY25/26 grant funding for chemistry, computing, mathematics, physics, French, German and Spanish is the same value as the bursary (available to trainees on fee-funded routes). In other subjects, the grant will continue to be £9,000 lower than the bursary to reflect additional funding available via the apprenticeship levy. The grant funding available for each subject is as follows:
    - £29k in chemistry, computing, maths, physics
    - £26k for French, German or Spanish.
    - £17k for other languages, biology, D&T, geography
    - £1k in RE, Art and Design and music.
- The PGTA is part of our wider salaried ITT offer which also includes the School Direct salaried route, High Potential Initial Teacher Training (current delivered by Teach First), and the Teacher Degree Apprenticeship (where a funding pilot is currently being carried out in maths).
- Guidance for employers (including schools) who are interested in hiring a postgraduate teaching apprentice is available here.
- Guidance for providers on how to provide training for the postgraduate teaching apprenticeship (PGTA) is available here.
- The updated postgraduate teaching apprenticeship funding manual is available here.

What changes have been announced?

Shorter duration PGTA

- From the 1st August 2025, the minimum duration of the PGTA will be shortened from 12 to 9 months. This will align the PGTA with the academic year and the award of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).
- Shortening the PGTA to a minimum of 9 months will bring this route into teaching in line with other postgraduate initial teacher training routes and make the PGTA easier to deliver for schools and providers.
- The 20% off the job learning requirement will continue, which equates to 278 hours, over 9 months and there will be no reduction in learning hours or changes to content.
- For providers and schools, as well as making this route more deliverable, we expect PGTA provision to increase, helping us to better meet candidate demand.
- In 2024/25, 1,432 trainees are training to teach on a PGTA course.

- Following the changes, we would also expect more candidates to apply for this route.
- There has been a 58% increase in salaried trainees over the last three recruitment cycles yet demand still outstrips supply. 2,836 eligible domestic candidates applied to salaried courses last cycle but were not successful.
- We are also streamlining the End Point Assessment (EPA) to reduce burden on providers.
- This will support our aim of recruiting 6.5k more teachers by the end of this parliament.

Assessment reforms

- We are 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 during National Apprenticeship Week 2025, 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, End Point Assessment Organisations (EPAOs) will be able to delegate assessment to the provider, where appropriate, in line with the assessment plan. Where this is the case, 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.
- The PGTA standard will be reviewed by August 2025, in time for the new 25/26 academic year.
- 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

- In National Apprenticeship Week 2025, we 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.
- This policy change is now effective and applies to new starts and existing learners currently on programme. The apprenticeship funding rules summary of changes (February 2025) set out more details regarding how providers and employers should implement this policy change.

What does the announcement on the 9th May mean for delivery of the PGTA?

- The changes announced mean providers will be able to deliver apprenticeships over less than 12 months in future.
- The minimum duration of the PGTA will now be 9 months, for apprentices starting on programmes from August 2025.
- For the PGTA, we know that shortening the duration aligns 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 February's announcement on End Point Assessment (EPA) affect the PGTA?

- Existing assessment plans are being rewritten on a standard-by-standard basis to reflect the changes announced, with the first plans being revised from April 2025. The PGTA Assessment Plan is due to be revised by August 2025.
- We are working with IfATE and the Employer Trailblazer Group to work through 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 make it more deliverable for providers and schools.

When will the changes come into effect?

- The first shorter duration apprenticeships for the PGTA will come into effect from August 2025. Current trainees are not affected by this change.
- 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. More detail is set out in the apprenticeship funding rules.
- Changes to the EPA are expected to come into place by the end of August 2025, and will affect new starts from September 2025.

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

- The two updated occupational standards are now live on the IfATE webpage.
- We continue to operate two separate standards and will continue to work with ITT providers / TB group on any changes to this for the future
- We will communicate further with the sector before any changes are made.

You recently removed requirements for maths and English - does this apply to this apprenticeship when they should be teaching children maths and English?

- 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.

Why are most of your apprentices primary teachers, when we need more secondary teachers?

- We are actively supporting secondary schools to recruit more secondary PGTA apprentices, particularly in key subjects.
- For 2024/25, we increased the grant funding we offer for secondary PGTA and this resulted in a 68% increase in the secondary PGTA trainees recruited (475 compared to 282 the year before).
- In five priority subjects (chemistry, computing, mathematics, physics and languages) where the funding increased most there was an even larger 217% increase in apprentices.

What about Further Education (FE) teachers? Does this apprenticeship cover them?

- The Learning and Skills Teacher apprenticeship is available for those wishing to teach in the FE sector. This is focused on the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to be an effective teacher of technical and vocational subjects.
- The PGTA may be appropriate for those wishing to teach academic subjects, for example in a sixth-form college, ultimately this is a decision that employers will need to make with the relevant training provider.
- The ITT criteria states that for all courses leading to QTS, including PGTA courses, no training programme should cover fewer than four consecutive school years, for example, covering a 14-19 secondary age range.

Schools are facing pressure with capacity, how can they deliver this?

- Apprentices bring a range of skills, and we know that many schools value this route as a way of growing their workforce, including as a route into teaching for their existing staff with the potential to become excellent teachers. Schools can recruit through the PGTA or one of the other many pathways into the profession.
- These reforms should make it even easier for schools to support an apprentice.
- Whether you pay the levy or not, employers can access apprenticeship funding and additional grants for teaching apprenticeships in priority subjects. Further information on apprenticeship funding is available at GOV.UK - Apprenticeship Funding.
- Recognising the pressures on school staff and their impact on retention, the department collaborates with sector partners to improve wellbeing and reduce practices that create unnecessary workload.
- We have taken action to address longstanding challenges in marking, planning and data management. Our Improve Workload and Wellbeing for School Staff service offers resources for reviewing workload and enhancing staff.
- Prioritising mental health is central to fostering a supportive culture in schools and colleges. Schools are encouraged to join the Education Staff Wellbeing Charter to promote staff wellbeing.

What else is the department doing to reach its target of 6,500 new teachers?

- We are making good early progress by ensuring teaching is once again an attractive and respected profession. Our first action in the summer was to

accept in full the School Teachers' Review Body's recommendation of a 5.5% pay award for teachers and leaders in maintained schools.

- In 2024/25 we also deployed a wide-range of initiatives to drive recruitment and retention, including:
    - announcing a £233m ITT financial incentives package for the 2025/26 recruitment cycle,
    - confirming targeted retention incentives for shortage subjects worth up to £6,000 after tax,
    - making clear that teachers can undertake planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time remotely
    - delivering a programme focused on embedding flexible working in schools, and multi academy trusts (MATs). This includes the delivery of supportive webinars and peer support provided by flexible working ambassadors and MATs.
    - deploying a range of resources to help address teacher workload and wellbeing, including the 'Improve workload and wellbeing for school staff' service and the 'education staff wellbeing charter'.