

DRIVING FORWARD PROFESSIONAL
STANDARDS FOR TEACHERS



Guidelines for Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programmes in Scotland

August 2022

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose and Status

Under the [Public Services Reform \(General Teaching Council for Scotland\) Order \(2011\)](#), it is for the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTC Scotland) to determine what constitutes a recognised teaching qualification for individuals seeking registration as a school teacher. GTC Scotland may make such provision about the education and training required to attain such a qualification as we think fit.

These guidelines set out our policy on the content, nature and duration of programmes leading to teaching qualifications (TQs) for the primary and secondary sectors. They supersede those issued by us in September 2019.

We ensure that these requirements are met through accrediting all programmes of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) in Scotland.

1.2 The Aims of Teacher Education

The overall aim of programmes of ITE is to prepare student teachers to become competent, thoughtful, reflective and innovative practitioners, who are committed to providing high quality learning for every learner. These programmes must align with the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education's requirements and ensure that student teachers meet the requirements of the [Standard for Provisional Registration \(2021\)](#), which enables newly qualified teachers to progress to the the [Standard for Full Registration \(2021\)](#). These are mandatory requirements for Registration with the General Teaching Council for Scotland.

1.3 Partnership in Initial Teacher Education

ITE in Scotland is provided by universities and the Royal Conservatoire for Scotland in partnership with schools and local education authorities.

Each of the partners has particular priorities, roles and responsibilities as have been highlighted in documents such as [Teaching Scotland's Future \(2010\)](#), [Aspect Review of the Education Authority and University ITE Partnership Arrangements \(Phase One\)](#) and the [National Implementation Board STEC/ADES National Framework Agreement for Partnership in the Early Phase of Teacher Learning \(2013\)](#). Good partnership arrangements take full account of the partners' mutual aims and their respective priorities and responsibilities. All partners, including GTC Scotland and the Scottish Government, will continue to keep the quality of arrangements for partnership under consideration.

1.4 Initial Teacher Education in the Context of Continuing Professional Development

ITE is the foundation on which all further professional learning is built. Newly qualified teachers are Provisionally Registered with us and only attain Full Registration on successful completion of the Teacher Induction Scheme or Flexible Route which allows them to achieve the [Standard for Full Registration \(2021\)](#). After attaining full registration, teachers are expected to be committed to career-long professional learning as an aspect of teacher professionalism. Through a process of self-evaluation, underpinned by engagement with the most appropriate Professional Standard, teachers should identify their own professional learning needs and maintain a professional reflective learning record to meet the requirements of [Professional Update](#).

While some institutions may continue to offer Additional Teaching Qualifications, which will remain subject to accreditation, other opportunities for teachers to gain professional recognition or additional registration are provided through our [Framework for Professional Recognition](#) and [Framework for Professional Registration](#).

1.5 Meeting the Standard for Provisional Registration

Student teachers completing an ITE programme and gaining the award of a teaching qualification (TQ)

must have demonstrated that they have met the [Standard for Provisional Registration](#).

Prior to entry to an ITE programme, applicants must:

- ❖ have appropriate levels of English (SCQF level 6) and mathematics (SCQF level 5);
- ❖ be competent in the use of Digital Technology;
- ❖ demonstrate appropriate interpersonal skills, attributes and dispositions which will allow them to engage young people, colleagues and partners in effective collaboration.

Applicants should show that they:

- ❖ are committed to professional values, are reflective and innovative;
- ❖ are self-directed, resilient and have high levels of self-efficacy;
- ❖ can reflect on the impact of their teaching on every learner;
- ❖ can develop appropriate subject and pedagogical content knowledge, and have the capability to become experts in pedagogy;
- ❖ can develop awareness of how the study of Scottish culture can be developed within the curriculum;
- ❖ can understand the principles of assessment and are able to use assessment to monitor and enhance learners' progress;
- ❖ are committed to their own ongoing professional learning and can engage with, and are informed by, educational research and policy;
- ❖ have an awareness of educational provision across Scotland, including the particular requirements of rural schools;
- ❖ have some awareness of education's links to other fields and are committed to working with other professionals within and beyond education.

2 Conditions for the Accreditation of All Programmes of Initial Teacher Education

2.1 General Conditions

We will only accredit those programmes of ITE which meet the following conditions:

- ❖ Programmes must be subject to validation and review processes under the auspices of a university or degree awarding institution. These processes must involve external members as a means of ensuring the maintenance of acceptable academic standards.
- ❖ Programmes must provide pathways leading to registration as a primary or secondary teacher.
- ❖ The minimum requirements for entry to programmes will be those laid down in the [Memorandum on Entry Requirements to Programmes of Initial Teacher Education in Scotland 2019](#).

2.2 Requirements Applying to Programmes Leading to the Award of a Teaching Qualification

Programmes of study must make student teachers aware of their contribution to learners' development, including the acquisition of core skills. They should also raise student teachers' awareness of all teachers' wider role in the safeguarding of children as set out in the [Scottish Government's Getting it Right for Every Child](#) (GIRFEC) approach.

Student teachers' study of the curriculum must cover current national guidance and prepare student teachers to identify and meet the needs of every learner in the cross-curricular aspects of their subjects, including literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing and using digital technology to enhance the learning experience. Student teachers must also be prepared to support every learner to access and fully participate in the curriculum.

Professional placements (or other relevant educational placement experience such as within

Children's Services provision) must provide the practical context to illustrate and progress the skills, understanding and content being developed in the programme. They will normally be undertaken in blocks of time but may also include a series of days. Each placement block must be assessed.

Student teachers should also have an awareness of transition issues both in school and between pre-school, primary and secondary schools and beyond.

❖ **Primary**

Programmes must prepare teachers to teach children through [Early Learning and Childcare \(ELC\)](#) as laid out in the [Implementing Early Learning and Childcare under the Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014: Progress Update](#) and those attending primary school. They must ensure that all new teachers are able to deliver programmes of learning appropriate for these stages. New teachers must, therefore, have knowledge and understanding of childhood development and undertake blocks of professional placement, including in an early-level environment, giving appropriate coverage to the range of stages of the primary school.

❖ **Secondary**

ITE programmes of study must be designed to prepare teachers to teach learners in secondary schools in one or more subjects and will lead to a TQ (Secondary Education) in a subject (or subjects).

Student teachers should be supported to develop an understanding of the principles of assessment and be able to use assessment to enhance learning and to meet the requirements of the curriculum and awarding bodies.

Programmes must make student teachers aware of the contribution their subject(s) makes to the secondary school curriculum and to learners' development, including the acquisition of core skills. In addition, they should also raise student teachers' awareness of secondary teachers' wider role in schools beyond subject teaching, through contributing to the interdisciplinary learning and the wider ethos of the school.

❖ **ITE Programmes Leading to Teaching Qualifications**

There are a number of different types of ITE programme: Concurrent degree, Combined degree and Professional/Postgraduate diploma. The requirements of each of these programmes is shown in the table below.

	Undergraduate degree		Professional/Postgraduate diploma*	Postgraduate Masters level programmes
Type of qualification	Combined degree: (TQ is awarded within the Degree.)	Concurrent degree: (The degree is awarded with the TQ being awarded separately.)	Professional/Postgraduate diploma	TQ is award within the Master degree
Timeframe of ITE programme	4 academic years of full-time study or equivalent part-time study.	PRIMARY 4 academic years of full-time study or equivalent part-time study. SECONDARY At least three and a half academic years' full-time study or the equivalent part-time study.	36 weeks of full-time study or the equivalent part-time study.	2 academic years of full-time study or equivalent part-time study.
Professional placement	At least 30 weeks . More than half of this should occur in the final 2 years of the programme, with a substantial block taking place in the last year.**	There must be a minimum of 18 weeks .	There must be a minimum of 18 weeks . Placement should take place in each school term, a block of at least 4 weeks taking place towards the end of the programme.	There must be a minimum of 18 weeks . Placement should take place in each school term. A block of at least 4 weeks taking place towards the end of the programme.
Programme Content	Programmes must contain appropriate elements of study, including in-depth academic study in areas beyond education, to allow student teachers to extend and deepen their knowledge, understanding and experience in order to meet the Standard for Provisional Registration.	PRIMARY On graduation, student teachers must have an area of specialism within the Primary curriculum and meet the Standard for Provisional Registration. SECONDARY On graduation, student teachers' level of tertiary academic attainment in their subject specialism must comply with the relevant PGDE (Secondary) entry requirements in the 'Memorandum on Entry Requirements to Programmes of Teacher Education in Scotland'.***	PRIMARY Programmes allow student teachers to extend and deepen their knowledge, understanding and experience in order to meet the Standard for Provisional Registration and build on relevant elements of their original degree programme for use in primary schools. SECONDARY In the case of student teachers seeking a qualification in more than one subject, the arrangements for school experience must allow student teachers to meet the requirements for the Standard for Provisional Registration in each subject.***	Programmes must contain appropriate elements of study, including in-depth academic study in areas beyond education, to allow student teachers to extend and deepen their knowledge, understanding and experience in order to meet the Standard for Provisional Registration. Programmes must provide pathways leading to registration as a primary or secondary teacher.

*Professional Graduate Diploma in Education is awarded at level 10 of the [Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework](#) (SCQF) Post Graduate is awarded at SCQF level 11. This does not affect the Teaching Qualification which is the same at both levels.

** (In the case of the B.Ed. (Technology) a minimum of 30 weeks must be spent on placement with a minimum of 24 weeks spent specifically on school experience and a further minimum of 6 weeks available for an optional industrial placement depending on the student teacher's needs and previous experience. The industrial placements should be drawn from a range of industrial, commercial and service organisations.)

*** Student teachers undertaking a PGDE (Secondary) programme leading to a TQ or TQs in Physics, Chemistry or Biology must also be appropriately prepared to teach Science within the Broad General Education.

3 Requirements for Programmes

3.1 Statutory Requirements

The ITE providers or other degree awarding institution will assess the programme proposal for academic rigour and degree-worthiness. All programmes are subjected to external scrutiny as a means of ensuring the maintenance of acceptable academic standards. The process must be completed before the accreditation event. The University must ensure that the statutory requirements have been met and robust Quality Assurance procedures are in place ensuring the programme meets its aims, remains contemporary and relevant and reviews the quality of provision.

3.2 Staffing Levels and Effective Delivery

Staff delivering the programme and associate tutors involved in professional placement should be identified along with their GTC Scotland status.

For ITE staff, their area of research/scholarship should also be noted with explanation of how this expertise is being used to both underpin and enhance the programme.

The communication strategy to ensure there is a shared understanding of the roles and responsibilities of associate tutors should be shared, along with an outline of how the associate tutors are supported to ensure their knowledge and practice remains contemporary.

3.3 Programme Design

The delivery of the programme must be premised on a sound rationale with associated aims and objectives. The programme design and delivery should also:

- ❖ develop and promote [equality](#) and diversity, and empower students to adopt these principles;
- ❖ ensure there is a progression in skills and knowledge acquisition;
- ❖ offer opportunities for personalisation and choice.

3.4 Recruitment and Selection of Students

- ❖ Marketing approaches must encourage diversity of applicants. ITE providers must have a system of selection for student teachers which must take into account available reports on individual applicants, their experience, interests and wider achievement and the extent to which they match the skills, attributes and dispositions desirable in a teacher. Student teachers should only be admitted to a programme after an interview process which should normally involve personnel from both the institution and local education authorities/schools.
- ❖ ITE providers should mitigate institutional barriers and bias throughout the recruitment and selection procedures to ensure all applicants are given equal opportunities of being selected onto an ITE programme. They should consider how the lack of diversity currently within the teaching profession in relation to protected characteristics is being addressed.
- ❖ Programmes must have clear criteria for recognising prior learning and experience, and offer opportunities for part-time and distance learning wherever this is appropriate.
- ❖ All student teachers must apply to Disclosure Scotland for membership of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme once an offer to join a programme has been received.

3.5 Support for Student Teachers

- ❖ Each ITE provider must have in place strategies and protocols to support student teachers both academically and with pastoral issues. The delivery of the programme should support student teachers to build their academic and professional resilience. There also needs to be within the

partnership arrangement defined roles and responsibilities to ensure that student teachers are fully supported on professional placement.

- ❖ The student programme and placement handbook should both explicitly state the supports available to all students, including clear advice for students should they experience discrimination or harassment on campus or on placement.

3.6 Content of Programme

The programme should include educational theory and practice that supports student teachers to develop their knowledge, understanding and practice in areas such as educational theory, childhood development and developing positive relationships. The legal and statutory frameworks which govern teachers' work should also be addressed throughout the programme.

Student teachers should also be exposed to national priorities and pedagogies to develop their understanding and practice in key areas such as:

- ❖ inclusion;
- ❖ additional support needs;
- ❖ adverse childhood and traumatic experiences;
- ❖ corporate parenting;
- ❖ parental involvement;
- ❖ involvement of young people;
- ❖ the curriculum with emphasis on areas that are Responsibilities of All - literacy, numeracy, health and well-being;
- ❖ digital and data literacy;
- ❖ skills for learning, life and work;
- ❖ Learning for Sustainability.

3.7 Professional Values

- ❖ Personal values and GTC Scotland Professional Values must be explored, discussed and assessed at multiple points throughout the programme.
- ❖ ITE providers should consider how they are enabling students to acknowledge and consider how their positionality and identity shapes their thinking and practice.

3.8 Delivery of Programme

The rationale for the delivery model should be clearly outlined with associated timelines and key milestones.

An outline of methodologies used, moderation of the programme and how the programme supports students to connect theory to practice should also be included.

The development of the programme should include opportunities for student teachers to engage in professional dialogue, to work collegiately and engage in collaborative learning. It should also include opportunities for student teachers to be creative and enhance their digital literacy skills to enrich the learning of every learner.

Multiple exit points should be identified and opportunities for further study should be signposted to support the teacher journey.

3.9 Assessment

The assessment pattern and range of assessment strategies, along with diverse learning and teaching approaches and blended learning opportunities should support student teachers' progression.

Successful completion of the programme should enable students to meet (and evidence) the [Standard for Provisional Registration 2021](#) .

Moderation activities must be part of the programme, alongside clearly outlined interventions to support student teachers who do not meet the assessment criteria, with procedures for re-sits, extensions and appeals identified.

There should be clear roles and responsibilities in the assessment of placements to ensure these are a valid and reliable means of measuring students' progress.

3.10 Partnership

- ❖ Partners must be involved in the planning of the programme to ensure that institution staff, school staff and student teachers have a shared, relevant and up-to-date knowledge and are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities in respect to professional placements. This includes mechanisms to collect feedback on the quality of the professional placement.
- ❖ The programme should normally have a professional placement pattern that is compatible with the Student Placement System and is practicable and sustainable.
- ❖ Partnership working should be evident to support and promote collegiality and collaborative working. This should be underpinned by self-evaluation, reflection and enquiry, and support student teachers to develop these stances.

GTC Scotland aims to promote equality and diversity in all its activities

GTC Scotland

Comhairle Choitcheann Teagaisg na h-Alba

The General Teaching Council for Scotland is the independent professional body which maintains and enhances teaching standards and promotes and regulates the teaching profession in Scotland. We strive to be a world leader in professional education issues.

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