

Official Response to the call for evidence

ITT core content framework and early career framework:

April 2023

About Community

The Education and Early Section of Community represent and support people working in all sectors of education and early years from nursery to tertiary, including further and higher education. Formerly Voice the Union, our dedicated education and early years team are trained to provide support for whatever our members are facing at work.

We represent Nannies, Early Years and Childcare Professionals, Heads and Leaders, Tutors, Support Staff, Lecturers and Researchers, and Education Students across all stages and phases of learning as well as being a nationally recognised union for Teachers in the UK. We are a stakeholder to various Government groups including COSLA, Ofsted, STA, Ofqual and are a contributor to the annual teacher pay review.

We have members across thousands of schools, universities, colleges, and nurseries across the whole of the UK.

This official response was prepared by:

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This is the official response from community on behalf of our members. It is a public document on behalf of the trade union and will be published on our website once the deadline for submission has passed.

Introduction

In January 2019 the Department for Education (DfE) published the Early Career Framework (ECF) and in November 2019 DfE published the initial teacher training (ITT) Core Content Framework (CCF).

The CCF defines in detail the minimum entitlement of all trainee teachers. Drawing on the best available evidence, it sets out the content that ITT providers and their partnerships must draw upon when designing and delivering their ITT programmes. More information about the CCF is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/initial-teacher-training-itt-core-content-framework>

The ECF sets out what early career teachers are entitled to learn about and learn how to do when they start their careers. It underpins the entitlement of early career teachers to receive two years of professional development designed to help them develop their practice, knowledge and working habits. More information about the ECF is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-career-framework>

Both the CCF and ECF were based on the most up-to-date research into excellent teaching practice. The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) independently reviewed the frameworks to ensure they draw on the best available evidence and that this evidence has been interpreted with fidelity.

However, evidence does not stand still, and when launching the CCF and ECF DfE committed to updating the frameworks as research progresses. Building on what we have learned from the first few years of CCF implementation and ECF delivery, we plan to review and revise the ITT CCF and ECF into more closely combined frameworks which cover the first three years or more at the start of a teacher's career and articulate what trainee and new teachers need to know and need to know how to do.

We are therefore seeking recent, relevant and high-quality research that may inform amendments to the existing frameworks. It is not anticipated that this will involve a fundamental rewrite of the frameworks. The aim is to build on what is there to ensure the frameworks are up to date and fit for purpose. Any new evidence submitted will be considered by DfE and appraised by the EEF on the basis of whether it is robust, relevant and helpfully supplements the existing evidence cited in the framework.

Respond online

To help us analyse the responses please use the online system wherever possible. Visit [DfE consultations on GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/consultations) to submit your response.

Other ways to respond

If for exceptional reasons, you are unable to use the online system, for example because you use specialist accessibility software that is not compatible with the system, you may request and complete a word document version of the form.

By email

Frameworks.EVIDENCE@education.gov.uk

By post

Developing Teachers and Leaders Division
Department for Education
2 St Paul's Place
125 Norfolk Street
Sheffield, S1 2FJ

Deadline

The call for evidence closes on 21 April 2023

Submission of evidence

We are seeking recent, relevant, and high-quality research that may inform amendments to the existing Core Content and Early Career frameworks. It is not anticipated that this will involve a fundamental rewrite of the frameworks, but is aimed to build on what is there to ensure the frameworks are up to date and fit for purpose. Any new evidence submitted will be considered by DfE and appraised by the EEF on the basis of whether it is robust, relevant and helpfully supplements the existing evidence cited in the framework.

The Core Content and Early Career Frameworks include some descriptive statements about the nature of teaching, learning, and school, and other statements that make causal claims about the known efficacy or effectiveness of teaching and learning approaches. Whilst we are interested in all forms of relevant research evidence, studies that use a comparison group to test impact in a reliable way are necessary to support claims of the efficacy or effectiveness of an approach.

Response from Community

Effective ITT is the means by which we prepare, enable and empower trainee teachers to become successful in the workplace; equipping them with the necessary skills, knowledge, understanding and awareness.

High-quality ITT will also give trainees the ability to manage, develop and thrive in what is often a challenging educational environment, providing the support and driving the desire to remain in the profession in the medium to long term.

Given the proportion of ECTs leaving the profession, sometimes in as little as just a few months, the evidence would suggest that we are some way from fulfilling these aims. Indeed, Ofsted noted the weaknesses of the new ECF programme, saying providers “rely too heavily on the core content framework, treating it as a generic curriculum model, with little attention to the specific subject expertise trainees will need... high-quality mentors now have to divide their time between supporting early career teachers on the ECF programme and trainee teachers. These increased expectations and competing demands have exacerbated previous placement shortages.”¹

This view is in stark contrast to the view of the Department that the ECF is delivering new recruits of the highest quality. According to the framework itself, it outlines “the best available evidence of what teachers should know and be able to do” but this ideological position is particularly difficult to define since we have little to judge against in the rapidly-changing educational environment of academisation, teaching school hubs and diminished influence of local authorities. Where is the independent arbiter to examine and identify the best available evidence? And what happens when that evidence contradicts strongly-held beliefs?

Community is broadly in favour of the CCF and ECF conceptual idea. Expanding teacher learning to cover both Initial training and the early career and linking the two by a ‘golden thread’ should fulfil many of the aforementioned aims. However, the demands placed on existing staff as a result of the ECF programme create significant additional workload on experienced staff causing tension between initial teacher training and the mentoring of early career teachers. Put simply, the idea is good but the practice is poor because the same people – teachers and leaders – are being spread too thinly.

¹ Ofsted Annual Report 2021/22, Page 73
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1122628/31357_ofsted_annual_report_2021-22_WEB.pdf

Ofsted report that, “it is vital that mentors have the curriculum expertise, experience and time to provide effective support for early career teachers”, but observed that school staff had experienced difficulties managing workload and this had an impact on the availability and quality of mentoring. This was especially the case where lead providers had not worked with delivery partners to support mentors to work with ECTs.²

And the Government Evidence to the School Teachers’ Review Body agrees, noting: “Insights from lead providers (and their delivery partners) have suggested ... mentors too may be struggling, finding it difficult to fit their ECF based induction programme responsibilities around other commitments.”³

The experience of trainee teachers and ECTs is that many of them struggle and end up leaving the profession early. There are many reasons why ECTs leave the profession early but the majority of those involved in the ECF provider-led training feel the workload expected of ECTs and particularly mentors is too much.⁴ It is, therefore, difficult to determine whether the current system is adequately preparing new teachers or whether those who become successful teachers would have succeeded anyway.

Schools are understandably concerned about the workload that the ECF programme creates for early career teachers and mentors, and some have withdrawn from offering both ITT and ECT placements due to the unmanageable workloads. According to a survey by *TeacherTapp*, 57% of ECTs agree or strongly agree that the ECF adds a lot to their workload and the proportion is even higher amongst mentors.

Additionally, “nearly half of mentors (46%) report that they have not been given additional non-contact time to work with ECTs. This fact is corroborated in around 20% of cases by senior leaders who admit they have not given ECT mentors additional time for their role.”⁵

Finally, in addition to time and scheduling, it is worth considering the impact of SEN upon trainees and ECTs. Given the significant reforms which have taken place in the area of special educational needs and disabilities, including the development of inclusive practice, all trainees must be given enhanced opportunities to develop the skills necessary to meet the needs of all learners – including those with SEN, and all should have at least one placement in a special school or working with SEN/D learners within a mainstream school.

² Ofsted Annual Report 2021/22, Page 74

³ Government Evidence to the STRB (2023), Page 41

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1137933/Government_evidence_to_the_STRB.pdf

⁴ Government Evidence to the STRB (2023), Page 41

⁵ “Early Career Teachers: The Story So Far” (April 2022)

<https://teachertapp.co.uk/articles/early-career-teachers-the-story-so-far/>

We close with the following thoughts:

- ITT needs to include an element of work/life balance, including an ability to identify stress and stressors, in both themselves and others, and to know what remedial actions to take.
- Emphasis needs to be placed on managing workload.
- Professional, emotional and personal stamina needs to be developed to manage difficult and pulse workloads.
- There should be a focus on developing the aspiring teacher as a role model within the school and community. Without this, it is difficult to see how developing teachers could develop appropriate attitudes and behaviours in their students.
- Regardless of the preferred age group or Key Stage, a range of behaviour management skills must be instilled in all trainees and developed by ECTs.
- Young teachers tend to struggle in systems which they do not understand, so all candidates should be educated to adopt a flexible approach to management.
- As a counterpoint, placements should only take place in schools where management is sound and of high quality.
- Trainees should be taught how to articulate their views and express their expertise in the workplace. They have a right to challenge the established views – nobody should be expected to follow the status quo if it is wrong.
- Reflective practice and evidence-based practice should be encouraged.



Department
for Education

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