


# Initial Teacher Training Recruitment Policy

<b>Responsibility:</b>	Director of ITT (Initial Teacher Training) programmes	<b>Date doc. created:</b>	April 2024
<b>Print name sign off:</b>	Sian Marsh	<b>Last review date of doc:</b>	November 2024
<b>Signature:</b>		<b>Next review date:</b>	September 2025

Best Practice Network (BPN) is committed to the fair treatment of applicants and students, regardless of age, disability, gender, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation.

BPN is committed to ensuring that all recruitment and selection decisions for its EYITT, Primary and Secondary ITT programmes are fair, transparent, and conducted according to our agreed policies and procedures. Each procedure will meet the requirements of the Secretary of State's ITT criteria and shall align with safer recruiting/safeguarding best practice.

BPN has adopted the following recruitment and appeals policy. No applicant or candidate shall be prejudiced or disadvantaged by using this policy.

## Safeguarding (Recruitment)

BPN and its partner schools are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and student teachers to share this commitment. To ensure this, our recruitment and selection policy is in accordance with national guidance, for example:

- Safeguarding questions are included at interview
- All interviewers have completed the Safer Recruitment training

All entrants onto our ITE (Initial Teacher Education) courses are subject to pre-employment checks, including a satisfactory Enhanced Criminal Records with Barred List check through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

Our commitment to maintaining a culture of vigilance regarding safeguarding and recruitment for initial teacher training reflects our unwavering dedication to providing a safe and nurturing learning environment for all.

## DBS Checks for Successful Student Teachers

All Student teachers that are successfully placed in a school, will be required to undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check before starting their role. This is a mandatory safeguarding requirement to ensure the safety and well-being of children and young people. BPN will guide the student teacher through the DBS application process, and they must complete this check before the placement can be confirmed. Failure to obtain a satisfactory DBS check may result in the withdrawal of the placement offer. Student teachers will also be required to pass a fitness to teach test and successfully complete an online Safeguarding course.

## Selection Stage

The process for admissions is co-ordinated by BPN in collaboration with its delivery partners. All applications for EYITT and apprenticeship must be made through the BPN Candidate Management System (CMS) or DfE (Department for Education) Apply. Applications for fee-funded teacher training or apprenticeship position in Primary and Secondary ITT must be made through DfE Apply using their proforma.

- All applicants will initially be screened by a member of the BPN ITT team to check they meet or will have the capacity to meet the entry criteria set out in the ITT requirements. Notes are made if an applicant will need a specific equivalency test so this can be discussed and explored with them at interview.
- Work history will be examined, and interviewers informed of any 'gaps' in work history, so this can be probed at interview.
- We will also undertake safer recruitment checks so further questions can be asked about any previous convictions that have been declared and any references from personal email accounts that cannot be verified
- Applicants who have lived or worked overseas may be asked to apply for a certificate of good conduct in addition to their DBS check. BPN does not have a policy to sponsor student visas.
- Any reasons for rejecting an applicant will be clearly identified at this stage.
- BPN publishes role descriptions and person specifications on its website.
- All applicants will be required to disclose any criminal convictions or professional misconduct as part of their application. All declarations will be reviewed and considered individually. Where we reject an application on the basis of a disclosure, full feedback will be provided to the applicant.

## Interviews

Interview dates are set by BPN and take place throughout the year. Candidates are selected for interview based on their application form. Where applicants apply as an employee of a school through the teacher apprenticeship route, the employer will need to confirm support for their application before an interview offer can be considered.

- All applicants are asked to provide original copy evidence of their identification, name changes (where relevant), right to work and study in the UK (if appropriate) as well as their qualifications including relevant equivalency testing, predicted grades for their degree if graduating in the summer and any ENIC statement of compatibility. Certified evidence of each qualification is required, and provisional results are not accepted (unless awaiting certificate).

- The interview process explores the applicant’s suitability to train to teach, including their potential to undertake an ITT course and meet the Teachers’ Standards by the end of their training.
- Interviews will be either online and/or face-to-face depending on the candidate’s location.
- Interviewers will scrutinise applications ahead of the interview day. Any concerns will be raised with the BPN team ahead of an interview taking place.
- Applicants will be asked to prepare a short presentation and complete written and maths tasks prior to the interview taking place. The written and maths tasks must be submitted to the BPN office **at least 48hrs** prior to the interview.
- No questions are asked about health or medical fitness prior to any offer being made.
- Following the interview and associated tasks, a final selection decision is made.
- If an applicant is successful, a conditional offer will be issued either directly to the candidate (if applied through BPN’s website) or via DfE Apply.

## Employed apprentices (Primary & Secondary ITT only)

All employed apprentices will need to have an identified school prepared to employ them on the unqualified teacher scale point 1, in accordance with the School teachers' pay and conditions guidance - [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67165b0d9242eccc6c849b4b/School\\_teachers\\_pay\\_and\\_conditions\\_document\\_and\\_guidance\\_2024\\_.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67165b0d9242eccc6c849b4b/School_teachers_pay_and_conditions_document_and_guidance_2024_.pdf)

Candidates who successfully pass the Stage 1 interview for a place on the apprenticeship route will have a further interview at the employing school (details will be shared via the BPN CAPs team).

Employed apprentices are not eligible for bursary payments as they are employed by the school and are in receipt of a salary.

## Postgraduate Teacher Apprenticeship Vacancies (Primary & Secondary ITT only)

Applicants who are successful at interview, will be offered a conditional place. One of the conditions of their place will be to secure an apprenticeship employer. We will support all applicants with sourcing a suitable apprenticeship employer. We work with a number of schools to seek employment opportunities for applicants (please note successful employment is not a guarantee of apprenticeship placement).

If employer cannot be secured by the date of enrolment, the candidate’s place on the programme will need to be deferred – applicants cannot start the course without an employer.

BPN will advertise apprenticeship vacancies on behalf of its partner schools. Successful applicants can choose to apply for the vacancies and will follow Stage 1 of the BPN recruitment and selection process before being introduced to schools.

At BPN, we are dedicated to helping candidates find suitable placements. However, it is important to understand that placements or job offers are not guaranteed. While we can introduce candidates to schools within our network, facilitate interviews, and arrange informal meetings, however the final decision regarding placement lies with the school.

Candidates must take an active role in their placement search, particularly if pursuing the Initial Teacher Training (ITT) route. Flexibility in travel for placement opportunities is essential including adhering to the school start and finish times expected of staff. BPN will provide guidance on engaging with schools and regularly advertise vacancies on our website but, ultimately, the responsibility for researching and securing a placement rest with the candidate.

It is crucial to note that, despite best efforts, BPN is sometimes unable to secure placements for every applicant. This is why it is vital for candidates to take ownership of the search process and actively look for opportunities themselves. By proactively reaching out to schools, researching potential placements, and remaining flexible, candidates significantly increase their chances of success. Appeals based on BPN being unable to find a placement will not be upheld, as securing a placement is not solely our responsibility.

Being shortlisted for a position does not ensure selection. Although we offer full guidance on approaching schools, we do not proof-read CVs or personal statements. Therefore, candidates must ensure that these documents are well-prepared before submission.

Candidates should be aware that declining placement opportunities presented by BPN could jeopardise their place on the course. Candidates are expected to remain open to the opportunities provided and actively pursue them to maintain eligibility in the programme.

BPN are happy to liaise with schools that candidates introduce to us. However, we encourage candidates to take the lead in reaching out to schools directly, as we are here to support not act on their behalf.

Failing to attend meet-and-greet sessions or interviews arranged by BPN may place the candidate's place on the programme at risk. If candidates are unable to attend these events, we ask that they inform BPN as early as possible so that alternative arrangements can be made.

To enhance the chances of securing a placement, BPN encourages candidates to explore a variety of options and consider adapting their pathway. This may involve switching from primary to secondary (or vice versa) or continuing within the ITT route. Being flexible can increase the opportunities and improve candidate's prospects.

Choosing the ITT route, where placements are unsalaried and incur no cost to schools, may simplify the process of securing a placement. This option offers greater flexibility and can expedite finding a suitable placement. However, it is important to note that this route does not guarantee placement either.

## References

References will be requested from two individuals following acceptance of a conditional offer. Referees should be appropriately selected to comment on the applicant's suitability for teacher training and asked to confirm "if they know of any reason why the candidate should not work with children?".

References from family and friends are not deemed appropriate and will not be accepted. Additional references will be requested if initial references are not appropriate.

## Additional Learning Needs (ALN), Well-being, Mental Health, and Equal Opportunities

At BPN we are dedicated to creating a community where every member feels a true sense of belonging. We are committed to providing an environment where everyone can thrive, feel valued and achieve their full potential through their contribution to education.

At BPN, diversity means celebrating full representation in all that we do. We actively promote the range of experiences that our student teachers bring to the programme for the benefit of all. The equitable approach that we take in our systems and policies signifies our efforts to challenge barriers to access. As an organisation we consistently strive to learn and do more. We are open to and welcome all feedback and have procedures in place to ensure that we evaluate and are responsive to feedback and act upon it.

Inclusion and respect for everyone is at the heart of all that we do. We embrace and enhance inclusive practice. Together, these values shape a vibrant, bias-free culture where everyone can grow and develop in order to succeed.

All candidates who progress through the interview stage will be asked if there is any further support, or reasonable adjustments required during the training year for BPN to accommodate/support any adjustments where possible.

## Health and physical capacity to teach

BPN has a responsibility to ensure that student teachers have the health and physical capacity to teach and will not put children and young people at risk of harm.

Successful applicants will be asked to complete a health questionnaire once an offer is accepted.

Only targeted and relevant health-related questions which are necessary to ensure that a person can teach will be asked.

BPN will provide support and guidance to student teachers who provide further information about identified needs. This may be following a DSA (Disabled Students Allowance) request via Student Finance England.

## Subject Knowledge Enhancement (Secondary only)

For applicants who need to improve their knowledge of the subject they wish to teach, completion of an SKE (Subject Knowledge Enhancement) will form a condition of an offer.

### Eligibility for an SKE bursary

In order to be eligible for an SKE bursary, candidates will need one of the following:

- a bachelor's degree class 2:2 or above
- a master's degree
- a PhD

Candidates can still do their SKE course whilst they are undertaking their teacher training, however they'll only be eligible for a SKE bursary up until their teacher training course starts. This is because they may then be eligible for other financial support, for example a subject bursary or tuition fee loan.

More information on SKE can be viewed here <https://getintoteaching.education.gov.uk/how-to-apply-for-teacher-training/subject-knowledge-enhancement>

## Appeals

An appeal is defined as a request for reconsideration of a decision to withdraw or reject an application.

Should a rejected applicant or a withdrawn student teacher consider that either:

- BPN has not adhered to its own policies or procedures or is in breach of any national policies or relevant legal requirements; or
- the grounds of rejection were not in line with the entry criteria set by the Department for Education:
  - Early Years Initial Teacher Training <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-itt-requirements-supporting-advice>
  - Initial Teacher Training <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/initial-teacher-training-criteria>
- an application has been maladministered
- there is evidence of bias or prejudice against the applicant/student teacher.

then the applicant/candidate is entitled to ask for a review of the decision to reject/withdraw.

A complaint may be about:

- a perception that a BPN or national policy or relevant legal requirement has not been correctly implemented or adhered to when dealing with an application procedure

An applicant/candidate wishing to lodge an appeal should write to:

**ITT Candidate Support Manager**

**Best Practice Network**

**Newminster House**

**27-29 Baldwin Street**

**Bristol**

**BS1 1LT**

**Teach@bestpracticenetwork.co.uk**

Appeals will only be considered from the applicant or student teacher concerned and not from any third party.

- An applicant/candidate wishing to lodge an appeal should do so within 21 days of the date of the letter, informing him or her of the decision on his or her application/withdrawal.
- An applicant/candidate wishing to make a complaint should do so within 21 days of the matter with which the complaint is concerned.

If an appeal or complaint is lodged, the BPN ITT Candidate Support Manager will contact the applicant to acknowledge receipt of the appeal or complaint. BPN will endeavour to deal with any appeal or complaint within 28 days. The applicant will be kept informed of the progress of their appeal or complaint if the period of investigation is likely to exceed 30 working days.

The Head ITT will investigate the circumstances of the appeal or complaint consulting relevant staff including, but not limited to, staff in the department which oversees the programme to which the applicant sought admission/was participating in. In certain circumstances, the results of the investigation may be passed to a director of the organisation for a ruling.

During the investigation, the applicant may be asked to provide further information on, or clarification of, any points made in his or her initial correspondence.

## Outcomes of appeals

### Appeals

Should the investigation establish that a decision to reject was made in breach of any BPN policy or procedure, any national policy or law, or if there is evidence of bias or prejudice against the applicant, the decision regarding the candidate's application/place on the programme will be reconsidered.

Should the reconsideration result in a decision to admit the applicant/re-engage the candidate (subject to any conditions being met) but at such a time in the cycle that the original entry point is not possible, a suitable alternative entry point will be offered.

Should the investigation determine that the original decision be upheld, the applicant/candidate will be informed accordingly with a statement as to why the appeal has been rejected.

### Further consideration

Should an applicant or student teacher be dissatisfied with the outcome of an appeal, they should write to the Early Years/ITT Director stating the reasons for dissatisfaction and the outcome they are seeking. The Director, in conjunction with the Managing Director, will investigate the appeal or complaint.

The decision of the Director and the Managing Director is final. Once this decision has been communicated to the applicant, no further correspondence will be entered into regarding this application/withdrawal from the programme.