


ITT (Initial Teacher Training) Deferral Policy

Owner and version control

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Introduction

Best Practice Network (BPN) understands that trainees may need to delay their training or withdraw from their training due to various reasons. BPN will ensure that trainees are provided with sound advice and are cognisant of any financial implications.

* If you are an apprentice, please refer to the [apprenticeship handbook](#) and discuss your next steps with your Apprenticeship Tutor.

Aims:

- to ensure that trainees understand how to defer their training and are aware of financial implications
- to ensure that trainees understand how to withdraw from their training and are aware of financial implications
- to ensure that the process of deferring or withdrawing from a BPN EY/ITT training programme is completed in a fair and equitable manner in line with our Equality Policy.

On Programme Deferrals

Deferrals are for those who have completed part of their EY/ITT course and would like to defer part of the programme until a later date.

Trainees can request a deferral when they believe that they will be unable to continue the programme due to an extenuating circumstance, as defined below (1.2).

To be granted a deferral, trainees must prove with independent evidence (3.1) that they have been affected by an extenuating circumstance. Deferrals are not guaranteed to all who apply and will be allocated on a case-by-case basis. Successful trainees will be permitted to reengage with the programme later, on a date that has been agreed by the Trainee and Partner Support team and the trainee.

1.2 Definition

Extenuating circumstances are defined as circumstances that:

- Are unforeseeable and beyond the control of the trainee
- Significantly impact the trainee's ability to complete the programme
- Occur within a relevant time frame
- Can be supported by independent evidence where appropriate. Please note that a deferral can only be considered if the following are met:
 - The deferral occurs within a calendar year unless you have had a medical incident such as major surgery or are on maternity leave
 - You are not requesting an extension to a deferral that has already been granted

Scope of extenuating circumstances

To qualify for a deferral, at least one extenuating circumstance must be met and evidenced.

2.1 What is considered an extenuating circumstance?

Whilst it is difficult to provide an exhaustive list of circumstances that meet the above definition, Best Practice Network considers the following to be valid extenuating circumstances:

- Medical incidents such as major injury, accident, or surgery
- A short-term illness that has resulted in sick leave
- A long-term illness that has worsened or "flared up"
- Pregnancy and maternity/paternity leave
- Clinical mental health issue
- Personal/psychological issues for which counselling is received
- Death/severe illness of an immediate relative
- Change in employment
- Sudden and unanticipated increase in workload, e.g. staffing issues significantly affecting the trainee's workload
- Unique trainee circumstance/ Other reason (reviewed on a case-by-case basis)

2.2 Circumstances not considered for deferral

The following circumstances would not normally qualify for a deferral as the EY/ITT team would intervene with a support plan/mental health and well-being plan:

- Poor time management/personal organisation
- Circumstances occurring outside of the relevant time frame

- Medical circumstances without sufficient evidence, e.g. a doctor's note
- Minor illness
- Planned familial obligations and holidays
- Childcare problems that could have been anticipated
- IT issues/failure to back up documents

3. How to apply for a deferral

Trainees wanting to apply for a deferral will need to have a conversation with a member of the EY/ITT Lead Tutor team. The Lead Tutor might be able to create a bespoke support plan to enable the trainee to remain on the programme. If this is not trainees will be asked to make a formal request to Best Practice Network by filling out the [deferral request form](#).

Trainees should give full details of their extenuating circumstances in the "reason for deferral" section of the form, explaining how these circumstances meet the above definition and have impacted their ability to continue the programme. All sensitive and personal data will be treated in accordance with data protection guidelines. Depending on the deferral option, costs may be incurred our ITT team will discuss this with you. BPN will notify the DfE (Department for Education) [via the Register](#) that the trainee has deferred from the programme. [For EYITT and Secondary ITT candidates this will also trigger suspension of DfE funding via the incentive, grant, or bursary payments.](#)

Re-engaging following a deferral period

The following considerations apply to an on-programme deferral:

- It may not be possible to return to the same placement school/setting
- It may be necessary to return at the same point in the programme 12 months later to fit in with training days and placement patterns
- Deferral may not be possible if changes to EY/ITT subject/phase allocations are anticipated or occur in the following year
- There will be implications for finance on fee-funded (Primary & Secondary ITT) routes – please refer to the [BPN ITT Tuition Fee Policy](#)
- There will be implications for finance on salaried routes where settings/schools are in receipt of incentive or grant payments
- There will be implications for finance where a trainee is in receipt of a DfE bursary
- There will be implications for future employment if the trainee has already secured an ECT (Early Career Teacher) post for the following year
- Trainees who are scheduled to return from a deferral will be required to attend an interview with a Lead Tutor at least one month prior to return and will be expected to keep in occasional contact during the deferral period
- An Occupational Health assessment may be needed before training can recommence

- Trainees will be required to undertake new DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) and online checks prior to restarting the programme.
- Trainees will be required to complete safeguarding training before restarting the programme.

Deferral of a place or offer

Successful applicants may request to defer their place on the EY/ITT programme until the following recruitment year. Such requests are at the absolute discretion of BPN, and places cannot be guaranteed should their chosen course not run the following year. Applicants should understand this risk before deferring their place. Deferred applicants will be expected to make a firm commitment to taking up their place and meet all conditions of offer in a timely manner during the following recruitment cycle otherwise school placements cannot be guaranteed. We reserve the right to re-interview deferred applicants. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that student finance is in place - (Primary & Secondary ITT Fee Funded).