


Initial Teacher Training Recruitment Policy

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Introduction

Best Practice Network 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 or, sexual orientation.

Best Practice Network is committed to ensuring that all recruitment and selection decisions for its EYITT, Primary, SEND 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.

Best Practice Network has adopted the following recruitment policy. No applicant or candidate shall be prejudiced or disadvantaged by using this policy.

Safeguarding (Recruitment)

Best Practice Network 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 an Enhanced 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 school placement can commence. Failure to obtain a satisfactory Enhanced DBS check may result in the withdrawal of the offer. Student teachers will also be required to pass a fitness to teach test and successfully complete an online safeguarding course.

All student teachers are recommended and expected to register for the DBS Update service to remain compliant throughout the programme. If you are not registered with the Update Service and a placement school requests a new DBS check, we will not cover the cost of a second DBS.

Student teachers who lose/cannot provide their DBS certificate, and not registered on the DBS Update service will be liable for all associated costs in relation to completed a new/subsequent Enhanced DBS check.

There is an annual fee of £16* for the DBS Update Service, and you must register within 30 days of the date your DBS certificate is issued. Further information and registration details can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/dbs-update-service>

Placement schools can suspend and/or withdraw your school placement if you are unable to provide your DBS certificate (where not on the DBBS Update service).

**cost can rise/change with inflation.*

Selection Stage

The process for admissions is co-ordinated by Best Practice Network. All applications for EYITT and apprenticeship must be made through the Best Practice Network Candidate Management System (CMS) or DfE (Department for Education) Find and Apply. Applications for fee-funded teacher training or an apprenticeship vacancy in Primary, SEND and Secondary ITT must be made through DfE Apply using their proforma.

Applicants must send their documents, as part of their application or additional request for information, promptly. We reserve the right to decline any application where we have not received the information within 3 working days.

- All applicants will initially be screened by a member of the Best Practice Network 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 are responsible for identifying any 'gaps' in work history, so this can be discussed with the candidate.
- 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.
- Any reasons for rejecting an applicant will be clearly identified at this stage.
- BPN (Best Practice Network) publishes role descriptions and person specifications for EYITT and ITT 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.
- **UK Residency:** All applicants must be a resident of the United Kingdom with the right to work and study.
 - **Apprentices** must have held UK residency for at least 3 years prior to 1st September 2026 with a valid visa/right to work in the UK until end of November 2027.
 - **ITT (fee-funded) candidates** must have right to work and study in the UK, including 3 years residency with a valid visa/right to work in the UK until end of July 2027 (July 2028 for part-

- time candidates). Student finance applications will only be accepted if candidates have the correct residency requirements.
- **EYITT applicants** must have the right to study or work in the UK and must hold the relevant visa before they start their EYITT course.

Interviews

Interview dates are set by Best Practice Network and take place throughout the year. Candidates can choose a date and time for their interview that suits them. Candidates who fail to book their interview within 2 working days we reserve the right to decline your application. Candidates who cancel their interview, repeatedly reschedule and /or fail to attend will have their application automatically withdrawn. Appeals on this basis will not be considered.

Candidates are selected for interview based on their application. 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 scheduled.

- 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.
- 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 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 answer a series of interview questions.
- 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.

Interview outcome

All applications, post interview completion, will be ratified. This means candidates application, documentation and interview will be reviewed for suitability of a place on the course.

Successful applicants will receive a conditional offer and learner agreement which must be signed within 5 working days. We reserve the right to withdraw any offer that breaches this timeline. The conditions of an offer will range from standard mandatory conditions which include Pre-programme checks (fit to teach, references (or employer declaration form) and completing of an online Safeguarding course) to conditions candidate specific conditions (such as an equivalency test or SKE).

All conditions must be met by the deadline stated in the conditional offer. BPN reserves the right to amend your conditions and a new offer will be sent to you to sign.

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. References from family and friends will not be accepted.

Referees will be asked to confirm "if they know of any reason why the candidate should not work with children?"

Additional references will be requested if initial references are not appropriate and/or do not provide adequate detail in support of the candidate's application.

References will be requested upon acceptance of any offer we may make.

Health and physical capacity to teach

Best Practice Network 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.

Best Practice Network 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.

Employed apprentices (Primary, SEND & Secondary ITT only)

All employed apprentices will need to have an identified school prepared to employ them on the unqualified teacher pay 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

Candidates who apply for an apprenticeship vacancy and 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.

Tuition Fee Student Teachers (Primary, SEND & Secondary ITT only)

Applicants who are successful at interview, will be offered a conditional place. At BPN, we are dedicated to helping candidates find suitable school placements. However, it is important to understand that placements are not guaranteed. Candidates can take an active role in their placement search, particularly if pursuing the Tuition Fee Initial Teacher Training (ITT) route. BPN are happy to liaise with schools that candidates introduce to us. Flexibility in travel for placement opportunities is essential to maximise placement opportunities. BPN will provide guidance on engaging with schools. It is crucial to note that, despite best efforts, BPN is sometimes unable to secure placements for every applicant. Where this is the case, applicants will be offered the opportunity to defer their place to the next available intake. However, it is important to note that this route does not guarantee placement either.

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

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 their offer of a place on the programme from apprenticeship to fee-funded (or vice versa). 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.

Apprenticeship Vacancies

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 apply for suitable apprenticeship vacancies. However, it is important to understand that job offers are not guaranteed. While we can introduce candidates to schools within our network, facilitate interviews, and arrange informal meetings, the final decision regarding employment lies with the school.

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.

Failing to attend interviews arranged by BPN will place the candidate's application 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.

Cohort Viability

We require a minimum number of candidates to operate a viable cohort and ensure a high-quality learner experience. By accepting any offer we make, the candidate's start date will be dependent on the viability of chosen subject/pathway and therefore the start date may be delayed to the next available cohort, if minimum numbers are not achieved.

All offers are conditional, and applications will be deferred to the next available cohort if conditions have not been met as per the date(s) in the conditional offer.

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.

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 a 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 complete their SKE course whilst they are undertaking their teacher training if this is agreed during the offer stage, however they'll only be eligible for a SKE bursary up until the point when their teacher training course starts. This is because they may then be eligible for other financial support, for example a salary, 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.

A rejected applicant or a withdrawn student teacher is entitled to ask for a review of the decision to reject/withdraw when they 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.

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:

Head of ITT & SEND Operations

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 Head of ITT & SEND Operations 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 of the relevant programme 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 Best Practice Network 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.