



Submitting a programme of Initial Teacher Education to EWC for accreditation (for new programmes commencing September 2025)

1 Introduction and statutory background

The Education Workforce Council (EWC) was established by the Education (Wales) Act 2014.

Under the Education Workforce Council (Accreditation of Initial Teacher Training) Additional Functions) (Wales) Order 2017, as amended, EWC has a statutory responsibility to:

- accredit programmes of Initial Teacher Education (ITE)
- monitor compliance of accredited programmes against Welsh Government accreditation criteria
- withdraw accreditation of programmes if it considers it appropriate to do so
- charge fees in connection with providing the service; and, when exercising these functions, to
- have regard to any forecast of demand for newly qualified teachers that is notified to it in writing by the Welsh Ministers

In doing so, EWC seeks to ensure that programmes of ITE are professionally appropriate, demanding and lead to student teachers meeting the qualified teacher status (QTS) standards in Wales.

Any partnership (the applicant) seeking to run an ITE programme that leads to qualified teacher status (QTS) in Wales must first ensure that it has been accredited by EWC, through its **Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Accreditation Board (the Board)**.

2 Purpose of this document

For new programme submissions commencing from September 2025, and includes separate arrangement for those commencing from September 2024, this document sets out:

- the procedures and timescales for a partnership to submit a programme for professional accreditation
- the process EWC will follow in deciding whether to accredit a programme or not and how/when partnerships will be informed of the decision

It applies to all ITE programmes which will run in Wales, and programme submissions must be made to EWC in line with the timetable in section 4.

This document should be used in conjunction with:

- Welsh Government 'Criteria for the accreditation of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes in Wales'; this includes the standards for qualified teacher status (QTS)
- the proforma for submitting programmes for accreditation to EWC in Wales

- the Education Workforce Council (Accreditation of Initial Teacher Training) Regulations 2017

These documents and other related information are available at:

<https://www.ewc.wales/site/index.php/en/accreditation/ite-accreditation/submitting-a-programme>

This document does not apply to the reaccreditation of existing programmes. Every programme in Wales can reaccredit for one (up to), five-year, period. More information can be found at

<https://www.ewc.wales/site/index.php/en/accreditation/ite-accreditation/submitting-a-programme>.

3 The programme accreditation process

The EWC defines accreditation as the process of ascertaining the professional acceptability of a programme of ITE leading to a teaching qualification, against the 'Criteria for the accreditation of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes in Wales' ('the Criteria'). Accreditation will be awarded to programmes, not partnerships, and therefore the accreditation process **must take place programme by programme**. Partnerships should make their own judgement on the suitability of collating different pathways into a single programme (for example, having a single PGCE combining both primary and secondary phases), dependent upon the structural differences between them. Partnerships are encouraged to make contact with EWC officers to further discuss this ahead of any internal validation processes.

When considering the time requirements for accreditation, conditions monitoring, monitoring etc., the EWC will consider the implications of phase and the level of study. For example, whilst a partnership may validate a PGCE Programme that combines both primary and secondary, from a resource perspective (and therefore the applicable fees), it will be treated in the same way as a PGCE Primary and a PGCE Secondary validated separately. The outcomes of accreditation, will still however, be on a programme by programme basis.

The Education Workforce (Accreditation of Initial Teacher Training) Regulations 2017 stipulate that the maximum length of an accredited programme is a period of up to five years. After five years (or the length of the accreditation period, if lower), that programme must be resubmitted to EWC for reaccreditation. During the five year period, the programme will be subject to monitoring by EWC and inspection by Estyn, which will offer the opportunity for the partnership to highlight any developments/enhancements made to the programme and for EWC to offer guidance/direction to the partnership. (See section 10 for further details of the monitoring process).

A separate guidance document for reaccreditation can be found at:
<https://www.ewc.wales/site/index.php/en/documents-eng/accreditation/submitting-a-programme/739-submitting-a-programme-of-ite-to-ewc-for-reaccreditation-2023>

The task of the accreditation committee is to decide whether **a proposed programme of ITE realises the Welsh Government's 'Vision for ITE', as set out in section A of the Criteria and addresses every matter referred to in section B of the Criteria document.** In doing so, the committee will seek to ensure that any programme is demanding, credible and professionally appropriate.

EWC reserves the right to revisit a programme at any time during the period of accreditation.

The accreditation process will involve a number of stages:

3.1 University approval/validation

The partnership must ensure that the programme has gained academic validation **before** it is submitted to EWC for professional accreditation. This will provide EWC with the appropriate assurance that the programme meets the necessary standards of the validating university. It is strongly advised that the partnership discuss the programme(s) with EWC officers before commencing with internal validation.

3.2 Accreditation

This is where EWC establishes whether the programme is capable of ensuring that a student teacher who completes the programme meets the QTS standards, and is suitable for registration with EWC as a school teacher. EWC aims to determine whether a programme offers relevant professional preparation for teaching. The accreditation will focus on key professional aspects of the programme and on the understanding and perceptions of the staff involved in its design and delivery.

In reviewing and accrediting programmes, EWC is committed to the following general principles:

- mutual respect and trust as the basis for positive professional relationships between EWC and partnerships
- collaboration with partnerships in the accreditation process, informed by evidence as a means of ensuring the high standards of ITE in Wales
- recognition of the diversity of contexts in which programmes are provided
- the importance of the Welsh language and ensuring that the accreditation arrangements operate bilingually
- consistency, transparency and fairness throughout the accreditation process
- confidentiality of all information provided to EWC
- clear communication of outcomes and decisions to the partnership and wider public

To reiterate, partnerships may wish to discuss informally with EWC their proposals for the accreditation of an ITE programme at any of the stages above. EWC officers (who are not part of the decision making process) will be able to provide impartial advice to partnerships about the accreditation process. Further details of the accreditation process can be found in section 7.

3.3 Accreditation outcomes

There will be three possible outcomes of an accreditation visit:

- accredit the programme without conditions
- accredit the programme subject to conditions; requirements will be clearly specified along with any timescales for implementation before the programme may commence
- not accredit the programme

The committee may also make recommendations for further improvements to the programme. These recommendations should form part of the action planning process, but do not determine the ultimate accreditation outcome in the same way as conditions.

Dependent upon the outcome of the accreditation visit, the partnership may be required to meet conditions to begin to deliver a newly accredited programme. In instances where conditions are a requirement of the accredited status of a programme, two further stages of the accreditation process commence:

3.4 Action planning

Upon communicating the accreditation outcome to the partnership, EWC will confirm the requirement for an action plan to meet the conditions outlined within the accreditation report. An action plan will be requested within 15 working days. The requirement for an explicit action plan is to ensure that programmes meet compliance with the Criteria, and is generally distinct from cyclical improvement planning of provision.

Upon receipt, the action plan will be reviewed by the accreditation committee, as well as EWC officers. Comments will be shared with the partnership. An action planning meeting will be held with the partnership, which will explore (a) any changes that may be suggested to the actions outlined within the action plan, and (b) the evidence that the committee requires to establish whether or not the partnership will meet those conditions.

Following the meeting, EWC will issue the partnership with a letter, detailing the evidence they will need to provide ahead of a conditions monitoring visit. From the point of receipt of the accreditation report, we aim to ensure that the action

planning stage (ending with receipt of the letter and recommendations from the committee), lasts no longer than 40 working days.

3.5 Conditions monitoring

As the committee makes recommendations for evidence arising from the action planning stage, EWC will also communicate to the partnership the timeframes for making progress against those conditions. This is known as ‘conditions monitoring’ and forms the final stage of the accreditation process.

A date will be scheduled for the monitoring of conditions, which will typically involve the committee Chair and two other members. The visit will ordinarily be either a half-day or full day visit per programme, plus preparation time for committee members. However, in instances where partnerships have large or small numbers of conditions, EWC reserves the right to change this.

Partnerships will be able to submit evidence up to 15 days in advance of the conditions monitoring visit.

The visit will decide whether partnerships have made sufficient progress in achieving the conditions outlined within the accreditation report. The committee may:

- accredit the programme and remove the conditional accreditation of the programme if sufficient progress has been achieved
- accredit the programme with recommendations for continued actions for the programme
- withdraw accreditation if sufficient progress has not been evidenced to meet the conditions

4 Timeframes associated with the accreditation cycle

No ITE programmes in Wales may run without approval from EWC. The following timetable will apply for all new programmes commencing from September 2025:

Action	Date
Partnership to submit programme to EWC for accreditation against accreditation criteria	By 31 March of the calendar year prior to commencement of the programme
EWC to assess programmes	Ordinarily by 31 July of the calendar year prior to commencement of the programme
EWC to inform partnership of decision	Ordinarily by 31 August of the calendar year prior to

	commencement of the programme and within 15 working days of the assessment of the programme
All action planning sessions to be completed and conditions monitoring schedules agreed	Ordinarily by 31 October of the calendar year prior to commencement of the programme
EWC to confirm funded numbers for a programme	December of the calendar year prior to commencement of the programme
All conditions monitoring visits undertaken and evaluated	No later than 3 months before the commencement of the programme
Partnership to commence delivery of new programme	From 1 September of the year of commencement

Given the implementation of new accreditation criteria in 2023, for partnerships seeking accreditation of new programmes for commencement in September 2024, the following timetable applies*:

Action	Date
Partnership to confirm intention to apply for accreditation	29 July 2023
EWC to confirm funded numbers for a programme for 2024/25 (subject to accreditation)	December 2023
Partnership to submit programme to EWC for accreditation against new accreditation criteria	5 January 2024
EWC to assess programmes	31 May 2024
EWC to inform partnership of decision	30 June 2024 and within 15 working days of the assessment of the programme
Partnership to commence delivery of new programme	From 1 September 2024

*EWC will endeavour to assess programmes and inform partnerships of the decisions as soon as is reasonably practicable

5 How to submit a programme for accreditation

Partnerships must submit programmes to EWC electronically using the 'Proforma for the submission of ITE programmes for professional accreditation' in accordance with the timeframes outlined in section 4.

This is available at <https://www.ewc.wales/site/index.php/en/accreditation/ite-accreditation/submitting-a-programme>. The EWC will not accept submissions in any other format or after this date. The proforma must be completed in size 11 Calibri font, using 1.15 line spacing. The submission must be no longer than 80 pages. Please submit by email using the contact details in section 11.

A separate proforma must be submitted for each programme the partnership is seeking accreditation for. A separate submission for subject specialism pathways within each programme is **not** required. The anticipated number of student teachers within each phase/subject should be presented in the 'Programme Summary Page' using tables similar to the ones below which are provided for illustrative purposes only:

Example one:

Programme title (length):	Post Graduate Certificate in Education (one year)	
Level and credits:	Total - 120 credits Level 6 60 credits Level 7 60 credits	
Phase and age range:	Primary 3-11	
Total number of places requested per year (please note that this is a request and is not guaranteed by accreditation:	Of which, number Welsh medium:	
100	30	
Subject specialism pathway (If applicable)	Places requested	Of which Welsh medium
N/A	N/A	N/A

Example two:

Programme title (length):	Post Graduate Certificate in Education (one year)	
Level and credits:	Total - 120 credits Level 6 60 credits Level 7	

	60 credits	
Phase and age range:	Secondary 11-18	
Total number of places requested per year:	Of which, number Welsh medium:	
140	31	
Subject specialism pathway (If applicable)	Places requested	Of which Welsh medium
Art and design	20	3
Physical education	20	3
English	25	3
Mathematics	30	3
Welsh	15	15
Computer science	15	2
Geography	15	2

Partnerships must refer to the Welsh Government 'Criteria for the accreditation of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes in Wales' when completing the proforma. The committee will use the Criteria when deciding whether or not a programme is to be accredited. The Criteria are to be interpreted in light of the 'Vision for ITE in Wales', as set out in section A of the Criteria document.

All sections of the proforma must be completed. Partnerships should seek to be concise and avoid submissions being voluminous. Any submissions which exceed **80** pages will be returned without being assessed.

The partnership should appoint a person with sufficient authority, who will act as the lead contact for the submission. This person should have designated responsibility for ITE and/or quality assurance. EWC will direct all correspondence through this person and may wish to clarify certain aspects of the submission.

Programme accreditation assessment fees

A schedule of fees payable by partnerships participating in the accreditation process is available on the EWC's website www.ewc.wales

6 EWC ITE Accreditation Board (the Board)

EWC delegates responsibility for accrediting ITE programmes to its ITE Accreditation Board, which has delegated powers to decide whether a programme should be accredited or not, and to monitor compliance with the Criteria.

The Board is made up of a Chair, two deputies and around ten others. Members of the Board are drawn from a range of backgrounds, including Initial Teacher Education, Estyn, consortia / local authorities / schools, practitioners registered

within EWC in the category of school teacher, or having other expertise the EWC considers relevant.

Any programme submission will be considered by a subset of Board members, known as the Accreditation of Initial School Teacher Training Committee ('the Committee'). To ensure consistency, each committee will always include the Chair or one deputy. The quorum, in Welsh Government regulations for an assessment is three members, which is typically the size of a committee.

All members are required to declare any conflicts of interest prior to considering a programme submission. Any conflicts identified either by a Board member or partnership will be considered by the duly authorised EWC officer (taking legal advice if required) and the member may be required to stand down from considering a particular programme if such a conflict or perceived conflict is deemed to exist by the duly authorised officer.

All meetings are serviced by the duly authorised EWC officer and supporting staff who will maintain an overview of the accreditation process.

7 How EWC considers a programme submission for accreditation

The accreditation assessment will consist of three stages:

- a paper-based review of a programme submission by the committee
- a partnership site visit by the committee, including a separate meeting to explore each programme submission; these will normally be scheduled for a day per programme and will take place at a mutually agreed venue
- the decision and written confirmation

A letter will be sent to the partnership at least 20 working days before the visit and programme assessment meeting. This will confirm the composition of the committee for each programme assessment, the format of the site visit and meetings, and give an indication of who the partnership might wish to have in attendance at the site visit and programme meeting(s). The partnership will be asked to respond in writing to confirm attendance and to indicate any perceived committee member conflicts.

Paper-based review

Committee members will be provided with copies of the programme submission at least 10 working days in advance of the site visit and assessment. The committee will review the documentation both individually and collectively, prior to the site visit and meetings.

Programme accreditation meeting(s) and site visit

Meetings will take place at a mutually agreed venue. The committee will raise questions with the partnership team about their programme and there will be an opportunity for discussion.

Meetings are expected to last for approximately one day per programme. Wherever possible, meetings will be arranged to examine themes which cross-over the programmes, including (for example), leadership and management. Some meetings may be arranged to explicitly cover aspects of each programme submitted.

The decision and written notification

The partnership will be informed of the decision by letter to the designated person identified on the programme submission. The letter will also be copied to the Welsh Government, Estyn and HEFCW. Full reasons for the committee's decision will be set out in the letter (in report form).

The potential outcomes associated with accreditation are listed in section 3.3.

A right of appeal to partnerships will be set out in the written decision.

The process of allocation of desired intake numbers for each programme is separate to the accreditation process. Confirmed funded numbers will be provided to partnerships in December each year.

All accredited programmes will be listed on EWC's website.

8 Appeals

Any partnership dissatisfied with the committee's decision shall have a right of appeal within 15 working days of the written notification of the committee's decision. Appeals will need to be made in writing, setting out the grounds for the appeal and any necessary documentary evidence. Further details of the appeals process will be set out in the decision letter.

A newly constituted committee (containing no member involved in making the initial decision) will consider the appeal. The appeals committee will meet to consider any appeal and the partnership will be informed in writing of the appeal outcome within 20 working days.

9 Major changes to a programme

Accreditation is granted on the basis a programme will be implemented, and will continue to be implemented, as indicated in the documentation submitted for accreditation. Where a partnership wishes to make significant changes to an accredited programme, it must notify EWC in writing **before** making these changes.

If a partnership is unsure as to whether its proposed change(s) constitutes a major change, it may wish to discuss informally with EWC prior to formal notification. EWC officers (who are not part of the decision making process) will be able to provide impartial advice to partnerships at any stage of the process.

What is a major change?

A major change is one which significantly impacts on:

- i) the quality of the programme
- ii) the delivery of the programme
- iii) the way the programme meets the 'Criteria for the accreditation of Initial Teacher Education programmes in Wales'

Examples of major changes may include, but is not limited to, the following types of changes:

- the constitution or management of the partnership
- the title of the programme
- the level of the programme
- validation arrangements
- the length of the programme or its mode of delivery
- structures or delivery models associated with staffing across the partnership
- assessment structures, word counts etc.
- student entry requirements

How to notify EWC of a major change

If a partnership seeks to make a significant change to an accredited programme, it must notify EWC using the proforma 'Notification of major changes to an accredited programme of ITE'. This is available at:

<https://www.ewc.wales/site/index.php/en/accreditation/ite-accreditation/submitting-a-programme>.

EWC will not accept notifications in any other format. This should be submitted by email to iteaccreditation@ewc.wales.

On receipt of a notification, EWC officers and the committee Chair who led the most recent accreditation assessment will review the proposed change(s) and consider whether or not these are materially relevant to the programme's accreditation status.

Where EWC officers and/or the Chair are content the proposed changes are not materially relevant to the programme's accreditation status, confirmation will be

sent to the partnership that the changes to the programme may be made without an interim review.

Where EWC officers and/or the Chair consider such changes to be material to the programme's accreditation status, an interim review will be arranged and the partnership will be informed in writing. Interim reviews may involve:

- the submission of documentation pertinent to the material changes to the programme for the Board's approval
- a meeting between members of the Board and partnership to further explore the changes; if the Chair of the accreditation committee also considers that a site visit is needed, officers will inform the partnership

10 Monitoring

The purpose of EWC's monitoring is to ensure that accredited ITE programmes remain compliant with the accreditation criteria throughout the period of accreditation.

The EWC monitoring process will ensure that accredited programmes of ITE in Wales remain compliant with the Welsh Government 'Criteria for the accreditation of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes in Wales' ('the Criteria'). Monitoring will be undertaken at programme level. Should any revisions be made to the accreditation criteria, partnerships are not normally expected to make changes to programmes to meet any new criteria introduced during the accreditation period. Such changes would usually be addressed at the reaccreditation stage. Programmes will be monitored against the version of the accreditation criteria against which the programme was accredited.

Ordinarily, monitoring visits will take place in year two of a programme being operational. More information on monitoring, including the EWC monitoring guidance, can be found at

<https://www.ewc.wales/site/index.php/en/accreditation/ite-accreditation/accredited-ite-programmes-in-wales>

11 Further information

Contact: ITE Accreditation, EWC
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Email: iteaccreditation@ewc.wales
Website: <https://www.ewc.wales/site/index.php/en/accreditation>

*Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.*