



part of Independent Schools Inspectorate

International qualified teacher status (iQTS): inspection report

**University of the West of England and
Sheffield Hallam University**

February 2026

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Summary of iQTS inspection and grading

The University of the West of England and Sheffield Hallam University joint iQTS provision was inspected by The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), a Department for Education (DfE) approved iQTS inspectorate, referred to in this document as 'the inspectorate'.

The inspection took place between 9 and 12 February 2026. The inspectorate assessed the provider's iQTS provision to be:

Grade 1

The provision is compliant with the iQTS criteria and other core iQTS documents.

The quality of leadership and management and the quality of programme design and delivery meets all requirements and exceeds in most areas.

Purpose of iQTS inspection

The purpose of iQTS inspection is to:

- ensure that delivery of iQTS is compliant with the:
 - [iQTS criteria](#)
 - [Initial Teacher Training and Early Career Framework \(ITTECF\)](#)
 - [iQTS Teachers' Standards](#)
- assess and evaluate the effectiveness of:
 - provider leadership and management
 - programme design and delivery
- give independent external assurance that iQTS provision meets DfE's quality expectations and legal requirements
- protect and maintain the integrity and reputation of the quality of iQTS
- identify key strengths and, where relevant, provide recommendations to the provider on what it should do to improve
- inform:
 - trainees considering undertaking iQTS
 - schools considering employing iQTS trainees or partnering with an iQTS provider as a placement school
 - parents with children attending a school staffed by iQTS trainees or iQTS holders
 - governments and organisations who have an interest in iQTS quality and standards

The inspection of a provider's iQTS provision and its subsequent grading is entirely separate from the inspection and grading of its domestic initial teacher training (ITT).

For more information, read the [International qualified teacher status \(iQTS\): inspection policy - GOV.UK](#) in full.

Information about this iQTS provider

The University of the West of England is an iQTS training provider accredited by the DfE. It works in partnership with Sheffield Hallam University, which is an initial teacher training (ITT) provider accredited by DfE to deliver qualified teacher status (QTS) programmes in England.

The provider was approved to deliver iQTS in the academic year 2023/2024. The programme is now in its third year of delivery.

In the academic year 2025/26, the University of the West of England and Sheffield Hallam University jointly offer iQTS training in the following countries:

- Algeria

- Australia
- Bahamas
- Bahrain
- Belgium
- Cameroon
- China
- Colombia
- Equatorial Guinea
- Georgia
- Germany
- Ghana
- Hungary
- India
- Iraq
- Ireland
- Italy
- Japan
- Kazakhstan
- Kenya
- Kuwait
- Korea, South
- Luxembourg
- Malaysia
- Morocco
- Myanmar
- Northern Ireland
- Pakistan
- Qatar
- Rwanda
- Saudi Arabia
- South Africa
- South Korea
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- Taiwan
- Thailand
- United Arab Emirates
- Vietnam

A total of 102 iQTS trainees are undertaking the primary and secondary iQTS programmes with this provider, of whom 59 are primary phase trainees, and 43 are training in the secondary phase.

This provider also offers an academic award with their iQTS programme. However, academic awards are beyond the remit of iQTS inspection, and the inspectorate cannot make any comment on the quality of this provider's academic award.

The University of the West of England plans to offer the iQTS programme as a sole provider from September 2026.

In-person inspection activities

The in-person inspection activities included:

- visiting one school in Sweden, partnering with the provider in the academic year 2025/26. An inspector carried out a joint lesson observation, observed mentor feedback and met with an iQTS trainee, the iQTS mentor and other members of school staff involved in iQTS delivery.

Remote inspection activities

Inspectors conducted remote inspection activities with iQTS provider staff as part of the review collection and evaluation of inspection evidence.

Inspectors met with iQTS trainees in ten placement schools which partner with the provider. Inspectors also met with six iQTS mentors and five other members of school staff, including senior leaders.

Inspectors reviewed policy documents, curriculum plans, learning materials, resources held on the virtual learning environment, application and suitability records, and trainees' online learning portfolios.

Summary of inspection findings

The provider's overall grade is based on inspectors' assessment of the following three elements:

- compliance of provision with the iQTS criteria
- quality of leadership and management
- quality of programme design and delivery

Grade 1 is the highest grade that can be awarded and grade 4 is the lowest.

A full description of iQTS inspection gradings can be seen at Annex A.

Areas of strength

- Close co-ordination between trainee, mentor and tutor allows for well-informed challenge and effective support and the accurate identification of trainees' next steps in learning
- The provider uses triangulated processes to track trainees' progress and intervene where necessary to provide support
- The highly effective quality assurance ensures impactful training that helps trainees to make good progress
- Trainees have access to high-quality resources to support them in their learning
- High-quality training for mentors and robust oversight of their work ensures they carry out their role effectively
- The provider monitors the quality of provision carefully, is responsive to feedback and adapts activities as required, including to help manage students' workload.

Areas identified for improvement

- Ensure that the provider implements the planned changes to safer recruitment processes
- Ensure trainees' own assessment of their knowledge in subject-specific areas accurately identifies areas for development that are precisely and consistently linked to national curriculum requirements
- Ensure that trainees who do not gain experience of teaching relationships and sex education (RSE) are fully prepared to teach this subject.

Compliance of provision with iQTS criteria

The provider is compliant with the iQTS criteria.

Quality of leadership and management

1. Detailed and accurate information about the course is provided on the provider's website, so that potential applicants understand the requirements and can make informed decisions. The recruitment process ensures that candidates have the potential to meet the iQTS teachers' standards by the end of the programme.
2. There are systematic recruitment processes in place at both the application and interview stages. Applicants deliver a presentation followed by an in-depth interview, which assesses their suitability.

3. Applicants' qualifications are checked to ensure they meet the minimum entry requirements specified in the iQTS criteria. This includes checks on their proficiency in English and mathematics. Trainees must meet the minimum requirements before they embark on the course.
4. The provider confirms trainees' understanding of their local safeguarding context and how to safeguard the pupils they teach during their school placements, as well as well as the requirements of the United Kingdom (UK) safeguarding guidance, including Keeping Children Safe in Education.
5. The provider has recently identified areas to enhance recruitment processes and suitable plans are in place to implement these changes. These include ensuring the provider has more precise assurance about the suitability of candidates to work with children.
6. There are effective processes to ensure that applicants are treated with equality. A suitable complaints procedure is made available for trainees.
7. Leaders have developed a well-designed iQTS curriculum which meets the needs of trainees. This develops trainees' pedagogical skills systematically and covers all elements of the initial teacher training and early career framework (ITTECF).
8. The flexible way in which the course is delivered allows trainees to access high-quality learning and online resources at times which fit around their different term dates and time zones.
9. Trainees train to teach in either the primary or secondary phase. Learning activities are tailored to both the needs of trainees who are new to teaching as well as those who join the programme with prior teaching experience.
10. Leaders adapt the curriculum, where necessary, to reflect the local context of the countries where the trainees are teaching.
11. The second placement and/or additional activities complement the core training and main placement. For example, by providing trainees with experience of teaching different age ranges or enhancing their skills and knowledge in specific areas.
12. Where trainees do not have the opportunity to teach relationships and sex education (RSE) in their placement schools, they have access to guidance about the RSE requirements for schools in the UK. However, trainees do not always have opportunities to demonstrate their learning.
13. Mentors work highly effectively with university-based tutors. Well-planned triangulation of the quality of trainees' planning and teaching ensures that trainees' progress is systematically monitored throughout the programme.
14. Mentors complete comprehensive induction training and receive detailed guidance on how to support trainees. Mentors have access to a range of high-quality resources to support their work with trainees.

15. Both trainees and their mentors understand how trainees' progress is assessed. Precise and clear targets ensure that trainees understand what they need to improve.
16. Clear and well-planned assessment arrangements are in place to ensure mentors, university tutors and leaders have an accurate understanding of the progress that trainees are making towards meeting the iQTS Teachers' Standards.
17. Leaders promptly put in place additional support arrangements when trainees are not making expected progress. Trainees cannot progress to the next stage of the course until all of the relevant requirements are met.
18. Trainees initially complete a self-assessment audit to identify gaps in their specialist subject knowledge, and an action plan is created to address these. However, this assessment is not always precisely matched to the relevant national curriculum requirements.
19. Effective record-keeping is in place. Mentors and university tutors use an online monitoring system to ensure that there are detailed records of feedback in progress meetings, and agreed actions. Trainees, mentors and university tutors can readily access the information in order to review progress against ongoing targets.
20. Suitable partnership agreements outline the respective roles and responsibilities of both the school and the provider. The agreement includes how the programme will be delivered, as well as requirements for safeguarding checks. There are clear protocols for information sharing and secure data storage which reflect the local regulations relevant to each partner school.
21. Governance and oversight arrangements are effective. Both university providers have established a secure working relationship, which includes robust quality assurance processes. Leaders and managers ensure all aspects of provision are carefully monitored.
22. Leaders have well-established feedback systems which allow them to respond to the views of key stakeholders in a timely way. Leaders take feedback seriously and respond quickly when changes or improvements are identified. As a result of feedback from trainees, leaders made prompt changes to lesson observation templates and developed a more streamlined reflection process.
23. The provider has procedures in place to ensure the award of iQTS is based upon the clear demonstration of meeting the IQTS Teachers Standards and the other requirements of the course.

Quality of programme delivery and design

24. A well-planned training programme meets the needs of trainees and takes careful account of the local context of the schools in which they are teaching. It supports

- trainees in developing the knowledge and skills they need to assimilate the ITTECF and meet the iQTS Teachers' Standards by then end of the course.
25. The rich curriculum supports trainees in developing their teaching skills, including effective lesson planning and questioning. Trainees are able to link their theoretical learning to their own teaching practice and are encouraged to reflect upon areas for development.
 26. The required intensive training and practice (ITAP) topics, including elements of pedagogy, creating a climate for learning and inclusive practice, are carefully planned to complement trainees' learning in other aspects of the course, such as behaviour management.
 27. Trainees have a range of opportunities to observe experienced colleagues as part of the ITAP provision and to discuss and compare their learning with other trainees. As a result, trainees are well supported to become reflective practitioners, enabling them to adapt their teaching strategies to best meet the needs of pupils.
 28. Leaders provide extensive, high-quality learning resources, including videos and interactive online content. Trainees can access them conveniently as required and this allows for flexibility across different time zones. Trainees also benefit from the expert guidance and support of experienced university tutors.
 29. The programme prepares trainees well for teaching in either the primary or secondary phases. University training sessions and school-based practice are planned with care to help trainees develop their specialist subject knowledge and age-range specific strategies.
 30. Trainees in the secondary phase receive training to support them in the teaching of their specialist subjects. They implement an action plan to ensure they address any gaps in their subject knowledge.
 31. Primary phase trainees develop the knowledge and skills they need to teach this age range, including adaptations for those trainees with previous prior classroom experience. Trainees learn about the teaching of systematic synthetic phonics, early mathematics and science, as well as foundation subjects.
 32. Leaders ensure the curriculum is adapted to reflect the needs and requirements of the different countries and regions where trainees are based. They ensure that trainees are prepared for teaching in a range of schools and localities. For example, trainees learn a range of approaches to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Opportunities for trainees to apply their understanding of the RSE guidance are not as well-planned.
 33. Leaders maintain careful records to ensure that trainees complete the required number of days in school as part of their teaching practice before they can be awarded iQTS. Trainees also have opportunities to experience teaching in other age ranges or different schools, mostly through second school placements or online lesson observations which complement their main teaching placement.

34. Trainees have opportunities to teach in different contexts and broaden their skills and experience. Suitable arrangements are in place for occasions when trainees encounter difficulties with securing a second placement.
35. School-based mentors play a highly effective role in the delivery of the course. They receive a detailed initial induction programme as well as well-planned ongoing professional development. University lead mentors provide school-based mentors with highly effective support and guidance, in particular through triangulation of the quality of trainees' teaching, which allows lead mentors to monitor their work with trainees.
36. Week by week guidance keeps both trainees and mentors informed about the focus of university training as the course progresses, so that mentors can complement this learning. Mentors provide trainees with prompt, helpful guidance when queries arise. As a result, trainees are well supported.
37. Highly effective formative assessment and feedback mechanisms help trainees and mentors to understand trainees' strengths and areas for development. Trainees have clear, personalised targets, created in conjunction with their mentors.
38. Careful monitoring by the provider means that trainees in need of additional support are identified quickly. Strategies to help their development are implemented and the trainees' subsequent progress is carefully evaluated.
39. Quality assurance processes at all levels are robust. Trainees have a secure understanding of the standards they need to demonstrate by the end of the programme. University tutors work collaboratively with school-based mentors and are able to monitor their work with trainees.
40. Leaders have an accurate oversight of trainees' progress and make effective use of data and feedback from tutors to adapt the programme to the pace of trainees' learning and ensure they have access to the resources they require.
41. The provider ensures there is informed support and challenge. They are aided in this by the insights provided by the external examiner. Very few trainees withdraw from the programme, and the rare instances of withdrawal are unrelated to the progress being made on the course.
42. Leaders make sure that trainees can benefit from access to the university's support services. Effective support is available for trainees' welfare, including any individual needs. Trainees' workload is monitored with great care to support them in balancing the training with other commitments. Leaders adapt activities when required to help manage trainees' workload, including arranging deferrals if required.
43. Secure processes are in place to demonstrate that trainees meet the iQTS Teachers' Standards at the end of their training. Regular progress meetings, and a final joint review by the two university providers ensure that trainees have developed the required skills and competencies. Successful completion of the

course and the recommendation of the award of iQTS is accurately reported to the DfE.

Next steps

The provider will work on the areas identified for improvement in this report. DfE will assess their progress within three months.

The provider will be inspected again in three to four years' time.

Contact us

If you have questions about this report or any other aspect of the iQTS programme, please contact us at iqts.policy@education.gov.uk.

Glossary of terms

Term	Definition/Explanation
Initial Teacher Training and Early Career Framework (ITTECF)	The ITTECF framework sets out what trainee and early career teachers need to know, and know how to do, at the start of their careers. It captures the minimum entitlement to training for both in a single framework that will come into effect from autumn 2025. iQTS providers should continue to use the ITTECF as they did the ITT Core Content Framework (CCF, 2019) ensuring that all framework statements are covered.
DfE	Department for Education.
Inspection	The process carried out by DfE-approved inspectorates to ensure that delivery of iQTS is compliant with the iQTS criteria, the Initial Teacher Training and Early Career Framework (ITTECF) and iQTS Teachers' Standards.
Inspectorates	Independent companies who quality assure products and services in overseas and domestic education.
iQTS	International qualified teacher status.
International qualified teacher status Teachers' Standards	Standards which trainees must meet by the end of the programme to be awarded iQTS.
International qualified teacher status: criteria for providers	Statutory guidance on the criteria that providers and their partners must meet to provide iQTS.
International qualified teacher status (iQTS): inspection policy - GOV.UK	Sets out DfE's inspection policy and gives information about how inspections are carried out.
ITT	Initial teacher training.
ITT provider	Initial teacher training provider accredited by DfE to deliver training leading to QTS.
QTS	Qualified teacher status.
Working days	Monday to Friday, excluding national holidays, which will differ overseas.

Annex A: Inspection gradings

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4
<p>The provision is compliant with the iQTS criteria and other core iQTS documents.</p> <p>The quality of leadership and management and the quality of programme design and delivery meets all requirements and exceeds in most areas.</p>	<p>The provision is compliant with the iQTS criteria and other core iQTS documents.</p> <p>The quality of leadership and management and the quality of the programme design and delivery meets all requirements and may exceed in some areas</p>	<p>The provision does not fully comply with the iQTS criteria and other core iQTS documents.</p> <p>The non-compliance is minor, easily rectifiable and does not have significant negative impact on the learning of trainees or their development into qualified teachers. It also does not significantly affect the quality of leadership, management or the quality of programme design and delivery.</p>	<p>The provision is not compliant with the iQTS criteria and all other core iQTS documents.</p> <p>Non-compliance has a significant negative impact on the quality of leadership and management and the quality of programme design and delivery. Recommendations are significant; therefore, reinspection will be required.</p>