



part of Independent Schools Inspectorate

International qualified teacher status (iQTS): pilot inspection report

University of Birmingham Dubai

Inspection dates: 19 - 22 February 2024

Contents

Summary of iQTS inspection and grading	3
Purpose of iQTS inspection	3
Information about this iQTS provider	4
In-person inspection activities	4
Remote inspection activities	5
Summary of inspection findings	5
Areas of strength	5
Compliance of provision with iQTS criteria	5
Quality of leadership and management	5
Quality of programme delivery and design	7
Next steps	9
Contact us	9
Glossary of terms	10
Annex A: Inspection gradings	11

Summary of iQTS inspection and grading

Birmingham University Dubai 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 19 February and 22 February 2024.

The inspectorate assessed the provider's iQTS provision to be:

Grade 1

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

The quality of leadership and management and the quality of programme design and delivery exceed requirements and are exceptional.

Purpose of iQTS inspection

The purpose of iQTS inspection is to:

- ensure that delivery of iQTS is compliant with the:
 - [iQTS criteria](#)
 - [iQTS Core Content Framework](#)
 - [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 \(iQTS\): pilot inspection framework](#) in full.

Information about this iQTS provider

The University of Birmingham Dubai is an initial teacher training (ITT) provider accredited by DfE to deliver qualified teacher status (QTS) programmes in England.

DfE approval for iQTS delivery is an extension of The University of Birmingham Dubai's domestic ITT accreditation. The provider was approved to deliver the iQTS pilot in the academic year 2022/23 and is now in its second year of iQTS delivery. This provider's iQTS delivery model is unique in that it delivers its training programme face to face in Dubai; all other providers delivery models are remote.

In the academic year 2023/24, The University of Birmingham Dubai offers iQTS training in the following countries:

- United Arab Emirates

A total of 22 iQTS trainees are undertaking the primary iQTS programme with the provider.

The 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.

In-person inspection activities

The inspectorate's in-person inspection included:

- meeting iQTS provider staff as part of the review and collection of inspection evidence
- visiting one overseas placement school partnering with the provider in the academic year 2023/24
- meeting iQTS trainees, iQTS mentors and other members of school staff involved in iQTS delivery.

Remote inspection activities

The inspectorate also conducted remote inspection activities with another two placement schools partnering with the provider. These activities also involved meeting iQTS trainees, iQTS mentors and other members of school staff.

Summary of inspection findings

The provider's overall grade is based on the inspectorate's 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

- The development of highly productive partnerships with schools who are committed to supporting the programme and who play a vital role in successful delivery of the training programme.
- The consistently high quality of mentoring because of the provider's training, support and clear guidance to mentors. This means that trainees receive regular developmental mentor feedback to improve their teaching and have opportunities to observe and teach across the primary curriculum.
- The coherent assessment processes that enable trainees to build on their strengths and address any relative weaknesses throughout the programme because different aspects of the feedback cycle are linked.
- The pastoral support provided by tutors and other university professionals that is readily accessible and supports a range of trainees' needs including helping trainees to manage their workload.

Compliance of provision with iQTS criteria

The provider is compliant with the iQTS criteria.

Quality of leadership and management

1. Candidates for the course are well-informed. Information on the university's website clearly outlines the minimum requirements for potential trainees. It

details how the course is taught and what trainees can expect from the year of study including the arrangements for central training and for school placements.

2. Recruitment procedures are robust. Course leaders at the university ensure that the course recruitment procedures are thorough and well understood. Important safeguarding checks are made before trainee candidates can progress onto the course.
3. Expectations for acceptance on to the course are transparent. The university makes clear the requirement for successful candidates to attain highly in the International English Testing System (IELTS). Course leaders also check the English language competence of applicants, including during interviews and in written tasks. Candidates must achieve GCSE grade 4 equivalence in mathematics and science.
4. There are secure processes to ensure that trainee candidates' qualifications are appropriate and match the criteria outlined on the university's website. The university uses external agencies to check the equivalence of qualifications.
5. Trainees benefit from a well-designed curriculum. Centre-based training is planned carefully to ensure that the iQTS Core Content Framework (CCF) is covered. The programme is also sufficiently flexible to allow for adaptations, where necessary, to address common areas of need. School-based training is tailored to the needs of individual trainees and dovetails with centre-based training to provide a coherent training experience.
6. The formative and summative assessments of trainees are thorough and developmental. Course tutors and school-based mentors contribute to the assessments which include elements of trainees' self-assessment. Information from assessments feed into centre-based training, which is adapted to meet the emerging needs of trainees.
7. Course leaders consider the local context of school placements, all of which are in the UAE. They teach the local arrangements for safeguarding as well as the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education in the United Kingdom (UK). School-based mentors consolidate trainees' understanding when outlining the school's safeguarding policies and processes. Tutors prepare trainees to teach nationally required material known as moral education in the UAE, during central training.
8. Course leaders diligently check and track trainees' skills in English, mathematics and science. They have systems in place to ensure that trainees have demonstrated the required English and mathematics fundamental skills required for the award of iQTS.
9. Course leaders have successfully drawn on existing partnerships with a range of schools to identify and train skilled school-based mentors. Leaders

- maintain productive relationships with lead mentors who oversee the progress of trainees and support class mentors in their day-to-day work with trainees.
10. The various levels of quality assurance work well. Trainees, lead mentors, course leaders and tutors, partners at the University of Birmingham in the UK and the external examiner all play their part in monitoring the quality of the training and mentoring, the accuracy of assessments and the quality of support for trainees. Partners at the University of Birmingham are particularly effective in overseeing the work of course leaders in Dubai, asking probing and challenging questions to support strategic development as well as effective operational delivery.
 11. Course leaders intervene quickly when their high expectations are not met. For instance, when the requirements of the comprehensive partnership agreements with placement schools are not adhered to fully.
 12. Course leaders check the notes from mentors' weekly meetings with trainees. As a result of leaders' clear expectations and regular feedback to mentors, the quality of developmental feedback that mentors provide to trainees is consistently high.
 13. Leaders are readily available to trainees. They provide valuable support and advice, including regarding the pastoral needs of trainees. They consider the needs of trainees when they plan school placements. For example, they consider the travel time to placement schools and the impact this may have on trainees' work/life balance.
 14. Leaders support trainees to maintain a reasonable workload. For example, they check that trainees have the required minimum two hours of non-contact time outlined in the partnership agreement, which is ringfenced for university work. They support trainees to think about how to make the marking of pupils' work manageable, including by introducing them to methods such as 'live marking'.
 15. University staff provide trainees with careers advice which includes guidance about job applications and interviews. Trainees value highly the availability of university leaders and staff and the care they provide.
 16. Course leaders are open and responsive to the findings of the quality assurance processes. The university's self-assessment and development planning takes into consideration the views of trainees. For example, leaders reviewed the requirements for detailed lesson planning, because of feedback from trainees.

Quality of programme delivery and design

17. The University of Birmingham Dubai is the central hub for the university's training programme. Trainees attend central training in person. This gives them the opportunity to form supportive relationships with their peers and

course tutors during the bi-weekly training sessions and the block training weeks throughout the course.

18. The curriculum encompasses the required CCF. School-based training complements the central training because mentors are kept informed of the content of the training provided centrally.
19. The curriculum has appropriate focus on training to teach English, mathematics, science, professional enquiry and the foundation subjects. It considers local requirements including for safeguarding and for the national requirements for teaching related to moral education. The programme draws on a range of subject experts in Dubai, including from partner schools, and from the UK remotely.
20. Leaders have considered the sequencing of the curriculum appropriately. For example, in the initial training block, trainees learn about behaviour management and lesson planning.
21. The curriculum is well designed to provide a sound basis for trainees' understanding of a range of approaches to teaching, based on research which trainees then apply to their teaching. Trainees consider relevant research in the professional enquiry elements of the training. For example, trainees learn about the concept of metacognition which they apply by articulating their thought processes when modelling to pupils how to solve mathematical problems.
22. Trainees' knowledge and understanding of key concepts in mathematics, English and science are tested regularly to ensure that by the end of the course, trainees have the necessary subject knowledge. This is achieved through the use of subject audits. Trainees find the audits challenging and the outcomes informative, giving them clear areas for improvement. The provider arranges additional taught sessions when the audits reveal common gaps in learning across the cohort.
23. Central training prepares trainees to adapt their teaching to meet the needs of pupils in their classes. The training includes information about how to draw on expertise in placement schools to meet the needs of pupils who have special educational needs.
24. Trainees understand how young children learn to read. They are taught the principles of why systematic synthetic phonics teaching is integral to supporting children's developing reading and writing skills. They also learn about a range of established phonics programmes. Trainees consolidate this learning during their school placements.
25. All trainees have second school placements planned to complement their experience in first placement schools. Typically, trainees have both key stage one and key stage two experience. However, when key stage one specific placements cannot be provided, trainees are required to gain this experience through observing and teaching phonics for at least two weeks.

26. As a result of the very positive partnerships that course leaders have developed with partner schools, lead and class mentors are highly committed to the training programme. They attend and value mentor training and are consistently clear about the requirements of the partnership agreement and the expectations of mentors.
27. The university provides comprehensive guidance about how to support and evaluate the progress of trainees, which mentors follow. The quality of feedback that mentors provide to trainees is consistently helpful and focused on strengths and areas for improvement, which are translated into regularly reviewed targets.
28. Robust assessments support trainees to develop their teaching and build their confidence. Assessments are insightful and provide a clear overview of trainees' progress across the CCF. The results of assessments and the developmental feedback trainees receive are brought together in targets for trainees which make sense to them. They use these targets to inform their development as confident teachers.
29. Trainees are required to reflect on the impact of their training and on their progress. They consider the effectiveness of their lesson planning and delivery which supports their development as reflective teachers.
30. Leaders monitor the progress of trainees carefully and know their strengths and relative weaknesses. They implement supportive action plans for trainees where necessary and involve school-based mentors to address gaps in knowledge or areas of relative weakness. Action plans have clear targets and achievable timescales that are clearly understood by trainees and their mentors.

Next steps

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 core content framework for iQTS	The iQTS framework defines the minimum training entitlement of all trainee teachers. It sets out the content that iQTS providers and their partnerships must draw upon when designing and delivering their iQTS programme.
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 iQTS Core Content Framework 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: pilot inspection framework	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 all other core iQTS documents.</p> <p>The quality of leadership and management and the quality of programme design and delivery exceed requirements and are exceptional.</p>	<p>The provision is compliant with the iQTS criteria and all other core iQTS documents.</p> <p>The quality of leadership and management and the quality of the programme design and delivery exceed requirements in most areas and are at least satisfactory in the remainder.</p>	<p>The provision is compliant with the iQTS criteria and all other core iQTS documents.</p> <p>The quality of leadership and management and the quality of the programme design and delivery meets requirements in most areas, with minor issues identified for improvement.</p>	<p>The provision is not compliant with the iQTS criteria and all other core iQTS documents.</p> <p>The quality of leadership and management and the quality of the programme design and delivery are unsatisfactory. They do not meet requirements and there are significant recommendations for improvement.</p>