



part of Independent Schools Inspectorate

International qualified teacher status (iQTS): pilot inspection report

University of Derby

Inspection dates: 18 - 21 March 2024

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Summary of iQTS inspection and grading

The University of Derby 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 18 and 21 March 2024.

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

Grade 3

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

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.

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 Derby 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 Derby'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.

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

- China
- Thailand
- Spain
- Qatar
- United Kingdom (Isle of Man)

A total of nine iQTS trainees are undertaking the primary iQTS programme with the provider at the time of the inspection.

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.

Area of strength

- The evidence-based central training programme is of high-quality and valued by both those trainees who have no teaching experience and the majority, who have considerable teaching experience.

Areas identified for improvement

- The mentor training programme is not sufficiently developed to ensure that all mentors have the skills to confidently support and develop trainees in accordance with the curriculum.
- Quality assurance processes do not allow leaders and managers to identify and tackle inconsistencies in the quality of support trainees receive in their school placements quickly enough.
- Procedures to monitor trainees' workload and wellbeing are not sufficiently defined.
- Mechanisms for obtaining feedback from all partnership members are not sufficiently well established.
- Protocols for information sharing and secure data storage, in line with local regulations, are not explicitly included in the partnership agreement.

Compliance of provision with iQTS criteria

The provider is compliant with the iQTS criteria.

Quality of leadership and management

1. Course information is clear and accurate. The university provides candidates with the information they need to make informed choices about their studies. Course information clearly sets out the entry requirements and details the age ranges covered for the primary phase.
2. Arrangements for recruiting trainees are systematic and clear. Admissions tutors ensure that all iQTS applicants hold the minimum qualifications and language competencies they need to enrol on the course. Admissions tutors have appropriate processes in place to check the authenticity and validity of admissions evidence, including international qualification equivalences.
3. Trainee selection processes are appropriate. The programme team make effective judgements about applicants' suitability for the programme following a detailed review of their knowledge, skills, academic background and prior experiences. Applicants participate in discussions about relevant educational topics and learning activities linked to the national curriculum in England. This helps tutors to evaluate applicants' confidence and communication skills.
4. Procedures to ensure that trainees are suitable to work with children are effective. Leaders and managers ensure all the necessary safeguarding checks are completed. They ensure that trainees understand their roles and responsibilities in how to safeguard the wellbeing of the children they teach at the school placements they arrange for themselves, as well as the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education in the United Kingdom (UK).
5. Course leaders have developed a well-considered, centrally delivered iQTS curriculum that meets the needs of trainees working within the primary phase, including both those new to teaching and those who join the programme with considerable prior experience.
6. There are clear systems and checkpoints in place for assessing trainees' knowledge, skills, and behaviours. However, course leaders do not adequately identify and tackle inconsistencies in the frequency and quality of trainees' school-based training assessments. As a result, the quality of feedback trainees receive to support their development is not always high.
7. Course leaders have planned the programme to consider local term time arrangements. However, the start date of placements is sometimes delayed, and trainees and mentors are not always clear about why this is. This leads to a lack of clarity around deadlines throughout the programme which makes advance planning for mentors more challenging.

8. The university has effective systems and processes for assessing and supporting the development of trainees' English and mathematics skills. Detailed assessments ensure that trainees have the required English and mathematics skills before the award of iQTS.
9. Mentor training is underdeveloped. Trainees source their own school placements and their mentors. Course leaders have implemented appropriate arrangements to check mentors' suitability and identify their professional development needs before the placement begins. Mentors receive detailed initial guidance about their role and responsibilities, the iQTS programme, and the university's expectations for professional mentors. Mentors can also access individual support and guidance from the programme team. However, course leaders have not implemented a sufficient ongoing training curriculum to ensure that mentors' development needs are fully addressed and that they have the necessary skills to support trainees confidently in line with the curriculum.
10. Quality assurance processes are not sufficiently developed to identify and tackle inconsistencies in the quality of support trainees receive in their school placements. Leaders have implemented a limited range of processes to monitor, evaluate and moderate the quality of mentoring. For example, link tutors conduct termly joint observations of trainees' practice and support mentors to moderate and adjust their judgements and feedback where necessary. However, quality assurance mechanisms do not swiftly identify where the work of mentors is not meeting the university's expectations. As a result, leaders do not act quickly enough to address the issues.
11. Procedures to monitor trainees' workload and wellbeing are not sufficiently clear and defined. Leaders and managers are mindful of the trainees' workload and have responded to trainee feedback to revise the timing, frequency and format of weekly learning activities to make these more manageable. Comprehensive online training resources allow trainees to complete learning at their own time and pace. However, the processes for all partners to proactively manage trainees' workload and wellbeing are not fully in place. For example, wellbeing days have been built into the programme to provide trainees with specific time to pause and reflect. However, not all trainees have the opportunity to use these days to help manage their workload.
12. Relationships with school partners are developing and evolving. The university has started to develop effective partnerships with individual schools, placement coordinators and mentors. However, these partnerships are at an early stage of development. Partnership agreements outline most of the roles and responsibilities of the iQTS provider and placement schools, as well as the content and delivery of the programme, procedures for safeguarding checks and the importance of equality of opportunity. Separate data sharing

and processing agreements outline the university's data protection and information security arrangements. However, partnership agreements do not clearly specify the protocols for information sharing and secure data storage in line with the local regulations relevant to each partner school.

13. Mechanisms for obtaining feedback from all partnership members are not fully established. Leaders have systematic processes for collecting, reviewing, and evaluating trainees' feedback on how their training needs have been met. Systems to gather feedback from placement schools and mentors are underdeveloped.
14. Appropriate internal and external moderation processes confirm the accuracy of assessment decisions. Leaders obtain detailed and constructive feedback from suitably experienced and qualified external examiners to help inform their self-evaluation of the programme. Leaders have identified various priorities in their quality improvement plans. However, not all of the required actions have been fully implemented to improve the quality of provision and the consistency of the trainee experience.

Quality of programme delivery and design

15. The central training programme is of high quality and supports trainees in developing the knowledge and skills they need to meet the iQTS Teachers' Standards. The programme is appropriately designed and sequenced to deliver an intensive period of input on subject pedagogy at the beginning of the course before focusing on relevant research-informed practice. The training programme effectively covers the international core content framework minimum entitlement.
16. The central training programme supports all trainees well in developing the foundational knowledge and skills they need to teach in the primary phase, including those with significant classroom prior experience. Trainees value the challenging content of weekly online training sessions, which support their development of understanding of pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment.
17. The taught sessions are well-planned and draw upon relevant education research. Trainees are well supported in developing their ability to critically reflect on their teaching and the philosophy of their placement schools and curriculums. For example, trainees explore pertinent research to help their understanding of behaviour management, subject-specific approaches to teaching, and adaptive teaching practices to meet the needs of pupils who have special educational needs.
18. Course leaders ensure the curriculum is locally adapted where necessary, reflecting the needs and requirements of the different countries and regions where trainees are based. For example, trainees are well supported to understand different approaches to managing behaviour in different cultural settings compared to the UK. Course leaders ensure that training sessions

are scheduled to work across different time zones, enabling all trainees to engage at a time that works for them. Trainees value the opportunity to meet online with other trainees in various countries to compare and discuss their experiences and different local contexts.

19. Subject-specific training resources and detailed online course materials support trainees well in developing their understanding of how to teach and support their pupils. For example, specific training resources help most trainees demonstrate a confident understanding of systematic synthetic phonics and different phonics programmes.
20. The programme provides trainees with the necessary resources and support to develop their fundamental English and mathematics skills. Online resources help trainees to close specific skills gaps where they exist.
21. Trainees are set their own individual programme schedules, which reflect their individual placements and local requirements, such as national holidays. Programme managers ensure that placement dates are updated on trainees' schedules where placements start later than planned.
22. Trainees benefit from personalised constructive assessment feedback on their academic assignments. Feedback accurately identifies strengths and where trainees need to develop. Trainees find this feedback helpful in developing their knowledge and skills throughout their course.
23. All trainees have appropriate planned opportunities to teach across the primary phase, either through second placements in another school or an alternative phase within the same school.
24. Guidance documentation for mentors clearly lays out the expectations for mentoring and the arrangements for the formative and summative assessment of trainees. Detailed mentor handbooks provide useful links to training and development resources and guidance on coaching, questioning, and giving feedback. Mentors can access development support from the programme team if required. However, there is no planned central training curriculum for mentor skills development.
25. In the main, trainees benefit from the support of committed and diligent mentors who provide valuable support and guidance. Mentors guide trainees to other experts within their school to help develop their knowledge and skills across the curriculum.
26. Most mentors meet with trainees weekly and carry out formative observations to inform their discussions with trainees about their progress and areas for development. However, a lack of consistency in the recording of meetings and observations limits the ability of course tutors to assure themselves of the regularity and quality of the mentor support and feedback. Mentors do not always set clear and precise targets to help trainees understand how to further develop their practice.

27. Trainees benefit from access to the university's support services and materials. For example, trainees can use the comprehensive 'Develop at Derby' resources to support their academic skills development.
28. Course leaders have implemented adequate procedures to ensure trainees can demonstrate that they meet the iQTS Teachers' Standards by the end of their programme.

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>