

*Charter For Initial Teacher Training.*

*a framework of recommended standards for ITT*

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## CHARTER FOR INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING



national union of students

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## MESSAGE FROM THE NUT GENERAL SECRETARY, DOUG McAVOY

Dear Colleague

I am pleased to commend to you this charter for initial teacher training, which has been prepared by the National Union of Students (NUS) in collaboration with the National Union of Teachers (NUT).

Recognising the importance of campaigning on behalf of trainee teachers, the NUT and NUS have developed a partnership. Each year, a scholarship holder from the NUS, supported by NUT funding, works and campaigns on issues of importance to trainee teachers.

This charter is a result of that partnership.

I commend this charter for initial teacher training (ITT) to:

- trainee teachers – on whatever type of training programme, as a guide to your rights while you are training;
- schools – to assist you in providing the best possible experiences for the students with whom you deal and, if you are an ITT provider, to advise you;
- local education authorities – to ensure best practice in teacher training across your schools;
- providers of initial teacher training – so that you can better prepare your students for the challenges of their professional life.

The NUT is resisting the removal of the right of student teachers to be guaranteed a qualified teacher as their mentor resulting from government changes to regulations governing the employment of teachers.

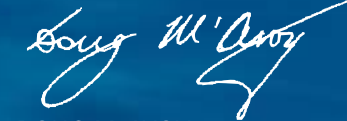
The regulations mean that, for the first time, student teachers can be required to take full responsibility for classes.

The NUT will be advising its members in schools to oppose any such misuse of student teachers. The NUT is seeking a similar approach from ITT providers.

Let us all work together in ensuring a confident, effective and motivated group of teacher trainees who will enrich the teaching profession and, in turn, the lives of many children.

Best wishes,

Yours sincerely



DOUG McAVOY  
General Secretary



## MESSAGE FROM THE NUS PRESIDENT, MANDY TELFORD

Welcome to the NUS/NUT charter for initial teacher training. This new and unique charter is intended to protect and promote the rights of students on initial teacher training courses, providing a framework of recommended standards for good educational practice.

Student teachers face unique challenges as they attempt to integrate their academic life within higher education with their professional responsibilities on placement. This charter recognises and promotes the needs of those students in an ever changing education system. We hope it will prove to be an invaluable tool for ITT students and their students' unions in campaigning for the highest quality educational experience and a resource for institutions in defining their own responsibilities towards student teachers.

It is an unfortunate reality that many student teachers do not always enjoy the rights they deserve during their course and particularly whilst on teaching placements. Although this charter goes some way towards combating the obstacles student teachers face, it will not replace the security, representation and support their teacher trade union, NUS and their own students' union will provide.

We hope you can use this charter as a set of clear guidelines to address the needs and demands of tomorrow's teachers.

Best wishes,



MANDY TELFORD  
NUS President



# CHARTER FOR INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING

This charter for students on initial teacher training (ITT) courses recognises that their needs are very different from those of other students in higher education.

The contribution that teachers make to society is invaluable. Investment in the training of future teachers is investment in the future of our education system, and therefore in society as a whole.

This charter, produced in partnership by the National Union of Students (NUS) and the National Union of Teachers (NUT), seeks to codify the rights that all ITT students should enjoy.

## We believe that:

- ITT students are of great value to society; this must be recognised and talented individuals must receive the support they need to enter the teaching profession;
- all ITT students should have access to a fair and equal level of financial support, whether on postgraduate or undergraduate training courses;
- students who successfully complete ITT courses should not be subjected to additional basic skills testing;
- in order to ensure that talented individuals are able to pursue the goal of entering the teaching profession, it is necessary to keep existing routes into teaching open by safeguarding the future of all types of courses leading to qualified teacher status (QTS).

## 1 > PRE-ENTRY

### Selection

In order to promote fairness in selection, and to widen access to teacher training:

- all relevant qualifications and experiences should be considered in the selection procedure, including prior work with children in an educational environment;
- a wider range of first degree subjects should be recognised as meeting entry requirements for postgraduate ITT courses than is currently the case

Providing students with the information they will need prior to the commencement of their course is vital to ensuring that they arrive at their institutions with the resources and knowledge that they need to adapt smoothly to life in higher education. Institutions should provide this information to incoming students a minimum of twenty-eight days prior to the beginning of the course.

### Information packs

Information packs should include:

- details of the structure and content of the course;
- information about any material resources students will need to begin the course with comprehensive information about relevant student financial support arrangements, including all available grants, bursaries, student loans and training salaries;
- information about any course costs likely to be incurred, including any tuition fees payable, field trip costs and the costs of all necessary material resources;
- an assessment of what support services the student may require, such as childcare facilities and support for students with disabilities or special needs;
- information about relevant academic and welfare services provided by the institution, students' union and other agencies.

## Accommodation

Institutions also have a duty to provide incoming students who will not be living at home with information about accommodation. Institutions with their own accommodation should provide application forms, together with a full list of options and costs. Institutions not able to provide accommodation, or with limited accommodation, should provide full details of other sources, including lists of institution-endorsed residences and costs. Information about accommodation is vital to incoming students and should be despatched at the earliest possible opportunity in order to help students avoid the obvious stress caused by having to look for a place to live at the last minute.

## 2 > INDUCTION

The induction period is one of the most important times in a student's academic career. A comprehensive and well-planned induction period will ease new students into the routines of academic life and prepare them for the work they will have to do in order to be successful and the opportunities they can take to enjoy and benefit from their time in higher education.

To ensure that students benefit fully from their induction period, it must include:

- a thorough introduction to the course, including content, schedules for classes, lectures and placements, and methods and schedules of assessment;
- information as to how and when students will be given the opportunity to demonstrate all the relevant professional standards for QTS;
- a guide to all key locations, on and off campus, such as teaching venues, libraries, support services and students' union buildings;
- an explanation of all relevant facilities, services and the duties of key personnel, including teaching and support staff;
- distribution of copies of the institution's student handbook, student charter and any other relevant documents;
- information about the institution's behavioural regulations or code of conduct for students and disciplinary procedures;
- details of procedures for complaints, grievances, harassment, mitigations, academic appeals and any other relevant procedures;
- a comprehensive guide to sources of representation and support, as detailed in Section 5 of this charter.

## 3 > ON THE COURSE

To ensure that ITT students have the opportunities and support necessary to advance successfully through their programmes and ultimately gain qualified teacher status, teacher training courses must be properly resourced and given the attention they warrant by both government and higher education (HE) institutions. Teaching staff (both in HE institutions, schools which are ITT providers and placement schools) must be supported, and the quality of teaching regulated and assured. Students must receive adequate levels of support and guidance, and have the access they need to essential resources such as books and IT provision.

### Teaching

- Classes, seminars and discussion groups should be as small as possible to allow a reasonable teacher to student ratio.
- Regular feedback mechanisms should be in place to keep students aware of their general progress and progress towards meeting requirements for the attainment of QTS, and to allow them to make any necessary adjustments to their working style and methods.

- Institutions should recognise that ITT students have heavy workloads, often set by a number of departments. Departments should liaise and make allowances for this in setting work deadlines. All teachers, including student teachers, are entitled to a reasonable work/life balance.
- In scheduling teaching sessions, institutions should be aware of the needs and constraints faced by students with special responsibilities such as childcare.
- Students should be given the opportunity to feedback on their teachers and the overall quality of their course, including the opportunity to participate in formal internal quality assurance systems.
- ITT students should have the opportunity to learn from good practice, so the quality of the teaching provision they receive should be of a high standard; teaching and lecturing staff should hold a recognised qualification such as membership of the Institute of Learning and Teaching.
- Institutions should ensure that students' individual training needs are met, as set out in the Teacher Training Agency's 'Requirements for ITT'.

### Support

- All students should have access to a personal tutor, who ideally should remain the same person throughout their course; however, students must also be able to change personal tutor if for any reason they wish to.
- Institutions and their teaching and support staff should at all times remain aware of the support needs of their students, particularly any special learning needs, and ensure these are met.
- Students should at all times have access to individuals and organisations for a wide range of support services, as set out in Section 5 of this charter.

### Access to resources

- Students should have access to all relevant up to date reference materials and teaching aids and other resources relevant to the age and subject ranges in which they are training.
- Institutions should ensure that an adequate stock of reference materials and teaching aids are available for situations in which many students might require the same item.
- Students should have free access to IT facilities including free unlimited internet access provided by the institution.
- Institutions should refrain from imposing heavy fines on overdue resources, recognising that many students may be forced to adopt complex study patterns.
- Reading lists should be available for all modules, classes or other elements of ITT courses.
- Institutions should also provide access to other essential resources such as photocopying and quiet study space.

## 4 > SCHOOL PLACEMENTS

School placements or teaching practice can be both the most fulfilling and the most challenging experience during teacher training. Teaching practice provides students with an opportunity to develop their skills under expert supervision whilst being assessed and given feedback. To ensure that pupils and student teachers alike benefit fully from this experience it is essential that the student teacher is afforded the same rights and respect given to fully qualified members of the teaching profession. Placements should take into account the individual needs of students. This requires flexibility on the part of the institution in arranging placements, for example, in offering part time placements which meet the needs of students as well as fulfilling requirements for total length of time spent in schools.

### Prior to placement

- The student should receive a comprehensive induction into all aspects of this part of their training, including the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved.
- Comprehensive information regarding sources of support during placements and procedures for resolving disputes over assessment and other matters should be provided.

- There should be effective communication between the institution and the school.
- Full details of how and when assessment will take place should be provided.
- The student should be notified in advance of their placement of the age of the pupils they will be expected to teach.
- The student should be informed of who their class teacher and mentor are, as well as those staff other than teachers with whom they will have to work.
- There should be at least one day of class observation allowed prior to the preparation period.
- Copies of and information about any school policies including the code of conduct or pupil behaviour policy, details of sanctions and rewards, equal opportunities policy or guidelines, as well as any other relevant information such as the school timetable, should be provided.
- The student should have access to examples of children's work and be informed of individual pupils' needs.

- The student should be informed whether they will be expected to create their own schemes of work or follow the class teacher's scheme of work.
- There should be sufficient time during the observation period for the student to discuss the scheme of work with the class teacher.
- There should be sufficient time for the student to prepare schemes of work.
- The student should not be expected to fulfil other course requirements during their preparation period or during teaching placement.

### During placement

Without consultation, the Government has changed the regulations governing the employment of teachers so that unqualified teachers can supervise and direct student teachers.

The NUT is the only teacher organisation resisting this removal of the right of student teachers to be guaranteed a qualified teacher as their mentor.

For the first time, student teachers can be required to take full responsibility for classes.

The NUT will be advising its members in schools to oppose any such misuse of student teachers. The NUT will be seeking a similar approach from ITT providers.

There are certain rights that student teachers should enjoy while on placement.

- Placements must provide students with opportunities to progress towards and demonstrate the professional standards required for QTS.
- Student teachers should be treated as colleagues and as professionals by members of school staff.
- Student teachers are required to work with adults other than teachers while on placement and appropriate guidance should be given about the role of such adults in the placement school. Information should be given about supervisory arrangements and accountability for support staff.
- Student teachers should be recognised as making an important contribution towards the school environment.

- Student teachers should enjoy a safe and healthy working environment.
- Student teachers have the right to trade union representation and should have access to school trade union representatives.
- Student teachers should have access to the same school resources as members of staff, including the photocopying of worksheets and handouts at no cost to the student.
- Student teachers have the right to change placement schools if they suffer bullying, physical violence or intimidation by parents, without impacting on the student's grade.
- If particular difficulties arise relating to unacceptable pupil behaviour, student teachers should have the opportunity to change class.
- The working time directive should be observed and account should be taken of a student's planning, marking and travel time.

It should also be recognised, however, that students are not fully trained teachers and as such there are certain duties that they should not be expected to carry out.

- Student teachers should not be left in sole charge of classes or breaktimes or be expected to replace absent staff or cover vacancies.
- Student teachers should not be expected to administer medication or carry out first aid.
- Student teachers cannot be responsible for the class register as a legal document and, therefore, cannot be required to mark the class register. For the purposes of their own professional development, student teachers may wish to gain experience in this classroom activity. Similarly, they may wish to register attendance at the beginning of a lesson for the purposes of their own records. They should consult their tutor or mentor before doing so.
- Student teachers should not be given classes with exceptionally difficult pupils and should receive appropriate support in relation to pupil behaviour management.

- Student teachers should be expected only to teach classes within the age range in which they specialise and to teach subjects in which they have received training.

Additionally, in order to ensure that the student gains the fullest possible benefit from their placement, certain practices should be observed.

- The student should be given the opportunity to practise his or her own specialist subjects.
- The student should be given the opportunity to experiment with different styles and methods of teaching.
- At least three working days advance notice should be given when the student is to receive a visit from his or her mentor or assessor.
- Sufficient time should be allowed for planning and marking.
- The student's timetable should include no more than 70 per cent class contact time of the teaching timetable of a classroom teacher.
- There should be recognition of the student's external commitments.

- There should be internal and external independent assessment and feedback.
- Schools should ensure that sufficient non-class contact time during the school day is available for teachers involved in supporting trainees, in order that high quality developmental and feedback work may take place.

#### Following placement

- It must be ensured that moderation systems are in place that guarantee reasonable parity of grading and assessment.
- Student teachers should have the right to appeal against a grading or report.
- Student teachers should have access to a complaints procedure.
- Student teachers should have access to constructive feedback from their placements.

## 5 > REPRESENTATION AND SUPPORT

Initial teacher training students have very specific needs and face issues which are not faced by other students, as well as the problems and constraints common to all students. It is vital that this is recognised and that student teachers have access to adequate support and representation from people and organisations that understand their situation.

### Sources of representation and support

Because of the demands of ITT courses, student teachers are often unable to seek the representation and support that they are entitled to. It is necessary, therefore, for institutions which train teachers, as well as representative bodies, actively to ensure that student teachers are aware of the representation and support available and where and how they can find it.

The key sources of representation and support are:

- teaching trade unions
- students' unions

Students should be introduced to these organisations during the initial part of their course, as part of the induction process, and informed as to how they can gain membership where this is not automatic. Representatives of these organisations should be invited by institutions to participate in induction sessions, to educate new students as to their purpose and how the students might make use of them.

### Essential information

Institutions also have a duty to provide students with access to information on:

- grievance, harassment and complaints procedures;
- mitigations and academic appeals procedures;
- student accommodation and housing issues, including legal rights of tenants and safety regulations;
- useful local knowledge, including particularly public transport and childcare facilities;

- religious facilities located on or around campus;
- counselling and learning support services on campus;
- medical and dental services located on campus if these exist, or otherwise facilities located nearby;
- referral to specialist welfare agencies;
- relevant support services for students with special needs;
- equal opportunities and anti-discrimination policies and practices.

Institutions should also ensure, where applicable, that parity of provision of all student support services exists between the main campus and satellite sites.

Providing the highest level of opportunity for those with qualified teacher status to enter the teaching profession is vital to the success of our teacher training system. This requires that those on courses that carry qualified teacher status be given the information and support they need to begin their careers following their successful completion of training.

Institutions which provide ITT courses have a central role to play in providing information and support relating to careers in teaching and should consider it their duty to offer students:

- comprehensive training on applying for a teaching post as an integral part of the later stages of ITT courses;
- access to information about existing vacancies for which they might wish to apply
- access to a named careers guidance tutor with specific knowledge of the teaching profession;
- advice and support in completing career entry profiles;
- preparation for and comprehensive information on the statutory arrangements for the induction of newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and in particular the entitlements of NQTs during the induction period.

# NUT REGIONAL AND WALES OFFICES

> You can contact the National Union of Students on: **020 7272 8900** or at: **461 Holloway Road LONDON N7 6LJ.**

> If you are worried about passing your skills tests, or about any other professional matter, contact your regional office or, in Wales, the NUT Cymru Office.



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