

Diploma in Teaching (Further Education and Skills)

Qualification framework for the full teaching qualification for the further education and skills sector

December 2023

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Section 1: Overview

1.1 Purpose of document

This document is to provide an overall framework guidance for the Diploma in Teaching (FE and Skills) primarily for use by Awarding Bodies (ABs) in their development of full qualifications for teachers in the FE and Skills sector. This new framework follows from the development of the Occupational Standards¹ for the FE and Skills teacher role and provides parameters for the development of a new qualification to meet them. It replaces the Diploma in Education and Training (DET), and any differently named HEI qualifications based upon the DET. ABs are advised to design qualifications in line with the following framework in order for such qualifications to attract public funding and also for the holder to be eligible for progression to QTLS.

The framework guidance may also be useful to:

- employers of teachers and trainers (including colleges of further education, independent training providers, local authorities, the third sector, the military, uniformed services, young offender institutions, prison education and the probation service)
- human resource (HR) managers and line managers
- staff development managers.
- newly employed teachers and trainers and existing staff
- course providers and teacher educators
- union branches and their branch learning representatives.
- those considering teaching as a career.

1.2 How to use this document

The document is arranged as follows:

Section 1 provides an overview of what the document covers.

Section 2 looks at recent changes within the sector and indicates the general direction of travel as suggested by government policies.

Section 3 provides guidance for Awarding Bodies on developing the qualification.

Section 4 provides an overall structure for the qualification, including the recommended guided learning hours, teaching practice and assessed observation requirements.

1.3 Enquiries about this document

All enquiries about this document should in the first instance be directed to the Senior Education Advisor at ETF, Howard Pilott at howard.pilott@etfoundation.co.uk

¹ See <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/learning-and-skills-teacher-v1-0>

Section 2: Background and context for the guidance

2.1 Standards-based qualifications

The development and release of the new employer devised Occupational Standards for the Further Education and Skills teacher provides an important milestone in teacher training for the sector. It is now possible to match the content and structure of these qualifications to what employers have stated they want of successful trainees. This now enables a complete refresh of the FE ITE offer to provide training programmes to map onto these standards.

The Learning and Skills Teacher Occupational Standards have been developed by a trailblazer group comprising employer representatives from across the FE sector, and were approved by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education. These specify the high expectations of a competent practitioner in the sector and are expressed in terms of overall professional duties elaborated by means of the relevant knowledge, skills and behaviours expected of a teacher in the FE and Skills sector. These set the benchmark to judge the competence of trainees and hence this qualification is designed to enable trainees to reach these standards.

The Diploma in Education and Training was released in 2013 since when there have been many changes in the FE and Skills sector as well as in the wider context. Additionally teaching as a discipline has moved on, and so, as a consequence, a new full teaching qualification is required. This document specifies a framework with reference to which Awarding Bodies will create the necessary new qualification specifications to replace the DET from September 2024.

This new qualification framework has been developed to generate qualifications for those working or intending to work in the FE and Skills sector to meet the new Occupational Standards. The spectrum of providers in the sector is immense including further education colleges, adult and community education providers, offender education, work based learning providers, the third / voluntary sector and a plethora of independent training organisations. There are over two million students in further education colleges alone.

These providers cater for a diverse range of learning need and aspiration which include and may combine:

- individuals from age 14 – 60+
- those seeking academic, vocational or professional qualifications
- individuals seeking new qualifications and / or skills for career change or development
- people from a diverse range of cultures and ethnicities
- newly arrived migrants who may have recent traumatic experiences
- learners who have previously been failed by the education system
- those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The structure of the Diploma in Teaching should allow a flexibility to reflect this spectrum of provision and the needs and aspirations of wide range participating learners.

Teaching within the FE and Skills sector is a challenging but potentially exciting and rewarding career choice.

2.2 Developing a new qualification

2.2.1 Qualifications and regulations

The Education and Training Foundation (ETF) is the workforce development organisation for the FE and Skills sector. It published updated guidance for the DET in 2016 and took responsibility for Covid mitigations for ITE qualifications during the pandemic. It is therefore well placed to support the development and roll out of new qualifications for FE and Skills teachers. In this light the ETF convened ITE Forum has taken responsibility for proposals in this area. The ITE Forum is a representative stakeholder grouping which includes AB, employer, DfE, funding and regulatory authority, and other representation. The ITE Forum constituted a working group to provide proposals for this new qualification framework and these have now received sector input and general approval. ETF will continue to maintain a watchful eye on this area and will from time to time issue updates to this guidance as necessary, as approved by the ITE Forum.

2.2.2 Professional standards

The ETF developed set of Professional Standards for the FE and Skills sector are for use post qualification: they do not apply to the assessment of this qualification. However they are important in supporting a teacher's post qualification career development especially their CPD. Hence it is important that trainees are made aware of them. The Professional Standards:

- set out clear expectations of effective practice in education and training
- enable teachers and trainers to identify areas for their own professional development
- provide a national reference point that organisations can use to support the development of their staff

The current standards can be accessed at [professional standards](#).

2.3 Policy context

Government priorities

The Government has made clear its commitment to the FE and Skills sector in the White Paper *Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth January 2021*². It presents a number of ambitious goals for the advancement of the sector including employer engagement, technical qualifications, skills guarantees, and improving teaching. Chapter 5 has a section entitled *Effective initial teacher education*, within which it states:

*145. We are improving initial teacher education so that all publicly funded training will be rooted in employer-led standards... Based on this new standard, we will support the redevelopment of further education initial teacher education qualifications, so that they too are based on the same clear set of outcomes.*³

This new qualification framework follows on from that intention. A level 5 apprenticeship has been approved by IfATE, the Learning and Skills Teacher, and any new qualification needs to mirror the standards achieved via that apprenticeship route.

The [Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth White Paper \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk) set out the Government commitment to *work closely with the sector to bring about the improvements to quality that we all agree are so important to improving teaching in further education settings (para 146)*. Following this, section 17 of the [Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk) sets out the new regulatory powers available to drive quality improvement in FE teaching in future.

Alongside this framework, the Department for Education has published the *Departmental Expectations for the delivery of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) for the Further Education (FE) sector in England*, consistent with the aim of raising quality standards and ensuring consistently good outcomes for trainees, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-education-initial-teacher-education/expectations-for-the-delivery-of-initial-teacher-education-for-fe>

Section 3: Guidance for Awarding Bodies

3.1 General guidance

This document lays out the parameters of the Diploma in Teaching (FE and Skills). In order for courses offering this award to be eligible for public funding of any description, they must have regard to all requirements detailed in the *Departmental Expectations for the delivery of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) for the Further Education (FE) sector in England*.

²

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/957856/Skills_for_jobs_lifelong_learning_for_opportunity_and_growth_web_version_.pdf

³ *ibid*

It is for Awarding Bodies to turn this framework into a qualification. This means the elaboration of the content and any option units to be offered will be done by ABs. It should always be borne in mind that this is a minimum level 5 award and any options should be at appropriate level and included to enhance the trainee's ability to achieve the standards. ABs are encouraged to provide references to the research/evidence underpinning particular content inclusion, where helpful.

The title of this qualification is the Diploma in Teaching (Further Education and Skills) – DiT(FES) – although HEIs may entitle it Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), if level 6, Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) if level 7, and Certificate in Education (Cert Ed), if level 5. They are all recognised as the full teaching qualification for the sector providing they comply with these guidelines.

3.2 Core knowledge and skills

This new qualification has an entry requirement that at the start of this programme, trainees should have achieved level 2 in maths and English. This matches the standard of those completing the L5 apprenticeship. This means all trainees will have the underpinning skills to support their learners in these areas. Within the qualification itself is now a Core Unit relating to Digital Skills & Educational Technology (Effective digital and on-line pedagogies), ensuring a necessary level of competence in this area too. Sustainability and EDI (equality, diversity and inclusion) should be featured throughout the programme as embedded themes, and references are provided in the appendices to provide some steers on these topics.

3.3 Study and placement hours

This framework recommends Guided |Learning Hours [GLH] for the qualification as minimum 360 hours, and Total Qualification Time [TQT] as minimum 1200 hours.

The placement should be of at least 250 hours in duration, of which at least 150 hours would be teaching practice. The balance, constituting professional practice includes activities such as team meetings, planning, interviews, assessment meetings, observations, provider wide sessions [eg CPD], etc. The purpose of the professional practice hours is to gain a full sense of the wider activities of a teacher on a day to day basis. Of the 150 teaching hours, at least 100 hours must be in the trainee's subject area. Additionally the trainee must gain experience of remote teaching: the recent pandemic highlighted the need for all staff to have these skills at their disposal. A minimum of 20 hours of remote synchronous [ie live] delivery should be included, alongside a minimum of 80 hours face to face delivery.

The placement requirement includes a minimum of two locations: the teacher trainee should gain experience in more than one teaching location. This is in order to improve the breadth of experience as practices vary. The second placement must be for at least 20 hours and ideally would be at a different provider but in extremis at a large provider, could include a different subject area and/or venue in the same

provider. It should be noted that the 20 hours at the 2nd placement are not specified as teaching hours so could be observation, CPD, etc, and other activities to give a sense of the approach within that area.

3.4 Mentoring and local support

The mentoring and local support arrangements must be robust. All trainees should have the support of 2 staff at their placement in addition to the support of their course tutor. The first is the subject specialist and must be competent and teaching in the trainee's subject area. This enables the provision of subject specific support. This staff member must have time to support the trainee [recommended 30 minutes per trainee per week] and additionally time to engage in assessment, particularly of the subject specific element.

There is also a local pastoral support mentor for more general areas of advice and support. This mentor may support more than one trainee in the placement, maybe acting for a group of trainees. Again this mentor must have sufficient time to support trainees [recommend 30 minutes per trainee per week]. This mentor would be expected to liaise with the provider re ongoing trainee progress reports. Where the placement is small and resources are insufficient, the mentoring role can be provided by a member of centre staff providing that sufficient additional time is allocated to this role.

All centres providing the qualification are required to provide adequate training to all placement mentors/subject specialists to ensure they are suitably trained to meet the needs of trainees. Centres may wish to make use of resources that ETF has developed in the area of mentoring, see eg <https://www.etf-foundation.co.uk/supporting/professional-development/mentoring/framework-and-guides/>.

3.5 Qualification Delivery Models

As this new qualification is designed to meet the new Occupational Standards, and these standards are otherwise achieved via an immersive apprenticeship experience, consideration must be given to how the new framework is suitably supported by means of a qualification route. The apprentice [trainee teacher] will be in the workplace for 18 months in order to gain the experiences, consolidation and training to be able to demonstrate at end point assessment achievement of the standards at the required level. The two ways by which FE teaching qualifications are delivered - in-service and pre-service - will need to be considered to ensure they are able to offer some comparable experience. For a more detailed discussion of this issue see appendix 2

Section 4: The qualification framework outlined

4.1 Structure

The qualification framework consists of a Core and Options. The total credit value of the qualification is a minimum of 120 credits. The recommended Core, as outlined below, consists of 5 Core Units [details below] which total 90 credits at level 5. It should be noted that HEIs may choose to offer part or all of the qualification at level 6 or level 7. Awarding Bodies will determine suitable option units at level 4 or above to complement the programme and enhance the trainee's ability to achieve the occupational standards.

4.2 Suggested core units indicating required core content

The Core units, together with a brief outline of content, are set as follows:

- Unit 1: Teaching my subject [15 credits]
 - Curriculum development, Pedagogic Content Knowledge
 - Threshold concepts and troublesome knowledge
 - Required wider/prerequisite knowledge
 - Embedding maths and English
 - Ensuring and maintaining subject expertise
 - Sustainability in your area
 - Progression advice

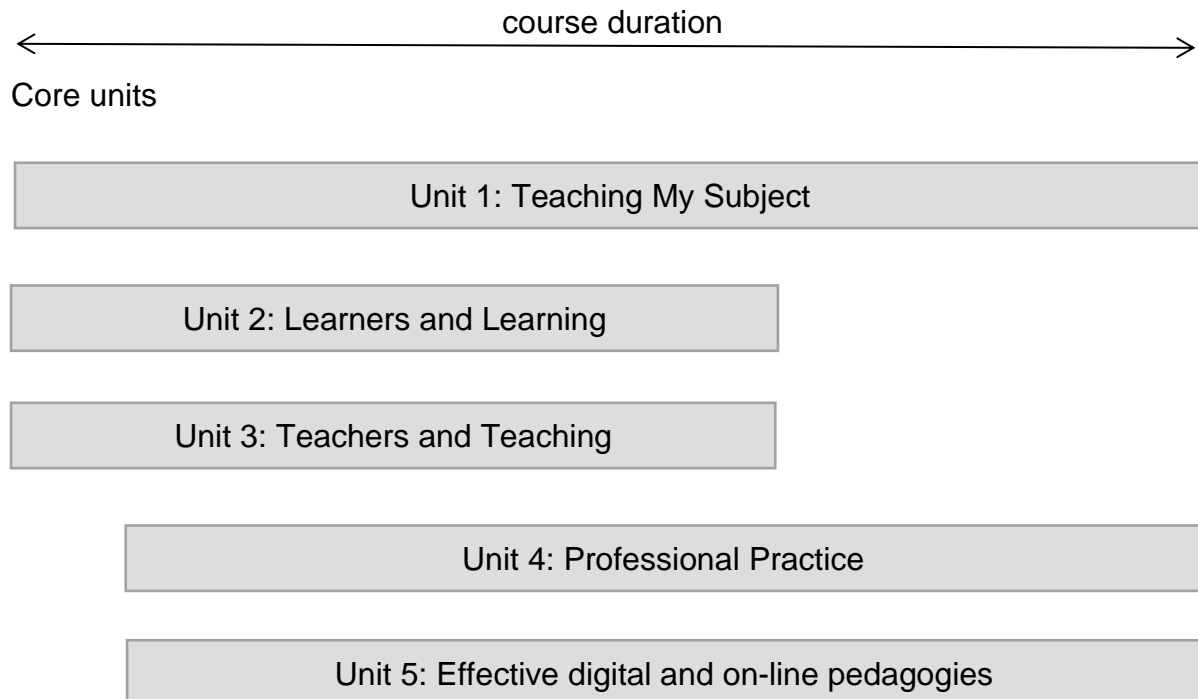
- Unit 2: Learners and learning [15 Credits]
- Part A: Learners
 - Getting to know your learners in FE
 - Their journeys to FE
 - Range of support needs
 - Safeguarding/EDI
 - English and maths abilities
 - Their wider expectations
- Part B: Learning
 - Contemporary learning theory, Neuro Science
 - Role and currency of research and evidence
 - Application of theory to practice
 - Encouraging learners to be independent and aim high

- Unit 3: Teachers and teaching [15 Credits]
- Part A: Teachers
 - The role of a teacher
 - What makes a good teacher?
 - Working with and learning from other teachers
 - Other sources of support
- Part B: Teaching
 - Rigorous curriculum thinking
 - Person centred approach
 - Planning and delivering sessions

- Developing resources to meet learner needs, individual support [incl SEND, mental health]
- Teacher expectations of learners incl classroom management
- F2f and remote delivery
- Assessment & feedback
- Embedding EMD
- Unit 4: Professional Practice [30 credits]
- Part A: Teaching practice
 - Micro teaches
 - Preparation for placement
 - Observation of other teachers
 - Team & solo teaching
 - Curriculum planning & review
 - Lesson planning and adaptations
 - Planning & conducting assessment
 - Using assessment to inform planning
 - Assessment feedback and advice/guidance
 - Application of evidence based methods
 - Managing and supporting learners incl behaviour
 - Placement log
- Part B: Being a professional
 - The Occupational Standards
 - Developing expertise
 - Updating and CPD
 - Professional responsibilities
 - Working with colleagues
 - Professional Status
- Part C: The FE and Skills sector
 - Overview of FE and Skills Sector
 - Types of programmes
 - Timetables
 - Contracts
 - Govt policy
 - Regulations [legal and local]
 - Funding
 - Organizational and wider support
- Unit 5: Effective digital and on-line pedagogies [15 credits]
 - Personal digital skills
 - Range of Ed Tech
 - AI, AR, VR etc
 - Managing digital delivery

For each of these headings there is provided some indicative content in the appendices. It is for Awarding Bodies to set the fine detail of these units.

Figure 1: Course outline/profile



The programme starts with 3 units: Teaching My Subject, Learners and Learning, and Teachers and Teaching. Whereas the focus on Teaching My Subject continues throughout the programme, the other two units are ‘absorbed’ into the Professional Practice unit: general considerations of both teaching and learning are applied within the context of actual delivery. A separate focus however remains on ‘Teaching My Subject’ as it is always necessary for good teachers to be aware that they are teachers *of that subject*. Educational Technology is brought in as a means of supporting/enabling professional practice and thus runs alongside the Professional Practice unit.

Ultimately the trainees demonstrate their achievement of the Occupational Standards in the Prof Practice Unit, but the other Core Units exist to provide the background, context, and theory underpinning such ability to demonstrate competence.

4.3 Option units

ETF has not prescribed the options units to be available as part of these qualifications. The Core structure is sufficient to allow the acquisition and consolidation of the knowledge and skills to achieve the occupational standards. The Awarding Bodies have been allowed flexibility in their offer of option units to allow their programmes to reflect particular emphases in certain parts of the FE market, thereby allowing consolidation of the relevant KSBs in particular areas. However option units should clearly be in the realm of FE teaching and should be chosen to enhance the particular trainee's chosen pathway within the sector.

4.4 Assessment

The assessment model to be used on this qualification requires all trainees to satisfactorily pass all modules by means of appropriate assessment except the Professional Practice module. The Professional Practice modules differs in the following regard to assessment:

- The candidate must complete and evidence all their practice hours as stated elsewhere
- The candidate must complete a portfolio of evidence relating to the placement[s] which is submitted to the module assessors
- The portfolio will feature a cross reference matrix demonstrating where the candidate has met the occupational standards in their professional practice, counter signed by their course tutor
- The candidate will participate in a final assessment involving a 30 minute oral discussion relating to any aspect of professional practice
- The final judgement will be that the trainee has or has not meet the Occupational Standards

The examination should be conducted in person by two qualified teachers – one from the provider and another either from the placement or from the Awarding Body – and they will share the questioning and agree a final result.

4.4.1 Observations

All candidates must undergo 10 observations, the majority of which should be to a group of at least 10 learners. The observations seek to do two things:

- To provide developmental feedback to the trainee as to where they can improve their practice
- To establish that the trainee is teaching at the level expected in the occupational standards

It is probably advisable that there is a gradation from the developmental to the assessment approach; that earlier observations are predominantly developmental. As the trainee progresses it is reasonable to expect their competence increases and hence is more amenable to assessment against the standards.

As a single teaching observation cannot be expected to cover the entire range of KSBs from the occupational standards, the programme should seek to ensure that all trainees are assessed against these across their observations. The tutor should provide an observation report to be included in the Professional Portfolio stating [if appropriate] that the trainees has met the KSBs relating to teaching practice. This assessment will be confirmed via the final professional discussion element of the assessment of this Professional Practice unit.

All observations should be at least 45 minutes each. Up to two observations may be of live remote delivery. Additionally one other session may be observed remotely [ie the observer not present] but appropriate arrangements must be made for prompt feedback and discussion

The observations should be conducted by the provider tutor and/or the subject specialist/placement mentor. The Awarding Body may choose to provide some guidance to accompany the observation assessment process.

4.5 Recorded sessions

Although recorded session are not suitable for formal observations, as a learning tool they are to be encouraged. Particular applications might include:

- As part of the Unit 3, to enable them to see themselves teaching to reflect on how they come across
- A trainee recording a session to show their application of a particular theory or technique
- As a means of demonstrating a trainee's ability to reflect on their performance

4.6 Entry criteria

These are for the Awarding Bodies to determine. However in order to be able to teach their subjects, trainees need to be qualified and/or experienced in that subject. Those intending to teach academic subjects would usually be expected to have a degree in their subject specialism. Those intending to teach in professional or vocational areas would usually be expected to have a professional or industry qualification and experience of working in their respective sector. There is a general expectation in the sector that a teacher should be qualified to at least one level above that at which they intend to teach. In some vocational areas this may be problematic but a reasonable expectation is that they hold the highest level trade qualification available, unless they have particularly substantial professional experience.

This qualification is a minimum level 5 and hence it is essential that all entrants are able to demonstrate an ability to study at level 5 [or above in the case of relevant HEI provision].

An additional requirement for entry is the achievement of Level 2 in both maths and English. The need to be able to support learners in both areas cannot be

understated and a sufficient grounding in both subjects is therefore essential to good teaching.

4.7 Accreditation of prior learning

Accreditation of prior learning is for providers to decide, using reasonable judgement, at the discretion and approval of the Awarding Body. Both parties must be satisfied that the evidence is valid, sufficient, authentic and current in order to gain any credit against the content of this qualification and, except in the case of recognised qualifications where there is a clear one to one mapping, some synoptic assessment would be deemed appropriate. Any such APL granted should be made available to external examination/quality assurance for countersignature.

4.8 Relationship to other FE teaching qualifications

At the time of writing this guidance, the review process has not yet reached the level 3, Award in Education and Training (AET), and the level 4, Certificate in Education and Training (CET). These two qualifications were written in 2013 as free standing awards and as they are now dated, the process for their review/rewrite will begin shortly. However there is as yet no relationship between what still exists and the foregoing framework for the new level 5 qualification. There is therefore an expectation that the AET and CET are unlikely to play a role in APL issues in the case of this new Diploma. The review process will examine demand for qualifications of this type and level, and also look at questions of the desirability of creating some form of progression route to fully qualified status via these lesser qualifications. This guidance framework will be updated to reflect any new recommendations as necessary.

Appendix 1: Delivery models

In-service qualification

In service programmes more easily follow from the apprenticeship model as they are immersive experiences. If the teacher [trainee] is employed in a capacity sufficient to meet the practice requirements in the qualification guidance – ie sufficient hours in correct context with adequate mentoring provision – then participation in a (eg) day-per-week model over (eg) 2 years, will allow the teacher (trainee) sufficient experience and training to achieve the standards via the qualification. As with the apprentice Learning and Skills Teacher [LST], the teacher is learning by doing, and then in their off-the-job training, they are relating that specific learning to wider contexts and theories. The benefit here is that the teacher (trainee) is not simply learning how to teach *this* group in *this* context/provider but being able to generalize this to wider teaching situations; they are exploring and acquiring theoretical knowledge that provides principles to guide action in novel situations. Such theories will not be of purely abstract interest but rather related directly to what the teacher (trainee) is doing on a daily basis: theory and practice are thus easily integrated. The overall framework of the in-service qualification is that it proceeds from the premise that the teacher (trainee) has experience to draw on and upon which to capitalize. Moreover that as an employee of a FE provider, that they are in some/many senses already operating in an acceptable capacity: they are almost certainly already writing lesson plans, creating and marking assessments, running lessons and supporting learners in myriad ways. This is an opportunity and a challenge:

- It provides a wealth of meaningful real-life examples upon which to draw
- It risks a teacher (trainee) sense of “I know this already”

The beginning of the qualification seeks therefore to draw on this by capitalizing on their experience of learners and of being a teacher of a particular subject: an exploration of who are my learners and what are their needs, alongside what does it mean to be a teacher – what is the range of things I do and seek to achieve? – and how that translates into classroom experience in my particular subject. These considerations then move onto how do my learners actually learn: what does psychology say? And what are the processes and procedures of teaching, including the nuances of this subject. It is important to note that these are the immediate concerns of the new teacher: how do I meet their needs in these lessons? [how do I do my job successfully?] As these domains are developed, observations and attendant feedback are arranged, and attention moves on to the context in which this teaching is happening: the FE sector *et al.* Likewise further areas of Ed Tech and digital skills follow. Throughout this period, assessments are progressively aligned with the standards such that by the end of the programme, all can be seen to have been demonstrated in the professional practice portfolio and further tested by means of the professional discussion.

Key to the trainee’s development is the role of the mentor/subject specialist and the relationship of these staff to the ITE provider. It is proposed that all trainees have 2 local supporters – one in their subject area with subject specific teaching expertise, and one as a general pastoral support in the workplace to provide an open sounding board as well as ability to iron out local issues. The first must be a subject expert and

both must have completed relevant training. Additionally they must have adequate time on their timetables to provide the requisite amount of support [av ½ hours/week per trainee]. they will also liaise closely with the ITE provider [tutor] and complete a regular log. The subject specialist will also be engaged in joint observation with the ITE tutor. Such arrangement allows a close placement/ITE provider relationship and more meaningfully workplace related judgements of trainee progress.

Pre service

The pre-service course, intended in general as a one year full time course, has to be shaped slightly differently as the trainee is commencing in the abstract as it were: they are removed from the workplace. It is recommended that this is compensated insofar as possible by means of early visits, observations and shadowing as it is desirable that the trainee gains a good sense of the FE workplace at the earliest juncture. These illustrations then serve as useful orientation points in early delivery: “you saw *this*; you can appreciate *that*”. However the start of the pre service course must of necessity deal in generalities which provide the opportunities to have wide consideration of the same introductory topics as per the in-service programme: *who am I teaching and what am I hoping to achieve?* The structure of the course is thus much more an exercise of from the general to the specific: one of progressive application of theory to the real life environment and the gradual development of competence. Hence the pathway is one of routes into practice rather than immediate deployment of teaching skills. Whereas the in service trainee *was teaching this week*, the pre service trainee has yet to engage directly and hence a set of ‘safe’ practice sessions [micro teaches in front of fellow trainees and tutor] are arranged in order to give an opportunity for the first attempt at teaching. Importantly the trainee now has a few of these with sequential foci: the first should look at the necessary preparations and mechanics with the latter looking at the overall feel of the session and how the trainee ‘came across’.

This then leads naturally into observation of skilled practitioners in FE actually teaching sessions with opportunities for analysis and reflection, alongside discussion of relevant theories of learning and teaching. This then progresses into their own practice which is initially developmentally observed but later assessed against the standards to ensure competence. A minimum of 150 hours of teaching practice is specified for all trainees as an appropriate amount to enable development and consolidation of the necessary skills to become competent. Additionally at least 100 hours should also be allocated to wider professional duties in the FE workplace [meeting, interviews, planning, etc] to become a fully participative teacher in the widest sense – as such participation is a crucial element to effective functioning with FE, this is seen as essential preparation for a trainee.

The assessment regime is thus a combination of assignments which shows appreciation of relevant theory but importantly with application, ultimately leads to demonstration of the standards: I deploy X theory in this situation, in this manner which means I am able to demonstrate Y standard[s]. The assessments are thus seen as a means for the trainee to show that they are working towards the level of competence as elaborated in the standards. At the end of the ITE programme all standards will have been covered and evidenced within their professional practice portfolio and candidates will undergo a professional discussion to test this in depth.

Appendix 2: Option Units Guidance

The function of Option Units is to allow a degree of tailoring of the programme. The Core of this qualification covers the essentials of what is needed to be a teacher in FE and so Option Units are there to enhance the programme; to provide a programme that better fits the needs of the trainees.

The overall picture re options units is that the inclusion of these should be determined by the needs of the teachers in the context of what the Awarding Body/Provider can offer. The context is that they should be level 4 or level 5 – as the Core is all level 5 and totals 90 credits, it constitutes the majority of the programme and hence the final award is at minimum level 5 – and should all be ofqual approved units, totalling 30 credits. All should plainly have direct pertinence to teaching and learning in the FE and Skills sector but much latitude exists therein.

It may be that an AB wishes to create a specialism in a particular strand of FE delivery – eg ESOL or Prison Education – and therefore a selection of units which have immediate relevance could be selected. Alternatively trainees may wish to take further some of the skills developed in the core of the programme by means of more focussed option units. There is also the possibility of trainees undertaking some action research or similar within parameters set by the AB.

These options units stand apart from the core in terms of assessment and Awarding Bodies will have to make their own arrangements for this. There is no stipulation as to whether this should be by means of continuous or final assessment. However trainees will have to submit evidence of their having passed 30 credits of reckonable options in order to achieve the complete qualification. They do not contribute to the final grade, which is rather a reflection of the performance with the core of the programme.

There is no in-principle position against an AB bringing forward option units previously used with the Diploma in Education and Training (DET), and in some cases this may be a convenient solution. However ABs must be able to assure themselves that any such pre existing units are still current and suitable for inclusion in this programme.