University of Southampton

ITAP Handbook for Schools: SEND ITAP

9th -13th February 2025-2026

(In Focus Placement schools 10-12th February)

PGCE (Secondary) Programme

Introduction

ITAP was introduced by the government for all Initial Teacher Education programmes in England from 2023. The following key compliance requirements are taken from the DfE criteria which can be found here:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67d9a7caa87d546feeda01c4/Initial_teacher_training__ITT__criteria_and_supporting_advice_-_March_2025.pdf

- ITAP equates to 20 days and should be additional to the 120 days spent on general school placements. Beginning teachers therefore have an additional 100 hours of training (during the 20 days of ITAP) in their curriculum from 2024.
- ITAP content should be based on pivotal or foundational concepts of the planned ITT curriculum that are able to put into practice immediately and have potential to impact on classroom practice *irrespective of context.*
- It **must be additional to and distinct from** the general placement itself.
- The aim of ITAP is to enable beginning teachers to make clearer links between theory and practice in 3-5 key areas of the ITT curriculum. These areas should be focused in order to maximise progress.

Last academic year was the first year where most providers ran all of their ITAP blocks. At the University of Southampton, we have found that many elements of the programme were very successful but we have responded to feedback and our internal quality assurance processes to make some changes for this year. The main two changes involve our SEND and Adaptive Teaching ITAPs; the rationale behind placing some elements of these ITAPs in school will be explained in each section.

It is important to emphasise that beginning teachers should only be involved in activities relating to ITAP during their time in school on these blocks.

Intent

ITAP is part of our PGCE curriculum and, whilst each block is distinct in its own right, the timings and format of each ITAP have been carefully designed to complement the phases of our wider curriculum, becoming increasingly nuanced as the year develops.

The Professional Studies curriculum starts with an overview of high -quality teaching and this is revisited throughout each ITAP. Whilst we look at specific elements of teaching – for example EAL and SEND- the message that we hope to convey through ITAP is that teaching is not about 'teaching EAL pupils' or 'teaching pupils with Autism' in a particular way; instead the focus is returning to what constitutes high quality teaching for all pupils and applying these to different contexts in order to ensure that beginning teachers are always refining their practice and maintaining high expectations.

Another key focus which runs throughout all ITAP blocks is on the importance of language and communication. This begins with a focus on clear instruction in the behaviour ITAP and then

progresses to a more specific focus on how assessment tasks are constructed in order to gain an accurate overview of learning; the SEND ITAP then continues to look at the importance of language in explaining tasks but also in terms of framing our expectations of pupils. In adaptive teaching the focus is on how teachers reframe their language in response to assessment in the moment and the final ITAP looks at the importance of consistency of language in the transition to secondary school.

An overview of all ITAP blocks

Monday 29th September – Friday 3rd October: Behaviour with a focus on language, routines and presence. This ITAP looks in particular detail at the importance of routines and the clear language and presence needed to communicate these.

Wednesday 26th – Friday 28th November: Assessment for learning. At this point the focus is on where and how pupils are being assessed in lessons. Many beginning teachers have a range of AFL strategies by now, but this ITAP aims to deepen their understanding of precisely <u>why</u> they are using a particular method of assessment at each moment in a lesson. It also aims to get them to think deeply about <u>how</u> they are assessing pupils' learning by focusing on the language used in assessment opportunities (the structure of MCQs, for example.)

Monday 9th – Friday 13th February: SEND. Focus on high quality teaching and ordinarily available provision. Again, there is a focus on language: both written and verbal and how this can be used in both instruction and discussion to effectively include, stretch and support all learners, including those with SEND. As part of this, there is also a focus on how TAs can effectively support pupils by supplementing support from teachers, again by looking at the language used.

Monday 13th – Thursday 16th April: Adaptive teaching: This builds on the previous ITAPs by again reinforcing the importance of high quality teaching as being critical for the success of all students. It will remind beginning teachers of the importance of formative assessment in informing adaptive teaching. They will focus on how teachers adapt the support given to pupils according to information gained from formative assessment with particular emphasis on questioning and scaffolding.

Wednesday 3rd – Friday 5th June: Maintaining high expectations in Year 7. Again, there is an emphasis on high quality teaching and again, we return to a focus on language through looking at the potential for shared subject-specific vocabulary from KS2 at transition to enhance progress.

SEND ITAP.

Context and Important Elements to Signpost

From the beginning of the focus placement beginning teachers should be identifying **two pupils** from classes that they currently teach (**ideally on a Thursday**), with an area of SEND to focus on during their ITAP week. The aim is not to suggest that there is a bespoke way to teach for these students but by focusing on two pupils it is hoped that beginning teachers will deepen their understanding of what high quality teaching methods through ordinarily available provision, are effective for these pupils and why they work in different contexts.

Last year, beginning teachers were in SEND settings to observe language and, whilst the feedback was very positive about the experience, we felt that in order to apply findings to their practice in a mainstream setting, the observation and opportunity to practice would be better undertaken in an environment already familiar to beginning teachers. We have kept the SEND setting experience as this was hugely valuable, but have placed this slightly ahead of ITAP in order to prepare beginning teachers for this.

- Beginning teachers will need to identify **two pupils** from their classes to focus on during the week. This should be completed in advance as they will need to observe them on Tuesday 10th February and on Wednesday 11th February and staff will need to be made aware of this.
- Wednesday will involve beginning teachers acting as a TA in their classes. Again, it is worth signposting this to staff as there is no need to do anything additional but they will need to know that beginning teachers will be in the room.

Timeline and Activities

Focus Placement, Weeks 1-5

Beginning teachers should select their pupils from any of the classes that they currently teach (**ideally on a Thursday**) with either: **SEMH, ASD, SPLD, Dyslexia or Dyspraxia**. These areas have been selected as they tend to be the most commonly encountered needs in mainstream settings. A pupil may well have two or more of these needs and that is, of course, to be anticipated.

Beginning teachers to identify **two pupils to focus on from classes that they teach** (ideally on **Thursday 12th February** to help with the application to practice during ITAP). Mentors should help with this and this information should be communicated to ITECs at an agreed time so that the following activities can be put in place.

Friday 30th January: Beginning teachers will spend the day in a SEND setting in order to raise their awareness of the breadth of SEND need and to enable them to observe how a positive and enabling culture is created.

The ITAP will be framed by discussion of its importance nationally – we are awaiting the publication of White Paper early this year and of course it features heavily throughout the new Ofsted framework. School-based activities focus on identifying, deconstructing and analysing the language used to deliver explicit instruction, support cognition and metacognition, and provide effective scaffolding as per the EEF's 'Five a Day' recommendations.

Beginning teachers will attend the following sessions on a carousel but with a focus on their chosen areas for the specialist input on certain areas. An overview of the session powerpoints can be found on the Partnership website.

Session 1, High Quality Teaching and Expectations

Beginning teachers will be reminded of the core principles underpinning high quality teaching and ordinarily available provision in schools. The session will look specifically at language through the lens of behaviour management for high need pupils. Links will be made between this ITAP and previous ITAPs on the importance of consistent language and routines and of the importance of frequent, ongoing formative assessment of pupils, again, with a reminder of the importance of language particularly when considering pupils with SEND.

Session 2 & 3, Specialist input on focus areas

Understanding Autism

Trauma Informed practice

Working with Pupils with Dyslexia and Dyspraxia

Working with pupils with Speech and Language development delay

These sessions will be held by expert colleagues who will again emphasise the importance of high quality teaching within ordinarily available provision. They will look at how language -both written and verbal- can be used to create an inclusive classroom environment.

Session 4, Working with your TA

This session will explore how to best use TAs in a classroom. Whilst we recognise that not all beginning teachers will have the opportunity to work with a consistent TA and, even where this is the ideal, it may not always happen in reality. It is nonetheless, important for beginning teachers to

have experience of planning for this and to be able to recognise best practice. The focus will look at how Tas use language to deliver or reinforce explicit instruction and provide effective scaffolding.

Focus Placement Schools: Days 2-4

(Tuesday 10th-Thursday 12th February inclusive)

It is important that beginning teachers should be engaged all day in ITAP activities and nothing else on all days as ITAP is in addition to the required 120 days of placement time.

Tuesday 10th February

Beginning teachers should shadow their two pupils for the day (this can be divided as is best for the school – they may choose morning lessons for pupil A and afternoon for pupil B etc).

There is a template of prompt questions for them to use which is attached at the end of this booklet.

They should note specific examples of:

- Simplification or chunking of instructions

- Use of visual or written support

- How expectations are communicated

During the day (or on Wednesday morning) there should be the chance for beginning teacher(s) to talk through the discussion prompts in this booklet with an expert colleague (the ITEC or SENCo). The aim of the day is for beginning teachers to understand that one approach does not always fit all pupils with a particular need i.e. there is no set 'way' for teaching all pupils with Autism, for example. They should also have seen a range of different classroom environments and thus been able to unpick elements of high-quality teaching that were successful in communicating learning to pupils.

Wednesday 11th February**Please note that Wednesday and Thursday could be swapped if timetabled classes really didn't allow for any teaching on Thursday. Beginning teachers could swap their teaching to Wednesday; act as a TA on Thursday and then draw together the experiences at the end of Thursday.

Beginning teachers to act as a TA in both pupils' classes for a day. This can be divided as they best see fit. If the pupil has a TA it would be useful for the beginning teacher to liaise with them to discuss routines in place. If the pupil wouldn't usually have a TA, the beginning teacher should act as a support for the class generally but with a focus on their chosen pupil (s) (as opposed to sitting next to them if they wouldn't normally have this support and potentially making them feel self-conscious.) There is a prompt sheet to support with how to approach this which can be used alongside this booklet. The idea is that beginning teachers observe on Tuesday and then become

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more involved in their pupils' learning on Wednesday before actually teaching them in their class on Thursday.

The aim of this activity is to get beginning teachers to consider the importance of clear and explicit instruction when framing tasks and also to consider their language around expectations for tasks. They have a scaffolding prompt sheet from the EEF to support with this – details can be found on their observation prompt sheets.

One lesson during Wednesday should be dedicated to their planning time for tomorrow's lesson and for them to incorporate any changes based on their reflections from the day. Again, there should be the chance to check -in with the ITEC or SENCo for discussion about this.

Thursday 12th February

Beginning teachers teach a lesson in their subject to a class with at least one of their focus pupils in it. They receive feedback on their teaching from their Mentors and discuss and deconstruct the feedback with the ITEC or other expert colleague.

Time should be given to allow beginning teachers to review their observations and notes from the week; to undertake the reading for the final day and to prepare their reflections for to share with their university tutors and main placement Mentors ahead of their return after half-term.

Friday 13th February

Beginning teachers will return to university in subject groups to explore a specific area of need in even further detail from a subject perspective – for example, they may look at ASD in English though the language used to frame English tasks, for example.