

Dear all,

I hope everyone has managed to get through the last week relatively unscathed and managed something of a weekend. We know from the messages and emails we are receiving that you are all working so hard to look after your trainees. Please do also take the time needed to look after yourselves.

I thought it might be helpful to issue some additional reassurance on a couple of issues that have cropped up a number of times over the weekend.

Firstly, there have been a number of questions around whether trainees should attend schools which are open and what we should be expecting of them in these difficult times. Providers must be mindful of their duty of care to their trainees and, as such, should not be requiring that they attend school as there may be a number of reasons why this is not practical or safe for them to do. Where a trainee does want to support their school to stay open, this must be an agreement made directly between the school and the trainee on a voluntary basis and is not considered a 'placement' in the normal way. Attendance or otherwise at school must not be made a condition of the award of QTS at the end of the programme.

Whilst attendance at school may not be a requirement, the continuation of a programme of study is and providers should offer their trainees a range of opportunities to further their professional learning. Trainees are still 'on programme' and should be helped to understand what this means for your provision in these uncertain times. There will be a need to balance the expectations of distance learning with the personal and professional demands being placed on the trainees as they, like all of us, struggle to come to terms with the new ways in which we are being asked to live our lives. You know your trainees best and are therefore best placed to make the right decisions about what can reasonably be asked of them. Your professional judgment, as always, will be key to making the right choices.

With that in mind, providers will also want to think carefully about the demands they are placing on school staff during this time. We all have a duty of care to one another and school mentors will be facing a number of significant personal and professional challenges over the coming weeks and months. Decisions about the level of involvement of school-based staff in distance-learning programmes can only be made at individual provider level but we would urge you to be mindful of what we are asking of schools during these unprecedented times.

We have also been asked about how best to make a judgment about the trajectory of trainees who providers feel are in need of more classroom experience. This can only be answered by close application of the advice. If, in your professional judgment, they would have met the Teachers' Standards after the final term in school, with all the additional support and guidance they would have ordinarily received during that time, then they must be considered 'on a trajectory to meet' and be awarded QTS. We understand that there may be some reluctance to make this judgment for some trainees as it may feel that, without the final term in school, they will simply not be ready. However, the DfE are alive to this issue and are working through plans for additional support for those NQTs. They are very clear that the lack of time on school this year should not prevent them from being awarded QTS if they would, all things being equal, have otherwise been awarded it. Trainees do, however, need to engage with the programme for the remainder of the year in order to be awarded QTS. Therefore, being 'on a trajectory to meet' at this point in time does not guarantee the award of QTS.

The trainees who you think would not have reached the Standards by the end of the programme, even if they had been given support and guidance in the final term, are the ones who should be considered 'not on a trajectory'. It is likely these will be the trainees who are on a cause for concern – or at risk of being put on a cause for concern – at this point in the programme. We are waiting for the formal guidance on how these trainees are to be managed and will update you through all our usual channels as soon as we can.

I hope the above helps to answer some of the questions that might have been occupying your thoughts recently. Please do keep asking us if there are additional issues which arise. We are in daily conversation with the DfE in order to work through these questions, and seek to find answers. As a

sector, we will be asked over the coming months to make many decisions in highly unusual circumstances. By continuing to work together we can, at least, make these decisions in collaboration with one other rather than working in silos.

Don't forget to visit our dedicated Coronavirus webpage, containing FAQs, links to useful documents, information and member shared resources (which contains a range of resources which have been shared by members for wider dissemination), which may help during these challenging times. Thank you to all members who have been kind enough to share their resources.

<https://www.nasbtt.org.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Finally, and in the spirit of collaboration, please do head over to our closed [Facebook Group](#) if you haven't already done so. We are seeing some fantastic professional conversations emerge looking at a range of issues that we are all aiming to overcome.

Kind regards,

Emma

Sent on behalf of  
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