

Initial Teacher Education Reflective - Responsive - Research-driven

Balancing Workload and Lives Policy: 2024/25

“High workload is one of the most commonly cited drivers for teachers leaving the profession and can be a disincentive for potential new teachers to join. The most effective actions to reduce workload are those that encourage better teaching – by focusing on what makes the most difference, supported by evidence, and making best use of teacher time.” (DfE, 2018).

Sussex ITE works with our student teachers and school partners to review workloads and identify essential and non-essential components. We review this policy yearly to ensure with student teachers and school partners to ensure that the demands of the course are not burdensome.

Wellbeing and managing workload are embedded within the culture and ethos of our Partnership. We consider workload from the perspective of both student teachers and school-based colleagues drawing on the DfE (2018) Addressing teacher workload in ITE guidance. We ensure that our Mentors and Professional Tutors are aware of statutory requirements concerning workload (DfE, 2018) and that they are knowledgeable about key drivers that impact on student teacher workload. This is discussed in in Mentor and Professional tutor training.

What have we done in response to the DfE workload in ITE?

ITE Curriculum Content

- Our Curriculum intent makes explicit reference to workload considerations whilst also balancing this with the realities of teaching.
- We integrate workload and well-being from the start of our provision - for instance in the interview for future entrants, to explore their understanding of resilience, awareness of why it might be important in teaching and strategies they have used in the past to resolve a challenging situation in their lives.
- We consider workload management through ITE content: across training provision we link workload to inputs on curriculum planning and resources, marking and assessment, mindful of any workload implications related to subjects (e.g. marking and English).
- Our wellbeing programme includes taught lectures on student teacher well-being, mental health and university support services, increased reflection through tutorials and personal tutor sessions, sharing workload strategies in tutor group time.

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- Enabling student teachers to understand and apply different ways of implementing formative feedback is a core component of our provision. For instance, encouraging student teachers to use a variety of feedback methods, such as verbal feedback; encouraging Mentors to help student teachers understand the assessment policy in their school. Mentors are required to co-mark in the early stages of assessment to model high quality feedback and analyse how feedback should be specific, targeted, and developmental.
- Lead Mentors also highlight ways in which student teachers can mark and provide feedback efficiently within the framework of their school's assessment and marking policy, taking into account statutory requirements including those set out by exam boards, Ofqual and the DfE.
- Our ethos subscribes to evidence based and experiential learning to determine what works in the classroom, where data is considered but is not a driver in student teachers' professional dialogue with expert colleagues around student progress. We emphasise that data should only be used when it is going to improve student outcomes and not as an end in itself.

Timetabling

- We always monitor the teaching timetables for every student two weeks after they begin placement to ensure no one is having an excessive timetable. This includes our School Choice and School Direct Salaried student teachers. We encourage our schools to make their Salaried student teachers super numerate and allow them sufficient time to build their knowledge and skills. Maximum timetabling requirements are set out clearly in our School Direct Salaried Partnership Agreement.
- Student teachers on all routes have protected non-contact time and professional development opportunities planned into their timetables, including time on curriculum planning and preparation, observation of expert colleagues, professional development, reading time for their academic assignments, etc. Workload is highlighted on each Partnership agreement.

Lesson Planning and Resources, Marking

- We have adopted a phased approach to supporting student teachers develop curriculum planning skills, including planning sequences of lessons. Curriculum planning at the early stages of teacher training may require a more structured approach, including encouraging the use of high- quality curriculum resources and textbooks in school to plan a sequence of lessons alongside Mentor co-planning. As student teachers become more secure in

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their planning, they are encouraged to evaluate existing resources to assess their quality and make decisions on which are best to use in different contexts.

- We are committed to minimising workload but student teachers still need to plan and develop excellent teaching by adapting resources and set schemes of work in school with powerful subject knowledge. It is important for student teachers to understand the mechanisms of lesson planning to prepare them to be able to plan across a range of schools (2 placement model) and for the realities of the classroom as ECTs. There is a strong focus on lesson planning across our provision with revisits made across each phase of the training.
- Student teachers access shared schemes of work and resources in their schools/departments to support their planning; necessary adaptations to these resources are expected to facilitate adaptive teaching for the students that student teachers have in their class and support the student teacher's own delivery of a lesson. This then allows student teachers to focus on evaluating published materials and schemes of work/resources.
- We consider the whole year/course and the progression a student teacher will make; this is reflected in the slow build in student teacher lesson planning across the phases. We suggest a set number or hours of the timetable to be taught by a student teacher but ensure that the Mentor is clear in the Mentor training that all student teachers will develop at their own pace and we should be able to monitor and modify their timetables to help them.
- Student teachers co-plan with Mentors in their early stages of each placement, breaking down the lesson planning process with both prior learning and the needs of students in each teaching group in mind. Some Mentors teach from the student teacher's lesson plan (full lesson or part of the lesson) and this enables student teachers to critique particular decisions they make in planning their lessons.
- Lesson plans are modelled across training and reviewed by Lead Mentors at the start of each placement to ensure that content on the plan is relevant but not over-burdensome; we can review lesson plans each week via PebblePad and as student teachers grow in confidence, reduce the amount of content on the plan (where appropriate).
- Over time, some student teachers develop more light touch planning over sequences of lessons in line with the principles found in the DfE (2018) report on planning and resources. This phased approach takes place when the mentor and the Lead Mentor agree that the student teacher can move to a one-page lesson plan in the Refining stage as teaching load increases.

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Monitoring Student teacher Workload

- Lead Mentors monitor workload for student teachers through review meetings and weekly reflections on PebblePad. We monitor workload for Mentors through our school visits and our Mentor training sessions.
- At Mentor meetings and on school visits, Mentors are asked how they are managing their student teacher workload (eg finding out how long student teachers are spending on curriculum planning, co-planning, co-marking, helping student teachers to source materials, signposting the school's shared area and helping student teachers to prioritise and manage their time effectively).
- Mentors and Lead Mentors routinely seek views and experiences of student teachers regarding any causes of stress and anxiety on the training programme and identify solutions and strategies to manage workload and develop time management skills with them. For instance, finding out how long student teachers are spending on curriculum planning, co-planning, helping student teachers to source materials, signposting the school's shared area and helping student teachers to prioritise and manage their time effectively. Collaborative teacher learning and dialogue is what is most effective, strategies tailored to the needs of individual student teachers.
- Professional Tutors, mentors and Lead Mentors ensure they share examples of managing workload/time management strategies in their school context by exploring scenarios with the student teachers with some schools using ECTs to provide examples of good practice.
- If a student teacher decides to withdraw from the course, they have an exit interview with the course lead. The exit interview assesses whether workload was a reason for withdrawal/deferral and strategies are discussed to help the student teacher to successfully complete their training.

Course Documentation

- We have streamlined our paperwork considerably to lighten student teacher workload; documentation and tasks undertaken are only those which contribute directly to improving pupil outcomes and to the effective development of the student teacher. The implementation of PebblePad means that paperwork is streamlined and not replicated and is visible to all stakeholders involved in the student teacher's development.

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Minimising Pressure Points

- We have minimised pressure points for academic assignments through our course structure. We ensure that student teachers' submitted assignments are spread across assessment weeks and with consideration of holidays and on placement expectations.
- We strategically plan the use of directed Study time to support workloads.
- We ensure a process of scaffolding for all assignments and review draft work to allow opportunity to support time management and development.
- Statutory tasks such as Prevent training and Maths competencies are completed early on in the training.
- We ensure that evidence collection against the Teachers' Standards is proportionate - focus is on quality of evidence, not quantity. A small portfolio of evidence is required for purposes of moderation across the subject cohorts which the QTS Ratification Board moderates in June.

Useful documents to refer to:

[The Education \(Health Standards\) \(England\) Regulations 2003](#)

[The Education \(School Teachers' Qualifications\) \(England\) Regulations 2003](#)

[The Education \(Specified Work and Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#)

[DfE \(2018\)](#)

[Higher Education \(Fee Limits and Fee Limit Condition\) \(England\) Regulations 2018](#)

[DfE \(2019\) Reducing Workload Supporting Teachers in the Early Stages of their Careers](#)

[DfE \(2024\) Improve workload and wellbeing for school staff](#)