Consultation response from the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)

Royal Geographical Society with IBG
Advancing geography and geographical learning

Core ITT Framework

Thank you for the invitation to respond to the work of the Independent Working Group which is developing a core ITT Framework.

The Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) is the UK learned society and professional body for geography and geographers. The Society maintains a strong overview of the discipline, its standing and practice in schools, higher education, and the workplace, including professional accreditation. We advise on, and support the advancement of, geography; the dissemination of geographical knowledge to the public, policy makers and other specialist audiences including teachers, scholars, and those involved in expeditions and fieldwork; and training and professional development for practising geographers. We have 16,000 members and Fellows and our work currently reaches more than three million people per year.

Each year the Society works with teachers and pupils from a high proportion of English secondary schools and our online educational resources receive 1 million+ 'user sessions' annually.
The Society works regularly with Schools Direct, Teach First and HEI ITT providers to provide subject specialist input into their secondary geography programmes, alongside more modest support for geography within primary ITT[1]. During this academic year we expect to work with c150 geography ITT entrants, almost one in five of the national cohort.

This consultation response, set out on the following pages, is not confidential and an official response on behalf of the RGS-IBG.

Please contact the Society if you would like any further details about our views and work.
I am responding to the consultation as the Director of the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG), on behalf of the Society as its formal response.

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[1] Canterbury Christ Church University and Canterbury Christchurch Teach First, Colchester Teacher Training Consortium, Harris Federation, St Mary's University, University of Brighton, University College London, University of Gloucester, University of Roehampton (primary), University of Sussex.

The Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) welcomes the work of this group and the opportunity to respond.

The Society is pleased to see subject knowledge placed firmly within the heart of the Teachers' Standards[2]. It is essential that teachers have a secure knowledge of their subject, including its key concerns, debates and educational value; can positively engage pupils' interest and curiosity within it; and promote high standards of learning through it.

ITT should provide the essential training to ensure our teachers are competent to teach their chosen subject and its associated skills (or in the case of primary, range of subjects), that they can articulate the contribution their subject makes to young peoples' education, and are aware of the importance of maintaining up to date knowledge and skills.

It is within ITT that a colleague, in terms of their subject focus, should:

- refine and develop (as needed) their subject knowledge to the requirements of the curriculum
- be able to contextualise the (subject) curriculum content and skills into the wider framework of the discipline, and understand the progression of subject knowledge and skills through the Key Stages
- refine and develop (as needed) their subject-specific skills (in the case of geography their map and GIS skills, fieldwork skills and data skills) and how those skills can be embedded in, and add value to, the subject content knowledge
- develop their subject specialist pedagogical knowledge and skills
- understand that knowledge continually develops and thus there is a need for continuing subject specific professional development to keep up to date; and appreciate the benefits of being part of a subject specialist community

In this way, their subject expertise and its teaching is developed appropriately to the needs of the classroom, the curriculum and their pupils, now and into the future.

Consultation Questions

1. **Are the suggested areas in the Annex (see page 6-8 of the slides) the right ones to include in a framework of ITT content? What areas are missing or could be removed?**
2. **What should be addressed or included in any of the proposed areas (especially the subject specific content of the framework)?**

The Society welcomes the inclusion of the following areas from the Carter Review annex and suggests the following amends and additions, which are shown in highlight. In particular we suggest adding two new sections.

- **Subject knowledge development** – ITT should address core content knowledge in teaching subjects with appropriate rigour, including the definition and scope of the subject, why it matters and the contribution it can make to young peoples' education, the concepts that underpin it (at both primary and secondary level); the ability to contextualise this knowledge to bring disciplinary coherence to a subject (that builds on and moves *beyond* the specific requirements of the curriculum or specifications), and the need for this knowledge to the regularly refreshed and up-dated.
- **Subject specific skills –** Alongside the need for ITT to support high standards of English and the use of mathematics in all subjects, subject specific ITT should address those skills which are relevant to a specific subject discipline. For example, within geography ITT this

[2] https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/283566/Teachers_standard_information.pdf

should include, the subject specific skills necessary to undertake geographical fieldwork[3], use mapping and Geographical Information Systems[4], and apply quantitative/data skills within the subject content of this discipline.

- **Subject-specific pedagogy** – ITT should address subject-specific issues such as: phases of progression within the subject; common misconceptions in the subject; linkages between subjects; and, most importantly, how to make it accessible and meaningful to learners at different abilities and stages of development.
- **Evidence-based teaching** – ITT should instil an evidence-based approach to teaching by inducting new teachers in where and how to access relevant research (including subject based research and scholarship), how to evaluate and challenge research findings, how this can be applied to classroom practice, as well as why using research matters.
- **Belonging to a professional subject specific community** – ITT should require trainees to become part of their respective subject specialist communities. It will be through these communities, typically the professional memberships of subject-specific Learned Society/ies or subject association/s for secondary teachers (possibly the College of Teaching for primary), that specialist subject knowledge and pedagogy can be fostered, enhanced and kept up-to-date. ITT should also engender within trainees an ongoing commitment to Continuous Professional Development and should raise trainees' aspirations towards their subsequent application for a relevant subject specific Chartered accreditation[5].
- **Professionalism** – As implied by the Teachers' Standards, ITT should cover the professional role of the teacher explicitly, covering the wider responsibilities of a teacher, including important issues such as working with parents and carers as well as other professionals, within and beyond their institutions.

3. How should the framework be implemented to ensure it improves the content and quality of ITT courses?

In implementing this framework the Society would welcome the following:

- Implementation of the Carter Review's recommendation for greater transparency of the content of ITT course programmes. We strongly agree with the proposed recommendation of the publication of the course 'syllabuses' of subject specific ITT programmes, across the whole range of providers. This should provide explicit details of the subject specific contextualisation, content, skills and pedagogy embedded in the training programme.

- The requirement that ITT course leaders (whether school or HEI based) are members of a relevant subject specific body, either a Learned Society or a subject association.

- Where available, that ITT course tutors have taken up the opportunity to have their professional subject specific knowledge and skills externally accredited. For example, this might include their attainment of a relevant subject specific Chartered accreditation, such as Chartered Geographer (Teacher)[6]. Such accreditations exist for most of the E-Bac subjects.

  The Society would also welcome enhanced opportunities for greater subject specific specialism within primary ITT programmes.

[3] Fieldwork being a statutory requirement of the KS1, 2 and 3 geography curriculum and a requirement within GCSE, AS and A Level examinations.
[4] Required at KS3 and within GCSE and A Level
[5] Which are available for teachers of English, geography, history, mathematics and science.
The Society also recognises that the College of Teaching has prospective plans for the provision of a (generic) Chartered Teacher accreditation.
[6] The Society is pleased to note that many ITT course leaders are Fellows of the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) and a number have also become accredited as Chartered Geographer (Teachers).