![Penta International logo]

International qualified teacher status (iQTS): inspection report

TES Institute

Inspection Dates: 15th to 18th December 2025

Contents

Summary of iQTS inspection and grading

Tes Institute was inspected by Penta International, a Department for Education (DfE) approved iQTS inspectorate, referred to in this document as 'the inspectorate'.

The inspection took place between 15/12/2025 and 18/12/2025.The inspectorate assessed the provider's iQTS provision to be:

Grade 1

The provision is compliant with the iQTS criteria and other core iQTS documents. The quality of leadership and management and the quality of programme design and delivery meet all requirements and exceeds in most areas.

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Purpose of iQTS inspection

The purpose of iQTS inspection is to:

- ensure that delivery of iQTS is compliant with the:
    - iQTS criteria
    - Initial Teacher Training and Early Career Framework (ITTECF)
    - iQTS Teachers' Standards
- assess and evaluate the effectiveness of:
    - provider leadership and management
    - programme design and delivery
- give independent external assurance that iQTS provision meets DfE's quality expectations and legal requirements
- protect and maintain the integrity and reputation of the quality of iQTS
- identify key strengths and where relevant, provide recommendations to the provider on what it should do to improve
- inform:
    - trainees considering undertaking iQTS
    - schools considering employing iQTS trainees or partnering with an iQTS provider as a placement school
    - parents with children attending a school staffed by iQTS trainees or iQTS holders
    - governments and organisations who have an interest in iQTS quality and standards

The inspection of a provider's iQTS provision and its subsequent grading is entirely separate from the inspection and grading of its domestic initial teacher training (ITT).

For more information, read the [International qualified teacher status (iQTS): inspection policy - GOV.UK](#) in full.

Information about this iQTS provider

Tes Institute is an initial teacher training (ITT) provider accredited by DfE to deliver qualified teacher status (QTS) programmes in England.

DfE approval for iQTS delivery is an extension of Tes Institute's domestic ITT accreditation. The provider was approved to deliver iQTS in the academic year 2023/24 and is now in its third year of iQTS delivery.

In the academic year 2025/26, Tes Institute offers iQTS training in the following countries:

- China
- Egypt
- Germany
- Japan
- Norway
- Saudi Arabia
- Singapore
- South Korea
- Spain
- United Arab Emirates

A total of 10 iQTS trainees are undertaking the primary and/or secondary iQTS programme with this provider.

This provider also offers an academic award with their iQTS programme. However, academic awards are beyond the remit of iQTS inspection, and the inspectorate cannot make any comment on the quality of this provider's academic award.

Remote inspection activities

The inspectorate's remote inspection activity included:

- meeting iQTS provider staff as part of the review and collection of inspection evidence. These included meetings with the Director of Tes Institute, Director of Programmes, Head of iQTS, Safeguarding Lead, Head of Governance and Regulation, iQTS Programme Manager and Lead Mentor

- meeting with the External Moderator

- scrutiny of the compliance grid and the full evidence base supplied by the provider

- remote inspection activities with four placement schools partnering with the provider. These activities also involved meeting iQTS trainees, iQTS mentors and other members of school staff, alongside observation of lesson delivery and mentor meetings.

Summary of inspection findings

The provider's overall grade is based on the inspectorate's assessment of the following 3 elements:

- compliance of provision with the iQTS criteria
- quality of leadership and management
- quality of programme design and delivery

Grade 1 is the highest grade that can be awarded and grade 4 is the lowest.

A full description of iQTS inspection gradings can be seen at Annex A.

Areas of strength

• Intensive training and practice (ITAP) are well designed, coherently structured and effectively delivered. Consistently positive feedback from trainees and mentors evidences a clear and sustained impact on trainee practice.

• Trainees benefit from high levels of personalised support, with timely and well-targeted early intervention provided by pathway tutors to secure progress.

• Robust quality assurance processes promote ongoing self-evaluation and continuous programme improvement, ensuring responsiveness to feedback and emerging needs.

• The programme successfully develops reflective practitioners, with trainees demonstrating a strong commitment to continuous professional improvement.

• Contextual adaptation is a clear strength, with international and local teaching contexts considered from the outset. This indicates that the programme is designed to be accessible, relevant and achievable for trainees working in diverse settings.

• Safeguarding is a clear and consistent priority, fully embedded across all aspects of the programme and well understood by trainees and staff.

• The programme is securely underpinned by pedagogical research. This demonstrates that curriculum design, delivery and assessment are informed by evidence-based practice, supporting coherence and depth in trainees' professional learning.

Areas identified for improvement

• Continue to embed recent developments in assessment and mentoring practice so that all trainees experience a consistently high standard of support. Ensure that feedback is well balanced and provides appropriate affirmation, while also offering clear and constructive challenge to further strengthen trainee progress.

• Continue to review and evaluate existing systems and processes as cohort sizes increase. This will help ensure that the quality of support, communication and oversight remains effective and responsive to trainee needs as the programme continues to grow.

Compliance of provision with iQTS criteria

The provider was compliant with the iQTS criteria.

Quality of leadership and management

1. Leadership demonstrates a strong and coherent approach across the full trainee journey, beginning with rigorous recruitment and continuing through training, assessment and recommendation for award. Entry criteria are applied consistently and securely. Qualifications are verified robustly, including the use of European Network of Information Centres (ENIC) for international equivalency, and safeguarding checks are clearly prioritised. Leaders ensure that employing schools understand and fulfil their responsibilities, with pathway tutors providing an additional layer of verification during initial visits. This creates confidence that only suitable candidates enter and remain on the programme.

2. Tes Institute's website is clear, accurate and informative. It sets out entry requirements, programme expectations and routes clearly, enabling applicants and schools to make well-informed decisions before application. Information is kept current through close alignment with the Department for

Education (DfE) guidance and sector networks, which supports transparency and confidence at the earliest stage of engagement.

3. Once trainees are enrolled, leaders maintain close oversight of progress, wellbeing and fitness to teach. Clear lines of accountability are evident between programme leaders, safeguarding leads, pathway tutors and partner schools. This enables early identification of concerns and swift escalation where needed. Evidence from inspection meetings and documentation shows that issues are addressed promptly through focused support plans or tailored adjustments to training and workload.

4. Safeguarding is a clear and consistent priority within leadership and management. Responsibilities are explicitly defined and underpinned by well-established policies and procedures. Leaders take account of the international contexts in which trainees work, ensuring that local safeguarding arrangements are understood and aligned with statutory expectations. Trainees complete safeguarding training early in the programme and revisit key expectations throughout, with understanding checked during pathway tutor visits and professional dialogue.

5. The inspection evidence shows that there is a positive safeguarding culture. Leaders work closely with schools to understand local risks and contexts and adapt support accordingly. Trainees and school leaders are confident in the provider's expertise and responsiveness, particularly when navigating differing legal and cultural frameworks internationally.

6. Trainees benefit from high levels of personalised support, which is a defining strength of the programme's leadership. Leaders place an emphasis on trainee wellbeing, recognising the demands of an employment-based international route. The weekly 'pause and prioritise' reflection within deliberate practice records provides a structured mechanism for trainees to signal pressures or concerns. Pathway tutors review this information routinely and act decisively where patterns of concern emerge. Evidence shows that interventions are proportionate, timely and personalised, ranging from informal check-ins to more formal focused support plans.

7. Leaders have taken appropriate action to strengthen the quality and consistency of mentor feedback, including revised guidance and clearer expectations around professional dialogue, target-setting and follow-up. Continued focus is needed to ensure these improvements are fully embedded across all mentors, so that every trainee benefits from a consistently balanced mix of affirmation and professional challenge that secures sustained progress.

8. Leadership demonstrates the capacity to flex and scale effectively in line with projected programme growth. This is supported by the wider infrastructure and expertise available through TES Global, which strengthens strategic planning, operational resilience and access to specialist systems.

9. Leaders should continue to refine oversight of trainee support systems to ensure consistent, transparent and sustainable personalised intervention is maintained as programme numbers grow.

10. Governance arrangements provide systematic challenge and oversight. The programme is scrutinised through internal quality assurance processes and an external moderation model that leaders engage with openly and constructively. External moderation evidence confirms a culture of honesty and responsiveness, with leaders addressing all points for improvement and embedding changes into practice rather than treating feedback as an end point.

11. Evidence from the external moderator confirms the strong leadership and quality assurance systems. Leaders are open, professional and honest. For example, they were willing to invite the external moderator to join a final assessment visit for a trainee. This provides clear assurance that leaders do not shield areas of difficulty. They use them transparently to provide timely, personalised and responsive support at the point of need. In doing so, leaders promote trainees' progress and outcomes successfully.

12. Quality assurance is continuous. Leaders use live data from pathway tutor visits, assessment documentation and stakeholder feedback to refine systems and approaches in real time. Improvements to assessment documentation, mentor guidance and learning management system functionality, demonstrate leaders' capacity to respond to evidence and strengthen consistency across the partnership.

Quality of programme delivery and design

13. Programme design is a clear strength. The curriculum is carefully mapped to the ITTECF and iQTS Teachers' Standards, with deliberate sequencing that builds from foundational aspects of teaching towards more complex practice. Early emphasis on behaviour and learning routines establishes strong classroom foundations, which are then revisited and developed through assessment, curriculum and adaptive teaching.

14. The programme is securely underpinned by pedagogical research. Curriculum design, delivery and assessment are informed by evidence-based practice, ensuring coherence and depth in trainees' professional learning. Content is carefully sequenced from foundational elements of effective teaching through to more complex aspects of curriculum, assessment and adaptive practice. This supports trainees to build secure understanding before applying learning in increasingly sophisticated ways.

15. The programme successfully develops reflective practitioners. Trainees demonstrate a strong commitment to continuous professional improvement, routinely evaluating their practice and responding constructively to feedback. This reflective approach is embedded through regular formative assessment, professional dialogue and structured opportunities to revisit and refine practice.

16. Clear expectations are in place to ensure that trainees gain teaching experience across four consecutive year groups. This enables them to understand where their teaching sits within the wider curriculum. It also helps them to see what learners have studied prior to working with the trainee, and how learning progresses as pupils move through the phase or year groups.

17. Intensive training and practice is a standout feature of the programme. ITAPs are carefully timed and sharply focused on areas known to be pivotal for trainee success. Five carefully chosen ITAPS are planned throughout the programme. ITAPS are grounded in pedagogical research. They provide opportunities for trainees to analyse and reflect on the research, observe experienced colleagues, apply research to case studies and scenarios and practice their learning in their own classroom. Throughout the ITAP, trainees reflect on their learning using a structured toolkit.

18. There is a strong coherence between ITAP learning and subsequent classroom practice. Trainees articulate clear shifts in mindset and approach, particularly in areas such as behaviour management, where practice moves from reactive to preventative. Learning from ITAPs is revisited through mentoring, observations and assessment, enabling trainees to embed and refine their practice over time.

19. Programme delivery is thoughtfully adapted to meet the needs of trainees working across diverse international settings. Leaders undertake extensive mapping of local contexts to anticipate potential barriers, such as access to special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) provision or differences in curriculum structures. Where direct experiences are limited, high-quality

alternatives are provided, including curated case studies, filmed practice and structured dialogue with specialists.

20. Trainees report that these adaptations help them make sense of the iQTS frameworks within their own contexts, rather than experiencing the programme as detached or generic. This strengthens both relevance and impact.

21. School-based training is well integrated into programme delivery. Trainees spend substantial time in classrooms, exceeding minimum expectations. They benefit from a carefully structured blend of observation, collaborative teaching and increasing responsibility. Second school placements are particularly valued. Every trainee experiences a different school or key stage. Trainees describe how these experiences broaden their understanding of different contexts and pupil needs.

22. Mentor development is a clear focus of programme delivery. All mentors engage in mentor training and education (MTED) Level 1 training, ensuring a consistent understanding of effective mentoring practice and programme expectations. Evidence from inspection discussions indicates that mentors value this provision highly. For example, one mentor expressed a strong desire for their school to continue working with the provider to progress to MTED Level 2 training. This illustrates both the impact of the training and the programme's contribution to sustained professional development in partner schools.

23. Pathway tutors play an active role in quality assuring mentoring through joint observations, review of documentation and professional dialogue. This ensures that mentoring remains focused on impact and progression.

24. Assessment is systematic, ongoing and closely aligned with the curriculum. A combination of weekly formative records, half-termly reviews and termly trackers build a detailed picture of trainee progress over time. This approach supports trainees to see themselves as reflective practitioners who continually evaluate and improve their practice.

25. The final assessment visit provides trainees with the opportunity to engage in a reflective conversation about their time on the programme, demonstrating how they have met the requirements for the award and celebrating their progress and achievements. This three-hour meeting allows the trainee to plan and structure the discussion in advance, offering a structured forum to review their professional journey.

26. Final assessment processes are thorough and well moderated. Evidence is triangulated across mentors, tutors and school leaders, providing high confidence in award decisions. External moderation confirms the rigour and validity of these processes.

Next steps

The provider will work on the areas identified for improvement in this report. DfE will assess their progress within 3 months.

The provider will be inspected again in 3 to 4 years' time.

Contact us

If you have questions about this report or any other aspect of the iQTS programme, please contact us at iqts.policy@education.gov.uk.

Glossary of terms

Term	Definition/Explanation
Initial Teacher Training and Early Career Framework (ITTECF)	The ITTECF framework sets out what trainee and early career teachers need to know, and know how to do, at the start of their careers. It captures the minimum entitlement to training for both in a single framework that will come into effect from autumn 2025. iQTS providers should continue to use the ITTECF as they did the ITT Core Content Framework (CCF, 2019) ensuring that all framework statements are covered.
DfE	Department for Education.
Inspection	The process carried out by DfE-approved inspectorates to ensure that delivery of iQTS is compliant with the iQTS criteria, the Initial Teacher Training and Early Career Framework (ITTECF) and iQTS Teachers' Standards.
Inspectorates	Independent companies who quality assure products and services in overseas and domestic education.
iQTS	International qualified teacher status.
International qualified teacher status Teachers' Standards	Standards which trainees must meet by the end of the programme to be awarded iQTS.
International qualified teacher status: criteria for providers	Statutory guidance on the criteria that providers and their partners must meet to provide iQTS.
International qualified teacher status (iQTS): inspection policy - GOV.UK	Sets out DfE's inspection policy and gives information about how inspections are carried out.
ITT	Initial teacher training.
ITT provider	Initial teacher training provider accredited by DfE to deliver training leading to QTS.
QTS	Qualified teacher status.
Working days	Monday to Friday, excluding national holidays, which will differ overseas.

Annex A: Inspection gradings

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4
The provision is compliant with the iQTS criteria and other core iQTS documents. The quality of leadership and management and the quality of programme design and delivery meets all requirements and exceeds in most areas.	The provision is compliant with the iQTS criteria and other core iQTS documents. The quality of leadership and management and the quality of the programme design and delivery meets all requirements and may exceed in some areas	The provision does not fully comply with the iQTS criteria and other core iQTS documents. The non-compliance is minor, easily rectifiable and does not have significant negative impact on the learning of trainees or their development into qualified teachers. It also does not significantly affect the quality of leadership, management or the quality of programme design and delivery.	The provision is not compliant with the iQTS criteria and all other core iQTS documents. Non-compliance has a significant negative impact on the quality of leadership and management and the quality of programme design and delivery. Recommendations are significant; therefore, reinspection will be required.