

Safeguarding Checks and Suitability Procedure for Initial Teacher Training and Education (ITTE) Trainees

1. Purpose

To commence an Initial Teacher Training and Education (ITTE) course at the University of Worcester, all trainee teachers must satisfactorily complete the required safeguarding and suitability checks. The purpose of these checks is to ensure that all trainees are suitable to work with children and young people and to meet statutory safeguarding requirements.

2. Applicant Self-Declaration

All applicants are required to complete a University of Worcester Suitability Declaration Form, disclosing any convictions, cautions, reprimands, warnings or bind-overs. Where an applicant declares relevant information, Admissions will issue a Declaration of Offences Form, enabling the applicant to provide additional contextual information. The completed form is returned to the Head of Admissions.

3. Assessment of Suitability

The Declaration of Offences Form will be reviewed jointly by the Head of Admissions and the Head of Department within the Institute of Education.

Where appropriate, advice may also be sought from the Academic Registrar and the Head of Institute before determining whether the applicant is suitable to undertake teacher training.

The decision-making process will consider the nature, seriousness, relevance and timing of any disclosed offence alongside the applicant's explanation and any supporting evidence.

4. Safeguarding Information at Interview

During interview events, applicants will be informed of:

- The professional responsibilities associated with becoming a teacher.
- The need to comply with safeguarding requirements.
- The safeguarding and suitability checks that must be completed before commencing training and placement activity.

5. DBS and Prohibition Checks

Following acceptance of an offer, applicants will be contacted by the University's DBS provider and instructed to complete an Enhanced DBS application.

Admissions will also undertake a Prohibition from Teaching check for all applicants accepting a place.

Children's barred list checks are completed as part of the DBS process.

6. Verification of Identity

Applicants must complete the online DBS application process and provide identification documentation in accordance with Home Office requirements.

Where applicants subscribe to the DBS Update Service, an existing Enhanced DBS certificate may be accepted provided that:

- The certificate relates to the appropriate workforce.
- The check is at the required enhanced level.
- The information remains current and valid.
- The name on the certificate matches the applicant's current name.

For applicants completing processes remotely, identity documents may initially be verified through a video call. Original documents must be produced when first attending the University.

7. Positive DBS Disclosures

Where the DBS process identifies information on a certificate, Admissions will review the disclosure to determine whether it corresponds with information already declared and risk assessed. Where information has not previously been disclosed, the applicant will be required to complete a Declaration of Offences Form. The suitability process outlined in Sections 2 and 3 will then be followed before any final decision is made.

8. Conditionality of Offers

Offers may become unconditional once academic requirements have been met. However, the University reserves the right to withdraw an offer where DBS, prohibition, overseas safeguarding or health checks identify concerns that render an applicant unsuitable for teacher training. Further guidance can be found within the University's Admissions Policy.

Overseas Safeguarding Checks

9. Applicants with Overseas Residence, Employment or Study

Additional safeguarding checks will be undertaken for applicants who have lived, worked or studied outside the UK for three months or more.

Where reasonably practicable, the University will obtain:

- A criminal record check or certificate of good conduct from the relevant country or countries.
- Professional conduct information from any relevant teaching regulator where the individual has taught or undertaken teacher training overseas.
- References from overseas employers or placement providers.
- Clarification regarding any gaps in employment, study or residence.

Where an overseas criminal record check cannot be obtained, the University will:

- Record the reasons why the check is unavailable.
- Obtain a self-declaration regarding criminal history.
- Seek additional references or evidence of conduct where possible.

- Complete and retain a written risk assessment before confirming a place on the course.

Placement Readiness

10. School Placement Assurance and Readiness Check (SPARC)

Trainees who have satisfactorily completed all required safeguarding checks will receive a School Placement Assurance and Readiness Check (SPARC) letter via SOLE. The SPARC letter confirms that the University has completed the required safeguarding checks and considers the trainee suitable to undertake school-based training.

11. Placements Prior to DBS Certificate Issue

Occasionally, applicants joining programmes late or recently arriving in the UK may not have received their DBS certificate before commencing their course or first placement.

In such cases:

- A children's barred list check must have been completed.
- Placement schools will be informed by the Course Leader or Partnership Lead.
- The placement school retains discretion regarding whether the trainee may commence placement activities.

Where a school or college allows a trainee to start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available, it should ensure that:

- Appropriate supervision arrangements are in place.
- All other required checks have been completed.
- A separate barred list check has been undertaken.

12. Verification at Placement

When attending a placement setting for the first time, trainees must present:

- Photographic identification.
- Their SPARC letter.
- Their original DBS certificate

Ongoing Suitability During Training

13. Duration of DBS Clearance

The DBS clearance obtained at the start of training remains valid throughout the duration of the course, including undergraduate routes extending beyond three years.

Where concerns arise or circumstances change, the University may require a further DBS check and the procedures outlined in this protocol will be followed.

14. Concerns Arising During Training

Where concerns regarding a trainee's conduct, behaviour or continued suitability arise during training, the matter will be managed in accordance with safeguarding, fitness to practise and professional conduct procedures. Where appropriate, information may be shared with relevant agencies, including the DBS and police. The University will undertake any additional checks required to confirm that the trainee is not subject to a prohibition order or equivalent restriction on teaching.

15. Professional Conduct Requirements

All trainees are required to sign the Institute of Education Professional Code of Conduct at the commencement of their programme.

Trainees must immediately disclose:

- Any arrest relevant to their suitability to work with children.
- Any caution, warning or conviction received during the course.
- Any matter that may impact on their fitness to practise or suitability to work in educational settings.

Failure to disclose relevant information may result in Fitness to Practise proceedings and may lead to withdrawal from the programme.

Allegations and Concerns Relating to Trainee Teachers

16. Managing Allegations and Safeguarding Concerns

Trainee teachers are subject to the same safeguarding expectations and standards of conduct as all other adults working with children.

Where a safeguarding concern or allegation is raised about a trainee teacher during a placement, the placement school or college will lead on gathering facts and managing the safeguarding process.

The placement school will:

- Follow its allegations management procedures.
- Seek advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where appropriate.
- Liaise with Children's Social Care and the police where required.
- Take any necessary action to safeguard children.

The University will be informed as soon as reasonably practicable and will work collaboratively with the placement provider throughout the process.

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education, the University will fulfil a role equivalent to that expected of a supply agency or personnel provider and will:

- Cooperate fully with safeguarding enquiries.
- Participate in relevant meetings and discussions.

- Share relevant information appropriately and lawfully.
- Consider any implications for the trainee's continuation on the programme.
- Provide support and guidance to the trainee during the process.

A placement must not be terminated solely because safeguarding concerns have been raised without appropriate consideration of the facts and consultation with relevant safeguarding professionals.

Where necessary, interim arrangements may be agreed between the placement school, the University and the LADO, including:

- Enhanced supervision.
- Temporary removal from placement.
- Alternative placement arrangements.
- Suspension from placement activity pending enquiries.

Any decisions will be based upon safeguarding considerations, risk assessment and professional advice.

University Tutor Visits to Placement Settings

17. Expectations for Visiting Tutors

University tutors visiting placement settings should normally be regarded as supervised visitors.

Tutors must:

- Sign in and out using the setting's procedures.
- Follow the safeguarding arrangements of the host setting.
- Wear visible University identification.
- Avoid seeking unsupervised access to children or young people.

Where regular unsupervised contact with children is anticipated, the University and placement provider should review whether additional safeguarding measures are required.

All University tutors visiting partnership settings are subject to Enhanced DBS checks, maintained in accordance with University procedures.

Record Keeping and Related Guidance

18. Retention of Information

The retention of safeguarding records, including information relating to DBS certificates, will be managed in accordance with:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- Data protection legislation.

- University record retention procedures.

19. Related Guidance

This protocol should be read in conjunction with:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (current edition).
- Initial Teacher Training (ITT) Criteria and Supporting Advice.
- University of Worcester Admissions Policy.
- Institute of Education Professional Code of Conduct.
- DBS guidance and Home Office publications.
- University Fitness to Practise procedures.
- Relevant safeguarding and partnership documentation.

For further information relating to DBS procedures, visit:

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service