Guidance for School Based Training allocations – Primary and Secondary

This policy applies to School Based Training (SBT) undertaken by those studying on the BEd and PGCE courses.

1. General
Trainees are placed in Partnership Schools that have a record of good training and support. Schools who wish to join the partnership are vetted through their Ofsted reports and discussion with the Head/Deputy head of ITE to identify their past experience of ITE. New schools: e.g. Free Schools have a visit from Head/Deputy to look at capacity to train including a compliance check.
All schools have to sign and adhere to the Partnership Agreement which outlines the responsibility of the University and Partnership schools.

2. Compliance with the standards
2.1 All trainees must be placed in at least two separate schools.
2.2 All trainees on all programmes must spend at least 120 days on SBT’s during their programme.
2.3 Secondary trainees must be placed in their appropriate subjects, covering two consecutive Key Stages.
2.4 Primary trainees must be provided with adequate experience within each of the two key phases within their pathway and have opportunities for experience across the three primary key stages.

3. Priority Criteria for placing trainees
Compliance with NCTL requirements is the overriding priority for all allocations. Other priorities are as follows:
3.1 To make reasonable allowances for any disability declared by a trainee.
3.2 To facilitate a trainee’s declared caring responsibilities for his/her own children or other family members.
3.3 To provide contrasting experiences between schools as well as achieving compliance (based on the school catchment area, and other considerations.)

4. Transport to and from schools
All trainees are given equal consideration regardless of whether or not they have their own transport. We take as much care as possible to plan practical journeys for those relying on public transport. First year BEd trainees living in Halls of Residence are usually provided with transport to their placement schools. All other trainees, whether or not living in Halls of Residence, must make their own arrangements.

5. Journey Times
We aim to place trainees at schools that can be reached within a reasonable daily journey time from the trainee’s term time address. In practice, trainees living outside the county of Hertfordshire will normally have longer journey times than those living in the county. This is because the majority of partner schools are in the county (see section 9 below.)
6. Trainees approaching schools for their own SBT

Trainees do in some cases wish to approach particular schools on their own behalf. This may, at our discretion, be acceptable under the following conditions:

6.1 The trainee has already completed at least one previous SBT.
6.2 S/he does not have any family members employed in any capacity at the prospective SBT school, nor attending the school as pupils.
6.3 S/he will not be mentored by a teacher with whom they have a pre-existing relationship eg friendship, business or residential relationship.
6.4 S/he has never been an employee of the school.
6.5 The school is in the University’s geographical partnership area.
6.6 The school teaches the National Curriculum and the teacher mentoring the trainee is him/herself a qualified teacher.
6.7 The school is not in an OFSTED category to improve (see 10.5 below.)

Trainees never ‘arrange their own SBT’. However they can introduce a school to the School of Education. If the school is not already in the Partnership a Quality Assurance assessment is carried out by the Senior Partnership Administrator. The Head of Initial Teacher Education may then agree for the school to be entered into the Partnership and for the trainee to be placed in that school.

7. Deferral SBT

These are offered in cases where a trainee needs to repeat a period of SBT, having had to withdraw from the initial SBT due to extenuating circumstances agreed by the School Assessment Panel. This trainee will either commence their SBT ‘out of step’ with the rest of their cohort, or possibly with the following year’s cohort. The School of Education will contact the trainee with progress updates until an SBT placement is found.

8. Referral SBT

A single referral may be offered in cases where a trainee needs to repeat an SBT, having failed it initially. This is subject to the agreement of the Module Board. The School of Education does not arrange referrals. A referred student is responsible for finding a school willing to offer a placement.

Before starting a referral, the trainee will be interviewed by the prospective school. If the interview is successful, s/he also has to pay a referral fee before commencing the SBT.

9. The Geographical Areas for our Schools

The majority – and particularly first SBT placements - are in the county of Hertfordshire. There are small but regular numbers offered each year in Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and the London Borough of Harrow, and occasional offers are available in Cambridgeshire, Essex and other North London boroughs.

The town of Hatfield has few schools. The majority of trainees living in Hatfield are allocated to schools in Welwyn, Stevenage, St Albans, Hemel Hempstead or Watford.

10. Quality Assurance of Schools

Current and new schools are quality assured by the following procedures:

10.1 Visiting Tutors/subject tutors evaluate the school’s support for the trainee during their regular visits. Any problems are communicated to the Senior Partnership Administrator and Head/Deputy Head of Initial Teacher Education.

10.2 Trainees and the supervisors complete evaluation forms for schools at the end of the training. Where issues are identified these are followed up by the Head/Deputy Head of Initial Teacher Education.
10.3 Schools complete evaluations of the trainee, the visiting tutor and their own training.
10.4 Where necessary, schools are deselected.
10.5 School Ofsted categories are checked weekly. Schools in the OFSTED categories: ‘Notice to Improve’ or ‘Special Measures’ are not used for school based training.

11. Equal Opportunities
Trainees may be allocated to faith schools or secular schools; we will not consider any objections on grounds of religious belief nor dress code.