

ECT:  
**PROGRAMME  
PARTICIPANT  
HANDBOOK**

2024-2025

**KEEP  
GETTING  
BETTER**



# Content

Introduction to the programme	<a href="#">03</a>
The Early Career Framework (ECF)	<a href="#">04</a>
Key terms	<a href="#">06</a>
ECT programme overview	<a href="#">07</a>
ECT programme structure	<a href="#">08</a>
ECT curriculum	<a href="#">09</a>
Self-study content	<a href="#">13</a>
ECT conferences and clinics	<a href="#">15</a>
Year 2 of the ECT programme	<a href="#">17</a>
ECT expected participation	<a href="#">17</a>
Mentor programme overview	<a href="#">19</a>
Role of the mentor	<a href="#">19</a>
Instructional coaching	<a href="#">20</a>
Mentor conferences and clinics	<a href="#">23</a>
Mentor self-study content	<a href="#">23</a>
Coaching for mentors	<a href="#">24</a>
Mentor expected participation	<a href="#">25</a>
Steplab	<a href="#">26</a>
Induction tutors	<a href="#">28</a>
How induction tutors can support an effective programme implementation	<a href="#">30</a>
How headteachers can support induction tutors	<a href="#">32</a>
Tight-but-loose	<a href="#">33</a>



# Introduction to the programme

This document is intended to support you to deliver the Early Career Framework (ECF) funded by the Department of Education (DfE). It provides an overview of how we will work together towards a high-quality implementation of the ECF in your network. This is a living document which will be updated over time to reflect our learning and improvement as a partnership, so please note any printed versions may be out of date. It contains practical details of our partnership and guidance on programme delivery, partnership working and quality assurance. It outlines what you can expect from us and when. It also details the responsibilities of you and your colleagues to make the work a success in your context. We encourage you to share the handbook with your team – to build understanding of the difference we can make together and the work it will involve.

Above all, this handbook reflects our shared commitment to work in partnership for the benefit of teachers, leaders and pupils.





# The Early Career Framework (ECF)

At Ambition Institute, we know that great teaching is the bedrock of our schools. Of all in-school factors, quality of teaching has the biggest impact on pupils (Hattie, 2003), especially for those pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g., Sutton Trust, 2011).

The ECF was published by the Department for Education in January 2019. It was written in collaboration with an expert advisory group from across the education sector and draws on the strongest available evidence on effective teaching and learning. It has been independently reviewed by the Education Endowment Foundation. The framework aims to ensure that teachers thrive in the early stages of their career, through having time and resources devoted to their professional development.

The ECF is designed to build on the knowledge acquired by teachers during Initial Teacher Training, developing expertise in five core areas: behaviour management, pedagogy, curriculum, assessment and professional behaviours. It is divided into 8 sections: one for each teacher standard. Each of these sections is composed of 'learn that' and 'learn how to' statements, to ensure that ECTs develop knowledge of both effective classroom strategies and the thinking behind them.

An example of one of the sections is below:

<b>Managing Behaviour (Standard 7 - Manage behaviour effectively)</b>	
<b>Learn that...</b>	<b>Learn how to...</b>
<p>1. Establishing and reinforcing routines, including through positive reinforcement, can help create an effective learning environment.</p> <hr/>	<p><b>Develop a positive, predictable and safe environment for pupils, by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Establishing a supportive and inclusive environment with a predictable system of reward and sanction in the classroom</i></li><li>• <i>Working alongside colleagues as part of a wider system of behaviour management (e.g. recognising responsibilities and understanding the right to assistance and training from senior colleagues)</i></li><li>• <i>Giving manageable, specific and sequential instructions</i></li><li>• <i>Checking pupils' understanding of instructions before a task begins</i></li><li>• <i>Using consistent language and non-verbal signals for common classroom directions</i></li><li>• <i>Using early and least-intrusive interventions as an initial response to low level disruption</i></li><li>• <i>Responding quickly to any behaviour or bullying that threatens emotional safety</i></li></ul> <hr/>
<p>2. A predictable and secure environment benefits all pupils, but is particularly valuable for pupils with special educational needs.</p> <hr/>	
<p>3. The ability to self-regulate one's emotions affects pupils' ability to learn, success in school and future lives.</p> <hr/>	
<p>4. Teachers can influence pupils' resilience and beliefs about their ability to succeed, by ensuring all pupils have the opportunity to experience meaningful success.</p> <hr/>	
<p>5. Building effective relationships is easier when pupils believe that their feelings will be considered and understood.</p> <hr/>	
<p>6. Pupils are motivated by intrinsic factors (related to their identity and values) and extrinsic factors (related to reward).</p> <hr/>	
	<p><b>Establish effective routines and expectations, by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Creating and explicitly teaching routines in line with the school ethos that maximise time for learning (e.g. setting and reinforcing expectations about key transition points)</i></li><li>• <i>Practising routines at the beginning of the school year</i></li><li>• <i>Reinforcing routines (e.g. by articulating the link between time on task and success)</i></li></ul>



The 'learn that' statements are knowledge based. For example, a statement in section 7 says that: "ECTs should learn that a predictable and secure environment benefits all pupils but is particularly valuable for pupils with special educational needs."

By contrast, the 'learn how to' statements are more practice-based. For example, "ECTs should learn how to develop a positive, predictable and safe environment for pupils by giving manageable, specific and sequential instructions."

Whilst the ECF is organised into sections around the Teachers' Standards, it is important to note that it is not an assessment tool and should instead be viewed as an entitlement to training.

*"The ECF is not, and should not be used, as an assessment framework. Early career teachers will not be expected to collect evidence against the ECF, and they will continue to be assessed against the Teachers' Standards only. The ECF will underpin an entitlement to training and support for ECTs and should not be seen as an additional assessment tool."*

ECF, 2019

**Read more:** [Ambition Institute's blog mythbusting the Early Career Framework.](#)





# Key terms

## Delivery partner (DP)

Organisations working with Ambition to support the delivery of the ECT programme across their network. For visiting fellows, the delivery partner will be the first point of contact to organise deployment.

---

## Early Career Framework Lead (ECF Lead)

Organisations working with Ambition to support the delivery of the ECT programme across their network. For visiting fellows, the delivery partner will be the first point of contact to organise deployment.

---

## Delivery partner lead (DPL)

Ambition Institute employee and main point of contact for delivery partners.

---

## Visiting fellow (VF)

Exceptional teachers from delivery partners who will deliver the ECT programme including clinics and conferences for ECTs and mentors. Please note, visiting fellows may also be coaches but not in all cases.

---

## Coach

Exceptional teachers from delivery partners who will deliver coaching for mentors. Please note, visiting fellows may also be coaches but not in all cases.

---

## Induction tutor

An experienced middle leader or senior leader who oversees the successful implementation of the ECT programme at a school level.

---

## Mentor

Participants responsible for developing and directly mentoring one or more ECTs.

---

## Early career teacher (ECT)

Teachers in their two-year induction period. This timeframe may be extended in some circumstances, for example, part-time working arrangements.  
**Note.** This term replaces newly qualified teacher (NQT).

---

## Conferences

One-day events which are designed to give ECTs a deep insight into key aspects of the ECF and implications for their classroom. For mentors, they are designed to give deep insight into key aspects of instructional coaching and how to best support their ECT.

---

## Orientation

An umbrella term for the support and training delivered to ECTs, mentors, visiting fellows and ECF leads at the start of their programme journey, including live sessions and asynchronous orientation materials delivered via Steplab.

**Note:** This term will be used instead of 'induction' for ECTs so as not to cause confusion with their 2-year statutory induction period.

---

## Induction

A term to describe the statutory induction period as set out by the Department for Education in their statutory guidance. As part of their statutory induction, ECTs should receive ECF-based training, and be assessed against the Teachers' standards.

---

## ECT clinic

Facilitated sessions which support ECTs build on and beyond the content of the self-study modules, and address typical teaching problems that all teachers face irrespective of context or experience.

---

## Mentor clinic

Facilitated sessions which support mentors with their coaching of ECTs throughout the programme.

---

## Coaching for mentors (CfM)

A one-to-one session between a mentor and a visiting fellow, offering bespoke feedback and guidance on instructional coaching practice.

---



# ECT programme overview

## What is the ECT programme?

The ECT programme is Ambition's programme that draws on the content set out in the Early Career Framework. We have designed a carefully sequenced programme of content, accessed through a combination of self-study modules and facilitated conferences and clinics.

The programme lasts for two years, matching the two-year induction period designed to support ECTs.

## What is the aim of the programme?

The ECT programme aims to help teachers build expertise in effective teaching and learning practices. The programme used the evidence-based content set out in the ECF to support ECTs to get off to the best possible start in their career.

## Programme principles

The ECT Programme for both mentors and ECTs has been built on evidence of how people learn new knowledge and skills and apply this to their practice. This evidence has informed principles underpinning the programme:

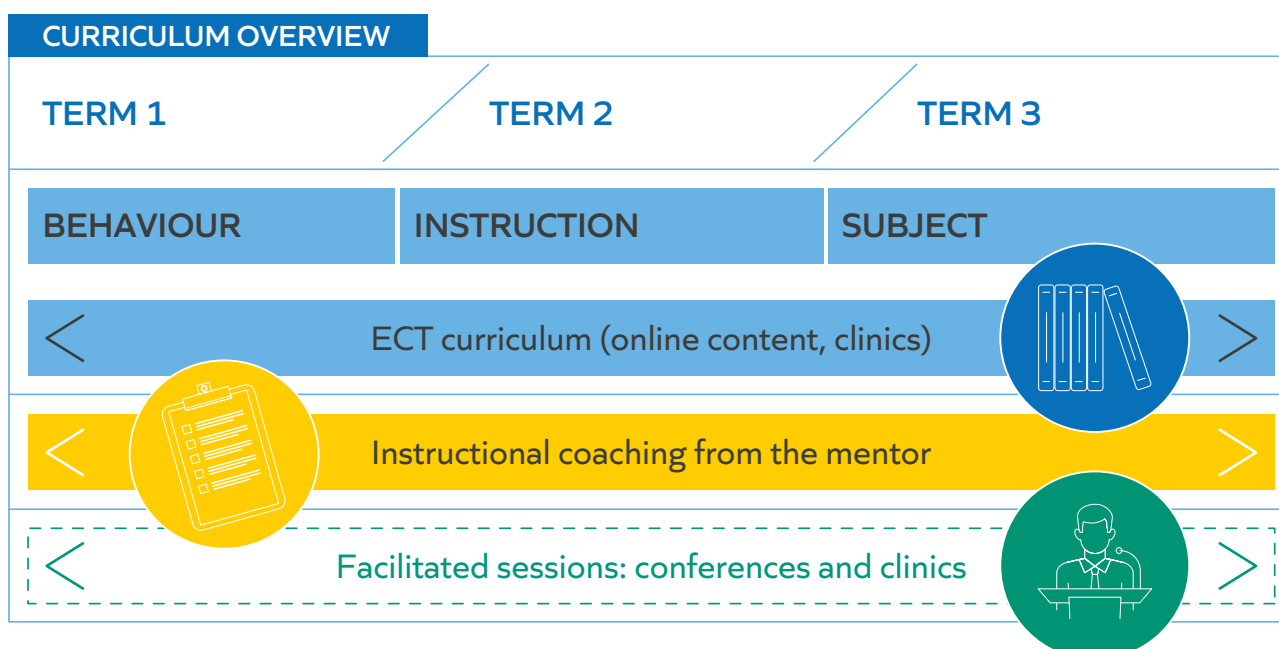
- > **Key learning broken down into small, manageable chunks** – in year 1 of the programme, each week, ECTs will work on a bite-sized aspect of their teaching (known as a step) selected in discussion with their mentor. For example, ECTs might look at a specific strategy to help them ask effective questions.
- > **Underlying features** - each example provided will have underlying features – these may be referred to as key ideas (self-study), underlying features (clinics/conferences/stretch) or success criteria (steps). These are the fundamental elements that underpin the concept (e.g. of concept high expectations to manage low level disruption) and will remain the same, no matter what context this learning is put into. For example, if we look at giving clear instructions an underlying feature will be that the instructions are manageable and sequential, this would be the same if delivering instructions to an early years class or an A-level psychology class.
- > **Clear modelling of effective practice** – during instructional coaching sessions, mentors will model the bite-size aspect (step), before ECTs practise applying the step themselves. ECTs will also see lots of different models of the strategies and approaches being taught within clinics and conferences.
- > **Multiple opportunities to return to key learning** – the aim of this programme is for ECTs to develop deep, interconnected mental models of key teaching practices and, to do that, it is important to revisit and build on key learning. ECTs will have the opportunity to revisit and deepen understanding of key learning through the self-study modules on Steplab, as well as during clinics and conferences. For example, during their ITT year, trainees may have learnt about the importance of giving clear instructions. This content will be revisited and built upon when looking at self-study modules on routines. ECTs will then return to these ideas when thinking about how to break down content when modelling content to pupils.
- > **Practice and feedback** - within each instructional coaching session, ECTs will deliberately practise and receive formative feedback on a bite-sized aspect of their teaching, so that they have an opportunity to practise the step before deploying it "live" in their classroom.
- > **Contextualised** - through the models provided by mentors during instructional coaching sessions, ECTs will be supported to see how the learning in self-study modules translates into practice.
- > **Familiar routines** - each week, ECTs will engage in weekly self-study and weekly (fortnightly in year 2) instructional coaching, to help both ECT and mentor establish a routine for engaging in professional development on the programme.

# ECT programme structure

The principal aim of Ambition's ECT programme is to build the expertise of ECTs, so that they can have the greatest possible impact on the pupils in their classrooms. The programme builds expertise through a combination of components:

- > **Self-study content.** ECTs will complete weekly self-study modules. Modules develop their knowledge of the evidence-informed content within the ECF.
- > **Instructional coaching.** Mentors run regular instructional coaching sessions with ECTs in school. Coaching sessions are carefully structured and can be tailored to their needs by considering their prior knowledge and current classroom practice.
- > **Conferences and clinics.** Facilitator run sessions help ECTs to examine key elements of practice in more detail.

The image below shows how Ambition's ECT programme is structured.



## Who will support me on the programme?

To support ECTs with their two-year training entitlement, they will have the support of an in-school mentor and an induction tutor. (Note: in exceptional circumstances the mentor/ induction tutor may be the same member of staff).

- > **Induction tutors** are responsible for ensuring that the ECT programme is implemented effectively across the school. For example, they will assign mentors to ECTs.
- > **Mentors** provide weekly support to ECTs in their schools. Every ECT has a mentor.
- > **ECTs** are the main audience for this programme. They are responsible for learning and practising applying the programme content.



# ECT curriculum

The Early Career Framework includes a substantial amount of content. Our programme has been designed to make this content manageable, and to support ECTs to embed what they have learned into their classroom practice.

## Strands

- > The programme content is organised into three strands.
- > A strand is a sequence of content that ECTs will work through with their mentor over a term.
- > Each strand has a core focus: Behaviour, Instruction, or Subject.

**Note.** it might be more helpful to think of these strand names as being mainly Behaviour, mainly Instruction and mainly Subject, as each strand includes relevant aspects of other strands, as well as important ideas and practice about teacher self-regulation.

## Modules

Each strand is divided into modules. These modules have been structured to introduce, intentionally revisit, and deepen ECTs' understanding of key ideas. This is to avoid building just familiarity with ideas – instead, the structure is to support ECTs to build a deep, rich, more interconnected understanding of these ideas over time.

Each module is comprised of content to read, content to watch and opportunities for ECTs to reflect on their own knowledge and practice.

When combined with instructional coaching and the facilitated clinics and conferences, these pieces cover all the module outcomes. For the most part, the 'learn that' statements are covered in the evidence summaries and the 'learn how to' statements are covered in the videos and instructional coaching sessions. The facilitated sessions can cover both types of statements.

It is recommended that ECTs complete the self-study modules in order, as the content is organised in a way that incrementally builds on prior learning. It is likely that target steps will often align with the self-study content covered that week; however, this does not have to be the case.

## Behaviour strand

Week	Study
1.	<b>B1 Strand fundamentals and re-contracting</b> Introduces foundational elements of behaviour and supports teachers and mentors to set up effective ways of working.
2.	<b>B2 Routines</b> Explores effective routines, the role of classroom environment and its connection to learning.
3.	<b>B3 Instructions</b> Shares role of high-quality instructions and how to plan and reinforce them.
4.	<b>B4 Directing attention</b> Examines monitoring and reinforcing expectations with praise, voice and movement(s).
5.	<b>B5 Low-level disruption</b> Focuses on managing low-level disruption to learning and how to maintain a positive environment.
6.	<b>B6 Consistency</b> Explores how teacher consistency builds a positive learning environment.
7.	<b>B7 Positive learning environment</b> Focuses on the classroom culture required for pupils to learn effectively
8.	<b>B8 Making learning manageable</b> Shares the link between success, behaviour and grain size.
9.	<b>B9 Challenge</b> Explores the role challenge plays in pupil behaviour.
10.	<b>B10 Independent practice</b> Considers the link between successful independent practice and expectations, routines and feedback.
11.	<b>B11 Pairs and groups</b> Focuses on how to make paired and group work successful through expectations, routines and culture.
12.	<b>B12 Upholding high expectations</b> Examines how to continually reinforce established foundations.



## Instruction strand

Week	Study
------	-------

- I1 Strand fundamentals and re-contracting**  
Introduces foundational elements of instruction and supports teachers and mentors to set up effective ways of working.

---

- I2 Identifying learning content**  
Focuses on identifying essential concepts and considering their role in planning and assessment.

---

- I3 Instruction for memory**  
Considers how teaching can support lasting change in pupils.

---

- I4 Prior knowledge**  
Examines the implications prior knowledge and misconceptions have on instruction.

---

- I5 Teacher exposition**  
Explores the challenge(s) when introducing new information and how modelling, explanations and scaffolds can help.

---

- I6 Adapting teaching**  
Focuses on how effective instruction requires adapting teaching to support and challenge all pupils.

---

- I7 Practice, challenge and success**  
Examines what constitutes purposeful practice and how practice is an integral part of effective teaching.

---

- I8 Explicit teaching**  
Explores explicit teaching across a lesson/unit of learning.

---

- I9 Scaffolding**  
Focuses on how scaffolds and worked examples can help pupils and how to gradually remove them.

---

- I10 Questioning**  
Looks at how effective questions can deepen and extend pupil thinking.

---

- I11 Classroom talk**  
Explores how classroom talk can help to develop pupils' mental models.

---

- I12 Feedback**  
Examines the link between teacher questions, feedback for pupils and responsive instruction.

---






## Subject strand

Week	Study
1.	<b>S1 Strand fundamentals and re-contracting</b> Introduces foundational elements of subject and supports teachers and mentors to set up effective ways of working.
2.	<b>S2 Planning backwards from learning goals</b> Focuses on the importance of subject excellence and starting with what teachers want pupils to learn.
3.	<b>S3 Types of knowledge</b> Looks at the differing nature of subjects, the importance of mental models, knowledge and identifying core knowledge within subjects.
4.	<b>S4 Gaps and misconceptions</b> Explores the need to identify and respond to gaps in pupil knowledge and pupil misconceptions.
5.	<b>S5 Acquisition before application</b> Explores the role secure relevant knowledge can play prior to application and how to build and check for high success rates.
6.	<b>S6 Promoting deep learning</b> Focuses on ensuring deep, hard thinking about key ideas that develop pupil mental models and flexible knowledge.
7.	<b>S7 Developing pupils' literacy</b> Explores the varying nature of literacy across and within subjects/phases and the important role of vocabulary, comprehension and oral literacy.
8.	<b>S8 Sharing academic expectations</b> Examines the links between challenging academic expectations, purposeful planning and breaking down and modelling content.
9.	<b>S9 Assessing for formative purposes</b> Examines the link between learning goals, formative and summative assessments.
10.	<b>S10 Examining pupils' responses</b> Looks at drawing inferences, identifying misconceptions and getting pupils to elaborate as part of formative assessments.
11.	<b>S11 Adapting lessons to meet pupil needs</b> Explores the ways formative assessments can provide inferences to adapt teaching to meet the needs of their pupils.
12.	<b>S12 Feedback</b> Focuses on aspects of effective feedback so that pupils can put it into action to improve their understanding.



# Self-study content

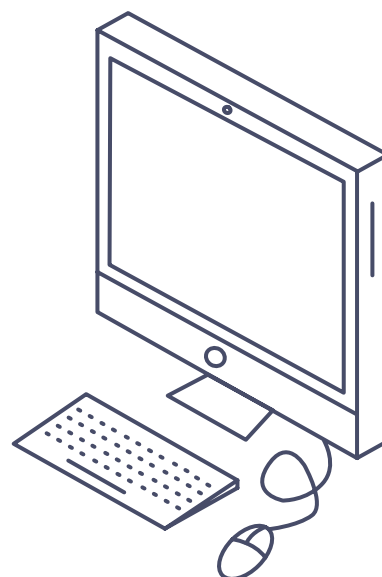
Self-directed study materials are designed to develop ECTs' knowledge of the content in the ECF. The format and structure of each self-study module will be the same each week. We want to support ECTs to develop effective habits and routines for their professional development. Knowing what to expect each week can help.

Each self-study module includes the following:

- > An introductory video and reflection task (10 minutes)
- > An evidence summary, example video and quiz (20 minutes)
- > A symptom checker and final reflection task (15 minutes)

## A note on self-study

Year one of the programme has been designed with the intention that ECTs will complete one module per week. However, we understand that because schools are busy places, occasionally a week of self-study may be missed. If this happens, ECTs can pick up where they left off in the following week.



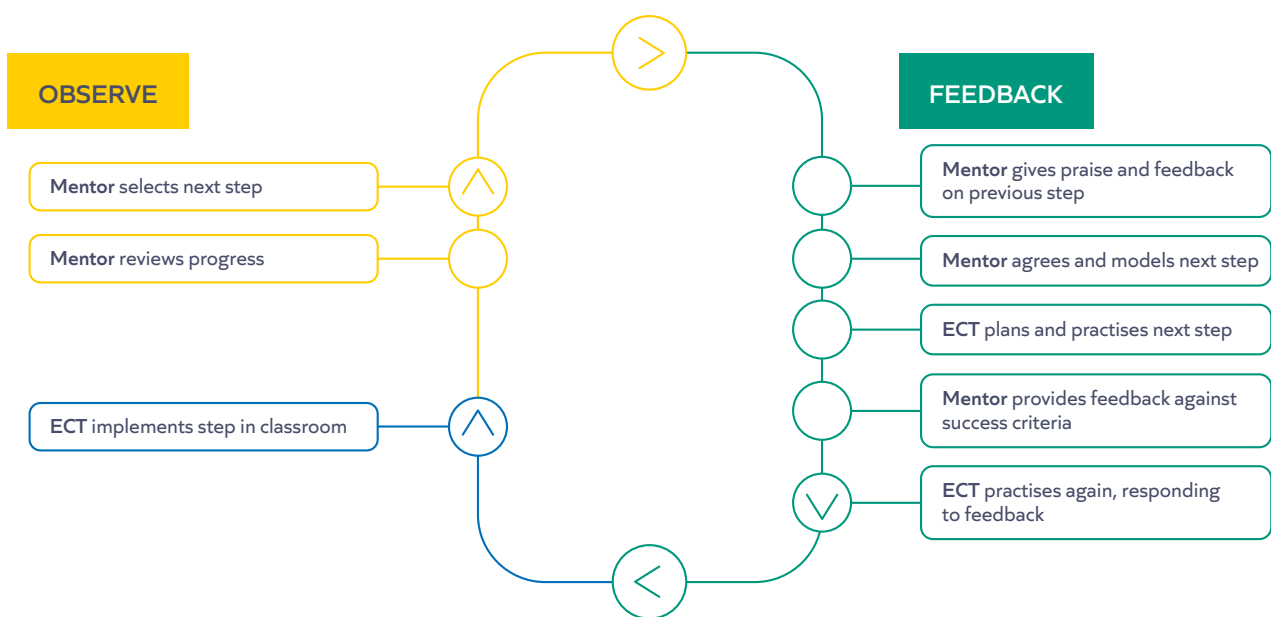


## Instructional coaching

In ECTs' first year on Ambition's programme, they will take part in a coaching session with their mentor each week (this will become fortnightly in year 2). ECTs may have encountered some forms of coaching already. Ambition's programme uses a particular model of coaching called instructional coaching. Instructional coaching sessions focus on a bite-sized area of teaching and offer ECTs the chance to practise and receive feedback from their mentor on this specific area. These sessions are designed to help ECTs apply insights from their self-study modules within their classroom practice.

The collaboration between the ECT and their mentor allows ECTs to sustain their development over time through dedicated coaching from an experienced practitioner. Having a mentor as a point of contact is an invaluable approach to ECTs continuing their professional development, allowing ECTs to draw on mentors' deep subject knowledge and prior experiences.

Mentors will drop in to see ECTs teach once a week. During the instructional coaching session, mentors will give feedback and praise an aspect of the ECTs' teaching and work with their ECT(s) to choose a precise area to develop. Mentors will provide a model, discuss the underlying theory and help ECTs to practise the area of development within the coaching session.



# ECT conferences and clinics

Over the course of the two-year programme, ECTs will attend 3 conferences and 6 clinics. These inputs will be facilitated.

## Year 1

- > **Conference 1:** The science of learning and effective of planning
- > **Clinic 1:** High expectations
- > **Conference 2:** Adaptive teaching
- > **Clinic 2:** Thinking hard
- > **Clinic 3:** Effective feedback

YEAR 1						
	AUTUMN 1	AUTUMN 2	SPRING 1	SPRING 2	SUMMER 1	SUMMER 2
Facilitated content (face to face or online)	Conference 1	Clinic 1	Conference 2	Clinic 2	Clinic 3	
Online content	Behaviour		Instruction		Subject	
Instructional coaching	Weekly instructional coaching					

## Year 2

- > **Conference 3:** Professional development and sustained wellbeing
- > **Clinic 4:** Working with others
- > **Clinic 5:** Literacy
- > **Clinic 6:** Implementation

YEAR 2						
	AUTUMN 1	AUTUMN 2	SPRING 1	SPRING 2	SUMMER 1	SUMMER 2
Facilitated content (face to face or online)	Conference 3	Clinic 4	Clinic 5		Clinic 6	
Online content	Access to all year 1 self-study modules and a diagnostic tool					
	Access to new stretch content					
Instructional coaching	Fortnightly instructional coaching					



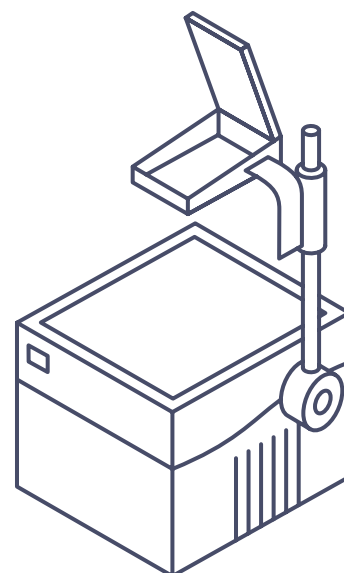
## Conferences

All three conferences will be full day, face-to-face events. Conferences are designed to complement and develop ECTs' knowledge of the content covered in the study modules. They will provide an important opportunity for ECTs to network with each other.

## Clinics

Clinics will last for 90 minutes and will typically be held online.

In each clinic, ECTs will explore a typical teacher problem, presented in the form of a question. For example, Clinic 1 asks: 'how can teachers prevent and respond to low level disruption to create a positive, predictable and safe learning environment?' The facilitator will introduce 4-5 underlying features that will work in all contexts to support them to overcome this typical problem. ECTs will then read, analyse and discuss 3-4 scenarios in which these underlying features are exemplified. The scenarios are fictional but realistic representations of classrooms in different contexts, subjects and phases. By identifying, and analysing the impact of, the underlying features in a range of contexts, ECTs should be better supported to understand what good practice looks like in their own classrooms.





# ECT expected participation

In year 1 ECTs are expected to:

- > Engage in weekly self-study
- > Engage in weekly instructional coaching
- > Attend 2 conferences
- > Attend 3 clinics

## Year 2 of the ECT programme

The Early Career Framework entitles ECTs to two years of training and support. Year 2 of our programme has been designed to enable ECTs to take increased responsibility for their professional development and so provides a less frequent and more flexible curriculum.

- > ECTs will receive a 5% timetable reduction. This is fully funded by the DfE.
- > Coaching should follow a fortnightly rhythm.
- > ECTs should start by completing any self-study modules not accessed during year 1.
- > ECTs will then use a diagnostic tool to identify possible areas of the self-study content which they may want to revisit. This may involve deepening mental models by exploring the further reading linked to each module.
- > At the start of half term 2, ECTs will have access to stretch modules. The content of these modules complements and develops that of each of the three strands.
- > ECTs will attend one conference and three clinics during year 2 of the programme.

YEAR 2 CURRICULUM OVERVIEW		
TERM 1	TERM 2	TERM 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete outstanding year 1 self-study modules</li> <li>• Complete year 2 Diagnostic Quiz</li> <li>• Create self-study action plan with mentor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revisit year 1 self-study content to strengthen knowledge and practise</li> <li>• Complete further reading suggested by year 2 Diagnostic Quiz and/or mentor</li> <li>• Complete Stretch content suggested by year 2 Diagnostic Quiz and/or mentor</li> </ul>	
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <span>&lt;</span> <span>Fortnightly self-study (online content)</span> <span>&gt;</span> </div>		
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <span>&lt;</span> <span>Fortnightly instructional coaching from mentor</span> <span>&gt;</span> </div>		
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <span>&lt;</span> <span>Facilitated sessions: conferences and clinics</span> <span>&gt;</span> </div>		



# ECT expected participation

In year 2 ECTs are expected to:

- > Complete the year 2 diagnostic tool
- > Engage in fortnightly self-study, including completing any outstanding modules from year 1, revisiting year 1 self-study content and engaging with further reading and stretch content as appropriate
- > Engage in fortnightly instructional coaching
- > Attend one conference
- > Attend three clinics





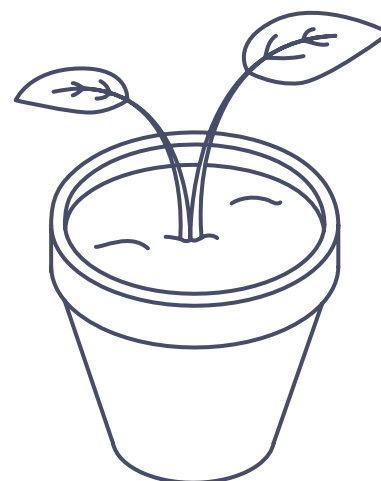
# Mentor programme overview

Mentors are entitled to 2 years of their own professional development alongside that of the ECT. This programme will enable mentors to develop their knowledge and skills in relation to the evidence base which underpins the ECF, effective instructional coaching and how to best support teachers in their first two years to develop their expertise.

AMBITION INSTITUTE MENTOR PROGRAMME 24 - 26						
	YEAR 1			YEAR 2		
	AUTUMN	SPRING	SUMMER	AUTUMN	SPRING	SUMMER
Facilitated content (face to face or online)	Conference 1 1 day	Clinic 90 minutes	Conference 2 1 day	Clinic 90 minutes		
	< Coaching for mentors (optional) >					
Online content	Year 1 Orientation 1 hour	Mentoring and coaching development area (optional)		Year 2 Orientation 45 min	Mentoring and coaching development area (optional)	
Instructional coaching	Weekly instructional coaching of an ECT with access to video models, evidence summary and instructional coaching scaffolds and steps 36 hours (1 hour per week)			Fortnightly instructional coaching of an ECT with access to video models, evidence summary and instructional coaching scaffolds and steps 18 hours (1 hour per fortnight)		

## Role of the mentor

Mentors support ECT development through weekly instructional coaching sessions. During these sessions, mentors will play an important role in contextualising ECTs' learning from the self-study modules.



# Instructional coaching

## What is instructional coaching?

At Ambition, we've chosen to use instructional coaching on the ECT programme, because it has a strong evidence base (Sims, 2019) for helping teachers make lasting improvements to their practice. In particular, it helps ECTs to overcome the 'knowing-doing gap' – the difference between learning a new technique and being able to use it regularly in their classroom.

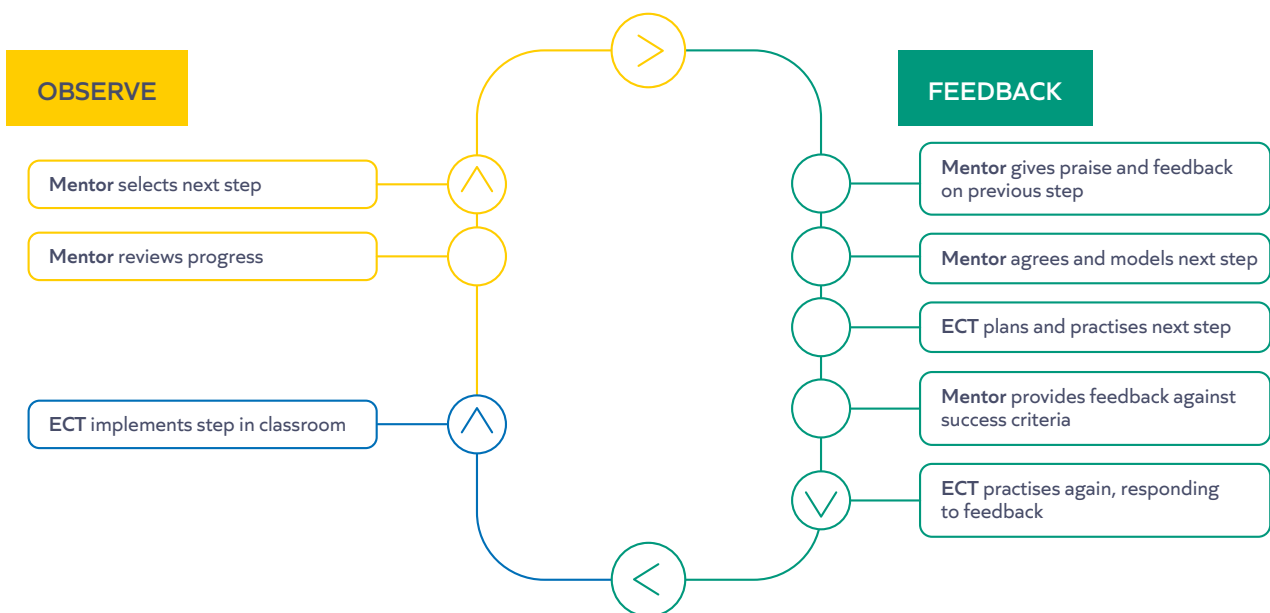
Instructional coaching is a weekly cycle of observation, practice and feedback focused on incremental improvements.

Instructional coaching is designed to work alongside the self-study modules accessed by ECTs each week. Our programme is used by teachers in all phases and subjects and is therefore designed to support ECTs to consider how the content of each module relates to their own specific practice. In each self-study module, we identify key ideas within the topic – ECTs and mentors should focus on these when considering how the content relates to their own classroom practice, since they are relevant regardless of context. Instructional coaching also plays an important role in contextualising the programme content for ECTs. During coaching sessions, mentors will use live models and offer feedback adapted to the subject and phase of their mentee.

## What does the instructional coaching cycle involve?

The instructional coaching cycle is split into two main components: observation and feedback. Observations are where mentors will see their ECT(s) teaching. They are low stakes and will help to guide the feedback sessions. Feedback sessions are a time for mentors to work with their ECT(s) to develop ECTs' understanding of a particular area through modelling, practice and feedback.

Instructional coaching will follow this cycle:





## Observation

Each week, mentors will observe their ECT teach for about 15 minutes. During the observation, the mentor will reflect on the ECT's progress towards their previous step and choose a single, bite-sized step to work on.

Mentors choose steps which build on ECTs' prior knowledge from their self-study so far. This helps ECTs to apply the steps thoughtfully and not just mimic techniques. The self-study content is carefully sequenced to build in depth and complexity, giving ECTs firm foundations to build on and develop mastery.

Mentors will log their observations by clicking on 'Observe' in the 'Coach' section of Steplab.

## Feedback

Each week, mentors and ECTs will meet for 45 minutes. Approximately 30 minutes of the meeting is used for instructional coaching, specifically modelling, practice and feedback.

Mentors begin by providing one piece of targeted feedback and praise on the ECT's progress towards the previous step. Next, the mentor shares the new step with the ECT and together they discuss why this step has been selected and how it is likely to help pupils.

The mentor then models how the step might look in the ECT's own context. The aim of the model is to help the ECT know exactly what a technique will look like in their own classroom. The model should build on the theory the ECT has previously learnt from their self-study. Steps will either be performance-based, task-based, or a combination of the two.

Finally, the mentor and ECT work together to practise the step. Importantly the ECT will practise more than once, with the mentor providing feedback on how to improve each time. This cycle of feedback and practice is often referred to as 'deliberate practice'. This practice helps overcome the 'knowing-doing gap' and sets the ECT up to put the new step into action.

Either during, or at the end of, the coaching session, mentors will click on 'Feedback' to log the details of the instructional coaching meeting. This can be found in the 'Coach' section of Steplab.

## Support

Mentors will be thoroughly supported to lead instructional coaching during Mentor Conference 1. Mentors can also find further guidance on instructional coaching in the Mentoring and Coaching Development Area section of the course library.

Important: we know that effective mentoring is not just about instructional coaching. We know that mentors need to provide other forms of guidance such as reassurance and pastoral support. Instructional coaching is designed to become more efficient over time – whilst to begin with it may take 30 minutes or more of the meeting, as mentors and ECTs become used to the process, it will require a smaller proportion of time. This will allow mentors more time to devote to other important aspects of support.



## **The impact of instructional coaching on ECTs**

Instructional coaching is well suited to helping ECTs. It provides careful structure and guidance which can help accelerate teachers' development at the start of their careers (Kraft and Blazar, 2018).

Deliberate practice of a precise step is a well-evidenced way of building expertise in teaching and beyond (Grossman, 2009). Focusing on a bite-sized step means that ECTs can also see tangible progress in their classrooms.

## **Similarities and differences between instructional coaching and other approaches**

There are lots of similarities between instructional coaching and other mentoring or coaching approaches.

- > Like other approaches, instructional coaching is still focused on helping ECTs improve their teaching practice.
- > Like all mentoring and coaching, instructional coaching only works when it builds on a strong relationship between the mentor and the ECT. Ambition's ECT programme prioritises building and strengthening these relationships over time.
- > ECTs' learning is more likely to stick and avoid misconceptions when it builds on prior knowledge. The carefully structured curriculum of ECT self-study helps ensure that this happens.
- > Many mentoring and coaching approaches involve explaining new techniques and how they work – by using modelling, instructional coaching also places this at the forefront of its approach.
- > Mentoring is not just about helping teachers get better, it's also about pastoral care and support. Instructional coaching is a significant element of our ECT programme, but it is not everything – it is important for mentors to take time for pastoral support as well.

## **Equally, there are some differences between the approaches:**

- > Instructional coaching is centred around the mentor using their expertise and experience to support ECTs to develop. This means mentors provide explicit guidance, rather than leaving ECTs to work out the answer themselves. This is because ECTs are at the beginning of their career, and this allows them to benefit from the mentor's wealth of knowledge.
- > Over time, the ECT will be able to take more and more ownership of their learning, but at least at the start of the programme their mentor will decide the weekly focus. This is to scaffold and support ECT's learning until they have developed greater expertise.
- > Self-reflection is an important element of all teachers' practice, but accurate reflection is difficult due to the messy feedback loops involved in teaching – it is hard for teachers to identify what to change in their classroom, much less whether a change is having the desired impact. This means that although ECTs will be supported to reflect on their practice, this reflection will not be what drives the weekly focus – at the beginning of their careers ECTs are more likely to make effective changes with careful guidance from their mentors.



# Mentor conferences and clinics

Over the course of the two-year programme, mentors will attend 2 conferences and 2 clinics. These are events run by an expert facilitator.

## Year 1

- > **Conference 1:** Instructional coaching and supporting your ECT
- > **Clinic 1:** Effective modelling and feedback
- > **Conference 2:** Adapting the coaching model

## Year 2

- > **Clinic 2:** Providing challenge

## Mentor self-study content

Mentors are supported to continue to develop their knowledge and skills in relation to instructional coaching, the ECF and the ECT programme through engaging with self-study content on Steplab. This content can be found in the Mentoring and Coaching Development Area and includes 12 modules.

1. **Introduction**
2. **Contracting the mentor-ECT relationship**
3. **Observe - lesson observations**
4. **Observe - setting steps**
5. **Feedback - praise progress**
6. **Feedback - modelling**
7. **Feedback - setting up practice**
8. **Feedback - cycle of practice and feedback**
9. **ECT induction assessment**
10. **Full instructional coaching conversation**
11. **Contextualisation**
12. **Providing challenge**



## Coaching for Mentors

Coaching for Mentors (CfM) is a training offer exclusively aimed at mentors on the ECT programme.

### Structure and content

The basic structure of CfM is a 1:1, hour long coaching meeting between a mentor and a coach (usually drawn from the delivery partner's visiting fellow pool and trained specifically to be a coach by Ambition). The session aims to support and develop the mentor's ability to coach their ECT in their weekly/fortnightly feedback meetings.

We have prepared resources for these 1:1 sessions, which relate to the developmental steps we have created for mentors. These steps relate to the following areas of instructional coaching:

- > Reviewing ECT progress
- > Selecting the next step
- > Giving praise and feedback
- > Sharing the next step
- > Planning and sharing a model
- > Facilitating ECT practice and re-practice

CfM is an 'optional' strand of the ECT programme – delivery partners (DP) are not required to run it if they feel it is not appropriate. As many or as few sessions as the DP requires can be set for their programme. As a basic recommendation, Ambition would suggest two sessions in year 1 and one session in year 2.

### Target demographic

Delivery partners have a lot of flexibility in deciding which mentors to target CfM towards. Here are some suggestions, but DPs are fully in charge of making this decision.

#### Every mentor

One option would be to try and ensure that every mentor on the programme gets access to one or more CfM sessions. This would benefit the programme in that DPs would know each mentor had been given 1:1 support tailored to their level of need. This approach would require the largest capacity both in terms of logistics and delivery by the trained coaches.

#### Mentors who need support

Delivery partners have a lot of flexibility in deciding which mentors to target CfM towards. Here are some suggestions, but DPs are fully in charge of making this decision.

#### Mentors volunteer themselves

A final suggestion might be to offer CfM to mentors to request at their own discretion.



## Mentor expected participation

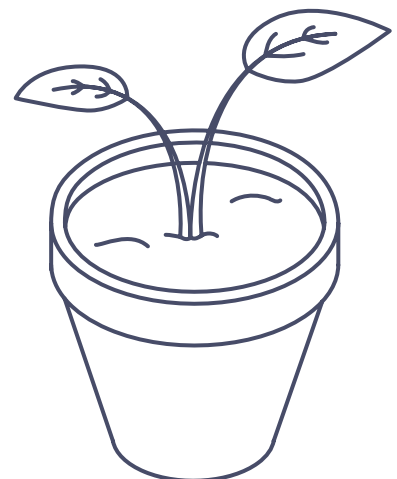
In year 1, mentors are expected to:

- > Observe their ECT for 15 minutes, then lead an instructional coaching meeting for 45 minutes.
- > Engage in self-directed study, for instance working through the modules in the Mentoring and Coaching Development Area on Steplab or reading the ECT evidence summaries.
- > Attend two conferences and one clinic.

In year 2, mentors are expected to:

- > Fortnightly, observe their ECT for 15 minutes, then lead an instructional coaching meeting for 45 minutes.
- > Engage in self-directed study, for instance working through the modules in the Mentoring and Coaching Development Area on Steplab.
- > Attend one clinic.

If a DP is running CfM then mentors are expected to participate in this too.





# Stemplab

## What is Stemplab?

Stemplab is our online professional learning and coaching platform, designed specifically to help teachers develop by drawing on the best available evidence about how teachers learn. Stemplab houses all the online content for ECTs and mentors. It also scaffolds the instructional coaching sessions held between ECTs and mentors.

- > Stemplab gives ECTs access to all the resources they need to improve their practice. It provides evidence-informed content in bite-sized weekly modules.
- > ECTs will also receive personalised steps set by their mentor. These form the focus of instructional coaching, helping them develop expertise, build effective teaching habits and keep getting better.

## How does Stemplab support mentors?

- > Stemplab provides a scaffold for mentors to efficiently and easily record weekly observations, identify and set steps and plan and deliver instructional coaching sessions.
- > Stemplab also gives mentors access to the same self-study materials as ECTs, allowing them to engage in well-informed and meaningful discussions.
- > Mentors also have access to bite-sized online courses to help them deepen their understanding of instructional coaching and of the programme in general.

## How does Stemplab support induction tutors?

- > Stemplab enables induction tutors to track the engagement of their mentors and ECTs.





## Support with Steplab

Both ECTs and mentors will be able to access Steplab when they have completed their Steplab Access Form on My Ambition. At any point during the year, mentors and teachers can access 'how to' guides within the support section of Steplab. Mentors also have access to an instructional coaching tour and simulator, allowing them to practise using the platform ahead of running instructional coaching sessions. At the beginning of each term, Ambition will run additional online sessions to support mentors, teachers and induction tutors in using Steplab. The dates and times of these sessions will be communicated via the DP digest for DPs to share with their networks.





# Induction tutors

## The role of the induction tutor

The induction tutor (IT) is the member of staff within each school with overall responsibility for putting the ECT programme into action. This will usually be a member of the senior leadership team. The IT drives engagement with our ECT programme in their school, for both mentors and teachers. Key to this role is supporting and protecting the statutory entitlements of ECTs and their mentors in line with the ECF reforms and statutory guidance.

For Ambition's ECT programme to be successfully embedded within a school, there are several enabling conditions which are required, and ITs play an essential role in ensuring these conditions are in place:

### Time

We know that time is a precious resource which is in short supply for everyone. The main vehicle of this programme is instructional coaching. Instructional coaching has the potential to have real impact on teachers but this is only going to happen if mentors and teachers have sufficient time allocated to be able to engage in this training. In accordance with the statutory guidance, teachers are required to receive a 10% reduction in their timetable in their first year and a 5% reduction in their second. This time off timetable should be used to specifically enable ECTs to undertake activities in their induction programme (DfE, 2021). It is also vital that the mentors have enough time to carry out their role effectively. On this programme, it is recommended that mentors have one hour off timetable, or equivalent, to support one ECT.

### Support from SLT and head teacher

Having sufficient time allocated on teachers' and mentors' timetables is also reliant on support from the senior leadership team (SLT) and the headteacher. Induction tutors will advocate for the mentors and teachers, championing the programme within their school. Communicating the programme rationale and the benefits of the programme to these stakeholders will help ensure that they can support the implementation of the programme.

### School culture

Teachers thrive and perform better when working in supportive environments. The school culture will have an impact on how teachers and mentors view this programme. Having the support of SLT will help ensure that the programme is recognised as a priority within the school, helping ECTs and mentors feel valued and supported within their school. For example, if SLT members communicate the great work which mentors are doing as part of their instructional coaching sessions, this will help the mentor feel valued in their role.

### Mentor understanding

Mentors are the beating heart of the programme. It is important for mentors to have developed mental models of what expert teaching is and to develop their mental models of effective mentoring, including instructional coaching. Mentors need to take the learning from the programme, contextualise it for their teachers and support the teachers to apply the theory in their classroom practice. Induction tutors, need to understand the mentor role in depth so that support can be provided to them, helping them to understand their role and the instructional coaching process.

## Induction tutors' use of Steplab

An important part of the IT role is tracking participant progress and encouraging engagement on Steplab. This can be done for both ECTs and mentors. There are several videos in the support section on Steplab that have been created for ITs to use to develop their skills and understanding in using Steplab engagement tracking. The breakdown below gives more detail of how this may be accomplished:

Induction tutors can:

- > Track engagement of their ECTs and mentors in their school using the 'Lead' tab. Within this tab, advanced reporting tools can be found which will clearly show an overall percentage of engagement for the period, and a more granular break down with specifics on who has completed engagement.
- > Where more than one cohort is present within a school, or multiple schools are being led by one IT, Steplab allows for comparisons to be made between schools/cohorts and for trends within and across schools to be identified and analysed. For example, the IT may choose to monitor the pattern between mentor and ECT engagement. Further guidance here: [\(Advanced reporting function\)](#)
- > Tracking course progress allows an IT to see where, within the prescribed course content, an ECT is currently focusing. This is useful to support any drop-ins or observations they complete as well as monitoring ways in which ECTs are engaging. For instance, are ECTs regularly accessing course content, or leaving it all to the end of term? Steplab course tracking guidance here: [Tracking course completion for participants on programmes](#)
- > Induction tutors should be tracking event attendance of their participants, encouraging regular attendance and challenging non-attendance. Induction tutors can do this via the 'Participant Events' button in the events tab of My Ambition. If a participant misses an event and is set catch up content, ITs can check if participants have completed this study using Steplab.
- > Induction tutors can view the learning materials that ECTs and mentors have access to by going to their 'Library' tab and looking at the courses. They may do this to better understand the content that ECTs and mentors are engaging with, to upskill themselves, and to be able to participate in meaningful discussions with participants around their current foci.
- > If the mentor is on leave for longer than 3 weeks, we advise that a different, existing mentor takes on the responsibility for that ECT or a new replacement mentor is registered by the IT on the DfE portal. In this instance, the new replacement mentor will start their own two-year, journey on the programme and will not need to complete catch up or be assigned to the same cohort as the ECT.
- > Ambition offers termly Steplab training sessions for ECTs, mentors and ITs. The dates and links to these sessions will be sent out to you via your DP. There are also pre-recorded training videos that you can request from your DP to support you in your use of Steplab.





# How induction tutors can support an effective programme implementation

## Flexibility and contextualisation

For further details on aspects of the programme that can be flexed, please refer to **the tight but loose section p.33.**

## Contextualising learning on Steplab

We know that professional development is effective when it is contextualised for the teacher. It is a key role of the mentor to ensure that the learning the ECT does weekly in their self-study is then contextualised. This is so that ECTs can ensure they are using their new knowledge in their classroom practice. In this regard, ITs, should support their mentors to effectively contextualise the learning, sharing their experience and expertise in this area.

To support work on contextualisation, please access the 'contextualising' module in the Mentor and Coaching Development Area on Steplab.'

## Year 2 of the programme

For year 2 of the programme to be run effectively in school, ITs should work with their mentors and ECTs to ensure they are accessing the diagnostic tool on Steplab. Once the diagnostic tool has been accessed by ECTs with their mentors, it is the role of the mentor to discuss the results of this and ensure the ECT has an action plan created for their second year of the programme. This plan will identify which areas of self-study the ECT is going to re-visit across the academic year. For ITs, it is good practice to check that ECTs and mentors have been through this process.

## Quality assuring mentor provision

For the ECT programme to run effectively in a school, the mentor plays an integral role. Induction tutors should quality assure the mentor provision in their school by meeting with mentors regularly to check their understanding of the programme's fundamental design principles and programme expectations. In particular:

- > Understanding and commitment to **instructional coaching** and **deliberate practice**.
- > Check that action steps are not being repeated several times – indicating that the coaching has not been effective yet.
- > Observing coaching sessions and giving constructive feedback to mentors.
- > Access the **coaching for mentors training** that Ambition provides so that they can coach their mentors as effectively as possible. Delivery partners can provide the information required to access this training.



## Overseeing end to end ECF entitlement

The IT will usually be responsible for the end to end ECF entitlement for the ECTs in their school. There are several organisations involved in this and therefore it's important that the IT knows which organisation is responsible for what.

An **Appropriate Body (AB)** is the organisation that quality assures statutory induction for ECTs. Through quality assurance, the AB assures itself that:

- > Relevant persons are aware of, and are capable of, meeting their responsibilities for monitoring support and assessment during teacher induction
- > Monitoring, support, assessment and guidance procedures in place are fair and appropriate

An IT would need to contact the AB regarding (but not limited to) the following:

- > Start date of the ECT's induction
- > Whether the ECT works part time or full time
- > Whether the ECT needs their induction shortened or extended
- > Whether there are concerns about the ECT's ability to complete the induction

**Ambition Institute** – is responsible for the design and quality assurance of the ECT programme. We should be contacted at [ectsupport@ambition.org.uk](mailto:ectsupport@ambition.org.uk) when:

- > An ECT or mentor is having difficulty accessing Steplab (our online learning platform)
- > An ECT or mentor cannot access the relevant materials for the programme they are meant to be registered on

**Delivery partner** – delivery partners are responsible for the day to day running of the ECT programme in their network. They run all required training events such as conferences and clinics and may also offer additional sessions such as IT training. They should be a first port of call for all participant queries.

## Engaging with additional learning and research through Ambition

- > Completing the IT orientation on Steplab
- > Accessing the 'learn' modules that ECTs and mentors have access to through your 'library' on Steplab
- > Engaging with the resources on the Mentoring and Coaching Development Area
- > Following Ambition on Twitter to see our latest research and blogs





# How headteachers can support induction tutors

Headteachers have the opportunity to support ITs to embed the enabling conditions required to create this environment where the programme can be successfully implemented.

In terms of logistical support, it would be helpful for headteachers to:

- > Liaise with the person in charge of timetabling and the IT to understand what support they need from headteachers and SLTs so that mentors and teachers have time allocated within their timetables to engage with the programme.
- > Provide the IT with enough time within their own workload to monitor and track engagement and the quality of coaching within the programme.
- > Support the Induction tutor to communicate the rationale of the programme and its importance to all staff, so that everyone is aware of what is being implemented and support them to see the programme as a benefit to their school and to their pupils.
- > Support the IT support and praise teachers and mentors who are engaging well with the programme.





# Tight-but-loose

## Background

This document sets out what we mean by tight-but-loose, why it is important and what it means for the way we manage programme design and development at Ambition.

## What is tight but loose?

The term originated in a paper Dylan Wiliam presented at an AERA conference. The full paper can be found here. He writes that ‘the tight but loose formulation combines an obsessive adherence to central design principles (the “tight” part) with accommodations to the needs, resources, constraints, and particularities that occur in any school or district (the “loose” part), but only where these do not conflict with the theory of action of the intervention’ (Wiliam, 2007). For our programmes, the terms ‘school’ and ‘district’ can be thought of to mean school, trust or DP.

## Why is the concept important?

A ‘tight but loose’ approach supports decision making around programme adaption, to protect both fidelity to the framework and fidelity to what we know about the programme is (likely) leading to impact. The framework outlined in this document uses our 9 curriculum principles to scaffold decision making. This will mean that – whilst there may be amendments or adaptations to the programme - we can ensure programme aims and impact can still be realised.

## Ambition curriculum principles

<p><b>1: Expertise</b> We focus on building expertise through professional development</p>	<p><b>2: Mental models</b> We build expertise by developing mental models for specific roles</p>	<p><b>3: Evidence</b> We supplement experience with insights from research</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We care about improving pupil experiences and outcomes. Evidence suggests the best way to achieve this is by building educator expertise.</li> <li>• Expertise is about having great impact. This arises from superior performance, which is the result of expert mental models.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental models are what educators know and how that knowledge is structured to guide their action.</li> <li>• Mental models are best organised around the core tasks that someone faces in their role. As a result, expertise is highly domain specific.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching and leadership are highly complex tasks. They are hard to figure out via trial and error alone. Experience is necessary but not sufficient.</li> <li>• As a result, our programmes lean hard on evidence from research and avoid ‘discovery’ approaches to learning.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4: Sequencing</b> We sequence ideas and experiences carefully to build on each other</p>	<p><b>5: Translation</b> We provide examples of what theory looks like in practice and support to achieve this</p>	<p><b>6: Deliberate practice</b> We provide opportunities for practice and feedback</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What we can learn is heavily influenced by what we already know. We sequence our programmes to build on prior knowledge.</li> <li>• We also build flexibility into our programmes so content can be tailored to individual needs, and exemplified for different phases, subjects and settings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sometimes it can be hard for participants to envision what research ‘looks like’ in practice. We provide multiple examples of content across a range of phases, subjects and settings.</li> <li>• We also break down our examples to help participants see which features are the most important to replicate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If educator behaviour doesn’t change, then our programmes won’t have impact. We ensure that ideas are translated into action by providing opportunities for practice.</li> <li>• Where possible, we provide feedback alongside practice to help participants refine their approach.</li> </ul>



<b>7: Habits</b> We make change stick through habits and routines	<b>8: Motivation</b> We build motivation throughout	<b>9: Tight-but-loose</b> We are tight on the above and loose on everything else
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School life is mentally demanding, and so teachers and leaders rely heavily on habits and routines.</li> <li>• Our programmes help participants to build habits and routines through retrieval, practice, and implementation intentions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The more motivated teachers and leaders are, the more they will improve.</li> <li>• Our programmes boost motivation by breaking content down into manageable chunks, making people feel like they belong, and explaining the 'why' behind our decisions, and more.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If we are consistent in implementing these eight key ideas, then we can be flexible in how we implement them. This can help accommodate variations in local contexts.</li> <li>• We are careful that any adjustments made to the programme don't end up jeopardising curriculum principles 1-8.</li> </ul>

### How does the approach work in practice?

We understand the desire for flexibility and to adapt the ECF programme so that it feels the best fit for participants and contexts. We are always thinking about where there is scope for DPs and facilitators to make their own decisions. We need, however, to make sure that any changes won't affect the effectiveness of the ECT programmes. We have therefore created some guidance around flexibility, using the framework 'tight but loose'.

Its aim is to:

- > Demonstrate the flexibility that is inherent within programmes
- > Provide advice and guidance to support DPLs and DPs to actually make changes to their programme that don't put the programme's effectiveness at risk.

### How the approach work in practice?

The framework is a tool to be used by DPLs in conversation with DPs to inform flexibility decisions, as well by facilitators in preparing to deliver sessions and in conversations with their DPs.

<b>Structural aspects we are tight on</b>	
Weekly, protected time for mentors and teachers to study, observe and meet. (Note: meetings are fortnightly in year 2 of induction).	Because instructional coaching needs intensive, sustained sessions for success (Kraft et al., 2018); mentors are required to have sufficient time for the role ( <a href="#">DfE, 2024</a> ).
Time provided for mentors and teachers to attend facilitated training, both upfront and throughout the programme; attendance is monitored.	Because successful use of instructional coaching requires trained coaches (Kraft et al., 2018); <a href="#">release time for training is funded</a> .
Early Career Framework provision and induction assessment are separate.	To ensure that mentoring conversations, including instructional coaching are supportive and purely developmental ( <a href="#">DfE, 2024</a> , Kraft and Papay, 2014).
The programme (including self-study and coaching) starts at the beginning of the induction period.	Because building effective routines from the start helps embed habits, and this is easier at a point when existing routines are disrupted (e.g. start of term)
<b>Opportunities to flex the programme:</b>	
Time provided could be in different forms. Mentors and teachers might be released for a lesson and use this time to meet, or they may meet at a different time. Similarly, participants could be covered to allow for training attendance or, for evening training, released from duties or allowed to leave early on another day.	

## Programmatic aspects we are tight on

Teachers complete self-study (evidence summary, video and quiz) every week. (Note: we understand that occasionally, mentors/ECTs will be unable to complete observations/ study/ meetings in a given week due to absence, etc. This flexibility is built into the programme.)	Because spaced practice is more effective than massed practice (Dunlosky, et al., 2013)
Mentors observe their ECT(s) weekly, for approximately 15 mins. (Note: observations are fortnightly in year 2 of induction)	Because instructional coaching is context-specific and individualised – teachers are coaching on their own practice (Kraft et al, 2018); feedback is a vital mechanism within instructional coaching (Sims et al., 2021)
Mentors run a one-to-one instructional coaching session for each of their ECTs as part of a weekly mentor meeting (at least 45 minutes)	Because instructional coaching must be individualised to be effective (Kraft et al., 2018) and deliberate practice helps ECTs overcome the ‘knowing-doing’ gap
Mentors provide ECTs with feedback on progress towards the previous step.	Because feedback is a key component of deliberate practice (Deans for Impact, 2017) which is effective in building expertise (e.g. Ericsson et al., 1993)
Mentors set ECTs a <b>bite-sized</b> step each week, logged on Steplab. <i>The step does <b>not</b> have to be new each week.</i> (Note: this will be fortnightly in year 2 of induction)	Because deliberate practice is effective when focused on a specific area of practice (Deans for Impact, 2017)
Weekly steps must be taken from ECF content. These steps are provided on Steplab but can be edited to suit your context.	The content from the ECF is an entitlement for all ECTs and is based on research evidence; effective professional development is evidence informed (Sims et al., 2021)
Weekly steps must be based on content covered by the ECT in their self-study <b>so far</b> , but this does not have to be the current week’s content.	Because instructional coaching is effective when it allows teachers to build on existing mental models (Cohen et al., 2020)
Mentors provide a model of the week’s step in the coaching session.	Because modelling supports ECTs to understand what success looks like (Berliner, 1988) and is a vital mechanism of instructional coaching (Sims et al., 2021)
Mentors support ECTs to complete multiple cycles of low-stakes practice of the step in the coaching session.	Because low-stakes practice (rehearsal) is a vital mechanism of instructional coaching (Sims et al., 2021)
Mentors provide ECTs with feedback on each cycle of practice. (Note: feedback on the lesson is focused on the previous step, not the lesson in general)	Because feedback is a key component of deliberate practice (Deans for Impact, 2017) which is effective in building expertise (e.g. Ericsson et al., 1993)
Mentors must use questions and prompts to support ECTs to build their mental models of effective practice	Because practising techniques without building an understanding of their purpose is likely to lead to ECTs misapplying them (Kennedy, 2016, EEF, 2024).
<b>Opportunities to flex the programme:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observations could be done via video</li><li>• The mentor meeting could be divided into two meetings: 30 mins of instructional coaching and 15+ mins of other aspects of mentoring</li><li>• Mentors must record steps on Steplab, but otherwise can provide as much or as little detail as is helpful</li><li>• Mentors can repeat or revisit the same step if needed</li><li>• Mentors can move on from steps if they judge this to be appropriate, even if ECTs have not met every success criteria</li><li>• Mentors can edit existing steps (pre-populated on Steplab) or create their own</li><li>• Providing pastoral support for ECTs might be done by another member of staff instead of the mentor</li></ul>	



The table below provide examples of possible changes to a programme and what DPs would want to consider the event of making these changes.

Example	Flexibility (y/n)	Curriculum principles to consider	Prompts to support decision making
Making changes to the structure / sequence of the curriculum	Y	Principles at risk: 2: Mental models 4: Sequencing 7: Habits  The programme has been designed to ensure that concepts build and deepen. Modules have been designed independently of one another, but we have created a narrative through the content which you will have to build yourself.	Are the changes you are proposing putting 'Sequencing' and the importance of revisiting prior learning at risk?  How will you ensure programme content follows on from and builds from previous content?  How will you create a narrative that ensures participants understand the flow of content - Does putting y strand after x make sense? What about it might make putting it in that order more difficult to make sense of and make managing participants' cognitive load more difficult?  How might the participants' habit building be affected by these changes?
ECT mentors creating their own steps and customising the sequence of coaching areas for ECTs	Y	Principles at risk: 2: Mental models 4: Sequencing	The ECT programme has been developed as a flexible sequence. It is okay to deviate from the coaching sequence but important to recognise that doing so will depower ECTs' learning to a degree as it won't align as well with their study modules. As a result, you may need to put in place (A) additional scaffolding to ensure new learning builds on prior knowledge and (B) plan for retrieval to ensure that learning sticks!
Adapting written examples/ models to fit phase or specific context	Y	Principles at risk: 2: Mental models 5: Translation  Examples/ models written within the content can be adapted to suit phase or specific context e.g. replacing a geography example with a secondary maths example if you are working with a group of secondary maths specialists. It is important to make sure your example still models the key underlying features/steps of the technique and does not introduce other competing features/distractors.	Can you maintain the focus on the model's underlying features/key ideas/success criteria and change only the surface features aspects of the model?  How will the new model help your participants to translate the theory into their practice?

The table continues on the next page.



Example	Flexibility (y/n)	Curriculum principles to consider	Prompts to support decision making
Grouping participants according to phase/subject/setting	Y	Principles at risk: None	Delivery partners are free to group their participants as they think best. We provide guidance on group size but where DPs think that participants will benefit from being grouped with others from the same phase, subject or setting, they are free to do so.
Asking ECTs to pre-read scenarios for clinics	Y	Principles at risk: None providing the pre-reading is not used to replace the analysis and discussion of multiple scenarios within the clinic itself	
Removing one example from 'We do' section of clinic	N	Principles at risk: 5: Translation In order for ECTs to translate the theory into practice they need to compare underlying features across multiple examples	Why do you wish to remove a scenario? If it is related to context, then the scenario can be re-written using our guidance (in the primers) to support with the provision of an example closer to the participants context. If it is related to timings, you may wish to ask participants to pre-read the scenarios. Participants should engage with a minimum of three scenarios in each clinic



# Could your colleagues benefit from an NPQ?

**Help us get the word out. We're looking for more teachers and leaders like you to join our upcoming NPQ cohorts.**

With funding still available, your colleagues can start their NPQ and take advantage of free, evidence-informed CPD. You can register your school's details below or pass the link on to your colleagues.



**KEEP  
GETTING  
BETTER**