**Fitness to Train to Teach**

**2023 – 2024**

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| **Introduction** |

Due to the vocational nature of Initial Teacher Training (ITT) courses and recognising the fundamental principles of the profession of a teacher is the care and protection of children ‘in loco parentis,’ it is a requirement under The Education Act (2002) for the health of all applicants to teacher training courses to be assessed. The standards used to assess against are specified in The Education (Health Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 and the current Initial Teacher Training (ITT): Criteria and Supporting Advice.

The first concern of a teacher is the education of their pupils. They are accountable for achieving the highest possible standards in work and conduct and they will be expected to forge positive relationships with parents and other professionals.

The aim of the Fitness to Train to Teach requirements is to ensure that a future teacher has both the physical and mental fitness to perform their duties without putting children and young people at risk. However, there is a duty on West Midlands Consortium to ensure that the health and safety or child protection requirements are not used to justify discrimination against a disabled student (Equality Act 2010). Each case will be looked at individually, on its merits and in the light of the particular circumstances.

For every applicant offered a place on one of our Teacher Training courses, it is important for everyone to establish whether they are fit to train to teach.

Your questionnaire will have many positive benefits. It will enable West Midlands Consortium to make well-informed decisions about your fitness to train to teach, to consider any reasonable adjustments that may be necessary and to ensure that all agreed adjustments and support are in place at the beginning of your programme and/or placement.

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| **Frequently Asked Questions** |

**How do I complete the Fitness to Train to Teach questionnaire?**

Applicants (and students where necessary), who have a conditional offer for a place on an ITT course will receive an email from **wmc@ttsonline.net** with a link to the Fitness to Train to Teach questionnaire.

The Fitness to Train to Teach questionnaire should be completed as soon as possible

**Why do I have to complete the Fitness to Train to Teach questionnaire before I start a teacher training course?**

All applicants for teacher training must complete a Fitness to Teach assessment to ensure that they meet the legal requirements to teach. Teachers, and those training to become teachers, need a high standard of physical and mental fitness to enter the teaching profession. Teaching is a demanding career and teachers have a duty of care towards the pupils in their charge. The health, education, safety and welfare of pupils, is taken into account when your Fitness to Train to Teach Questionnaire is assessed.

The reasons for addressing the issue of your fitness to train to teach centre around the following requirements:

* To ensure the health, safety and well-being of teachers
* To ensure the health, safety, well-being and educational progress of students
* To manage any risk to the health of teachers which may arise from their teaching duties including ensuring that those duties do not exacerbate pre-existing health problems
* To ensure the health and safety of other teachers and support staff is not adversely affected by a colleague being medically unfit
* To enable all, including those with disabilities, who wish to pursue a career in teaching, to achieve their potential within the bounds of reasonable adjustment.

**When do I have to complete it?**

Please complete the Fitness to Train to Teach questionnaire as soon as possible. It can take a few weeks for clearance to be received so please ensure you apply well in advance of your course start date.

Applicants will receive email confirmation to notify them that their fitness to train to teach has been cleared.

Please note that you will not be able to enrol or start your course/school placement unless you have completed this questionnaire and you have been officially declared fit to train to teach.

**Who gets my information?**

Your answers are confidential and your completed questionnaire is assessed by West Midlands Consortium’s Director of ITT in the first instance.

The information you provide and any information collected in reference to your Fitness to Train to Teach assessment may be shared with the following parties during the assessment process:

* The applicant/student
* Student and Registry Services at West Midlands Consortium
* Student Well-Being Service at Staffordshire University (where relevant)
* Applicants/students own General Practitioner and/or specialists (where relevant)
* Course Leader (where relevant)
* Partnerships (where relevant)

Information about you will not be shared with third parties without your consent unless the law allows this, or there is a serious risk to life.

**What happens if I do not complete my Fitness to Train to Teach questionnaire?**

You must complete the Fitness to Train to Teach Questionnaire prior to starting your course at West Midlands Consortium. WMC has a responsibility to partnership schools, and the pupils attending those schools, that our trainees on placement are fit to train to teach and where appropriate, have in place reasonable adjustments to manage the impact of any disability, medical condition, or mental health issue on their teaching. You must meet all conditions of entry before you can be fully registered on your course.

In addition, if they are not fully registered they will not be eligible to receive any funding – and all loans and grants from Student Finance England or other relevant funding body.

The Fitness to Train to Teach assessment is a compulsory compliance check for admission to an initial teacher training course. If applicants fail to satisfy this condition, they will be withdrawn from the admissions process/their studies.

**What does this assessment involve and what could the outcome be?**

The information contained within your Fitness to Train to Teach questionnaire will be assessed by the Director of ITT in the first instance and, where necessary, the Occupational Health Team and/or your own GP and/or consultant/specialist. In some circumstances, you may be asked to attend a medical assessment.

The final outcome will be assigned one of the following categories:

**Category A:** Assessed as being fit to train to teach

**Category B:** Assessed as being fit to train to teach. The medical practitioner may advise that reasonable adjustments would be appropriate.

**Category C:** Assessed as not fit to train to teach at the current time.

Occupational Health will pass on information given ‘in confidence’ only if there is a significant identified risk to the candidate/trainee concerned, to pupils or others.

Following these classifications, West Midlands Consortium will email the applicant one of the following outcomes:

**Category A:** confirmation that they have been declared Fit to Train to Teach

**Category B:** confirmation that they have been declared Fit to Train to Teach. The medical practitioner may advise that reasonable adjustments would be appropriate.

**Category C:** confirmation that they have been assessed as not Fit to Train to Teach.

Applicants will be able to resubmit a new questionnaire after appropriate medical treatment, and/or recovery. They will be required to submit with their application a satisfactory current medical report.

**What happens if I do not disclose a disability, long-term medical condition or mental health issue?**

Under the [**Health & Safety at Work Act (1974)**](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/37/contents) individuals have a responsibility to take reasonable care of their own and other people’s health and safety at work. In addition, schools, academies, colleges and institutions have a statutory responsibility for ‘safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people’ [**Education Act (2002)**](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents).

If you have a disability, long-term medical condition or mental health issue which has a bearing on your occupational health, you are required to disclose these on the Fitness to Train to Teach questionnaire. If you decline to disclose a condition which affects your fitness to train to teach, or give false information, then it may result in your withdrawal from the course.

On a more practical level it also prevents you from accessing any support that you would be legally entitled to during your training under the [**(Equality Act 2010)**](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance). According to this legislation, West Midlands Consortium is required to make reasonable adjustments to support any students disclosing a disability, long term medical condition, or mental health issue.

**What happens if I do disclose a disability, long-term medical condition or mental health issue?**

If you have a disability, medical, or mental health condition then it is possible that we will request further medical evidence of your condition from your GP or
Consultant and refer you to the Occupational Health Team for further assessment before a final decision is made. This is an opportunity to identify access requirements or
support needs, including any reasonable adjustments, which may be required.

If you have access requirements or identify as disabled, we strongly encourage you to disclose this as soon as possible so that we can assess and discuss with you any reasonable adjustments that may be helpful and to which you may be entitled. West Midlands Consortium has a strong record of enabling students with disabilities to ensure they become successful teachers.

There are times when West Midlands Consortium may need the Course, or placement/school staff to be aware of a condition and trainees are encouraged to share or allow WMC to share relevant information with the school to support them on placements.

**What kind of support can I access?**

The support you can access will depend on your individual circumstances. You may also be eligible for Disabled Students’ Allowances (DSAs).

Examples of the type of support available are as follows:

* Help with travel costs if you are unable to use public transport
* Assistive technology software
* Specialist ergonomic equipment
* Sessions with one-to-one study skills support tutors or specialist mentors.

**What if my health circumstances change after I have submitted my Fitness to Train to Teach questionnaire?**

If there is a change in your health or well-being after you have completed your Fitness to Train to Teach Questionnaire, you should contact **wmc@ttsonline.net** in the first instance.

If there is a change in your health or well-being once you have enrolled with WMC, you should inform your Course Leader in the first instance.

Any change in your health and/or well-being will be initially assessed by the Director of ITT.

You may be required to complete a new Fitness to Train to Teach questionnaire following your or your Course Leader’s declaration of a change in your health and/or well-being. This is compulsory and failure to complete the request would result in you being referred to the [**Fitness to Practise policy/procedure**](https://www.bathspa.ac.uk/media/bathspaacuk/about-us/policies/academic-and-student/Fitness-to-Study-Procedure.pdf).

It is a student's responsibility to inform their Course Leader if, following a change in their health, a GP or Health Professional advises them to take a break in their studies or employment. Their Course Leader would then inform the Director of ITT so that they can arrange a break or a delay in their placement and a new Fitness to Train to Teach assessment can be completed. The student may also be advised to contact Staffordshire University’s Student Well-Being Service for support/advice.

This is an opportunity to identify support requirements and/or the need for reasonable adjustments, following a change in their circumstances. The Student Well-Being Service Team can offer assistance and advice on available support, such as reasonable adjustments and accessing funding support that they could be legally entitled to during their training.

All returning Initial Teacher Training students from an official study break, where West Midlands Consortium is the accredited ITT provider, are required to complete an updated Fitness to Train to Teach assessment.

**Are there any conditions that will automatically prevent me from pursuing an Initial Teacher Training Course?**

There is no specific list of conditions incompatible with teaching.

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| **Advice for Filling out the Fitness to Train to Teach Questionnaire** |

* Please complete the questionnaire and answer all questions as thoroughly as possible, even if you have not disclosed it before in the application/admissions process.
* Please complete the questionnaire well in advance of your course as you will need this in place in order to start your course.
* By completing the questionnaire, you are consenting to information being held and processed by West Midlands Consortium and, where relevant, the occupational health provider. If required, the information you provide within this questionnaire will also form the basis of your occupational health record. Any information you provide will be dealt with in a confidential manner and Data will be processed in line with the requirements and protections set out in the UK General Data Protection Regulation.
* By completing the questionnaire, you are stating that the answers to all the questions asked are true and complete to the best of your knowledge and belief and that you understand that making false statements or failure to declare a health problem could lead to you being withdrawn at any stage of your application/course.
* It is extremely important that your personal details are correct when completing the questionnaire, in particular your email address and phone numbers, to ensure that this clearance process is efficient. During the process it is advisable to monitor your spam/junk folder as any correspondence may be automatically diverted into this folder. It is your responsibility to ensure that you cooperate with all Occupational Health procedures, attending appointments that are arranged or rearranging as appropriate. You will be responsible for any charges relating to non-attendance at occupational health appointments

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| **Important** |

Any applicant with an offer for a Teacher Training course who has not been cleared as ‘Fit to Train to Teach’ by the beginning of the course will not be allowed to register and may have their offer of a place rescinded.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this questionnaire in confidence, please send an email to the Director of ITT at ssplant@ttsonline.net