



**Ambition
Institute**

ECT PROGRAMME

HEADTEACHER ORIENTATION

**KEEP
GETTING
BETTER**

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Headteacher orientation

Section 1. Welcome

Welcome to this introduction to the Early Career Teachers Programme. Thank you for taking the time to engage with this information about the programme which aims to support your teachers and mentors to develop their expertise and, ultimately, benefit your pupils.

This orientation aims to give you an overview of the programme, of the different programme stakeholders and how you, as a headteacher, can support your staff to successfully get the most out of it.

This orientation is designed to lay the foundations for the support you can provide your staff in embedding this Early Career Teachers Programme. This orientation will support you to understand:

- > How the programme has been designed to support early career teachers to develop teaching expertise.
- > How the programme has been designed to support mentors to build on and develop their skills as mentors.
- > Your role on the programme, and the enabling conditions required to ensure the programme is embedded effectively in your context.

There is also optional content which will help develop your understanding of the role of instructional coaching on the programme, including the evidence underpinning this approach.

Your role as headteacher is crucial in supporting the induction coordinator in your school to ensure that mentors and early career teachers are equipped to be able to engage with the programme. It's therefore helpful for you to have an understanding of the programme and the principles underpinning the design of the programme.

Before we begin, a quick reminder about terminology – one of the changes within the Early Career Framework is that the post-qualification induction period for teachers has been increased to two years instead of one, to provide greater support to new teachers. Consequently, we will refer to 'early career teachers' (ECTs) instead of NQTs. We will consider any teacher in their first two years of teaching to be an ECT.

This orientation should take approximately an hour and a half to complete (including optional content). This optional content is available, should you wish to explore certain aspects of the programme in more depth. You will also have the opportunity to attend a thirty-minute Q and A webinar where you can ask any questions you may have about the programme. Please note these down as you work through this orientation.

What is the Early Career Framework?

We know that great teaching is the bedrock of our schools. Of all the in-school factors, the quality of teaching makes the biggest impact on pupils (Hattie, 2003), especially for those pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g., Sutton Trust, 2011). The Early Career Framework is designed to ensure this strong start, building the foundation of a successful career in teaching for all Early Career Teachers (ECTs).

As a headteacher, you play a vital role in supporting your staff to effectively implement the Early Career Framework (ECF) in your context through this Early Career Teachers programme.

The Early Career Framework sets out what new teachers need to learn so that they finish their two-year induction period ready to have the greatest possible impact on pupils. The framework is drawn from the strongest available evidence on effective teaching and learning and has been independently reviewed by the Education Endowment Foundation. It is a curriculum which enables teachers to develop their teaching expertise, building on learning and honing their skills which they start to acquire during their Initial Teacher Training and will continue to master throughout their careers.

The Early Career Framework is divided into 8 sections: one for each teacher standard. Each of these sections is composed of 'learn that' and 'learn how to' statements.

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

Extract from the Early Career Framework

The 'learn that' statements are knowledge based. For example, a statement in section 7 says that: "early career teachers 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, "early career teachers should learn how to develop a positive, predictable and safe environment for pupils by giving manageable, specific and sequential instructions." You can access the Early Career Framework in the final section of this orientation.

Whilst the Early Career Framework is organised into sections around the teacher standards, it is important to note that the Early Career Framework 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 early career teachers and should not be seen as an additional assessment tool."

ECF, 2019

Section 2: What is Ambition Institute's Early Career Teachers programme?

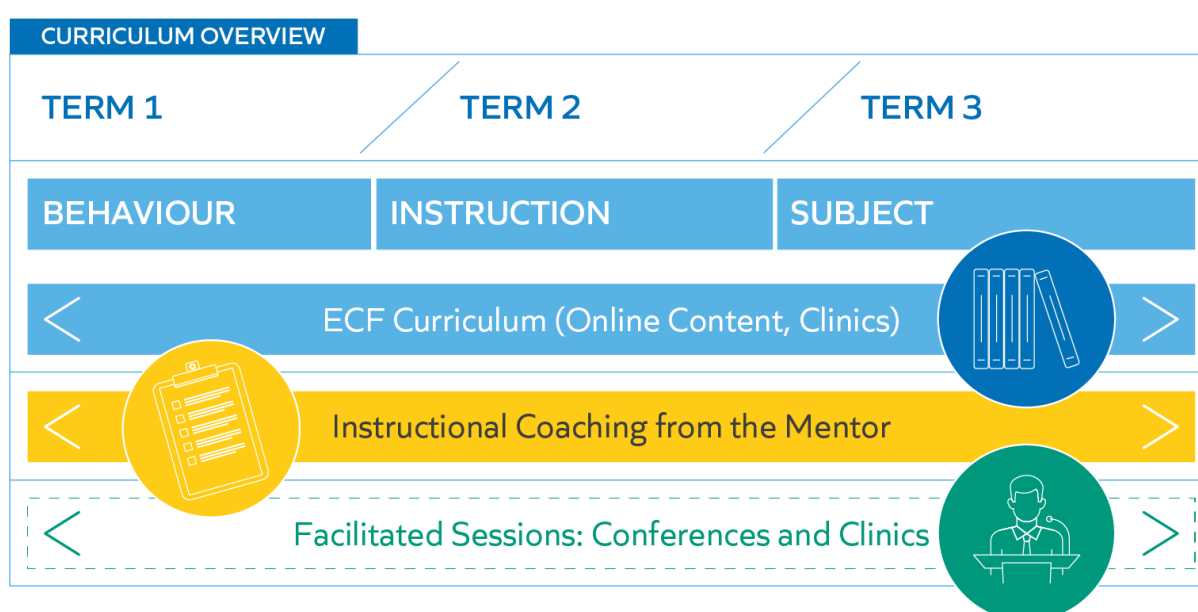
Programme overview

The key aim of Ambition Institute's Early Career Teachers programme is to support teachers to build on their understanding of key learning around effective teaching, assessment and curriculum practices from their ITT year. The content of the programme is designed to incorporate all the statements included within the ECF, as well as complement the current teaching standards.

The Early Career Teachers programme is grounded in the best available evidence for how teachers learn. It is organised into three core strands, which cover all 8 areas of the Early Career Framework. The three strands are behaviour, instruction and subject. Each strand is intended to correspond roughly to a term, whilst allowing the programme to flex to meet the needs of individual schools, for example varying term lengths or exam periods.

Core programme inputs for Early Career Teachers

On this programme, teachers receive two main sources of support: weekly self-study modules on Steplab and instructional coaching from a mentor (weekly in Year 1 and fortnightly in year 2). Additionally, ECTs also get the chance to put into practice and discuss key teaching strategies in clinics and conferences, where participants get to work with one another and deliberately practise planning and delivering a range of strategies.



Below is an overview of the core programme inputs for Early Career Teachers

- 3 x ECT Conferences (6 hours)
- 6 x Clinics (1 hour)
- 36 x self-study modules (1 hour)

All schools receive funding linked to the time needed for these training sessions.

For further information around the suggested timings and overview of content covered in ECT clinics and conferences, see Appendix B.

How do mentors support ECTs on the programme?

We've designed our programme to not only build on the best available evidence around supporting teachers to improve but to be flexible enough to work in your school context and to fit around other aspects of the mentor's role. We know that teachers are busy and that this is especially true for mentors. The Department for Education stipulates that schools are expected to provide mentors with sufficient time to carry out their vital role.

Each week on the programme will follow the same pattern, reducing the number of things for mentors to think about and helping them and their ECT(s) get into productive habits. Each week, they will:

- > Spend a short time (10-15 minutes) carrying out a non-judgemental, developmental observation of their ECT. The purpose of this is to allow mentors to identify a bite-sized area of teaching practice, or 'step', to work on with their ECT.
- > Spend approximately 45 minutes working with their ECT to develop their practice. The first 20-30 minutes of this will be an instructional coaching meeting to practice and provide feedback based on the lesson observation.

Having sufficient time for mentors and teachers to meet is a key enabling condition to ensure the programme is effectively embedded in your context. **Schools should protect at least 60 minutes of mentors' time per week for working with their ECT.** The induction coordinator needs to ensure that this time is protected for both mentors and teachers. Therefore, your role **as headteacher is vital as you will need to support the induction coordinator to ensure this time is allocated for both ECTs and mentors.** It is likely to be in the form of a reduced teaching allocation but could also be created in other ways including a reduction in other duties. It may be the case that schools reduce mentors' timetables but that due to other constraints, mentors and ECTs still meet before or after school.

What does the training for mentors look like?

The role of the mentor is crucial in supporting ECTs. We know this is a demanding role, whether they are new to mentoring, or an experienced mentor new to the Early Career Framework or the instructional coaching approach. This means mentors deserve the best possible professional development, to help them keep getting better at their role.

Ambition Institute's Early Career Teachers programme has three facilitated elements for mentors:

- 2 x mentor conferences: in-person, one full day (6 hours).
- 3 x coaching on coaching: virtual or in person (1 hour each).
- 3 x mentor clinics: virtual or in person (1 hour each).

All schools receive funding linked to the time needed for these training sessions as part of the mentor induction funding.

At Ambition Institute, we've used our expertise and knowledge from educational research of what makes high-quality professional development to provide mentors with the knowledge and skills they need, when they need them.

This begins with their own orientation and the first face-to-face mentor conference. These are designed to provide mentors with the knowledge of the programme as well as build on and refine the existing mentoring skills they have so that they can hit the ground running.

There is then a continuous programme of support and training throughout the year:

- > Scaffolded and differentiated coaching steps which align to the curriculum the ECT is following which mentors can use and adapt for their ECTs.
- > Access to all the 'Study' modules available to ECTs, allowing mentors to see exactly what their ECTs are learning in order to better target their instructional coaching sessions. This content is optional, but it is strongly recommended that mentors engage in this reading, so they can link the step they provide ECTs with the teacher's prior knowledge.
- > One-to-one 'coaching on coaching' sessions with an expert teacher educator, designed to provide them with feedback and support to further develop their skill in instructional coaching.
- > Facilitated group sessions ('mentor clinics') to further develop their knowledge and skills in supporting teachers and to share successes and challenges with other mentors.
- > Bite-sized online courses tailored to mentor needs. This content includes opportunities for mentors to deepen their understanding of areas such as deliberate practice and ECT assessment. Again, this content is designed to fit around mentors' schedules, meaning they can access it as and when they need it.

A key pillar of the Early Career Framework reforms is that mentors are entitled to be provided with time to make the most of the training, including being released to attend facilitated sessions. As a headteacher, you play an important role in ensuring that mentors get this time allocated within their timetable.

Read below for an example of what this support might look like in practice.

Robyn is headteacher of a large all through school in the Northwest of England. We are in Half Term 6, and she is currently planning the timetable allocation for the coming academic year. She has over 15 ECTs in her school (4 of whom trained in their ITT year within the school and 11 new members due to join in September). Robyn is currently liaising with the induction coordinator on the following:

- > Which members of staff may be mentors to these ECTs.
- > How much time needs to be allocated for ECTs off timetable.
- > How much time needs to be allocated for mentors off timetable.
- > How much time the Induction coordinator will require to carry out their role effectively.

Robyn supports the induction coordinator to understand which members of staff would be best equipped and appropriate to be mentors to the ECTs. The induction coordinator has already liaised with the SLT about who has already expressed interest in mentoring and has tried to match the mentor with an ECT in terms of phase and subject area.

The mentors available also vary in terms of experience and familiarity with the role so Robyn and the induction coordinator also take this into consideration when planning timetable allocation. Having read the orientation and spoken with the induction coordinator, it becomes clear to Robyn that she needs to allocate one hour for the ECT and one hour for the mentor off timetable each week (fortnightly in year 2). Additionally, Robyn also considers that the least experienced mentors will potentially require further support and so arranges for an hour off timetable for the induction coordinator as well. Robyn understands that it will take time to embed the programme and so arranges half termly check ins with the induction coordinator to discuss any barriers which the induction coordinator is facing and monitor the progress of the mentors and teachers on the programme.

How is the programme designed?

Evidence informed

The Early Career Teachers 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** – each week, teachers will work on a bite-sized aspect of their teaching with their mentor, such as how they ask effective questions.
- > **Clear modelling of effective practice** – mentors model what the bite size aspect (known as a step) looks like before the teacher practises applying the step themselves.
- > **Multiple opportunities to return to key learning** – for example, teachers begin to learn about giving clear instructions during modules on routines and managing behaviour, returning to similar ideas when thinking about how to break down content as part of teacher modelling.
- > **Practice and feedback** -within the instructional coaching session, teachers deliberately practise and receive formative feedback on a bite sized aspect of their teaching so that they have had an opportunity to practise the step.
- > **Contextualised**- the mentor contextualises the learning which the teacher engages with during their weekly study, so that the teacher is better able to see how the learning applies to their own practice.
- > **Familiar routines**-each week, teachers engage in weekly self-study and the weekly (fortnightly in year 2) instructional coaching also helps ensure that both mentors and teachers getting into the routine of engaging in their professional development on the programme.

Context specific

We know that whilst there are similarities in how the majority of pupils learn and how schools are structured, every school and each phase and subject is different. This means that teaching expertise is context specific, and it is mentors who know their context best. While the content within the programme provides a range of phase and subject specific exemplification, mentors are still best placed to contextualise the evidence-informed content from the Early Career Framework and the materials on Ambition Institute's programme to fit each ECT's setting, phase and subject(s).

Flexibility on the programme

We want the programme to be flexible and responsive to the needs of your ECT(s), mentor (s) and your school. However, we also know that when implementing evidence-informed strategies such as those underpinning this programme, we need to stick closely to the core components. If we don't, the programme is likely to have less impact on teachers and their pupils.

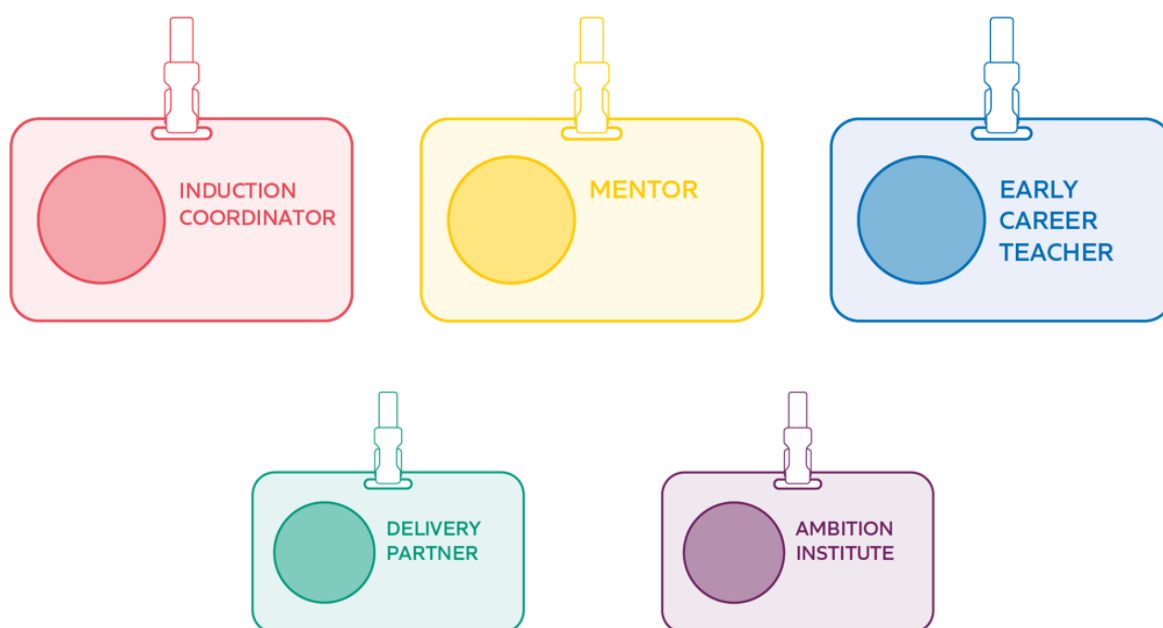
We can use toothpaste as an analogy here. Toothpaste has lots of different components: flavouring, colour, fluoride, etc. However, the things that make toothpaste effective in reducing tooth decay are fluoride and regular brushing. We can change the colour or the flavour and not affect the impact, but if we take out the fluoride, or don't brush regularly, then the toothpaste won't be as effective in reducing tooth decay.

It is similar with professional development, including this programme. Where possible, we will give mentors and schools flexibility to adapt and tailor the approach, but not when it is a core component of the programme. The types of flexibility available are listed below:

Opportunities to flex the programme	
Structural aspects of the programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The allocated 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 if training is in an evening released from duties or allowed to leave early at a different time.

Further details on flexibility in terms of programmatic aspects of the programme are also available and listed as an appendix. These might be something to discuss with your Induction Co-ordinator following their orientation or even once the programme has started.

Roles on the programme



Early Career Teacher (ECT)

Ambition Institute’s Early Career Teachers programme is designed to support ECTs to learn, understand and put into practice the evidence-informed content in the Early Career Framework. This is a two-year programme designed to induct ECTs into the profession and to set them up for long-lasting, effective and rewarding teaching careers.

The role of ECTs on the programme is to get into a regular routine of professional development – centred around engaging with weekly self-study modules and instructional coaching. ECTs also need to attend training sessions known as clinics and conferences; these are designed to help them develop even deeper understanding of core aspects of teaching, such as responsive teaching.

Essentially, ECTs need to put their efforts into learning as much as possible across the programme. This is what will help them have the maximum impact on the pupils they teach.

Mentor

Mentors are the cornerstone of the support provided to ECTs. They lead the development of a teacher or number of teachers on the Early Career Teachers programme. Supported by our online platform, Steplab, mentors run weekly instructional coaching sessions to support ECTs to transfer their learning into changes to their classroom practice.

Mentors are responsible for the ECT(s) engaging with the programme, including the weekly self-study and attending the facilitated teacher clinics and conferences. Mentors need to support teachers, particularly in terms of contextualising and adapting content for the ECT's own setting. Mentors on the Early Career Teachers Programme **will not be responsible for assessment** against the Teachers' Standards during the induction period.

Induction coordinator

The induction coordinator is the member of staff within each school with overall responsibility for putting the Early Career Teachers programme into action. This will usually be a member of the senior leadership team. The induction coordinator drives engagement with our Early Career Teacher programme in their school, for both mentors and teachers.

Key to this role is supporting and protecting the new statutory entitlements of Early Career Teachers and their mentors in line with the Early Career Framework reforms and statutory guidance. The induction coordinator will be responsible for monitoring engagement with the programme via the Steplab platform and liaising with the school's delivery partner or directly with Ambition if belonging to central cohort.

Delivery Partner / Ambition Institute

Your ECT's programme will either be delivered directly by Ambition Institute or via a delivery partner. A delivery partner is a Teaching School Hub, Academy Trust or Local Authority responsible for delivering the Early Career Teachers programme to a group of schools.

Early Career Framework Lead (Delivery Partner model only)

Each delivery partner has an Early Career Framework lead (ECF lead) who is responsible for overseeing the ECT programme in their network. ECF leads are responsible for holding schools to account in providing the necessary time for mentors and teachers to engage with the programme, as well as monitoring attendance and engagement.

The ECF lead provides support and clarification for technical queries regarding the programme, including dates for training. ECF leads are also responsible for making high level decisions about the level of programme flexibility available to individual schools.

Ambition Institute

Ambition Institute is a national education charity. We help schools tackling educational disadvantage to keep getting better and help their teachers and school leaders to become more expert over time.

We are responsible for the design and production of all training materials and study content on the Early Career Teachers programme, drawing on the best available evidence about effective practice. We are

responsible for designing the Early Career Teachers programme so that ECTs can learn, understand and put into practice the content in the Department for Education's Early Career Framework.

We work with Steplab, a professional learning platform for teachers, teacher educators and school leaders to help mentors and ECTs achieve impactful and lasting changes to classroom practice.

Section 3: Your role as Headteacher

Enabling conditions

In order for Ambition Institute's Early Career Teachers programme to be successfully embedded within your school, there are several enabling conditions which are required and, as headteacher, you play an important role in supporting the induction coordinator to have these conditions 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-

SLT and Head Support: Having sufficient time allocated on teachers' and mentors' timetables is also reliant on support from the Senior Leadership team (SLT) and, ultimately, you, the headteacher. As headteacher, you have the agency to ensure that the induction coordinator is supported amongst your SLT and the wider school body. By championing the programme and supporting the induction coordinator to communicate the programme rationale and the benefits of the programme to staff, you are helping ensure that the induction coordinator successfully embeds the programme within your school.

School Culture: Teachers thrive and perform better when working in supportive environments (Kraft and Papay, 2014). The school culture will have an impact on how the 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 which, in turn, can help teachers and mentors see the value in the training and 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/ Teacher relationship: A positive working relationship between mentor and teacher is essential in order for the training to be effective. Contracting at the start of the coaching relationship has been found to be helpful to both parties as it establishes the foundation of the working relationship. As headteacher, you can support the induction coordinator to oversee and support both mentors and teachers to ensure that this relationship remains effective throughout the programme. This can result in both mentors and teachers feeling supported.

Mentor mental model: 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. Mentors need to take the learning from the programme, contextualise it for their teachers and support the teachers to apply the theory into practice. As headteacher, it is helpful for you to have a good understanding of the mentor role so that you can provide support to your induction coordinator who will

provide more in-depth support to mentors. Induction coordinators support mentors to understand their role and the instructional coaching process, when needed.

Section 4: Next steps

What do I do now?

- > Welcome to the final section of the headteacher orientation for the Early Career Teachers programme. This section will talk you through the next steps, as well as giving you access to the Early Career Framework and suggest further reading which

Actions

- > Access and read the [DfE statutory guidance on ECT Induction](#).
- > Spend some time reading the [Early Career Framework](#). This specifies the knowledge and skills that ECTs are entitled to learn across their two-year induction period, as well as providing references for the research underpinning the statements. Ambition Institute's Early Career Teacher programme is designed to ensure ECTs cover the content, but it is still important that induction coordinators and mentors build their knowledge of the framework itself.
- > Sign up to the Q and A webinar
- > If you would like further information on instructional coaching read section 5 below.
- > If you would like to read some case studies which show a typical day in the life of induction coordinators, mentors and ECTs, read section 6 below.

OPTIONAL CONTENT

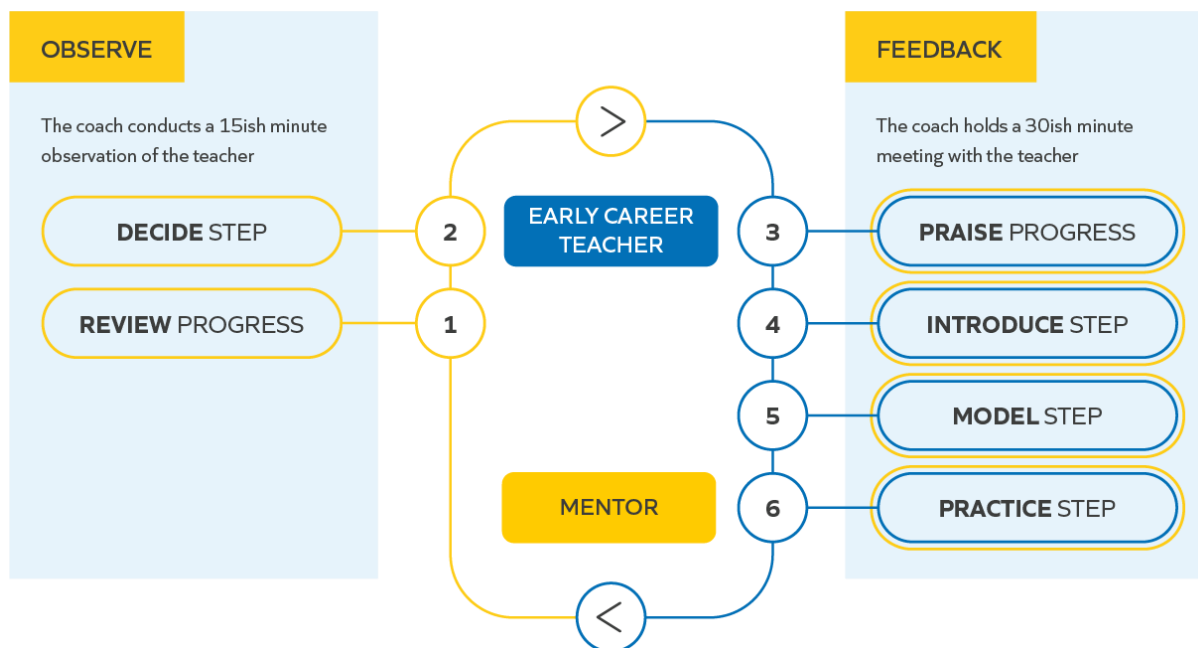
Section 5: Instructional coaching

What is instructional coaching?

On Ambition Institute's Early Career Teachers programme, mentors use instructional coaching to support ECTs to use the theory they have learned from the self-study modules and develop their classroom expertise. But what is instructional coaching and why have we chosen to use it?

At Ambition Institute, we've chosen to use instructional coaching on the Early Career Teachers programme because it has a really strong evidence base (Sims, S. 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.



Observation

Each week the mentor observes the ECT teach for about 15 minutes. This helps them choose a **single, bite-sized step to work on**. For example, an ECT might have been working on giving clearly sequenced instructions; if the mentor feels they are ready to move on, they might decide the next step is to work on an effective strategy for monitoring whether pupils are following the instructions. **Bite-sized steps are designed to help ECTs see the progress they are making** on the journey towards mastering the craft of teaching.

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.

Feedback

Each week, approximately 30 minutes of the mentor 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 and the mentor and ECT discuss why this has been selected and why it is likely to help pupils.

The mentor then **models** a demonstration of what the step would look like 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. To continue the above example, the mentor might demonstrate how they would circulate to monitor pupils or how and where they would stand in the classroom.

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 focused on a precise step is often referred to as 'deliberate practice'. This practice helps overcome the 'knowing-doing gap' and set the ECT up to put the new step into action.

The impact of instructional coaching on Early Career Teachers

Instructional coaching is well suited to helping Early Career Teachers. It provides careful structure and guidance which can help accelerate teachers' development at the start of their career (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 that can be mastered in a week 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 to have the best possible impact on pupils.
- > Like all mentoring and coaching, instructional coaching only works when it builds on a strong relationship between the mentor and the ECT. Ambition Institute's Early Career Teachers 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 Ambition Institute's Early Career Teachers programme, but it is not everything – it is important for mentors to take time for pastoral support as well.

Equally, some coaching and mentoring approaches take different 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 ECTs' 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.

Section 6: Case studies of induction coordinators, mentors and ECTs

A week in the life of an induction coordinator

Mandy is an induction coordinator in a large secondary school. She oversees a team of five mentors and five ECTs. We join her in her first term in role.

“I’ve found it really satisfying to see how the mentors and teachers have progressed since the start of the year. Having worked closely with the SLT before the induction officially started, we ensured that mentors and teachers have time allocated within their timetable for the instructional coaching session and we are really starting to see the results from this protected time. Mentors and teachers are developing very positive working relationships and there is a great deal of trust which has developed, not just between mentor and teacher but also between me and the mentors.

Mentors are also sharing positive feedback around their ECTs and I then feed this back to SLT and heads of department, so that this positive feedback is reinforced with the ECTs. This has therefore started to have a positive impact on the school culture in general.

I really like how Steplab also enables me to look at the steps that mentors are setting as it can help me to support mentors and check in with them if things aren’t going as planned with the coaching sessions. Every week I have scheduled in a 30-minute check in with all the mentors and we discuss any potential barriers they may be facing and share any examples of best practice when it comes to instructional coaching. “

A week in the life of an ECT

Abdi is an ECT in a secondary school. He teaches Science. We join him in during the Autumn term of the first year of his induction.

“I’m really enjoying being part of the Early Career Teachers programme, and I can see the difference it is making to my practice already.

I’ve found the bite-sized nature of the programme really useful. It’s allowed me to get into a good habit with my self-study. I have a free period on a Tuesday afternoon which I use to complete the self-study each week. My head of department is also free at the same time, so quite often I’ll go and badger her with any questions I have!

My mentor is amazingly supportive. This term I’ve been working on the behaviour strand and each week in my instructional coaching sessions he models the technique that we are going to work on. This is much more helpful than just talking about the technique as it means I can see exactly what it should look like, in the context of my own school. This is particularly useful in terms of putting into practice the general principles I’ve learnt into a science context. After sharing the model, he supports me to practise – this helps me because it means I can get feedback and improve before trying something out for real in front of pupils.”

A week in the life of a mentor

Sian mentors Arif, an Early Career Teacher who teaches Year 1, in a two-form entry primary school. We join Sian in the Autumn term of the first year of Arif’s induction period.

“My favourite aspect of the Early Career Teachers programme has been how it allows ECTs to have a real sense of continuous, incremental improvement. It’s really clear to both Arif and I that they are developing their practice each week and that this is having a positive impact on pupils’ learning.

The structure of the programme is key here, especially the combination of instructional coaching and the ECT self-study. Each week I watch a short segment of one of Arif’s lessons to decide on a really precise focus for the coaching session. We then meet for the one-to-one coaching session itself, where we always follow the same structure which makes it easier for both of us. I start by praising the progress I’ve seen, then I share the next step and we unpick why this is likely to improve pupil learning. Then I model a demonstration of exactly what the step will look like in class. Finally, I support Arif to practise the step several times, giving feedback to help them perfect it.

I have to be honest, at the start I was a little bit sceptical about the modelling and practice; I’ve been a mentor for several years and whilst I would do some modelling, it wasn’t always a major part of my practice. I also felt a little bit awkward about it. This first half term has totally changed my mind though – I can see how much easier it is for Arif to put new learning into practice compared to teachers I’ve worked with in the past. I think that the coaching is even helping me to become a better teacher too – I’ve had to think about what I do and why for some elements of my practice that I’ve not thought in detail about before.

I also really like how the coaching builds on the self-study content. The curriculum is really carefully sequenced so that it builds in complexity over time. I still have the flexibility to choose a next step that builds on Arif’s current practice, but the curriculum supports us both in two ways. Firstly, it helps me maintain a sustained focus (e.g. around giving clear instructions) for a period of time, rather than jumping around between ideas. Secondly, because I only set steps based on what Arif has studied so far, he has a better understanding of the purpose of the step and is more likely to use it in a way which benefits pupil learning, rather than just mimicking a technique.

I’m finding that as the term goes on, I’m becoming more efficient – at the start the instructional coaching took most of our mentor meetings, and it took me quite a bit of time to plan how to put the materials into my own school’s context. Now that we’ve both found our feet, we can often complete several cycles of practice and feedback in half an hour or less which frees up time for other aspects of mentoring such as pastoral support.”

Appendix A

Programmatic aspects of the programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Observations (as part of instructional coaching) could be done via video > The mentor meeting could be divided into two meetings: 30 mins of instructional coaching and 15+ mins of other aspects of mentoring > Mentors must record action steps on Steplab, but otherwise can provide as much or as little detail as is helpful > Mentors can set repeated action steps if needed > Mentors can move on from action steps if they judge this to be appropriate, even if ECTs have not met every success criteria > Mentors can edit existing action steps or create their own > Providing pastoral support for ECTs might be done by another member of staff instead of the mentor > As ECTs develop expertise (most likely in year 2 of induction), they may be able to begin to identify their own action steps
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Appendix B

Suggested sequence of ECT clinics and conferences

Year 1 inputs*				
Conference 1	Clinic 1	Conference 2	Clinic 2	Clinic 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Introduce science of learning > Apply understanding of science of learning to habits of planning. 	Using routines to manage behaviour	Responsive teaching	Whole class verbal feedback	Giving effective praise
Year 2 inputs*				
Conference 3	Clinic 4	Clinic 5	Clinic 6	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Preparing for year 2 and teacher wellbeing 	Pupil thinking and responses	Implementation	Developing pupil literacy	

*As we receive feedback on the content, iterations to the content and sequencing of this content may occur for the coming year. This table is therefore subject to minor changes as the programme evolves and the curriculum is adapted to respond to the needs of ECTs.

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