

**Initial Teacher Education Partnership**

**Link Tutor Handbook**

**Primary Programmes**

**2020-21**

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Contents

[The Role of the Link Tutor 3](#_Toc68082842)

[Core Responsibilities of the Link Tutor 3](#_Toc68082843)

[Communicating with Schools and School Visits 4](#_Toc68082844)

[Initial QA Meeting: 30 mins 4](#_Toc68082845)

[QA of Mentoring: 1 hour 4](#_Toc68082846)

[SE3 Progress Review Meeting: 1 hour 4](#_Toc68082847)

[Schools with more than one mentor 6](#_Toc68082848)

[Allocation of Hours and Deployment of Staff 7](#_Toc68082849)

[Your Availability 7](#_Toc68082850)

[Expectations for Placements 8](#_Toc68082851)

[Placement Dates 8](#_Toc68082852)

[Contact with Schools 10](#_Toc68082853)

[What to do if additional support is needed by schools 12](#_Toc68082854)

[Appendix 13](#_Toc68082855)

[SE File Checklist 13](#_Toc68082856)

[Appraisal Record (to be completed on Abyasa) 14](#_Toc68082857)

[Link Tutor QA Form (Abyasa Template) 18](#_Toc68082858)

[SE3 Progress Review Meeting (template to be completed on Abyasa) 19](#_Toc68082859)

[Contact List 20](#_Toc68082860)

# The Role of the Link Tutor

The link tutor is an integral part of the all ITE partnerships with schools, working with Alliance Leads, school-based mentors and external mentors (primary programmes) to ensure rigorous quality assurance of the PGCE and Undergraduate programmes.

Link tutors monitor how mentors undertake their role and ensure consistency of judgements of student teachers. This is usually completed through undertaking shared lesson appraisals of student teachers with the mentor which, in turn, supports moderation across the programmes. On established primary School Direct programmes, the link tutor role is shared with the Alliance Lead. A record of the shared appraisal is completed on the template on Abyasa Pro, the university database which tracks the progression of all student teachers during their placements. The Abyasa Pro system supports effective tracking of student teachers to ensure they are making appropriate progress towards their targets and also ensures that appropriate interventions can be made where a student teacher is causing concern or in need of additional support. Link tutors also support mentors in the quality assurance of the student teachers’ professional development and they ensure that procedures for the mentor’s completion of the online documentation are in place.

# Core Responsibilities of the Link Tutor

* To quality assure mentors and the student teacher experience
* To support all mentors across programmes
* To keep up to date with training and university procedures

# Communicating with Schools and School Visits

Communication is an essential part of the link tutor role. As we are currently in the COVID-19 pandemic, all visits to schools will be carried out remotely, that is, through a virtual platform such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom.

All link tutors are expected to contact school mentors once the placement details are released and as soon as possible during the first week of the placement. This should be done through telephone or email. The purpose of this is to introduce yourself and arrange a further 30 minute meeting as soon as possible.

## Initial QA Meeting: 30 mins

In your initial contact with the mentor, you will need to arrange a 30 minute remote meeting or telephone call to take place during the first two weeks of the placement. The 30 minute meeting can take place on Teams, Zoom or another platform agreed by the link tutor and the mentor. During this meeting you will need to:

* Discuss how the student is settling in
* Ensure the mentor is trained and has attended the mentor training for this placement
* Check that the mentor has the required handbooks and access to documentation. This will be on the Mentor YSJ Learn platform or the website <https://www.yorksj.ac.uk/working-with-the-community/placement-providers/initial-teacher-education/#using-abyasa-pro>
* Ask the mentor if they are clear about expectations for the placement, how to carry out appraisals and how to record these and the weekly meetings on Abyasa
* Notes from the discussion should be recorded on Abyasa

## QA of Mentoring: 1 hour

About halfway through the placement, the link tutor should arrange to observe the mentor giving feedback to the student teacher after a lesson appraisal. This should be done via video call (Zoom or similar). A time should be agreed that is soon after the lesson has taken place. If this is not possible, the link tutor and mentor should agree to meet at another time where the mentor can provide a summary of the observation and feedback given to the student teacher, with targets identified.

The link tutor will observe the mentor discussion with the student teacher and then provide feedback to the mentor about the quality of the feedback. The template available for this is located on Abyasa (also in the Appendix).

## SE3 Progress Review Meeting: 1 hour

The Progress Review meeting is conducted at the mid-way point of a final school experience (SE3). It takes about one hour and is led by the link tutor alongside the student teacher and mentor.  The purpose of the meeting is to:

* review the progress of the student teacher at this stage of their final placement
* identify the student teacher’s strengths and evidence towards meeting the Teachers’ Standards
* identify any gaps or areas for development in meeting the Teachers’ Standards
* suggest evidence which will support meeting the Teachers’ Standards
* set clear targets for the remainder of the placement so that the student teacher can make the expected progress to successfully complete the placement
* model a professional dialogue to support the mentor in their role
* enable the student teacher to take responsibility for their own development through professional dialogue (and thus support them in future performance management meetings as an NQT)

Preparation before the meeting

* The link tutor will arrange to meet with the student and mentor in a video/online meeting for one hour
* The student teacher will prepare and have ready some examples of evidence to show they are meeting the Teachers’ Standards and demonstrate areas where they have particular strengths.
* Evidence should not be onerous or burdensome for the student teacher. The focus of the meeting will be on the quality of the professional dialogue, with supporting evidence used to highlight examples of their progress as a teacher. This might include work from pupils, lesson planning, resources used to support pupils with additional needs, etc
* The student teacher should read through the example questions in the SE Handbook and if helpful, go through these with the mentor before the meeting

During the meeting

* The link tutor will lead the meeting, using some of the questions in the handbook, and following up with further questions as appropriate
* The mentor will contribute to the meeting through professional dialogue
* The student teacher will demonstrate strengths and evidence through professional dialogue
* All members will agree clear targets (no more than three) for the remainder of the placement and suggest further examples of evidence and opportunities within the school (if possible) to support these

After the meeting

* The link tutor will add and complete the Progress Review meeting template on Abyasa (see Appendix template which can be used to make notes during the meeting).

## Schools with more than one mentor

If your school has two students being supported by two different mentors, then an observation of the feedback by each mentor should be undertaken. The initial QA contact meeting should be done with both mentors together. Link tutors quality assure the mentors and are not there to observe every student.

# Allocation of Hours and Deployment of Staff

All university-based tutors carry out the link tutor role. YSJ also employs suitably experienced teachers and school leaders to carry out this role exclusively through part-time contracts. Student teacher numbers change each year therefore some staff may not be deployed as a link tutor.

For primary UG and primary university-centred PGCE programmes, the Placements Team works with the SE Director to allocate appropriate link tutors. For primary and secondary School Direct programmes, the Programme Lead works with Alliance Leads to allocate link tutors. Once all programme details are confirmed and entered into Abyasa by the Placements Team, link tutors are informed and provided with an overview of the placement dates. This will normally be about one week before the placement is due to start.

When placing deferred or resit student teachers, link tutors will be provided with information about the student teacher’s previous placement and experience. It is expected that link tutors have correspondence with the SE Director, Alliance Lead or Programme Lead prior to contacting the school so they are fully aware of the reasons for the deferral or resit, as well as know the strengths and targets for the student teacher. This will support the link tutor and mentor discussions about appropriate support strategies needed for the student teacher.

## Your Availability

For all programmes, if link tutors are not available for part of any school experience, the Placements Team must be informed in advance. In some instances, a ‘buddy up’ system with another link tutor may be possible although not ideal as the support for the mentor should be consistent throughout the placement. It is likely then that link tutors will not be given a school placement if on holiday or not available for part of the block.

# Expectations for Placements

* Make initial contact with each school at the start of every year to introduce yourself
* Familiarise yourself with the current SE documentation
* Keep regular contact with each mentor during the school experience
* Keep within the expected working hours of a teacher’s week and avoid weekend working to ensure a balance of worklife requirements
* Inform the School Experience Director or Programme Lead if there are initial concerns or problems with the student teacher, and particularly if a student teacher is not on track to make expected progress
* Contribute to the on-line appraisal form for every shared appraisal/complete the Link Tutor QA template after observing the mentor feedback to the student
* Ensure you make the required contact/visits to each school for each placement and do not exceed this
* Conduct a shared appraisal with each mentor each year
* Conduct a shared moderated appraisal and progress review meeting for every final (SE3) student teacher
* Record all visits and communication on Abyasa
* Provide additional mentor training and support as required, such as writing an intervention log, how to use documentation and complete reports on Abyasa, setting SMART targets for student teachers
* Provide new information about schools to the Placements Team, such as the school’s latest Ofsted grade, specialist curriculum areas, staff changes
* For university-centred programmes, liaise with the school for any further mentor training needs and possible hosting of future placements and inform the Placements Team
* Attend link tutor training events, meetings and specific school experience mentor training

# Placement Dates

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **PG Primary University Centred Full Time** | **PG Primary University Centred****Part Time** | **PG Primary School Direct** | **Undergraduate Primary** |
| **SE1** | Autumn termSchool A | Autumn term & Spring termSchool A | Autumn termSchool A | 26th April – 17th June 2021 |
|  | 6 week block (Nov-Dec) | 5 week block, 3 days a week (Nov-Dec)5 week block, 3 days a week (Jan-Feb) | 6 week block (Nov-Dec) | 7 week block  |
|  | SE1 interim and final report on Abyasa  | SE1 interim and final report on Abyasa | SE1 interim and final report on Abyasa | SE1 interim and final report on Abyasa |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **SE2** | Spring termSchool A | Summer termSchool A | Spring termSchool B | 12th April – 25th Jun 2021 |
|  | 6 week block (Jan-Feb) | 19th April – 28th May (6 weeks) | 6 week block (Jan-Feb) | 10 weeks  |
|  | SE2 interim and final report on Abyasa | SE2 interim and final report on Abyasa |  | SE1 report and SE2 interim and final report |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **SE3** | Summer termSchool B | Summer term (Year 2)School B | Summer termSchool A  | 4th Jan – 26th Mar 2021 |
|  | 12th Apr – 24th Jun 10 weeks | 8 week block (Apr-Jun) | 12th Apr – 24th Jun 10 weeks | 11 weeks |
|  | SE3 interim and final report on Abyasa | SE3 interim and final report on Abyasa | SE3 interim and final report on Abyasa | SE2 report and SE3 interim and final report on Abyasa |

## Contact with Schools

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **School Experience** | **Contact should be made by e-mail and/or telephone prior to the start of the placement to introduce yourself** | **SE1** | **SE2** | **SE3** |
| **Primary UG**  | 30 mins online meeting to QA all is set up for placement1 hour online to QA mentor feedback to student30 mins for additional support as students may be placed in a team of 2 or 3 |  30 mins online meeting with mentor to QA all is set up for placement1 hour online to QA mentor feedback to student following lesson observation | 30 mins online meeting to QA all is set up for placement1 hour to QA mentor feedback to one student following lesson observation1 hour Progress Review meeting with each student and mentor in attendance |
| **Primary UC PGCE Full time**  | 30 mins online meeting to QA all is set up for placement1 hour online to QA mentor feedback to student | 30 min online meeting to QA mentor support if the mentor has already been observed\*If the mentor has not been observed giving feedback in SE1:1 hour online to QA mentor feedback to student | 30 mins online meeting to QA all is set up for placement1 hour to QA mentor feedback to one student1 hour Progress Review meeting with each student and mentor in attendance |
| **Primary UC PGCE Part Time** | 30 mins online meeting to QA all is set up for placement1 hour online to QA mentor feedback to student | 30 min online meeting to QA mentor support, which might be:* observation of part of the weekly progress meeting
* a one to one meeting with the mentor on making judgements of the student at interim/end of SE
* observation of feedback to student following appraisal
 | 30 mins online meeting to QA all is set up for placement1 hour to QA mentor feedback to one student1 hour Progress Review meeting with each student and mentor in attendance |
| **Primary School Direct PGCE**  | 30 mins online meeting to QA all is set up for placement1 hour online to QA mentor feedback to student following lesson observation | 30 mins online meeting to QA all is set up for placement\*Where the school is different to SE1: 1 hour online to QA mentor feedback to student, or \*If the school is the same as SE1 and the mentor has not been observed giving feedback: 1 hour online to QA mentor feedback to student\*If the mentor has been observed giving feedback during SE1:1 hour observation of the weekly progress meeting with mentor and student | 30 mins online meeting to QA all is set up for placement1 hour Progress Review meeting with the student and mentor in attendance |

\*Due to the uncertainty of visits to schools in the current COVID-19 situation, confirmation of link tutor contact with schools will be circulated at the beginning of each placement once this has been agreed by the ITE Team and partners.

# What to do if additional support is needed by schools

The allocated link tutor hours accommodate the time needed to make contact/visits and complete the required documentation and meeting notes on Abyasa.

**If you have a student teacher who is causing significant concern and are aware that this is likely to result in the need for additional visits / workload over and above the hours allocated, please discuss this as soon as possible with either the SE Director or Programme Lead, or the Careers, Student Placements and Opportunities Manager and follow the procedure outlined below.**

In cases where a **‘Requiring Improvement Action Plan’** pro forma has been written or additional support/visits above those contracted may be required, the relevant School Experience Director, Programme or Alliance Lead should be informed in the first instance.  Where it is not possible to contact this member of staff, please ring the School Administration Unit to leave a message so an appropriate member of staff can be informed and take decisions as appropriate. In the majority of cases, an urgent decision is not necessary.

In some instances, the SE Director or Alliance Lead will take responsibility for support from this point forward in the placement.

**No link tutor should proceed with additional QA support/visits until such authorisation has been given, either by phone or email.**Any additional support/visits for external link tutors must be authorised **before**they are carried out in order that they can be paid.

There may be a workload / capacity issue for university-based link tutors who may require additional link tutor support through further negotiation with the Careers, Student Placements and Opportunities Manager **and** the link tutor’s line manager.

In any event, the SE Director or Alliance Lead should continue to be kept informed of the student’s progress by the link tutor as it may be appropriate or necessary for them to intervene at a later stage.

The SE Director or Alliance Lead may also visit the student teacher at that point and decide whether the placement should be terminated.

**Please note**: Any other additional expenses incurred must also have prior authorisation from the SE Director, e.g. emergency replacement car hire in the case of a breakdown.

In order to provide additional support where ‘capacity’ is an issue, a pool of external link tutors with proven expertise in supporting weak students will be identified.

# Appendix

## SE File Checklist

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name of student teacher** |  | **Comments and date** |
| **Initial check & date** | Student Teacher | Mentor | Link Tutor/ Alliance lead |  |
| **Teaching File** |  |  |  |  |
| **MT plans in place and files correctly organised before start of SE** |  |  |  |
| 1. Student Information

Personal detailsSubject knowledge auditsCode of ConductAudit of Teachers’ Standards |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Attendance record
 |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Children’s Prior Learning
 |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Overview of key events/ SE Overview
 |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Weekly plans: Phonics

Weekly timetableMaths and English |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| 1. Daily plans
 |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Records of monitoring and assessment
 |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Class List
 |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Individual Children’s Needs
 |  |  |  |  |
| Planning, Archive & Context File |  |  |  |  |
| * Contextual information
 |  |  |  |  |
| * Long term plans (from the school)
 |  |  |  |  |
| * Overview of key events/Medium Term Plans
 |  |  |  |  |
| * Previous week’s planning and assessment records (in subjects)
 |  |  |  |  |
| * Examples of annotated children’s work
 |  |  |  |  |

## Appraisal Record (to be completed on Abyasa)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Student teacher** |  | **School** |  |
| **Observer(s)** |  | **Date/Time** |  |
| **Subject/****Topic** |  | **Programme/SE** |  |
| **Class/Year group** |  | **Grouping**(set/band/mixed ability) |  |
| **Focus of observation** (general or related to a specific standard/target) |  |

Refer to Teachers’ Standards 2012. Please note all areas of the standards can be considered in the lesson appraisal.

**Has the student teacher attached the relevant lesson plan showing context and learning outcomes (TS4)? ☐**

|  |
| --- |
| **Student teacher’s response to specific weekly target(s)** (student teacher to fill in targets before lesson) |

**Part 1: (completed by mentor/link tutor)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Time** | **Key points within the lesson** | **Link to TS** |
|  |  |  |
| **Strengths in teaching that enabled pupil progress**: | **Areas for development for greater impact on pupil progress** *(linked to TS)***:** |

**Part 2. Evaluation - for completion by student teachers during feedback on this session**

|  |
| --- |
| **TS1, TS5: High expectation, stretch and challenge, adaptation for learning.**Subject knowledge and ability to address misconceptions in connection with securing pupil progress and learning. |
| *What went well:* | *Areas for improvement:* |
| **TS3, TS4: Subject and curriculum knowledge, addressing misconceptions (addressed also in planning)** |
| *What went well:* | *Areas for improvement:* |
| **TS6: Effective assessment of pupils’ learning** |
| *What went well:* | *Areas for improvement:* |
| **TS7: Behaviour for learning and the learning environment** |
| *What went well:* | *Areas for improvement:* |
| **TS2: Overall impact on pupil progress:** |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Priority/subject specific target:** (Ensure this is reflected in the targets set in the weekly progression meeting) | **Strategies to support the target:** |

**Signed: Mentor/Link Tutor/Teacher**

**Signed: Student teacher**

**Student teachers should complete the evaluation box on the lesson plan and this should be discussed with mentors as part of the weekly progression meeting.**

## Link Tutor QA Form (Abyasa Template)

Summary Comments

Please give a brief overview of the dialogue you observed between the student teacher and the mentor

Links to Mentor Standards <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/536891/Mentor_standards_report_Final.pdf>

Please make a brief note about how you have observed these being demonstrated during the meeting

Mentor Standard 1: Personal Qualities

Establish trusting relationships, modelling high standards of practice and understand how to support a trainee through initial teacher training

Mentor Standard 2: Teaching

Support trainees to develop their teaching practice in order to set high expectations of all pupils and to meet their needs

Mentor Standard 3: Professionalism

Set high expectations and induct the trainee to understand their role and responsibilities as a teacher

Mentor Standard 4: Self development and working in partnership

Continue to develop their own professional knowledge, skills and understanding and invest time in developing a good working relationship within relevant ITT partnerships

Indicate an area the mentor may like to explore further to develop their mentorship skills in line with their own CPD needs in school

Link tutor confirmation of QA feedback

Date

## SE3 Progress Review Meeting (template to be completed on Abyasa)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Progress Review Meeting  | Link Tutor Notes  |
| Opening discussion: how the placement is going, the opportunities for the student and responsibilities they have undertaken so far  |   |
| Summary of the strengths of the student teacher and related Teachers’ Standards  | TS1 TS2 TS3 TS4 TS5 TS6 TS7 TS8 PPC (please omit as appropriate)  |
| Strengths: evidence discussed  |   |
| Areas to develop (related to the TS)  | TS1 TS2 TS3 TS4 TS5 TS6 TS7 TS8 PPC (please omit as appropriate)  |
| Areas to develop: possible evidence  |   |
| Further discussion of Teachers’ Standards not included in strength and areas for development  |   |
| Agreed targets for the remainder of the placement (no more than 3 and linked to the TS)  |   |
| Submitted by: (name of link tutor)  |   |
| Date:  |   |

# Contact List

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Careers, Placements and Student Opportunities Team Manager | Simon Gandertonplacements@yorksj.ac.uk |
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