



# GSA SCITT Withdrawal and Deferral Policy

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## Introduction

Overview The GSA SCITT aims to have no deferrals or withdrawals. Rigorous and thorough recruitment and selection coupled with excellent support and regular opportunities for all personnel to communicate any concerns are key to this. There are however circumstances beyond our, or trainee teachers', control that occasionally mean these do happen. Once confirmed, in the case of either scenario, the University of Derby is informed and the SCITT Strategic Board receives a detailed report.

in the case of withdrawals or deferrals for teacher apprentices, this policy will be used in conjunction with the latest ESFA guidance and the Spencer Apprenticeship Withdrawal / Deferral policy

## Deferral

Trainees may ask to defer for several reasons such as ill health, accident or significant personal circumstances.

Where the trainee indicates the desire to do this, or a mentor considers this a possible option either must contact the Director of ITT immediately. The Director of ITT or other representative will have an initial discussion to cover reasons. This discussion will also ascertain that there are no hidden reasons associated with lack of support and/or issues with the training or placements. The implications of a possible deferral will be covered. The University of Derby will be contacted and their guidance will be sought in terms of the PGCE element where relevant

In the case of health-related issues any deferral must be accompanied by a doctor's/medical note. This may also be sought in some instances of personal circumstances where appropriate. Depending on the nature of the issue a decision will be made with SAT HR, the trainee and their mentors as to whether all elements of their training will temporarily be suspended or just the in-classroom aspects.

The terms and length of the deferral will be agreed with a review date built in during this period. Keeping in touch procedures will be agreed. All meetings and communications with trainees will be recorded and saved on their files. They will remain confidential and a decision made with the trainee as to how much mentors/schools need to know. It is the responsibility of the GSA SCITT representative dealing with the deferral to communicate these to the trainee and ensure the trainee acknowledges all written records of meetings as accurate.

Nearing the time for the end of the deferral the trainee will receive a letter indicating the next stages to include a formal 'return to training' interview which will be conducted by a GSA SCITT representative and may include mentors and GSA HR representative. The trainee has the right to invite a Union representative, friend or relative to this meeting.

The length of the deferral may require a change of school and/or a reorganisation of second and other placements. It may also require extension to the training period beyond that of the deferral period where the deferral was of a length and a time in the year that means the autumn term needs to be completed in full given the changes of classes and other aspects associated with picking up training in a different academic year.

Any funding that the trainee is in receipt of will be retained by the GSA SCITT as of immediate effect until such time as they resume. No additional funding will be made available other than that they

were entitled to had they not had the deferral. DfE are informed of the start and proposed end dates of the deferral period.

## Withdrawal

Trainees may request to withdraw or may be withdrawn. This is a situation of last resort and all efforts are made to ensure it does not come to this.

**Where the trainee indicates the desire to do this**, or a mentor considers this a possible option, either must contact the DITT immediately. From this point forward all meetings and decisions will be documented and stored on the trainee files and treated with confidence. Any records taken will always be shared with the trainee and the trainee asked to acknowledge they are a true reflection of the meeting/conversation. Where the request has come from a trainee the DITT or other representative will have an initial discussion to identify reasons. This discussion will also ascertain that there are no hidden reasons associated with lack of support and/or issues with the training or placements. If it is the latter all efforts will be made to resolve these to keep the trainee on the course. The implications of a possible withdrawal will be covered. The DITT will recommend a suitable period of time for trainee reflection and may suggest adjustments to be made to the training programme in the meantime to facilitate this. A follow –up meeting will be arranged and the trainee is entitled to have a representative there; Union, friend or family.

The placement school and mentors will be kept informed and the University of Derby will be contacted and their guidance will be sought in terms of the PGCE element. In the case of withdrawal on the grounds of health related issues, they must be accompanied by a doctor's/medical note. This may also be sought in some instances of personal circumstances where appropriate.

Any funding that the trainee is in receipt of will be retained by the GSA SCITT as of immediate effect. DfE and if appropriate the Student Finance Company will be informed.

**Where the trainee is at risk of being withdrawn, the trainee disciplinary process from the Appeals and complaints policy will apply and is listed below.**

Part 2 of the Teacher's Standards outlines the personal and professional conduct expected of all teachers. Disciplinary procedures might be initiated by concerns such as:

- Conduct incompatible with the professional standards of a teacher
- Application to the training is such that and appropriate professional standards is unlikely to be reached
- A medical or physical condition that precludes the trainee from being fit to teach
- Some other substantial reason

## Stage one

Where the trainee is flagged up as being of concern, an informal meeting will be arranged between the trainee and a GSA SCITT representative. The trainee will be advised of action required to overcome these concerns (through an informal support plan) and made aware of the implications of not doing so. Trainees will be given all the necessary support from SCITT and school to enable them to meet their targets) The trainee will be sent a record of this within 2 working days of the meeting. This record will indicate the timeframe for the satisfactory completion of the actions identified. Where there are concerns about the trainee teacher's performance the placement school in consultation with GSA SCITT will be required to support the trainee.

### Stage two

If the trainee has been unable to address the issues satisfactorily within the given time frame then a formal meeting between the trainee, their placement school representative and a GSA SCITT representative will take place. The trainee will be given a formal support plan and a final deadline by which time they will have had to meet the targets set and the consequences of non-compliance made clear (i.e. that once failed, it is not possible to retake QTS). A record of this meeting will be sent to the trainee within 2 working days.

### Stage three

In cases of persistent underperformance where the trainee has not met the targets set by the deadline set there will be a follow up meeting with the trainee, a representative of their choosing and a SCITT representative. They will be informed that they are being removed from the course. A record of this meeting and the confirmation of withdrawal from the course will be sent to the trainee within 2 working days.

### Misconduct

In cases of alleged misconduct, the placement school will be required to appoint an Investigating Officer (IO) who will conduct an investigation as a matter of urgency using the placement school's disciplinary policy. A senior leader from GSA and/or SALT director will decide with the school if the trainee is to be suspended at any stage prior to or during the investigation or whether they can continue training. If suspended, then GSA SCITT will direct the trainee to study at a suitable location. The IO will be invited to report their findings to a representative of the GSA SCITT with the school Headteacher to determine whether the allegation is founded and what subsequent actions need to be taken dependent on the nature of the misconduct. The trainee will be informed of the outcome in writing within one week of this meeting. In cases of alleged serious trainee teacher misconduct the GSA SCITT will follow the DfE advice about how to refer allegations of misconduct.

### Misconduct associated with matters of safeguarding

As with all other forms of alleged misconduct it is essential that all schools inform the DfE as soon as is practically possible. Where the misconduct also involves matters of safeguarding, it may be necessary to make a separate referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service and possibly other agencies such as the police. If serious misconduct is found proven, then a decision is made about whether that teacher should be prohibited (banned) for life from the teaching profession. A prohibition order is not intended to punish the teacher concerned. Prohibition orders are imposed to fulfil the remit of protecting pupils, maintaining public confidence and upholding high standards.

In cases of misconduct where the allegation appears to have substance the trainee will be called to formal interview with the Director of SALT and 2 members of the GSA SCITT Executive Body who have not been involved to date. The trainee may choose to have a representative from a Union or friend. This interview will explore the complaint further. If the allegation is upon balance established the panel may:

- Issue a formal warning which will go on the trainee's record
- Require the trainee to withdraw from the programme
- Dismiss it and no record of the case retained in the trainee's portfolio

There are situations where trainees will be withdrawn. Persistent failure to meet targets or misconduct is the most likely occasion where removal from the course will be considered. Warnings will always be given and will be preceded by a range of support measures. Warnings will be given to:

- trainees who are unable to do the work in spite of trying;
- trainees who are making insufficient effort;
- trainees whose failure to attend taught sessions and/or lack of active engagement within sessions indicate a lack of professional engagement with the course;
- trainees whose attitudes and/or standards during school based training periods are unprofessional / unsatisfactory.

**No trainee should be asked to leave the training programme without a clear system of warning and documented processes for target setting and support, fair investigation, and counselling as to the options available.**

- Trainees making unsatisfactory progress towards the Standards despite significant and prolonged support risk being withdrawn.
- **Early identification through observation and written feedback is essential.** Potentially failing students will be given timely and expert support from all those associated with their training.
- Clear targets and success criteria for these will be given, fully documented and regularly reviewed.
- **Throughout the following processes all meetings will be recorded in writing and emails will be taken to form part of this record keeping.** Any records taken will always be shared with the trainee and the trainee asked to acknowledge they are a true reflection of the meeting/conversation.
- **At the point it becomes apparent that progress is unsatisfactory the trainee will be warned of the implications of persistently poor progress and the likelihood of being withdrawn from the course.**

Trainees at the risk of failing at the end of term 2/term 3 will be counselled as to the fact that once QTS is failed they cannot retake it and that it may be appropriate to withdraw or defer, to sort out issues that are impacting their ability to meet the Teachers' Standards. Where it is very hard/impossible for the trainee to ascertain an end point to their deferral it may be that withdrawal is the option.

Should the trainee still be failing then the trainee may:

1. Be withdrawn or withdraw themselves in line with any terms and conditions they signed at course outset
2. The trainee is counselled and allowed to continue with the course and is subject to external moderation procedures for the course to run to completion

**The decision to withdraw the trainee will be made with the Director of TSH, the GSA SCITT DITT and at least one member of the Strategic Board. This will be communicated to the trainee in writing as will the process for appeal. The trainee will have 10 days in which to make such an appeal. Any payments the trainee was entitled to will stop immediately. DfE and, if appropriate, the Students Loans Company will be informed once the appeal period has passed.**



In the event of any withdrawal the SCITT central team will review all selection documentation to ascertain if the issues that arose could have been ascertained during the selection processes and if so what needs to change in the SCITT's policies and practices.