

Using Steplab to support structured and effective coaching with your early career teacher: your frequently asked questions

| Observations, action steps and feedback | |
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| <p>How does the observation, action step and feedback cycle work on Steplab?</p> | <p>The instructional coaching process is made up of two stages on Steplab.</p> <p>1. Observe and select: This is where you observe your ECT's lesson, review the previous step you set for them and select a new action step for them to work on.</p> <p>When you observe your ECT, you should use the spaces available in the 'Observe and select' section of Steplab to make notes of praise, evidence relating to your ECT's next step and how you might want to model that to your ECT during your feedback session.</p> <p>When you are ready to have your feedback session with your ECT, use the 'Give feedback' section on Steplab. This will display all of the notes you made during the 'Observe and select' stage.</p> <p>2. Give feedback: You can only give feedback to your ECT once you have completed the 'Observe and select' stage as the observation is where you gather all the evidence and information you need to have a really effective feedback session with them. When you click 'Finish' on the Give feedback section the step you have set becomes visible to your ECT and is logged on the system.</p> <p>Steplab will support you to repeat this two stage cycle with your teachers every week. You can observe more than once in the same week using the 'Coach again' function as long as you have had a feedback session with your ECT related to your first observation.</p> |
| <p>What do I observe for in order to set a new action step?</p> <p>Do I align action steps with my early career teacher's modules of self-study?</p> | <p>Setting your next action step for your ECT should always be based on your observation of what you have seen in the teacher's classroom ('the evidence').</p> <p>The action steps that are available are all aligned to your teacher's modules of self-study. You can set an action step from <u>any</u> module that has been released to your ECT so far (so the step does not need to link to the teacher's current self-study and can be linked to previous self-study)</p> <p>During your observation, you will review the previous step you set and decide whether you are happy to move on from that step. You can decide to repeat that action step if you do not feel the ECT has met that step yet.</p> <p>To support you in selecting the next step, you have some optional support available to you in Steplab.</p> <p>1: Study for coaching: On your Coach page, you can access the modules your ECT is studying each week as part of the programme.</p> <p>2: Step library: On your Learn page, there is a button called 'Library'. In your library, you have access to all of the action steps across the Early Career Framework.</p> |
| <p>How do I tailor the steps to subjects which are not based in a classroom, for example, PE?</p> | <p>Self-study modules and the associated action steps are designed along with the Clinics to cover the content of the Early Career Framework in its entirety, and are adaptable to any subject or context through editing, exemplification, and modelling by mentors.</p> <p>When setting an action step during the 'Observe and select' stage on Steplab, you can use your subject expertise and professional judgement to tailor and edit the action step to individual contexts. There is also an option to set a custom action step if you want to set an action step that is not currently appearing.</p> |
| <p>Do we need to set action steps in a certain sequence?</p> | <p>The most effective coaches try to ensure that their coaching follows a theme rather than jumping between different topics. It's often more effective to stick with an area until we are happy that our teacher has achieved what we want, than to change the focus of coaching every single week.</p> |
| <p>I chose a next step, but then changed my mind. Can I change the action step I have set?</p> | <p>You can change the step you have set for your teacher if you haven't completed the 'Give feedback' section. You can do this by clicking into the observation you completed, clicking 'discard' under the step you have selected, choosing a new step and saving your changes.</p> |
| <p>Is the ECT able to see the 'next step' that I selected when they log on to Steplab?</p> | <p>The ECT can see the step that has been set for them when you have clicked 'Finish' on the 'Give feedback' section of Steplab.</p> |

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| <p>If the ECT fails to meet the step, do we give feedback or do we wait until the next week, conduct another observation, and then give feedback?</p> | <p>Each week, you should observe your early career teacher and conduct a feedback session with them. If you observe your ECT and feel they have not yet achieved the step you set for them, it is up to your professional judgement as a mentor whether you want to work with them again on the same action step or to move on to a new step.</p> <p>Repeating an action step: We do not expect early career teachers to always master each new step within a week so there is nothing stopping you from repeating the same action step. In this situation, you may want to consider how you can best support your them to achieve the step – for example by remodelling the action step.</p> <p>Moving on from an action step a teacher has not met: You can also decide that a step has not yet been met and still select a new action step to work on. During the 'Observe and select' stage on Steplab, select that the step has 'Not yet' been met. At this point, the system will recommend you repeat this step. In the 'Select next step' section, you can 'discard' this recommendation and select a new step instead (you may also wish to return to the step the teacher has not met in the future and review it at another point – this is possible too).</p> |
| <p>Does the ECT need to 'tick off' every action step eventually?</p> <p>Do we click 'yes' if the ECT meets the majority of the criteria? I've always selected 'no' because I believed they had to accomplish all action steps.</p> <p>How do I move forward when the micro-steps within the action steps do not pertain to my ECT?</p> | <p>When using the step selector to choose a new action step, dots and ticks denote the areas where action steps have been set and achieved previously. There are 100's of action steps that can be chosen from each module so an early career teacher does not need to be set or achieve or all of them. It is about your professional judgement as a mentor what areas you set action steps for your teacher on.</p> <p>Attached to each action step are success criteria. These are designed to be used as a guide for determining whether you feel your teacher has achieved the action step. However, you can decide an action step has been achieved even if all of the success criteria have not been met. It is about your professional judgement as a mentor to make this decision. Steplab provides the flexibility for you to make this decision.</p> |
| <p>It would be really helpful to have all the action steps available beforehand, as an ECT might have a particular weakness that needs addressing first. Is this an option?</p> | <p>All of the action steps that form part of the programme can be found on your Learn page. Click on the 'Library' button and you will see a section called 'Step library'. This contains all the development areas and action steps that form part of the programme.</p> <p>You can also access PDF versions of all our core induction materials on the ECF website.</p> |
| <p>Is it okay to set a step even if the ECTs have not completed the study?</p> | <p>Yes. Whilst it is useful for your ECT to be familiar with the content, and it is recommended that they complete a new self-study module each week, it is not essential they have completed the study for you to set an action step.</p> |
| <p>Does the fact that you have to go back to a previous step imply that your ECT will be behind with the program?</p> <p>What if you don't complete all the steps by the end of the term?</p> | <p>Completing (or not completing) action steps is not an indication that early career teachers are 'behind' on the programme. Early career teachers aren't expected to complete every single action step available.</p> <p>As long as they are staying on track by completing self-study each week, and mentors are supporting them to with relevant and specific action steps, then they will keep getting better – and that's what the programme is all about.</p> |
| <p>Design principles of Early Career Teachers</p> | |
| <p>Do we need to mentor according to a certain approach or method?</p> | <p>Yes. The ECT programme is designed to be delivered using instructional coaching. The induction conference provided a walkthrough of and opportunities to practise instructional coaching. You can read an introduction to instructional coaching here.</p> <p>If you have not attended the induction conference, you will need to work through the catch up materials. Please speak to your induction coordinator to help you find time and support for this</p> |
| <p>Do we have the option of doing more than one step per week?</p> | <p>Instructional coaching is based around setting a single, bite-sized action step each week. This is based on extensive research into deliberate practice (<i>Ericsson and Pool, 2016</i>) as well as to avoid cognitively overloading ECTs</p> |
| <p>What is the difference between a strand and a module?</p> | <p>There are 36 modules, grouped into 3 x strands. Strands are denoted by the broad themes of the modules within them – Behaviour, Subject, and Instruction. However all strands do have content from each of these areas, and each draws from the full breadth of statements in the ECF, so they should not be seen as exclusively one subject or the other</p> |

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| <p>Does the mentor have to be subject-specific in order to observe the ECT?</p> | <p>Ideally mentors would be specialist in the same subject/phase as the teacher(s) they mentor, so they can help contextualise teachers' learning. We recognise this is not always possible, and they can still be a really effective mentor if this is not the case.</p> |
| <p>Other questions about mentoring on Steplab</p> | |
| <p>What is the 'Drop In' feature for?</p> | <p>Drop-ins allow for teachers or coaches to support colleagues with a quick observation or feedback on the fly. Drop ins shouldn't be used for coaching your ECT on the programme.</p> |
| <p>Is it expected that mentors complete the self-study modules that my ECT is doing (watching the video, completing the quiz, reading)?</p> | <p>It is optional for mentors to engage with the ECTs 'Learn' content. This option is there to support mentors if they want to familiarise themselves with the content before modelling to their ECT</p> |
| <p>I have been completing observations but have not added all to Steplab since I was uncertain how to use it. Should I go back to do this?</p> | <p>If you have not logged some of your observations on Steplab, it is not a requirement of the programme to have to backdate these observation and feedback sessions.</p> <p>If you do want to do this, you can log your observations and feedback sessions by using the 'Coach again' function of Steplab. Once you have completed an observation and feedback on Steplab for the week, a button will appear on your Coach page saying ' Coach again'. You can use this to complete further observations and feedback sessions.</p> |
| <p>Leadership and management of the Early Career Teachers programme in school</p> | |
| <p>How do ECTs know if they are on track to pass?</p> | <p>Remember that while presentation of the ECF is structured around the Teachers' Standards, this is simply for clarity. The ECF is not an assessment framework, and early career teachers are not expected to collect evidence towards it.</p> <p>The purpose of the ECF is to ensure new teachers have sufficient time and resources devoted to their professional development and can thrive in the early stages of their career.</p> |
| <p>The release schedules of my ECTs are different from each other. How come?</p> | <p>ECTs may have onboarded at different times. If one ECT onboarded a week later than their colleagues, then they would be one week behind in module release. This will be resolved at the end of term when the missed modules are released, so everyone should start at the same point in the new term</p> |
| <p>What happens if one of us (ECT or Mentor) is absent (off sick, on leave etc)</p> | <p>If the ECT is absent, all of the modules in a strand will be released at the end of each half-term and so the ECT can catch up on their self-study. If the mentor is absent, we recommend the Induction Coordinator picks up the mentoring of an ECT, as they have Steplab access and can still record their coaching sessions. If that is not possible, you can just pick up coaching where you left off upon your return.</p> |
| <p>Is the induction coordinator able to see the coaching done on Steplab?</p> | <p>The induction coordinator is provided with an overview of the coaching completed each week by the mentor and the study modules completed by the ECT.</p> |
| <p>How can we get a holistic perspective of what we have completed and what the students have completed?</p> | <p>The 'Study for coaching' section on your Coach page provides an overview of the modules released to your ECT so far. You can view their progress in here as well as any modules you have chosen to complete. Your 'Activity' section on your Coach page also denotes the action steps you have set for your ECT over the course of the programme.</p> <p>This link contains a guidance video on looking at a teacher's progress on Steplab.</p> |
| <p>Is it possible to modify when Strands are released to accommodate for individual schedules?</p> <p>Would it be possible to release the study materials earlier than they are currently released?</p> | <p>Content on the Early Career Framework is released in a predefined sequence – early career teachers working through the Behaviour strand, followed by the Instruction strand and finally the Subject strand.</p> <p>Some Delivery Partners may allow for teachers to work through the content in a different order. This will have been communicated to you if this is available.</p> <p>If your school wants to have modules released on a different day of the week, they can email ectsupport@ambition.org.uk to request this change.</p> <p>If you wish to see the program modules for the entire program, they are all available in pdf form at: https://www.early-career-framework.education.gov.uk/ambition/</p> |
| <p>What do I do if my question hasn't been answered here?</p> | <p>Our friendly team is ready and waiting to help with any more specific question you have. Get in touch with us at: ectsupport@ambition.org.uk</p> |