

ECT Pastoral Coaching

Supporting Guidance



Aims and overview

Year 1 Early Career Teachers (ECTs) meet with their mentor every week. Instructional coaching should be run at least every fortnight. In intervening weeks, delivery partners or mentors may choose to run pastoral coaching instead.

Pastoral coaching may vary from session to session, but its ultimate aim will be to support ECTs to feel confident in managing the various demands of their role. This includes managing the workload, responsibilities and time demands of being a teacher, alongside meeting the requirements of the Early Career Training Programme (ECTP). By supporting ECTs in these areas, we aim to help them succeed in the classroom and on the ECTP, which in turn boosts their sense of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977). Increased self-efficacy helps ECTs stay motivated and supports their wellbeing.

This document provides guidance for mentors to structure pastoral coaching meetings. Following this structure can help ensure pastoral coaching targets specific areas of need and helps mentors to provide effective support. It also outlines some suggested focus areas for meetings: workload & wellbeing, planning for wider school responsibilities and events, and knowledge-building around the programme content.

It is important to note that mentors can go beyond this guidance and take these sessions in the direction that they feel will be most beneficial. The suggested structure and content outlined in this guidance document acts as a prompt rather than an expectation for meetings.

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Summary of suggested pathways

This section outlines some suggested focus areas for pastoral coaching meetings. It outlines three potential pathways for mentors to consider. An overview of all three pathways is provided below, and the following pages outline each pathway in greater depth.

Pathway ① Workload and wellbeing	Pathway ② School events and responsibilities	Pathway ③ Programme content knowledge building
Useful for an ECT who needs support in managing their time or tasks, including where they have multiple demands on their time.	Useful for an ECT who has upcoming events in the calendar (e.g. <i>parents' evening</i>), or wants further support with wider teaching responsibilities (e.g. <i>parental phone calls</i>)	Useful for an ECT who wants to discuss and reflect on key takeaways from training programme inputs, such as self-study modules, clinics or conferences.

Pathway ① Workload and wellbeing

Purpose:

Efficient workload management can improve well-being. ECTs who feel more in control of their time are more likely to succeed in their role and on the ECTP. As ECTs take on an increased timetable compared to their trainee year, their workload will increase accordingly. Whilst mentors can help to make workload manageable, certain tasks (such as assessment and planning) will still require significant time. Therefore, mentors can support ECTs to use their time on these tasks most efficiently, ensuring they positively impact pupil learning while managing their time effectively.

What this support is for:

- > Planning and prioritising work.
- > Working together to address workload-related problems an ECT is facing.
- > Signposting ECT to additional support where needed (e.g. *line manager, HR, employee assistance programme or GP*).
- > Providing a space for mentor and ECT to strengthen their relationship.

What this support is not for:

- > Providing a counselling service.
- > Diagnosing or resolving a mental health need.

Pathway ② School events and responsibilities

Purpose:

Teachers working in supportive professional environments tend to improve more quickly (Papay & Kraft, 2016). Supportive professional environments include those where there are opportunities to collaborate on school-based challenges or responsibilities (Papay & Kraft, 2014). During year 1 of the programme, ECTs will have a range of events such as parents' evenings and may take on additional roles, like pastoral responsibilities for a class or tutor group. They will also have tasks related to their teaching which are part of their professional responsibilities, such as making phone calls home or supporting a pupil who has joined their class, possibly joining from a different school.

The level of prior knowledge ECTs have about these tasks may vary depending on their trainee year experience, particularly if they spent time at their current school. Discussing these responsibilities can reassure ECTs and help them feel more prepared.

What this support is for:

- > Building an ECT's confidence in new or wider responsibilities.
- > Helping the ECT feel more prepared for these tasks.
- > Pre-empting potential issues that might arise.

What this support is not for:

- > Replacing support provided by school leadership. All teachers have a right to support, assistance and training from senior colleagues.

Pathway ③ Programme content knowledge-building

Purpose:

Over the course of programme, ECTs will engage with a broad range of material through the study modules, clinics and conferences. Given this breadth of content, ECTs may benefit from opportunities to discuss key takeaways and questions. Doing so can support ECTs to further build and secure their knowledge of key programme content. While some discussions may overlap with instructional coaching, it is important to remember that instructional coaching focuses on practising a specific and granular step for improvement. This pathway provides a broader opportunity for discussion, ensuring the distinct purpose of instructional coaching is maintained.

What this support is for:

- > Building an ECTs' knowledge of programme content.
- > Checking an ECTs' understanding of programme content.
- > Addressing any misconceptions an ECT might hold around programme content.

What this support is not for:

- > Planning how to put the programme content into practice –instructional coaching is the primary mechanism for supporting ECTs to develop their practice.

Suggested meeting structure

This section presents a suggested structure for pastoral coaching meetings, based on a three-stage model of identifying, exploring, and revisiting a focus area. This page explains the purpose of each stage and introduces the prompts that mentors will find on the pathway-specific pages that follow.

Stage	Purpose	Content
Listen and clarify	To help mentors to identify areas an ECT might benefit further support with.	<p>Suggested diagnostic questions are provided that apply to all three pathways. These questions aim to encourage broad discussion, allowing ECTs to express their needs and helping mentors identify a useful focus area for the meeting. Given the broader diagnostic purpose they serve, not all questions will be directly relevant to a specific pathway.</p> <p>Further clarification questions are also provided to support mentors to probe further and better understand their ECT's needs.</p>
Explore	To discuss a chosen topic with an ECT in greater depth, identifying where there are any points of challenge or concern.	<p>Suggested exploration topics and questions tailored to each pathway are provided. These questions and prompts aim to encourage rich and purposeful discussion about challenges, concerns, questions, or next steps.</p>
Revisit	To revisit the topic in a later meeting to provide continuity and ongoing support, as required.	<p>Suggested prompt questions are provided to support mentors to revisit a topic explored in a previous session. These questions aim to encourage thoughtful, ongoing reflection.</p>

Pathway-specific meeting prompts

The following section provides some meeting prompts for each of the suggested pathways, aligned to the meeting structure outlined above. Please note that all prompts and questions provided in this guidance are designed to be indicative rather than restrictive, giving mentors the flexibility to use, adapt, or expand upon them as needed.

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Pathway ① Workload and wellbeing

<p>Listen and clarify</p>	<p>Listen:</p> <p>How have the past few weeks been at work, and personally? <i>e.g. How are you feeling about school/in general this week?</i></p> <p>Looking ahead to the next few weeks, are there any deadlines or events that you have coming up? <i>e.g. What planning, marking or data-points do you have?</i></p> <p>Do you feel happy that you have the time you need for these? <i>e.g. What school events are in the calendar?</i></p> <p>How have the past few weeks been on the Early Career Teacher Programme? <i>e.g. How have you been getting on with self-study?</i> <i>e.g. Have you had any live sessions?</i></p> <p>Clarify:</p> <p>Can I just check I've understood? I think you said...</p> <p>I'm not completely clear about... Please can you tell me a bit more?</p>
<p>Explore</p>	<p>What tasks do you need to do this week? What order of priority are they in?</p> <p>How is each priority likely to help you help pupils to succeed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > In the short term? > In the long term? > What might you do instead? <p>What is urgent and important? Is anything non-urgent and/or unimportant?</p> <p>What might you stop doing to create space for your top priorities?</p> <p>What are the likely consequences of this?</p>
<p>Revisit</p>	<p>Last week/a few weeks ago, we discussed... How is that going?</p>

Potential topics to discuss

Below is an overview of tasks that might affect an ECT's workload, which a mentor might consider discussing as part of this pathway.

Assessments: Preparing for, marking, or grading end-of-topic or term assessments.

Marking: Managing the marking requirements and workload for the upcoming weeks.

Planning: Completing lesson plans and utilising available resources.

Data inputs: Entering data and understanding the systems and processes involved.

A note on broader wellbeing support

An ECT may wish to discuss issues related to their wellbeing more broadly, including out-of-school needs. If so, it is important to listen and reassure the ECT, and help them to identify any support which might be available to them. However, the mentor may not be the best suited, or best qualified, person to provide that support and it may be more appropriate for the mentor to signpost the ECT to where they could get the best available support. This might be the ECT's line manager, the school's SLT, employee counselling services offered by the school, Citizens Advice, or support from mental health charities such as Mind or Samaritans.

Pathway ② School events and responsibilities

<p>Listen and clarify</p>	<p>Listen:</p> <p>How have the past few weeks been at work, and personally? <i>e.g. How are you feeling about school/in general this week?</i></p> <p>Looking ahead to the next few weeks, are there any deadlines or events that you have coming up? <i>e.g. What planning, marking or data-points do you have?</i></p> <p>Do you feel happy that you have the time you need for these? <i>e.g. What school events are in the calendar?</i></p> <p>How have the past few weeks been on the Early Career Teacher Programme? <i>e.g. How have you been getting on with self-study?</i> <i>e.g. Have you had any live sessions?</i></p> <p>Clarify:</p> <p>Can I just check I've understood? I think you said...</p> <p>I'm not completely clear about... Please can you tell me a bit more?</p>
<p>Explore</p>	<p>How are you feeling about...? <i>e.g. parents evening, a phone call home, a new pupil joining the class, taking on pastoral responsibility for a class or tutor group</i></p> <p>Is there a particular aspect of this you are unsure of, or have questions about?</p> <p>What additional information might you need?</p>
<p>Revisit</p>	<p>Last week/a few weeks ago, we discussed... How did that go?</p> <p>What went well last time, and how can this help you in future?</p> <p>Were there any challenges you faced, and what was the impact of this?</p> <p>Was there anything that surprised you when you did...?</p>

Potential topics to discuss

Below are some prompts for events or responsibilities that a mentor might wish to explore in this pathway. These ideas are illustrative of what support might be useful, rather than an exhaustive list.

Pastoral responsibility for a class or tutor group	Parents evening
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Celebrating successes: recognising achievements of pupils in the class tutor/group. > Finding out about pupils: speaking to another teacher who knows the group/pupils well. > Contact with home: how to act as a point of contact for parents/guardians. > Belonging: how to support pupils to feel that they have a connection to their peers and to the teacher. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Reviewing pupil progress: specific achievements or areas of improvement to highlight or discuss. > Preparation of materials: examples of pupil work might it be useful to share with parents. > Anticipating questions: the questions parents are likely to have, and how to respond to these. > Time management: approaches for keeping to time during meetings. > Support at home: how parents/guardians could help their child's learning at home.
Phone call home	A new pupil joining the class
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Focusing the conversation: how to keep the conversation focused on the topic at hand. > Starting the conversation: how to start the conversation in a positive way to make it more likely to be successful. > Questions: responding to any questions. > Making a record: noting down the key points and any agreed actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Addressing gaps in prior knowledge: providing targeted support without creating extra workload (e.g. <i>creating individualised resources</i>) > Motivating the pupil: how to support the pupil to experience success. > Welcoming the pupil: making the pupil feel like part of the group.

Pathway ③ Programme content knowledge building

<p>Listen and clarify</p>	<p>Listen:</p> <p>How have the past few weeks been at work, and personally? <i>e.g. How are you feeling about school/in general this week?</i></p> <p>Looking ahead to the next few weeks, are there any deadlines or events that you have coming up? <i>e.g. What planning, marking or data-points do you have?</i></p> <p>Do you feel happy that you have the time you need for these? <i>e.g. What school events are in the calendar?</i></p> <p>How have the past few weeks been on the Early Career Teacher Programme? <i>e.g. How have you been getting on with self-study?</i> <i>e.g. Have you had any live sessions?</i></p> <p>Clarify:</p> <p>Can I just check that I've understood? I think you said...</p> <p>I'm not completely clear about... Please can you tell me a bit more?</p>
<p>Explore</p>	<p>What are your three key takeaways?</p> <p>What is one thing you'd like to know more about?</p> <p>What can you tell me about ...?</p> <p>Do you have any questions?</p> <p>Is there anything you didn't understand?</p>
<p>Revisit</p>	<p>Thinking back to... how has your understanding changed from when we last discussed it?</p>

Potential topics to discuss

Below is an overview of programme inputs that an ECT might want to discuss with their mentor as part of this pathway.

Self-study materials: Fortnightly online modules that ECTs complete. Each module delves into a specific aspect of teaching, such as embedding a positive classroom culture or effective modelling.

Clinics: Facilitator-led sessions that ECTs attend once per term. Each clinic examines a teaching challenge and explores how ECTs can apply ideas from the programme to address it.

Conferences: Facilitator-led events that ECTs attend three times throughout their programme. Each conference provides an opportunity to deepen knowledge in a core teaching area, such as adaptive teaching, and begin planning for practice.