DBS and safeguarding arrangements, and recruitment checks for Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Students

Dear School/Setting Leader

The University of Cumbria is committed to safeguarding and working in partnership with schools who host placements to safeguard young people and promote their welfare.

This letter confirms the checks that the university carries out as part of its commitment to safeguarding and to ensure compliance with statutory requirements.

The information is provided to assure you that all appropriate, relevant checks are completed to enable you to support ITE whilst ensuring that the children and young people in your school are protected.

We do this in line with our Partnership Agreement, which you receive and sign when offering ITE placements each academic year.

DBS check and the single central record

Section 1.3 of Initial teacher training: criteria and supporting advice requires:

> *"Accredited ITT providers should confirm in writing to placement schools that a non-salaried trainee's criminal record check, including a check of the children's barred list, has been completed and that the individual has been judged by the accredited ITT provider to be suitable to work with children. Accredited ITT providers are not required to provide any information to schools in addition to this confirmation. Schools may wish to record this confirmation in their single central record, but they are not required to do so."* [1]

Confirmation of Enhanced DBS checks are provided by the University of Cumbria as part of the email communication from the Placement Team informing you of a student placed with you. This will confirm the student's DBS certificate number and date of issue of the certificate. Although we cannot share further details with you, you are legally entitled to ask to see the students DBS paper copy certificate. If student is unwilling to do so, you are legally permitted to turn them away (without further reason).

The University asks students to have their current DBS certificate with them when they are on placement activity. This provides you with confirmation of the certificate number and date of issue. You should not make a copy of it. Students are also asked to have photographic ID with them to confirm their identity.

All DBS checks are at Enhanced Certificate level which includes a check of the Children's Barred List and are completed prior to or soon after registration. Students not in receipt of DBS clearance by the start of placement are checked by the University against the Children's Barred List via a standalone, online check. Schools will be informed of any such student, and it is at the discretion of the Head Teacher whether such students can begin a placement with you pending issue of their DBS clearance or certificate.

[1] This aligns with the information in KCSiE paras 375 – 376, DfE 2026

University tutors visiting students in schools

Institute of Education staff who regularly visit schools as part of their role will be DBS-checked and can be asked to produce their DBS certificate if the school requires this.

Recruitment and selection checks

Initial teacher training: criteria and supporting advice [2] relates to entry requirements. Firstly, they require us to:

"*Ensure that all entrants have achieved a standard equivalent to a grade 4 in the GCSE examinations in English and mathematics*"

With the additional criterion for those training to teach in the 3-11 age range:

"*Ensure [... they] have achieved a standard equivalent to a grade 4 in the GCSE examination in a science subject.*"

For students on Postgraduate programmes, we are required to ensure that:

"*All entrants hold a first degree from a UK HE institution or equivalent qualification*."

These checks and confirmations are carried out as part of our recruitment and selection processes. A record of confirmation of qualifications is maintained by our Admissions Team. Annual audits take place to confirm compliance, and our compliance is checked as part of Ofsted ITE inspections.

Our application processes require applicants to complete an application form. All appropriate applicants are interviewed and have their identity checked and all University of Cumbria colleagues involved in selection processes have completed safer recruitment training. References are requested and checked for all students after they have accepted any offer made. Applications only proceed to enrolment once suitable references have been received.

Additionally, the latest EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers [3] outlines specific criteria for references. In relation to this we can confirm that all references for ITE students:

- are not accepted if they are open (e.g. to whom it may concern),
- must be supplied by the referee not the applicant,
- must be a professional reference for any applicant who has been out of education for more than three years,
- are not accepted from family members,
- are checked for legitimacy,
- are pursued where information is vague or insufficient, and
- are compared with information provided in applications.

If an applicant's employment history or study history indicates they have been based overseas for six months or more in the last five years, an overseas police check is added as a clearance check.

Responsibility of school or setting

When inducting students into a placement, it is the school's responsibility to provide safeguarding information including your safeguarding policy, supervision and reporting route. If you have any safeguarding concerns relating to a student on placement with you, contact the university as soon as possible.

[2] Sections 1.1 to 1.3
[3] Effective from 01 September 2026, section 3.20.

Benedict's Law

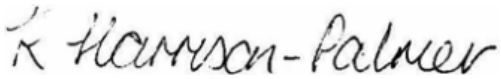
The DfE does not currently require accredited ITE providers to include specific allergy training within the mandatory ITE curriculum. Therefore, the University does not provide formal standalone allergy training as part of its ITE programmes. Placement schools remain responsible for ensuring that trainees are familiarised with local policies and procedures relating to allergy management and emergency response during their placement.

General statement on compliance

The University of Cumbria is compliant with all relevant legal, statutory and regulatory requirements relating to its students carrying out placements as part of their course of study:

- DfE's Keeping children safe in education 2026
- DfE's Initial teacher training (ITT): criteria and supporting advice (Sept 2026)
- Universities' Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET) guidance
- News: DBS guidance (October 2025) | UCET

Yours sincerely,



Dr Ruth Harrison-Palmer, Director of Institute of Education

Safeguarding Checks: FAQs for Placement Schools

1. **Which safeguarding and suitability checks does the University complete before a trainee starts placement?**
   The University undertakes all required pre-placement checks for fee-funded Initial Teacher Education trainees. These include:
   - Enhanced DBS check with Children's Barred List check.
   - Verification of identity.
   - Verification of qualifications.
   - Receipt of satisfactory references.
   - Overseas criminal record checks where required.
   - Suitability and fitness-to-train assessment.
   - Any other checks required by current Initial Teacher Training / Initial Teacher Education requirements.

   Schools will receive written confirmation that all required checks have been completed and that the trainee is suitable for placement.

2. **Does the University use the DBS Update Service?**
   Where appropriate, the University may accept an existing Enhanced DBS certificate that is registered with the DBS Update Service and is at the appropriate workforce and barred-list level. In these cases, a status check is completed before placement.

3. **How old can a trainee's DBS check be?**
   There is no statutory expiry date for DBS certificates. The University follows current sector guidance and risk-assesses the validity of existing certificates, including use of the DBS Update Service where applicable. Schools remain entitled to determine whether they wish to see the DBS certificate on arrival.

4. **Does the school need a separate Letter of Assurance?**
   No. The safeguarding checks information provided in this letter by the University serves as confirmation that all required checks have been undertaken.

5. **Is new safeguarding assurance issued each academic year?**
   Yes. The University reviews its safeguarding assurance information annually to ensure alignment with current legislation, Department for Education requirements and partnership expectations.

6. **What should a school do if a trainee's details do not match the information provided?**
   If there is any discrepancy regarding a trainee's identity, DBS certificate, placement documentation or safeguarding assurance, the school should contact the University immediately before permitting unsupervised activity.

7. **What should a school do if safeguarding assurance has not been received before placement starts?**
   The school should contact the University's Placement Team or nominated partnership contact before the trainee begins placement. The trainee should not be treated as cleared through university processes until appropriate assurance has been received.

8. **What should a school do if a safeguarding, conduct or suitability concern arises during placement?**
   Any safeguarding concern, allegation, professional conduct issue or information that may affect a trainee's suitability to work with children should be reported to the University immediately using the normal partnership and safeguarding escalation routes. The University will work with the placement school to determine any necessary actions.

9. **Do schools need to record fee-funded trainees on the Single Central Record?**
   Schools may choose to record receipt of the University's safeguarding assurance on the Single Central Record, but there is no statutory requirement to carry out duplicate checks where written confirmation has been provided by the accredited provider.