

# Changes to the professional skills test for teachers

In the [teacher recruitment and retention strategy](#) published in January, the government committed to helping great people become teachers and making sure they receive high-quality teacher training.

To support this, the government today announced that it is introducing a new approach to assessing the numeracy and literacy of prospective teachers, which will replace the existing skills tests.

The current skills tests will be replaced with a new system where trainees will be assured against a set of fundamental maths and English skills by the end of their initial teacher training.

This approach will allow universities and schools to better identify the individual needs of each trainee and offer them extra support to strengthen their skills where needed.

This decision was taken following a review of the skills test and after engaging with universities, schools, candidates, teachers and representative bodies. This review found that these tests do not provide appropriate assurance of the maths and English skills of teacher trainees.

Over the coming months, the Department for Education (DfE) will work with the Standards and Testing Agency and teacher training providers to develop new guidance on the fundamental maths and English skills for teachers.

James Nobel-Rodgers, Executive Director of the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET) and Emma Hollis, Executive Director of the National Association of School-Based Teacher Trainers (NASBTT) said:

UCET and NASBTT wholeheartedly welcome the news that the skills test will be replaced. We know that our members find it ineffective as a measure of literacy and numeracy, and logistically burdensome – not to mention the impact on the candidates themselves. We support the decision to replace it, and look forward to working with the Department of Education and others to design an alternative approach that more accurately reflects the skills that teachers need in today's classrooms.

Million Plus, the Association for Modern Universities in the UK said:

Today's announcement is a hugely positive step for teacher education. Ending arbitrary testing, which is a very real barrier to recruitment, will encourage more capable candidates to undertake teacher education and should result in a much-needed increase in

high-quality teachers across England. We have been working with the DfE to ensure that, as a result of this change, not only will the standards of literacy and numeracy be maintained they should actually improve, as the standards will be linked to the demands of modern teaching. MillionPlus has long called for reform to the skills tests system so we are very pleased that the DfE has made this step today, a policy reform that will help support and strengthen the profession.

A more detailed announcement on the implementation of this approach will be made in September when DfE publishes interim guidance.

Read the [written ministerial statement from The Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP](#), Minister of State for School Standards.