

# National Specialist SCITTs

## Admissions Policy

**Important:** This document can only be considered valid when viewed via one of the following sources: the trust or SCITT website, internally via the central policies and procedures intranet (SharePoint / MLE), or the online learning platform for trainees.

If this document has been printed or saved to another location, you must check that the version number on your copy matches that of the document in the above locations.

The accredited provider for both the National Mathematics and Physics SCITT and the National Modern Languages SCITT, is Chorus Education Trust operating as National Specialist SCITTs.

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EXCELLENCE IN SUBJECT-SPECIFIC TEACHER TRAINING

## Version Control

| Version | Section                   | Amendments                                                                                                                                                                           | Date ratified: | Author name and job title       |
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| 2.0     |                           | Redraft of NML SCITT policy for National Specialist SCITTs                                                                                                                           | Dec 2025       | Katrin Sredzki-Seamer, Director |
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# 1. Introduction

The Admissions Policy provides the basis for the admissions practice across all SCITT programmes. The good practice principles and ethos identified in this document apply equally to all categories of Applicants who submit an application to study at both the NMAP SCITT and NML SCITT and to Recruits who have accepted a conditional offer, during the Pre-course Programme and prior to their enrolment as Trainees on a SCITT course.

Responsibility for compliance with the Admissions Policy lies with any member of staff of both SCITTs and colleagues in Hubs who play a role in the admittance of Applicants and Recruits into the teacher training programme.

All colleagues with admissions responsibility must be familiar with this Admissions Policy and will be provided with the appropriate guidance, training and support.

This policy addresses the mandatory criteria that organisations should meet to provide initial teacher training leading to qualified teacher status as set out in the [\*DfE's Initial Teacher Training \(ITT\): Criteria and supporting advice\*](#).

Both SCITTs are committed to encouraging applications from the widest range of educational, social and cultural backgrounds.

In addition, the policy aligns with the [\*Chorus Education Trust Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy\*](#) by promoting an admissions environment in which all individuals can demonstrate their abilities, free from discrimination or harassment, and where decisions are based on merit. We value diversity and recognise the benefits that Trainees from different backgrounds and experiences bring to our teacher training provision, partnership and schools. We are committed to drawing on a range of different backgrounds to strengthen our work and acknowledge the impact of intersectionality on individuals and the ongoing development of our provision and partnership.

## 1.1 Equity

The SCITTs are committed to providing equality of opportunity for all our Applicants, Recruits and Trainees. We recognise that the programme and the teaching profession is enriched by a diverse intake. No potential Trainee will be excluded from entry to either SCITT programme as a result of discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, gender definition, intersex and non-binary, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation; or any combination of protected characteristics.

## 1.2 Responsible Recruitment

On the basis of the evidence provided and within the limitations of the number of available placements in each Hub, the SCITTs will use all reasonable efforts to attempt to match aspirations and level of subject knowledge of each Trainee to placements which ensure the successful completion of the programme.

We will align our recruitment targets in each hub to the available placements and ensure collaboration between neighbouring hubs to support Applicants when placements become limited.

### 1.3 Inclusivity

The SCITTs are committed to diversity in each group of Trainees and will make available a range of measures by which Applicants may demonstrate their readiness and commitment to train to teach their subject(s) at KS3, 4 and 5.

The SCITTs are committed to supporting Applicants who are neurodivergent, have a long-term physical or mental health condition, or have any other accessibility needs. Support with the application process and regarding reasonable adjustments for interviews is offered. During the interview process Applicants will also have the opportunity to discuss support they may require during the pre-course programme and throughout the training year.

Recruits will be invited during the pre-course programme and enrolment process to highlight any support or reasonable adjustments they may need in meeting the conditions of the offer and during the training year.

### 1.4 Transparency

The SCITTs will be open and accessible in their requirements and selection processes. Each Applicant will be entitled to a prompt and professional assessment of their application against clearly available criteria, and complaints and appeals will be handled in an independent process.

The main aims of this policy are to secure high-quality candidates for the programme and to be timely and responsive in dealing with Applicants at all stages of the process.

## 2. Information for prospective Applicants and Applicants

Both SCITTs are committed to providing accurate admissions and course information which is clear, comprehensive and easily accessible for prospective Applicants and Applicants.

Admissions and course information, including detailed information about entry requirements and how we assess Applicants, is published on our website.

Recruitment nationally and regionally will take place through:

- regular taster days in hub lead schools or information sessions online
- marketing at partnership schools including flyers, banners, emails and newsletters to parents/alumni, and discussions with volunteers and staff who meet the training criteria
- social media
- SCITT representation at relevant events, e.g. careers fairs, Recruitment events and Train to Teach events
- targeted press advertising, where appropriate

- involvement of partnership schools in the School Experience Programme and other volunteering programmes.

Prospective Applicants will be made aware of various financial incentives and available support.

Prospective Applicants will be supported from first contact and throughout the application process regardless of whether their intention is to apply for a place on either SCITT programme.

Prospective Applicants can access Terms and Conditions and SCITT Policies on all SCITT websites.

### 3. Admission Criteria

National Specialist SCITTs welcome applications from Applicants who can demonstrate that they have the potential to train to teach and are able to benefit from the programme and from the learning, research and social environment which the SCITT programmes provide.

All applications to a SCITT programme must be made through DfE Apply. Applications are dealt with by the SCITT Admissions Team in a timely manner.

#### 3.1 Academic entry requirements

To ensure that all Applicants are prepared for their Initial Teacher Training, all SCITT programmes have academic entry requirements which Applicants will need to fulfil.

Entry requirements are determined by the SCITT Strategic Board following the [DfE Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice](#), supplemented by the advice from academic staff and informed by their professional opinion of the level of academic preparation required for an Applicant to succeed on the programme.

Mandatory criteria from the Department for Education state that prior to the full enrolment, all Recruits must have achieved a standard equivalent to a grade C /4 in the GCSE examinations in English and Mathematics, however, Applicants must check the specific eligibility criteria for the course they have applied for to ensure they meet the provider specific entry criteria.

Equivalence is at the discretion of the SCITT as the provider and, in most cases, we will only accept GCSE, O-Level, iGCSE, Scottish Standard grades 3 or higher or an international equivalent certified by UK ENIC. For Applicants who are not native speakers of English, we require an IELTS test taken within the last 2 years where the overall score is 7.0 and the score for each strand is 6.5 or higher as equivalence to English GCSE. We will consider equivalent qualifications such as the Cambridge Proficiency Exam at CEFR level C1 or above.

Mandatory criteria from the Department for Education state that prior to full enrolment, all Recruits must hold a first degree of a United Kingdom Higher Education Institution or equivalent qualification from a non-UK institution accompanied by an ENIC statement of comparability and a degree transcript.

Academic qualifications achieved, or expected, will normally be a degree of a 2.2 or above, or equivalent in the same, or a related subject. In some cases, it may be possible to consider graduates with degrees in subjects not directly related, providing that the content of the

Recruit's previous education or work experience provides the necessary foundation for work as a teacher for the subject they are training to teach.

Recruits for the NML SCITT programme are required either to have a degree in the appropriate language, or a degree in which the appropriate language is a significant element, or to have spent a substantial period of residence in a country where that language is the main language. Native speakers are exempt from the requirement to have a degree in the main subject they wish to train to teach to Key Stage 5 but must have an acceptable, alternative degree. All Recruits will preferably hold a qualification in a second language which is equivalent to GCSE or higher, but this is not essential.

In addition, Recruits for the NMAP SCITT programme are required to hold a minimum of an A-level qualification grade B or above in the subject they wish to train to teach in. If a Recruit cannot fulfil the A-level requirement then their degree and experience in industry may be considered.

Recruits may be required to complete a Subject Knowledge Enhancement course prior to training.

### 3.2 Non-academic entry requirements

We welcome applications from Applicants who have obtained a wide range of UK, European and international qualifications that offer effective preparation to embark on a SCITT programme.

Applicants and Recruits will be advised and supported to enable them to obtain any necessary documentation and equivalencies to enable them to embark on their training.

There are also non-academic additional requirements for Recruits, for example providing a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Enhanced Disclosure, obtaining world-wide criminal record checks and completing a satisfactory health check. Recruits are advised to read the **DBS Policy**. More information is also supplied by the SCITT Admissions Team.

All Recruits will be required to complete the SCITT Pre-course Programme between March and August which consists of three online events and a range of pre-course tasks prior to the start of the course in August.

## 4. The shortlisting process

The shortlisting process is a two-stage process.

When applications are received through DfE Apply, the SCITT Admissions Team check:

- That the Applicant meets the SCITT's academic entry criteria
- The Applicant's residency status – the SCITT can only accept applications from Applicants from the UK or those who have the right to study in the UK
- The teacher's records and the children's barred list via the Teaching Regulation Agency database.

As the SCITT is not a licensed visa sponsor, international Applicants who are not eligible to study in the UK will be advised to apply to Higher Education institutions who are licensed to sponsor visas.

The Applicant will be rejected if the entry criteria are not met. The SCITT Admissions Team will seek further information prior to interview on the other points if concerns arise.

In the second stage, the Course Leader has responsibility for shortlisting supported by the Director. The selection for interview is based on:

- The quality of the overall application
- The employment history - we will clarify gaps in employment at interview
- An assessment of the suitability of the Applicant's GCSEs, A-levels and degree (or equivalent) as well as the level of subject knowledge they offer
- The Applicant's motivation to teach
- The Applicant's experience of working with children or young people
- The quality of the Applicant's written English.

Throughout the shortlisting stage of the selection process proper regard will be given to ensuring equity of opportunity. When an Applicant is invited for an interview, they will be asked to identify any support needs for the interview and completion of written tasks, and reasonable adjustments will be made to allow equal access for any Applicant with an additional need.

An online search is completed for all shortlisted Applicants in line with statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education.

Reasons for rejection will be shown on the DfE Apply system. Further feedback will not normally be provided at the pre-interview stage but can be requested from the SCITT Admissions Team.

## **5. The Interview Process**

The interview process is designed to assess an Applicant's suitability to train to teach and their potential to meet the Teachers' Standards by the end of their training.

With the invitation to interview the Applicant will receive links to a detailed introduction to the SCITT programme and our interview process as well as answers to the most frequently asked questions.

Prior to attending an interview, the Applicant will have the opportunity to talk to the SCITT administrators to clarify our processes, discuss their qualifications and receive personalised advice. They can also highlight any potential barriers and request support and reasonable adjustments.

All Applicants will be required to complete two written tasks either on the interview day or separately via an online meeting:

- A written task in English based on an article the Applicant will be sent prior to the day

- A written task in the subject they wish to train to teach in.

Applicants, unless reasonable adjustments have been agreed, will be required to write by hand on paper when completing the written tasks. For Physics and Maths written tasks, the notes / workings will also be assessed.

Applicants who do not meet the required minimum level of subject knowledge will be informed that they will not be invited to attend the interview and they will be asked to withdraw their application. We reserve the right to reject any application that does not meet the requirements of the DfE or our programme entry requirements. Feedback will be given.

The interview and teaching task will normally take place at a SCITT hub lead school or partnership school, but online interviews may be offered as an alternative when government guidance or the Applicant's circumstances require this.

The interview process will be conducted by at least two panel members from the hub lead team and/or the SCITT central team.

The panel will assess the Applicant's suitability for the course using the criteria published on the SCITT website and in the invitation to interview pack.

The interview process will include:

1. The two written tasks mentioned above if not completed prior to the interview day
2. A 10-minute teaching task with a group of pupils / or interview panel for on-line interviews, information will be sent prior to interview
3. A formal interview (40 minutes)
  - A series of questions gauging the Applicant's motivation to want to train to teach, their experience and skills and their insight into educational contexts and challenges.
  - A conversation about the subject the Applicant would like to train to teach in and conversations about any other subjects the Applicant may be able to teach.
  - Languages Applicants will be required to have a conversation in the main language they wish to train to teach to KS5 and in all languages they can offer.
  - An opportunity for the Applicant to ask questions.

Applicants will have the opportunity to speak to hub lead staff and current or past Trainees about the details of the programme and the demands of the course wherever possible on the interview day. However, if this is not possible, Applicants/Recruits may be invited to zoom meetings, taster days or school experience days organised by the SCITT to offer this opportunity.

As part of the interview process the panel will establish the Applicant's subject knowledge in the subject(s) they offer and their level of English. This is to ensure that Applicants are ready to meet the academic demands of the programme and to inform development points prior to the start of the training.

Subject knowledge enhancement courses and other development points such as the Applicant's knowledge of English will be discussed at interview and the Applicant will be

advised of possible conditions to be met should an offer be made. The Applicant will have the opportunity to discuss their personal situation at this point, possible support and solutions are explored, and deferrals will be explained if applicable.

The interview panel must be aware of guidelines relating to equal opportunities and how they relate to the conduct of the interview. At least one member of the panel will have completed courses in Safer Recruitment and a course to raise their awareness of Unconscious Bias.

All panel members will follow the SCITT interview script and will not ask questions which an Applicant from a group subject to discrimination may find intimidating, such as questions about presumed problems, or disadvantages, relating to race, nationality, gender, age, creed, sexual preference or physical ability. No Applicant will be questioned about marital status, the views of the spouse or partner towards the application, provision for children or any other purely domestic arrangements, unless the Applicant broaches the topic.

Interviewers will not ask any questions or enter into discussion regarding criminal convictions, however, if the Applicant has declared a conviction on their DfE Apply application or during the interview process, the panel will advise them that this will be referred to the SCITT suitability panel.

Applicants will be invited to provide information about a need or disability they may have so that appropriate support and reasonable adjustments can be put in place for the interview process. If the Applicant is successful and later accepts the conditional offer, further discussions will be arranged during the Pre-course programme and prior to the start of the training to ensure the appropriate support and reasonable adjustments are in place.

The **Equality Act 2010** makes it illegal to reject an Applicant because of disability. There are however three instances in which a provider can reject a disabled Applicant if they have the entry criteria necessary, these are:

- overriding health and safety concerns
- barriers resulting from competence standards
- reasonable adjustments cannot be made.

The SCITT will be proactive in encouraging disclosure at all stages of the application process. Information will be treated in accordance with the relevant legislation. Should the SCITT be unable to make reasonable adjustments, support and advice will be offered to find an alternative provider or suitable employment.

Successful Applicants will usually be informed of the decision of a conditional offer for a place on the programme by phone on the day of the interview or the following morning.

A conditional offer will be entered on the DfE Apply system and a formal offer letter will be sent to successful Applicants by email. This will:

- specify any conditions to be met including:
  - successful completion of a degree
  - equivalency tests
  - proof of original documentation

- completion of a Subject Knowledge Enhancement course
- state the procedures for the assessment of physical and mental fitness for teaching as per [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) and the [Education \(Health Standards\) \(England\) Regulations 2003 legislation](#)
- include information about background checks including DBS procedures and worldwide criminal record checks
- include details of the Pre-Course programme and actions to be taken prior to enrolment
- detail any recommendations such as school experience visits and self-study to be completed during the Pre-Course programme.

Unsuccessful Applicants will be notified via DfE Apply. Applicants can request further feedback by emailing the SCITT Admissions Team.

## 6. Appeals and Complaints

Should a rejected Applicant feel that there are grounds for appealing the decision, they should write, explaining the grounds for their appeal, to: The Complaints Officer, Chorus Education Trust, Unit 4 Acres Hill Business Park, Acres Hill Lane, Sheffield, S9 4LR. All appeals should be made within **ten working days** of the relevant decision.

Should an Applicant feel that there are grounds for complaints about matters relating to the SCITT marketing and admissions process, they should write, explaining the grounds for the complaint to: The Complaints Officer, Chorus Education Trust, Unit 4 Acres Hill Business Park, Acres Hill Lane, Sheffield, S9 4LR.

All appeals and complaints will be processed in the same way as those for existing Trainees. Details are available in our **Appeals Policy** and **Complaints Policies**, which are available on the SCITT websites.

National Specialist SCITTs reserve the right to withdraw any offer made on the basis of an application which has been found to contain fraudulent information. National Specialist SCITTs may also withdraw the offer of a place if an Applicant has been found to have omitted key information from their application. Any Trainee found to have been admitted on the basis of fraudulent information may have their studies terminated.

National Specialist SCITTs will consider re-applications on an individual basis and reserves the right to use information from a previous application in assessing a re-application.

National Specialist SCITTs are committed to ensuring that interaction with Applicants and Recruits is conducted in a professional, courteous and respectful manner and we expect that communication from Applicants and Recruits is conducted in the same way. The SCITT will not tolerate inappropriate behaviour or language towards its employees or members of the partnership during the admissions process. Hostile, aggressive or otherwise inappropriate behaviour or language, whether expressed verbally or in writing, will be viewed seriously and may adversely affect the consideration of an application, the enrolment, an appeal or a complaint. The SCITT will normally warn an individual that their behaviour or language is

inappropriate, and that action is being considered, but where the behaviour or language is particularly inappropriate no warning need be given before action is taken. Such action may include a referral in line with the Chorus Education Trust's disciplinary procedures, the withdrawal of an offer or the rejection of a current or future application. Conduct which constitutes a criminal offence will be referred to the relevant authorities.

All SCITT Recruits and Trainees are expected to follow the **Codes of Conduct** set out on the SCITT website. Where we become aware of a Recruit or Trainee conducting themselves in a manner inconsistent with this code, we may refer them to the SCITT suitability panel.

## 7. Monitoring and Evaluation of the Admissions Policy

For each cohort of Trainees admitted to a SCITT Training programme:

- The Admissions Team keeps a record of withdrawals and reasons for withdrawals
- The SCITT Director and Course Leader will attend a selection of interviews for quality assurance purposes
- The Administration Team will keep a record of Trainees who do not complete the programme for monitoring purposes
- The Administration Team will keep a record of the employment and career progress of Trainees
- The SCITT Director and Course Leader will review data and other feedback on selection and Recruitment in their annual reviews, self-evaluations and improvement plans
- The **Admissions Policy** will be reviewed annually unless an earlier review is required.

## 8. Data collection

In connection with the application process the National Specialist SCITTs collect, hold and process information about Applicants and Recruits. This information may include personal data (which identifies an Applicant/Recruit as an individual) and sensitive personal data.

The personal data submitted as part of each application is used to assess the suitability of an Applicant for study on a SCITT programme. Applicants' and Recruits' personal data may also be passed to government bodies.

The personal data within applications will form part of the Trainee record for Recruits who are admitted to the SCITT programmes. Further details about how such personal data will be processed are set out in the [Chorus Education Trust website policy section](#).

When processing Applicant personal data, the SCITTs comply with the UK General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018, as well as all other legislation enacted in the UK in respect of the protection of personal data. Further information about data

protection policies at the NMAP SCITT and NML SCITT as part of National Specialist SCITTs and Chorus Education Trust can be found [here](#).

## 9. Publishing this Policy

This policy is available on the SCITT website. A copy can also be requested via our SCITT office.

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) runs an independent scheme to review student complaints. Chorus Education Trust operating as National Specialist SCITTs, and the accredited provider for the National Modern Languages (NML) SCITT and the National Mathematics and Physics (NMAP) SCITT is a member of this scheme. If an Applicant, Recruit or Trainee is unhappy with decisions made by National Specialist SCITTs regarding this Policy, they may be able to ask the OIA to review this decision once all SCITT internal procedures have ended and a Completion of Procedures (COP) Letter has been issued by the SCITT. More information about making a complaint to the OIA, what it can and cannot look at and what it can do to put things right if something has gone wrong can be found here: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students>.