

APK Guide for Mentors

What is the APK?

APK stands for Applying Professional Knowledge. It is one of the two assignments that together make up the PGCE academic qualification (the other is called 'Reflecting on Professional Knowledge', which takes the form of an interview at the end of the course). The APK assignment asks the trainee to design and critically evaluate both the planning – based on research literature - and the impact of a small unit of work/series of lessons (4-6) within their subject. It is a 6000-word written assignment with appendices.

What is the purpose of the APK?

The APK requires trainees to do what good reflective teachers do: plan, teach and critically reflect upon their own practice. It requires them to choose a particular pedagogic focus that they want to develop in their classroom with one specific class. Having decided upon the pedagogic focus, they should then read what others have written about this area of teaching. Essentially, this becomes a literature review. They should then use the ideas and strategies that they have read about to plan and teach their unit of work. Next, they evaluate and reflect upon how well the ideas and strategies worked to help the different pupils in class learn and make progress. Finally, they should think about what they might change / the recommendations they should make for their future practice.

What should the APK focus on?

The curriculum tutors can give specific guidance as this is a subject specific assignment. Trainees might choose to focus on developing an area of conceptual thinking, or focus on dialogic talk in the classroom, or on the use of assessment learning techniques to improve the quality of learning in a particular subject, or on assessing the impact of cognitive science techniques on learning within a particular subject.

How can I support my trainee with their APK?

There are several ways in which you can support your trainee with their APK. You can guide them to choose a particular class that might be a good fit to try out this unit of work on. You can help them to choose the substantive topic to hang the pedagogic focus on. Trainees normally teach their APK lessons in December or January, so help them by looking at your curriculum to see what topic they could teach. Guide them to think of a pedagogic focus that is sensible and useful in helping pupils to make progress in your subject. You could also read some of the scholarship with them and discuss their planning in your mentor meetings.

APK timeline.

Subject areas may modify some of the dates to suit their cohort.

9/10/23: APK assignment introduced in a lecture.

16/10/23: and after: trainees discuss with Curriculum Tutor and Mentor what their APK could focus on.

12/23: Hand in up to 1000 words of draft literature review for formative marking.

12/23- 1/24: Teach APK lessons.

1/24: Hand in up to 500 words of evaluation section for formative marking.

22/2/24: Hand in final draft of the assignment.

23/2/24: Hand in the appendices for the assignment.