SWIFT Teacher Training

BIOLOGY 2027–2028

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Welcome from Kelly Armstrong

Thank you for considering SWIFT Teacher Training. Our secondary programme is designed to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence you need to become an exceptional teacher. Through a carefully sequenced 39-week curriculum, extensive subject-specific training and contrasting school placements, you will learn from experienced subject specialists and expert teacher educators while applying your learning in real classroom contexts.

At SWIFT, you will be supported every step of the way by a dedicated team of mentors, visiting tutors, campus leads and subject specialists. Together, we are committed to providing the guidance, feedback and opportunities you need to grow into a confident, reflective and successful teacher.

Choosing where to train to teach is a significant decision, and finding the right fit is just as important as finding the right course. This booklet aims to give you an honest insight into life as a SWIFT trainee, including the training you will receive, the support available and the experiences you can expect throughout the year.

About Kelly

Kelly Armstrong is the SWIFT Teacher Training Deputy Director (Secondary), leading the development and delivery of the secondary training programme. Based at Coombeshead Academy, part of Education South West, she has over 12 years of experience teaching Drama, Dance and Performing Arts across Key Stages 3 to 5, alongside extensive experience in Initial Teacher Training. Kelly has held a range of leadership and quality assurance roles, including Deputy Team Leader of Performing Arts, BTEC Quality Nominee and Edexcel Examination Moderator.

Course Information

Overview

- We deliver our programme over 39 weeks, to enable trainees to maximise their training year experience.
- Our model sequences learning through three phases, covering six themes, which align with the Autumn, Spring and Summer Terms.
- These broad strands form the basis of our Core Sessions where trainees learn through our evidenced-based approach to teaching.
- Subject Sessions are delivered by specialist Subject Leads.
- Through these sessions trainees explore how evidence-based knowledge and practice is applied through each subject lens.

Core Sessions

Core Sessions are based on the core areas outlined in the Initial Teacher Training Early Career Framework (ITTECF), which we refer to as the 'Core Strands':

- **Core Strand 1 |** Behaviour Management and High Expectations
- **Core Strand 2 |** Pedagogy (How Pupils Learn, Classroom Practice, Adaptive Teaching)
- **Core Strand 3 |** Curriculum
- **Core Strand 4 |** Assessment
- **Core Strand 5 |** Professional Behaviours

"Leaders have designed a curriculum that embeds key learning, such as inclusion, within the core and subject knowledge that trainees need."
(Ofsted 2026)

Biology Course Aims

Our overall aim is to enable trainees to make the strongest possible start that leads to ever-deepening expertise across their career.

Specifically, we want all Science trainees to focus on developing a profound understanding of the science curriculum. Trainees will explore the key themes of the science curriculum within their chosen specialism as well as across the other sciences. This exploration will involve a comprehensive examination of the core concepts and principles in their specific area of focus, as well as an understanding of how these themes intersect with other scientific disciplines.

For Biology, the key themes include:

- The cellular basis of life,
- Heredity and life cycles
- Organisms and their environment
- Variation, adaptation and Evolution
- Health and Disease

Subject Themes

Subject Sessions are organised into six themes, aligned with the SWIFT Core Strands, enabling trainees to explore pedagogy and teaching approaches through a subject.

Theme 1: The Science Curriculum
Theme 2: Creating a powerful environment to teach Science
Theme 3: The effective teaching of Science
Theme 4: Assessment and feedback in Science
Theme 5: Adapting Science
Theme 6: Enriching Science

Meet Matt Hamilton - Subject Lead

Biology helps us make sense of the living world, from the smallest cells to the complex ecosystems that sustain life on Earth. If you are passionate about biology and want to inspire that curiosity in the next generation, this course will give you the knowledge, skills and confidence to do so.

Throughout your training, you will deepen your understanding of key biological concepts while strengthening your wider science subject knowledge. Alongside this, you will explore the pedagogical approaches that help students think scientifically, develop their understanding and achieve success.

Our aim is to support you in becoming an inspiring, reflective and knowledgeable biology teacher who can foster curiosity, challenge misconceptions and help young people develop a lifelong appreciation of science.

About Matt

Matt Hamilton is SWIFT Teacher Training's Secondary Subject Course Lead for Biology, bringing over a decade of experience in secondary science education. As Head of Science at Kingsbridge Community College, he has led curriculum development, staff development and assessment practice, while also supporting schools across a range of trust and partnership projects.

Matt is passionate about developing excellent science teachers. He has extensive experience designing and delivering Initial Teacher Training programmes, mentoring trainee and early career teachers, and leading professional development. His expertise in curriculum design, practical science teaching and coaching helps trainees build the knowledge, confidence and skills needed to thrive in the classroom.

Special Education Needs and Disabilities

Developing expertise in supporting pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) is woven throughout the course. Trainees explore inclusive teaching approaches through expert-led training, professional studies activities and practical classroom experience. You will learn how to identify and remove barriers to learning, understand the needs of vulnerable pupils, and use adaptive teaching strategies to support all learners.

Throughout your placements, you will apply this learning in practice by working closely with pupils with SEND, planning lessons that meet diverse needs and reflecting on the impact of your teaching. Regular mentor support, feedback and assessment help you develop confidence in creating inclusive classrooms where every pupil can succeed.

Intensive Training and Practice

ITaPs accelerate the development of teaching practice around pivotal themes in the ITTECF and strengthen the link between theory and practice and to develop strong communities of practice.

There are four ITaPs across the year, designed to intensify training around key knowledge and skills:

- ITaP1 | Procedural routines
- ITaP2 | Questioning
- ITaP3 | Gradual release of responsibility
- ITaP4 | Oral language

PGCE with Bath Spa University

Alongside Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), trainees can gain a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) awarded by Bath Spa University.

The PGCE comprises three modules. The first two modules each carry 30 Level 7 credits. The final module is achieved through successful recommendation for QTS by SWIFT Teacher Training. To be awarded the PGCE, trainees must successfully complete both academic modules and achieve QTS.

Assignment 1 Pedagogy for Learning in the Classroom

Explores how effective teaching approaches support pupil learning. Trainees critically engage with educational research, evaluate the impact of strategies used in their own teaching, and provide evidence from their training and classroom practice. Assessment includes a 2,000-word literature review, a 15-minute presentation, and an annotated evidence portfolio.

Assignment 2 Adaptive Teaching for Learning in the Classroom

Explores how adaptive teaching can create inclusive classrooms where all pupils can succeed. Trainees critically engage with research on inclusion, evaluate how they have adapted teaching in their own practice, and provide evidence from their training and classroom experience. Assessment includes a 2,000-word literature review, a 15-minute presentation, and an annotated evidence portfolio.

School Placements

Structure

School placements are a core element of trainees' training and are designed to provide a high-quality, contrasting experience across different educational settings. Trainees will develop their teaching practice by working in diverse contexts, enabling them to build adaptability, subject knowledge and professional confidence.

Trainees' training will include at least two placements:

- Placement A (Autumn Term): short placement in a school to establish core teaching skills.
- Placement B (Spring and Summer Terms): long placement in a contrasting school, offering a different context.

Placements are carefully selected to ensure a balance of contrast and breadth of experience, whilst also considering practical considerations, such as travel, sustainability and trainees' individual career aspirations.

Activities on School Placements

- Weekly reflective journals help trainees review progress, identify key learning and set targets for improvement.
- Professional Studies develops understanding of wider aspects of teaching, including behaviour, safeguarding, curriculum, assessment and inclusion.
- Lesson planning builds trainees' ability to design effective, inclusive lessons that support pupil progress and achievement.
- Observations of Expert teachers provide opportunities to analyse effective teaching and apply successful strategies in practice.
- Subject knowledge audits help trainees identify strengths, address gaps and track development throughout the course.

Mentoring in Schools

Role of the Mentor

Your Mentor is your main source of support during school placements, helping you translate training into effective classroom practice. Through regular coaching, feedback and professional guidance, they support your development, wellbeing and progress throughout the course.

Your Mentor will:

- Meet with you weekly for a dedicated mentoring session.
- Observe your teaching and provide focused, actionable feedback.
- Help you identify strengths and set clear improvement targets.
- Review lesson plans and support you in developing effective teaching strategies.
- Coordinate key placement experiences, including observation, co-teaching and independent teaching.
- Support your understanding of areas such as SEND, adaptive teaching and inclusion.
- Monitor your workload, wellbeing and professional development.

Support, Inclusion and Wellbeing

We use a ‘team around the trainee’ approach to ensure support is coordinated, responsive and effective. This includes:

- Mentors providing day-to-day guidance, feedback and progress monitoring in school.
- Campus Leads coordinating support and developing targeted support plans where needed.
- Phase Leads providing additional oversight and specialist support to ensure trainees are successful.

What we do

- Tailored support is available whenever trainees face challenges, with early intervention and personalised strategies to help them make successful progress towards the Teachers’ Standards.
- Inclusive training is a priority, with reasonable adjustments and individual support plans available for trainees experiencing barriers related to SEND, health, protected characteristics or personal circumstances.
- Diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging are embedded throughout the programme, creating a respectful community where all trainees feel valued, supported and able to thrive.
- Wellbeing is actively promoted, with a focus on manageable workloads, open communication, pastoral support and encouraging trainees to maintain healthy professional and personal practices.

“Inclusion is central to the provider’s vision and is evident throughout the trainee journey.”

“Leaders promote equality, diversity and inclusion consistently across the provision.”
(Ofsted 2026)

Secondary Training Venues

Exeter | Future Skills Centre

Option to attend:
- Core Sessions
- PGCE Sessions

Address:
Future Skills Centre, Exeter EX5 2LJ

Plymouth | University of Plymouth

Option to attend:
- Core Sessions
- PGCE Sessions

Address:
Rolle, 8AA, Drake Circus, Plymouth PL4 8AA

Taunton | Orchard Grove Training Centre

Option to attend:
- Core Sessions

Address:
Trull, Taunton TA3 7FD

Teign School | Nr Newton Abbot

Subject Sessions:
- Biology, Chemistry and Physics Subject Sessions

Address:
Chudleigh Rd, Kingsteignton, Newton Abbot TQ12 3JG

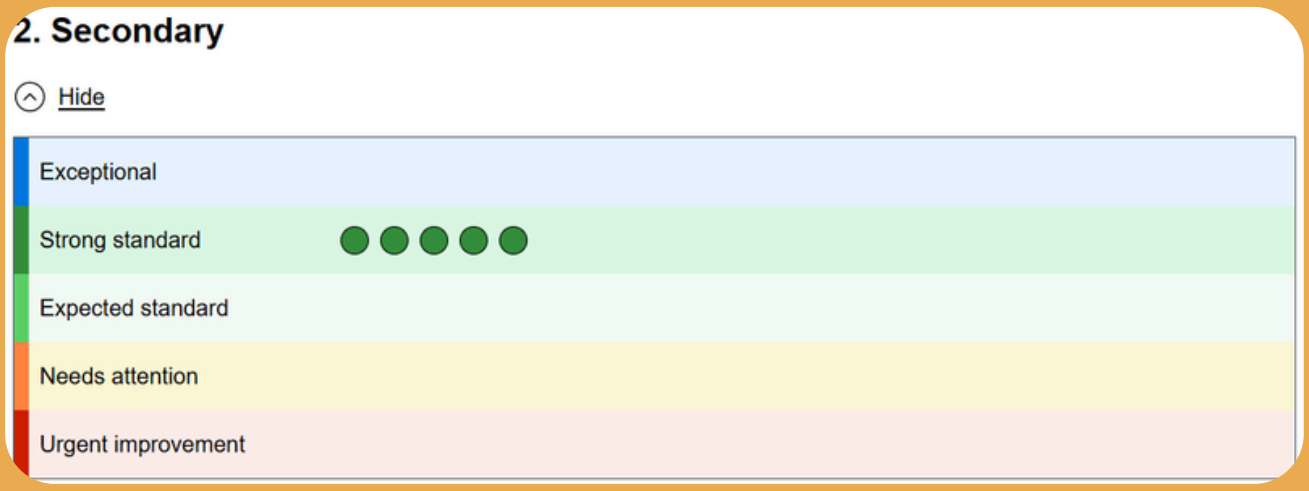
Secondary Course Calendar (26-27)

Here is the Secondary Course Calendar for 2026-2027. It provides a close fit to what the calendar for 2027-2028 will look like. The 2027-2028 Course Calendar is published on our website in the Summer Term.

Week Beginning	Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
31/08/26	1	Bank Holiday	N/A	N/A	SWIFT Start Induction	SWIFT Start Induction
07/09/26	2	Core Session	Core Session	Core Session	PGCE / Core Session	Subject Session
14/09/26	3	Short Placement Professional Studies	Short Placement Professional Studies	Short Placement Professional Studies	Short Placement Professional Studies	Subject Session
21/09/26	4	ITaP 1	ITaP 1	ITaP 1	ITaP 1	ITaP 1
28/09/26	5	Core Session	PGCE	Short Placement	Short Placement	Subject Session
05/10/26	6	Short Placement	Short Placement	Short Placement	Short Placement	Subject Session
12/10/26	7	Short Placement	Short Placement	Short Placement	Short Placement	Subject Session
19/10/26	8	PGCE / Core Session	Core Session	Core Session	Core Session	Subject Session
26/10/26	8a	Holiday	Holiday	Holiday	Holiday	Holiday
02/11/26	9	Core Session	Core Session	Core Session	Core Session	Subject Session
09/11/26	10	Short Placement	Short Placement	Short Placement	Short Placement	Subject Session
16/11/26	11	Short Placement	Short Placement	Short Placement	Short Placement	Short Placement
23/11/26	12	PGCE / Core Session	Short Placement	Short Placement	Short Placement	Short Placement
30/11/26	13	Short Placement	Short Placement	Short Placement	Short Placement	Short Placement
07/12/26	14	Short Placement	Short Placement	Short Placement	Short Placement	Short Placement
14/12/26	15	Short Placement	Short Placement	Short Placement	Short Placement	Short Placement
21/12/26	15a	Holiday	Holiday	Holiday	Holiday	Holiday
28/12/26	15b	Holiday	Holiday	Holiday	Holiday	Holiday
04/01/27	16	Core Session	Core Session	Core Session	Core Session	Core Session
11/01/27	17	ITaP 2	ITaP 2	ITaP 2	ITaP 2	ITAP 2
18/01/27	18	Professional Studies Long Placement	Professional Studies Long Placement	Professional Studies Long Placement	Professional Studies Long Placement	Subject Session
25/01/27	19	PGCE	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement	Subject Session
01/02/27	20	Core Session	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement	Subject Session
08/02/27	21	ITaP 3	ITaP 3	ITaP 3	ITaP 3	ITaP 3
15/02/27	21a	Holiday	Holiday	Holiday	Holiday	Holiday
22/02/27	22	PGCE / Core Session	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement
01/03/27	23	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement
08/03/27	24	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement
15/03/27	25	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement
22/03/27	26	Core Session	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement	Bank Holiday
29/03/27	26a	Bank Holiday	Holiday	Holiday	Holiday	Holiday
05/04/27	26b	Holiday	Holiday	Holiday	Holiday	Holiday
12/04/27	27	ITaP 4	ITaP 4	ITaP 4	ITaP 4	ITaP 4
19/04/27	28	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement	Subject Session
26/04/27	29	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement	Subject Session
03/05/27	30	Bank Holiday	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement
10/05/27	31	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement
17/05/27	32	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement
24/05/27	33	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement
31/05/27	33a	Bank Holiday	Holiday	Holiday	Holiday	Holiday
07/06/27	34	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement
14/06/27	35	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement
21/06/27	36	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement
28/06/27	37	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement
05/07/27	38	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement	Subject Session
12/07/27	39	Long Placement	Long Placement	Long Placement	Next steps	Conference/Graduation

Ofsted Report | June 2026

SWIFT Teacher Training was inspected by Ofsted under the ITE Inspection Framework in June 2026. Both Primary and Secondary courses were rated Strong Standard in all areas. We are extremely proud of the report, which celebrates the high-quality experience of our trainees and the expertise of our team and partners.



Some highlights

"Trainees become highly skilled and confident entrants to the profession, fully equipped to sustain teaching careers in their local area."

"Trainees have a genuine sense of belonging."

"Through high-quality mentoring and carefully aligned training, trainees make substantial gains in knowledge, confidence and classroom effectiveness."

"Trainees leave the programme as knowledgeable, resilient and highly capable teachers who are well equipped for employment."

(Ofsted 2026)

Find out more

Visit our website HERE

Email us at admissions@swiftteachertraining.org.uk

Call us on 01626 882828

SWIFT Teacher Training