Pathfinder
Teaching School Hub

Making the ECTP a success in your school

A guide for Induction Tutors

About this handbook

Purpose of the Handbook

This document is designed to support induction tutors to carry out their role within the Early Career Training Programme. It is a living document which will be updated over time to reflect our learning and is best used electronically so that the live links can be accessed.

What You'll Find in This Handbook

1. What is the ECTP and what is my role as induction tutor?
2. What is self-study and what should my ECT be doing?
3. What is instructional coaching and how can I make sure this is happening effectively in my school?
4. Instructional coaching trouble-shooting
5. Pastoral coaching
6. Events
7. Registrations, amendments and keeping in touch
8. FAQs

What you won't find in this handbook...
Information about the statutory assessment of ECTs. For information about this, please contact your appropriate body and refer to the statutory guidance ***here****.*

1. What is the ECTP and what is my role as Induction tutor?

The Early Career Training Programme (ECTP) is an entirely developmental, 2-year (or full-time equivalent) programme of study. It builds from the Initial Teacher Training to deepen Early Career Teachers' knowledge and practice in core domains of teaching, as outlined in the ITTECF.

Pathfinder Teaching School Hub partners with Ambition Institute. Ambition Institute are one of five lead providers in England - they design and deliver the programme through teaching school hubs, like us.

At the moment, we have two slightly different programmes running:

1. ECTP 2025 - the newly updated programme in place for ECTs registered from September 2025 onwards
2. ECT Legacy programme - in place for all ECTs registered before September 2025

The school induction tutor is responsible for coordinating the enactment of the ECT programme within their school (or group of schools).

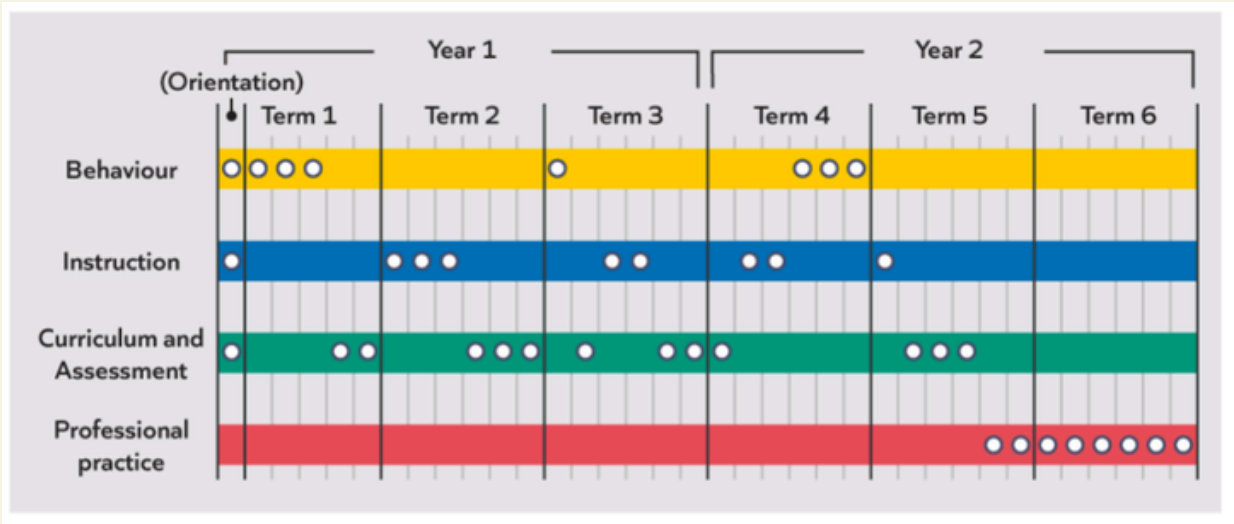
Induction tutors:

- ensure ECTs can engage with the ECT programme (for example, by making sure that ECTs have the right amount of time off timetable)
- actively track and support ECT development, providing guidance to help ECTs navigate their induction journey
- work with Mentors to ensure that training is appropriately contextualised for the school setting

2. What is ECT self-study and what should my ECT be doing?

ECTs access fortnightly self-study via the Steplab platform. Each self-study takes around 45 minutes to complete and should be the first priority for the ECT in their dedicated ECT time.

Self-study on the ECTP 25 (Year 1 ECTs)
From September 2025, the ECTP will adopt an interwoven curriculum, linking content from the four strands of Behaviour, Instruction, Curriculum & Assessment and Professional Practice.



The content from each strand that ECTs will cover each term are connected through an over-arching theme:

Term 1 - Fostering the enabling conditions for learning
Term 2 - Introducing pupils to new knowledge
Term 3 - Enabling pupils to engage in high-quality practice
Term 4 - Increasing challenge for pupils
Term 5 - Working in education
Term 6 - Reflecting, revisiting and embedding good teaching practices

There are five self-study modules each term, which should be completed across the term, ideally fortnightly. You can find a link to a more detailed breakdown of each of the themes **here**. And as Induction tutor, you can view each study in Steplab following this path: Steplab>Library>ECT Materials

Self-study on the Legacy Programme

In the legacy programme, the content is organised into three strands. A strand has a sequence of content that ECTs will work through with their Mentor over a term of Year 1. Each strand has a core focus: Behaviour, Instruction or Subject.

In Year 2 of the legacy programme, self study continues on a fortnightly rhythm.

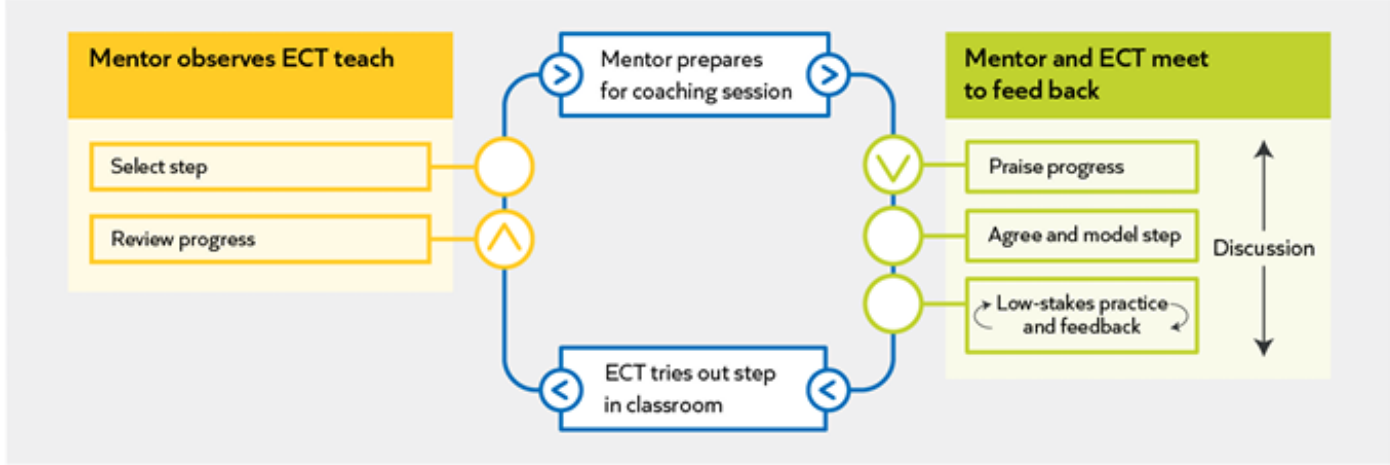
- ECTs should start by completing any self-study modules not accessed during Year 1
- ECTs will then use a diagnostic tool to identify possible areas of the self-study content which they may want to revisit
- From November 1st, ECTs will have access to stretch modules. The content of these modules compliments and develops that of each of the three strands

3. What is Instructional coaching and how can I make sure this is happening effectively in my school?

Instructional coaching is a cycle of observation, practice and feedback that is responsive to ECTs' needs, supports them to develop their mental models of effective teaching, and helps them enact knowledge from the programme in their own practice.

Instructional coaching has a strong evidence base for helping teachers make lasting improvements to their practice. Ambition's instructional coaching framework is designed to provide Mentors with a consistent structure for their sessions.

The instructional coaching cycle is set out below:



Part 1 - Mentor observes the ECT teach

The first part of the instructional coaching cycle is for the Mentor to complete a short (10-15 minute) observation of the ECT. During this observation, the Mentor needs to make two decisions:

1. Decide if the ECT has achieved the current step or if they need to continue to work on the same step for another coaching cycle.
2. Select a new step for improvement from the bank of steps on Steplab.

Part 2 - Preparing for the coaching session

Following the observation, Mentors will need to take some time to prepare for the Mentor meeting. Steplab guides Mentors to plan questions and prompts for the coaching conversation and they can use the step success criteria to help them to plan their model.

Part 3 - Mentor and ECT meet to feedback

3a Praise progress

This stage is essential to enable ECTs to build knowledge of what effective teaching looks like and to motivate them to keep getting better. This is most effective when praise is specific and tightly-focused. The success criteria in Steplab support Mentors in providing this praise effectively.

3b Agree and model step

Modelling is a cornerstone of the instructional coaching approach on the early career training programme. It forms part of the mentoring conversation, after a Mentor has observed a lesson and selected a step, but before practice. It is there to be a bridge. It connects what a teacher has learnt in their self-study to their own context. It shows them the route they need to take to put this knowledge into practice.

Effective models do three things:

1. Focus the ECT's attention, by being concise and focused on the key elements only. The criteria attached to each step are a good guide for what needs to be included.
2. Build the ECT's mental model by making our thinking visible, by and making explicit links between theory and the practice being demonstrated.
3. Put the steps into the ECT's context by tailoring the model to the ECT's class, subject, phase, school or setting.

Image from Steplab

Modelling can feel uncomfortable at first. Because of this, it can be tempting to do everything but model – to talk through what a model might look like, or to model while sat down when we need to be stood up, or even to show the development area video instead of modelling. However, if we don't model, or don't model authentically, we will have less – or even no - impact on our ECT's practice. It is a critical step as it will ensure that our ECT is clear on what needs to change and what the change should look like. The clearer this is, the more successful the practice will be and the more likely changes will be embedded into classroom practice.

You can watch a video of a mentor modelling a step for their ECT **here**.

3c Low stakes practice and feedback

What counts as practice? Just like modelling, the practice on the Early Career Training programme needs to be as authentic as possible. This means that if the step is performance-based, then our ECT needs to practice performing the step, as they would in the classroom. If the step is task-based, then our ECT needs to actually do the task for a lesson – such as creating success criteria, writing a model or designing some scaffolding. Our ECTs can't just say what they would do – they need to actually do it.

Multiple cycles of practice are an essential part of the process. It is a misconception to think that one cycle of practice is enough. ECTs need to receive feedback on each practice attempt before being asked to practice again.

1. Feedback needs to be accurate, clear and specific.
2. Feedback should guide our ECTs to reflect
3. Feedback needs to be actionable.
4. Feedback needs to be tightly-focused.

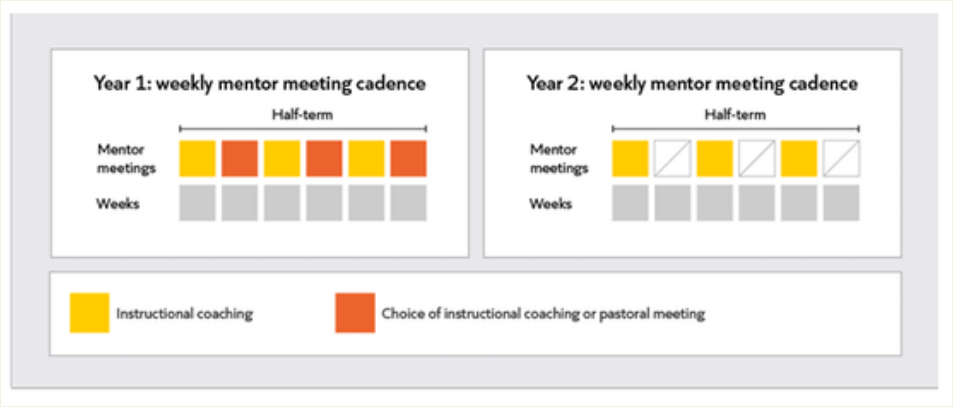
You can watch a video of a Mentor supporting their ECT to practice **here.**

4. Instructional Coaching Trouble-shooting

Problem	Possible solutions
Mentor and ECT do not have corresponding release time	Ideally Mentors and ECTs should have time available to meet together during the school day. If this is not possible, then the ECT and mentor should meet at the end of the day and the mentor should be 'reimbursed' by being given some time off timetable at a different point.
Mentor is not providing a model for the ECT	Signpost mentors to the ECTP Mentoring and Coaching Development Area on Steplab > Study 6: Feedback - modelling Share this **video** and discuss Ask mentor to book a **Coaching for Mentors** session with Catherine
Mentor is not setting up practice and feedback for the ECT	Signpost mentors to the ECTP Mentoring and Coaching Development Area on Steplab > Study 6: Feedback - setting up practice and Study 7: Feedback - cycle of practice and feedback Share this **video** and discuss Ask mentor to book a **Coaching for Mentors** session with Catherine
Mentor says they are coaching but it is not recorded on Steplab	Share the Steplab training **video** Share Catherine's steplab shortcut **video** Work through the Steplab Simulator on Steplab> Support> Coaching simulator
ECT is really confident and needs more challenge	Signpost the mentor to the ECTP Mentoring and Coaching Development Area on Steplab > Study 12: Providing challenge

5. Pastoral Coaching

In ECTP 25, the option to provide pastoral coaching is a built-in flexibility for Year 1 ECTs. This is to allow Mentors to support ECTs outside of their classroom practice. It is not mandatory, but can be used fortnightly.

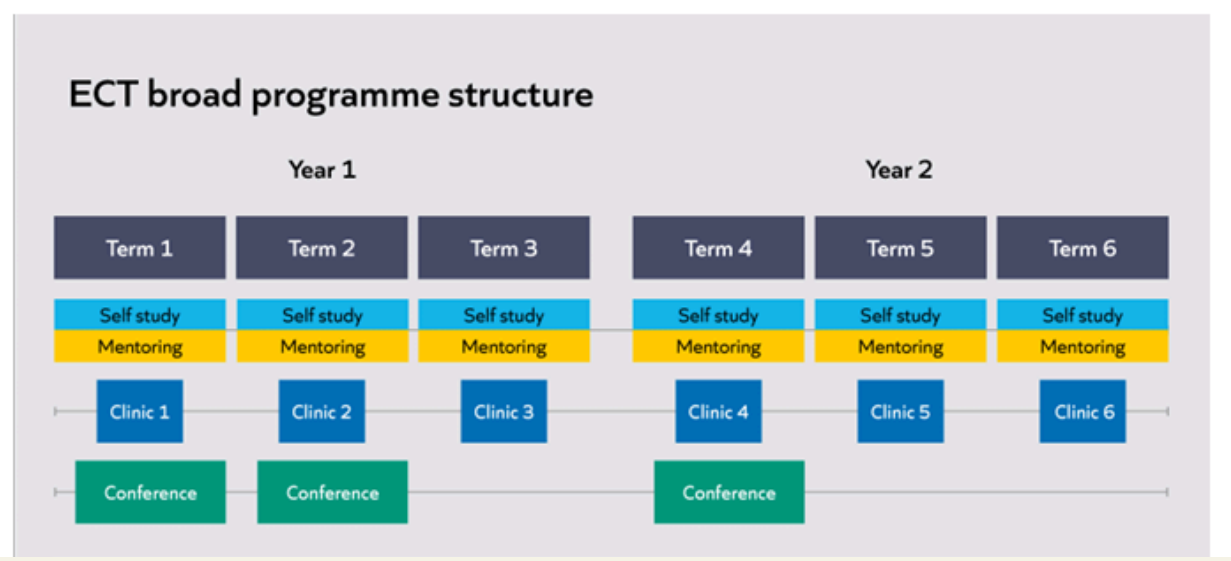


Pastoral support is likely to encompass a wide range of issues such as managing and planning for parents' evenings, tutor groups, wellbeing, phone calls home, and workload to name a few. The content of pastoral support sessions will be based on ECT need and decided by the Mentor.

There is a guidance document to support Mentors with pastoral coaching which can be found **here**. Pastoral coaching should be recorded on **MyECT** and you can access a video of how to do this **here**.

6. Events

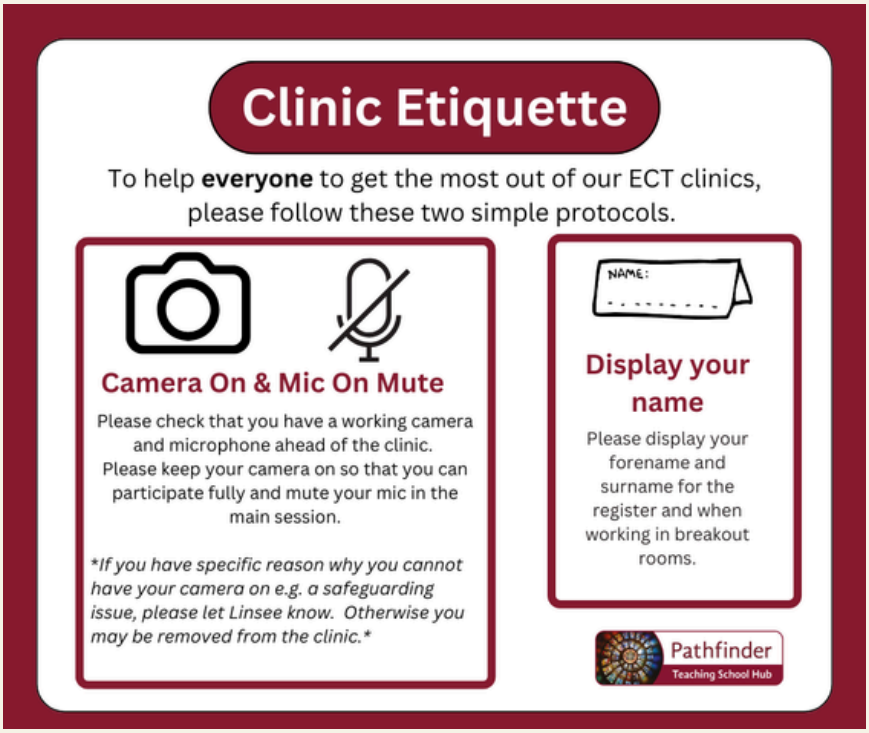
ECT Events
ECTs are invited to three full day conferences and six twilight clinics over the course of the two year programme.



Conferences are full day, face-to-face events which are held at Archbishop Holgate's School in York or Malton School. Participants will be emailed the dates and locations of events in advance and every effort should be made to enable ECTs to attend these events.

Clinics take place after school from 3:45pm-5:15pm with an additional 30 minute pre-read. On ECTP 25, participants are given a choice of focus for each clinic e.g. primary & secondary (online), specialist (online) or universal (face-to-face). On the legacy programme, all clinics are online and have a universal focus.

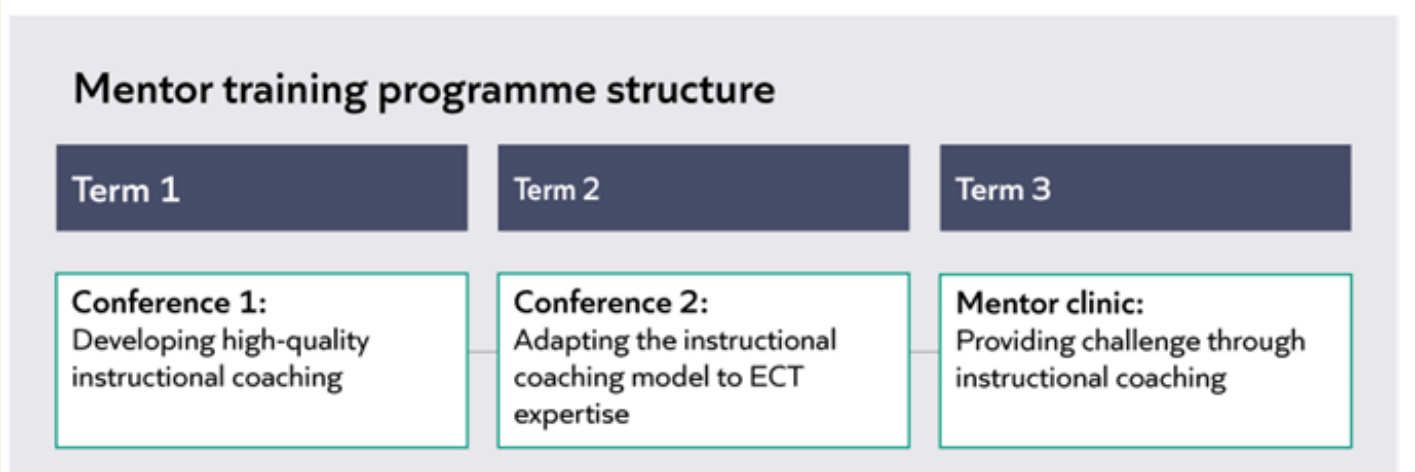
You can support your ECT by ensuring they have everything they need to take part in their clinics and follow our 'Clinic Etiquette'



Mentor Events
From September 2025, the mentor training programme has been condensed into one year. During this time, mentors will attend two full-day conferences and one 90-minute clinic.

Conferences are face-to-face events which are held at Archbishop Holgate's School in York or Malton School. Participants will be emailed the dates and locations of events in advance and every effort should be made to enable Mentors to attend these events.

Clinics take place online after school from 3:45pm-5:15pm.



Other support for mentors

Orientation
When a mentor is allocated an ECT on Steplab, they receive access to the orientation materials specific to their ECTs programme. These materials are helpful in orienting mentors to the programme details for their ECT. These can be found on Steplab>learn.

ECTP Mentoring and coaching development area
Ambition have created twelve optional studies in the mentoring and coaching development area on Steplab. These can be found on Steplab>library

Coaching for Mentors
Coaching for Mentors supports the use of Instructional Coaching to support our most novice teachers. Coaching for Mentors is a 1:1, supportive, low-stakes process, designed to support mentors' development as instructional coaches, specifically in relation to supporting Early Career Teachers. Mentors can read more about Coaching for Mentors and sign up here.

Resource area
We have a dedicated area on the Pathfinder Teaching School Hub website which has a range of useful resources for all roles within the ECTP. You can access this here. You can find the password in your Monday morning email.

7. Registrations, amendments and keeping in touch

Registering a new ECT
Please follow this process to register a new ECT with us.

1. **Click here** to fill in our google form with your ECT(s), Induction tutor(s) and mentor(s) details.
2. Log in to the DfE portal **here** and add your ECT(s) and mentor(s). You will also need to match your Mentors and ECTs in the DfE portal for it to pull through to Ambition for the ECT Programme. If your school doesn't have a login for the DfE portal then please email the DfE: continuing-professional.development@service.education.gov.uk
3. If you are using Pathfinder as your Appropriate Body, you should add your ECTs to **ECT Manager**. If you haven't used us as your AB before, please click on the yellow button "Register your school" and you will receive login details so you can add your ECT(s).

We use ECT Manager to manage the statutory assessments. If you cannot find your school, please email: lthompson@ahs.pmat.academy

If an ECT is leaving your school
Please let us know as soon as possible by completing this **google form**. You do not need to take any action on the DfE portal.

If you are changing an ECTs mentor or induction tutor
Please let us know as soon as possible by completing this **google form**. You will also need to update the details on the **DfE portal** to enable new Steplab accounts to be made.

If you have questions about ECT events, registrations or general enquiries
Phone 01904 806900 and ask to speak to Linsee or email her at lthompson@ahs.pmat.academy

If you have questions about an ECTs statutory induction process
Phone 01904 806900 and ask to speak to Alison or email her at abailey@ahs.pmat.academy

If you have questions about the ECTP
Phone 01904 806900 and ask to speak to Catherine or email her at cmatthewman@ahs.pmat.academy

8. FAQs

How much release time should my ECT get?
ECTs should receive an additional 10% release time in Year 1 of their induction and 5% release time in Year 2 of their induction.

How much time does my mentor need to carry out their role?
We recommend that mentors need a minimum of one hour per week for ECTs in Year 1 of their induction and one hour per fortnight for ECTs in Year 2 of their induction.

How do we receive funding for the ECT programme?
Schools are funded to cover ECTs' time off timetable and mentor support during the 2-year early career teacher entitlement (ECTE). Funding comes from 2 sources.

This normally means:

- Year 1 funding to cover the cost of 10% off timetable should come from core funding or equivalent (for example, DSG, general annual grant, 16 to 19 funding, or place funding)
- Year 2 funding comes from additional support from the DfE (called 'grant funding') – for academies and others, we pay this to your school directly or, if you're a maintained school, your local authority will pass the funding to you. You can read more about eligibility and funding for the early career teacher entitlement **here**.

A mentor is off sick, what should I do?
You should step in and coach the ECT in the mentors' absence. The best way to do this is using Tag Team Coaching. Click **here** for guidance on how to use this feature.

My ECT is off sick, what should I do?
You should pause the ECT during their absence so that they do not receive nudges or other unwanted communication. Click **here** for guidance on how to pause your ECT.

My ECT is part-time, how much study and coaching do they need to do?
We encourage part-time ECTs to keep up with the programme at the same rate as a full time ECT, particularly if they are employed 0.5 or above.

We missed a coaching cycle, how can we add this in?
You can add in additional coaching cycles by using the coach again function on Steplab. Click **here** for guidance on how to use this feature.

Where can I find the dates of this year' events?
The dates for all this years' events are available on our website **here**.