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The British government's promised guidance on creationism for teachers seems to have arrived. A press release at Teachernet, run by the Department for Children, Schools, and Families, [states](#) [4] that "Creationism and intelligent design are not part of the National Curriculum for science" and describes "intelligent design" as "a creationist belief" that "is sometimes erroneously advanced as scientific theory but has no underpinning scientific principles or explanations supporting it and it is not accepted by the international scientific community." The press release adds that "there is scope for schools to discuss creationism as part of Religious Education -- a component of the basic school curriculum -- in developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other religions."

The press release and a corresponding document entitled "Guidance on the place of creationism and intelligent design in science lessons" (dated September 18, 2007; [available](#) [5] for download from Teachernet) were [occasioned](#) [6] by a propaganda blitz in late 2006 on the part of a newly formed creationist organization styling itself Truth in Science, which sent packets of creationist teaching materials to the science heads of every secondary school in the United Kingdom. Subsequently the government issued a series of statements and disclaimers, including a June 21, 2007, [statement](#) [7] from the Prime Minister's Office affirming that creationism (including "intelligent design") "should not be taught as science" and promising guidance for schools "in due course."

After explaining the place of science and religious education in the British national curriculum, "Guidance on the place of creationism and intelligent design in science lessons" unequivocally states: "Creationism and intelligent design are sometimes claimed to be scientific theories. This is not the case as they have no underpinning scientific principles, or explanations, and are not accepted by the science community as

a whole. Creationism and intelligent design therefore do not form part of the science National Curriculum programmes of study." Presumably with Truth in Science's materials in mind, it recommends, "Any resource should be checked carefully before it is used in the classroom. If resources which mention creationism or intelligent design are used, it must be made clear that neither constitutes a scientific theory."

The guidance document explains that although it is inappropriate to teach creationism, it is not necessarily inappropriate to teach about creationism: "Any questions about creationism and intelligent design which arise in science lessons, for example as a result of media coverage, could provide the opportunity to explain or explore why they are not considered to be scientific theories and, in the right context, why evolution is considered to be a scientific theory. ... Science teachers can respond positively and educationally to questions and comments about creationism or intelligent design by questioning, using prompts such as 'What makes a theory scientific?', and by promoting knowledge and understanding of the scientific consensus around the theories of evolution and the Big Bang."

It also refers to a Religious Education model unit entitled "How can we answer questions about creation and origins?" ([available](#) [8] for download (PDF) from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority website), which "aims to deepen pupils' awareness of ultimate questions through argument, discussion, debate and reflection and enable them to learn from a variety of ideas of religious traditions and other world views." When the unit debuted in January 2007, the *Guardian* (January 23, 2007) [commented](#) [9], "The teaching of ID and creationism should prove less contentious in this part of the curriculum (although the scientists who argue that ID is a science may be disconcerted), as pupils will investigate and role-play disputes between religion and science, such as Galileo, Charles Darwin and Richard Dawkins."

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