



Professional Graduate Diploma in Education PGDE Secondary (Full-time)

Frequently Asked Questions

(For entry into academic year 2024/25)

1. How long is the course and how is time divided between campus and placement times?

36 weeks - from the end of August through until the beginning of the following June.

The **2023–24** programme is included below. Please note that this can change each year and will not necessarily match all school holiday dates.

Dates	Programme Weeks
Monday 28 th August - Friday 6 th October	1-6: in UHI (blended learning) Local induction 28 th August, residential induction (Inverness) 29 th to 31 st August.
Monday 9 th – Friday 13 th October	7: UHI READING WEEK
Monday 16 th – Friday 27 th October	8-9: in UHI (blended learning)
Monday 30 th October – Friday 8 th December	10-15: Placement in School 1 for 6 weeks [formative]
Monday 11 th – Friday 22 nd December	16-17: in UHI (blended learning)
Monday 25 th December – Friday 5 th January 2024	18-19: UHI CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS
Monday 8 th – Friday 26 th January	20-22: in UHI (blended learning)
Monday 29 th January – Friday 8 th March	23-28: Placement in School 2 for 6 weeks [formative]
Monday 11 th – Thursday 28 th March	29-31: in UHI (blended learning)
Friday 29 th March – Friday 12 th April	32-33: UHI HOLIDAYS
Monday 15 th April – Friday 24 th May	34-39: Placement in School 2 for 6 weeks [summative]
Monday 27 th May – Friday 7 th June	40-41: in UHI (blended learning) Programme ends on Friday 7 th June
Before the end of June	UHI Exam Board and GTCS profiles

2. Can I study by distance learning?

No, you must attend one of the UHI campuses where the programme is offered, with the exception of Aberdeen City and the Scottish Borders, where UHI offers this programme in Aberdeen and Galashiels in partnership with Aberdeen City and Scottish Borders Councils. Applicants for the Scottish Borders programme should already be settled in the Local Authority area. The Secondary programme is offered at the following UHI campuses: Argyll (Oban), Inverness, Moray, NWH (Fort William, Stornoway and Thurso), Orkney, Perth, Shetland and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (Gaelic Medium only). The programme is sometimes available in Lochgilphead (Argyll), Barra (NWH), and Benbecula (NWH). This decision is made annually and is dependent on the number of applicants in those areas.

Please note that not all subjects will necessarily be offered at every UHI campus, please refer to the website for

up-to-date details.

3. Do I need to be on campus 5 days a week when not on placement?

We use a blended approach to learning. In the weeks designated as being in UHI, you are expected to attend all presentations and take part in group and individual activities. Currently, this involves timetabled collaborative engagement all day Monday and Thursday. Online individual learning activities are included on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, along with an online seminar discussion at a pre-arranged time on one of these days. Subject-specific sessions are held on Fridays, these can also be attended online from home/your chosen location.

You are strongly advised to spend time improving your practical and subject-specific knowledge prior to each placement.

4. Are there any other attendance requirements?

Yes. You must have 80% attendance and registers are kept of all scheduled sessions. In the placement module of the programme you must attend for 90 days, in order to meet the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) requirements for the Standard for Provisional Registration as a teacher. Placements will be five days per week in school.

There is a three-day residential induction event in Inverness for students on the PGDE Secondary programmes during week 1 of the programme. This is an integral part of the core programme and provides valuable opportunities for the PGDE Secondary cohort to work collaboratively together face-to-face. The residential aspect is especially useful for building the programme learning community, and students are required to commit to this on accepting their place on the course.

5. Can I apply to several UHI campuses in the same intake?

No, you should only apply to the campus at which you wish to study.

6. Can I apply to teach through the medium of Gaelic?

Yes, the Gaelic-medium programme is offered at Argyll (Oban), Inverness, NWH (Fort William and Stornoway), Perth and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig. You should apply to the PGDE Secondary Teaching (Gaelic Medium) using UCAS course code X130. Indicate in your supporting statement the secondary subject that you wish to teach.

You need to be fluent in spoken and written Scottish Gaelic to start on the programme. As part of the programme, you will develop your Gaelic-language skills in an educational context. We encourage applicants to write their personal statement in Gaelic.

Wherever possible, you will be placed in a school where you will have the opportunity to teach your subject through the medium of Gaelic. This will be dependent on availability within the Local Authority.

Additional information for Gaelic-speaking applicants can be found at <https://www.uhi.ac.uk/en/courses/pgde-secondary-gaelic-medium/>.

7. I am already a primary teacher. Can I use your course to convert to secondary?

No. This is due to the structure of the programme which is designed for applicants new to teaching. We would advise any teachers interested in converting to a different sector to discuss their request with their employing authority in the first instance.

8. Can I choose where I do my school placements?

No. Our programme is delivered through collaboration with each partner Local Authority in which the UHI

campuses are based. School placements are allocated within 90 minutes' commute of your term-time address via a national GTCS system within the local authority partnered with the UHI campus at which you are enrolled. If your term-time address is outwith the local authority, for placement allocation you will be considered as living within the local authority and your commuting time to placement will be 90 minutes from within the authority.

You will gain experience in two schools, during three blocks of placement totalling 18 weeks. Occasionally, some mainland placements are allocated within a neighbouring authority area, still within a 90 minutes' commute, and in a local authority area that is in partnership with UHI. The UHI local authority partners are: Argyll and Bute, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Highland, Moray, Orkney Islands, Perth and Kinross, and Shetland Islands Councils.

Applicants for Perth should note that we are unable to provide school placements in Angus, Clackmannanshire, Dundee, Fife and Stirling Council areas.

Aberdeen City and Scottish Borders applicants are enrolled for the Secondary programme through Inverness, but all placements will be allocated in Aberdeen City and Scottish Borders local authority areas.

Please note that we do not reimburse travel expenses for school placements within a 90-minute commute of your term-time address.

9. Can I do a placement in the same school as my children attend?

No. This represents a conflict of interest as you are on placement as a teaching professional.

10. Will I be able to stay in my home Local Authority area for my induction year?

This is not a decision that UHI can influence.

All students enter the GTCS Teacher Induction Scheme in the same way as other PGDE graduates across Scotland or can opt to follow the Flexible Route to induction.

More information about these two processes is available from the GTCS website:

[Teacher Induction Scheme - The General Teaching Council for Scotland \(gtcs.org.uk\)](https://www.gtcs.org.uk)

Please note that applicants who have been assessed by the University as having the international fee status (please see Section 20) will not be eligible to enter the GTCS Teacher Induction Scheme.

11. How are students selected for places?

Applicants are selected on the basis of the current entry requirements and a virtual selection event. Please note that the UCAS priority application date is 31st January 2024. We will consider applications after this date if places remain available. The programme will close for all applications on the 31st May 2024 and does not open in Clearing.

Please note that in some circumstances where the relevant local authority has limited school placements available in your subject, we may offer you a place at another UHI campus where placements are available.

12. Which qualifications do I need?

You are required to hold passes at grade C or above in **both** Higher English (SCQF Level 6) and National 5 Mathematics (SCQF Level 5), or an accepted equivalent (please see below), **and** an undergraduate degree (preferably with honours) which meets the subject-specific requirements detailed at the following link: [Subject-specific requirements for the subjects being offered by UHI.](#)

If your degree does not provide all the required entry credits for the subject you want to teach, you can:

- Add top-up credits for your teaching subject from individual modules at the appropriate SCQF level to a maximum of 30 credits. These credits must be obtained before entering the programme.

- Or ask the University to consider some credit from a Master's degree that relates directly to the school curriculum of the teaching subject you are applying for. The University considers this on an individual basis.

The details of your qualifications (including pending qualifications) must be clearly stated on your application form under the Qualifications section. You will be required to provide a copy of your certificates, including full academic transcript of your degree to evidence that your degree covered the main Scottish curriculum topics of the subject that you are applying to teach.

If you are completing these qualifications in the year you apply, it is your responsibility to ensure that you will have achieved the required qualification(s) and provided evidence of this to PGDE admissions team **10 working days prior the start of the PGDE programme.**

Accepted UK and Republic of Ireland equivalents for English and Mathematics:

English

- Higher English (C or above)
- Higher ESOL (C or above)
- National Units Communication (NC) (SCQF level 6) and Literature 1 (SCQF level 6)
- A level English (D or above), or GCSE English Language (C/4 or above) and GCSE English Literature (C/4 or above), or O Level English Language (C or above) and O Level English Literature (C or above)
- Irish Leaving Certificate, English, Higher Level, Grade B3 (H3 from 2017) or above
- Online Access Course in English (SCQF Level 6), University of Aberdeen (D3 or above)

Please note that IELTS is not acceptable instead of the above qualifications.

Mathematics

- National 5 Mathematics (C or above)
- National 5 Lifeskills Mathematics or National 5 Applications of Mathematics (C or above)
- Intermediate level 2 Mathematics (C or above)
- Standard Grade Mathematics (Grade 1 or 2)
- SCE Ordinary Grade Mathematics (C or above)
- GCSE Mathematics (C/4 or above), or O Level Mathematics (C or above)
- Irish Leaving Certificate, Mathematics, Ordinary Level, Grade C/C3 (O4 from 2017) or above
- Online Access Course in Mathematics (SCQF Level 5 or 6), University of Aberdeen (D3 or above)

13. Can I study for qualification in more than one subject?

Yes, you can work towards dual qualification in many of the subjects that UHI is offering, and Gaelic with any subject. The current list of combinations that the GTCS will allow for induction year can be found here: [Dual Registration | In2Teaching](#)

The University welcomes applications for a wider range of dual subjects than that supported by the GTCS. However, if you study two subjects that are not on the GTCS list then you will be offered an induction year post in your first teaching subject only. You will be able to complete full registration for your second subject after your induction year.

If you would like to be considered for dual qualification then apply for, what you consider to be, your main subject and include in your personal statement that you are interested in teaching the second subject also.

Additional information for Gaelic-speaking applicants can be found at <https://www.uhi.ac.uk/en/courses/pgde-secondary-gaelic-medium/>

14. I have a professional qualification at a degree level. Is this acceptable instead of a degree?

No. Applicants must have an undergraduate degree validated by a higher education institution.

15. What if I have non-UK qualifications?

If you hold non-UK qualifications, you must email us scanned copies of your original English, Mathematics and

degree certificates (including a full academic transcript of your degree), along with their certified translation into English (if appropriate), as soon as you have submitted your application on UCAS. We will carry out an equivalency check to find out whether your qualifications are sufficient to meet the entry requirements. Please note that the equivalency check will only be carried out after a programme application has been submitted. If you would like to find out how your qualifications compare against the UK ones prior to making an application, you may wish to contact [UK ENIC \(Ecctis\)](#), the designated national agency for the recognition and comparison of international qualifications. (Please note that this service may incur a fee.)

It is possible to study for the required English and Mathematics qualifications at UHI partner campuses and/or other institutions. Please enquire with the PGDE Admissions team.

16. When will I be asked for evidence of my qualifications?

You will be asked to provide scanned copies of your qualifications as part of the selection process. We will ask for your English, Mathematics and degree certificates, and the full academic transcript of your degree which contains details of the module titles, levels, and credits.

If you were not issued with an academic transcript on graduation, you will need to request this from your university. Please note that, depending on the university, this may take a few weeks and, therefore, we advise that you enquire about a transcript well in advance.

17. What experience of work with children and young people should I have?

We recommend that all applicants to the programme organise work experience in a secondary school, to gain an understanding of how their skills can be transferred to the secondary classroom.

During the online selection event, you will be expected to demonstrate an ability to reflect on your own skills and experience in relation to becoming a teacher and an understanding of the role of a Scottish secondary teacher.

18. Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme registration

All successful applicants are required to undergo a PVG check through Disclosure Scotland. Any offer of a place on the programme is subject to holding successful PVG clearance at the time of enrolment.

Applicants who have lived outside the UK for a period of six or more consecutive months in the past five years will be required to provide a criminal record check from all the relevant country(s). This requirement is in addition to the PVG Scheme application.

Please note that all costs associated with obtaining PVG clearance and any criminal records checks must be met by the applicants.

19. What if I have a particular support need or underlying health condition?

All UHI PGDE students can access the full range of Student Support Services once they have enrolled. If a Personal Learning Support Plan is generated for you, the Programme Leader will work with the relevant members of the programme team to take forward what is recommended. You will be allocated a Personal Academic Tutor who is your first point of contact for anything which is having an impact on your ability to engage in programme study as expected.

In considering your application to study with us, you should carefully note that the partnership approach embedded in PGDE as both University and school-based (See Questions 8 – 11 and 17) means that we cannot negotiate or guarantee in advance what adjustments will be possible before you are an enrolled student with the University.

20. What about funding?

When considering your application, we will assess your fee status, i.e. the level of tuition fees you will be required to pay if successful in gaining a place on the course. This will be based on the information provided in your application. In some cases, we will ask you to provide additional information and complete a fee assessment form. Your fee status will be indicated in your official offer letter.

Financial support (e.g. tuition fees, loan) for eligible applicants is available via the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS). Please be aware that if you have been living outside the relevant area in the three years prior to 1 August 2024 your eligibility for funding may be affected. For full eligibility criteria please visit: <https://www.saas.gov.uk/full-time/funding-information-undergraduate>.

Applicants ordinarily resident in the rest of the UK, and applicants assessed as international-fee payers, must ensure that they have funding in place prior to accepting a place on the programme.

All applicants are strongly advised to check the fee status in their offer letter and apply to the relevant funding authority as soon as applications open. Please note that applicants can apply to SAAS irrespective of whether they have been offered a place on the programme.

A £20,000 bursary may also be available for some subjects. For up-to-date information on subjects and eligibility criteria please go to the Teaching Bursary in Scotland website: <https://teachingbursaryinscotland.co.uk/>

For further information on tuition fees and funding please go to the [UHI website](#).

21. How do I apply?

Applications must be made through [UCAS Undergraduate](#). To apply, please search for PGDE Secondary at UHI and choose the subject you wish to study.

Any application deadlines include submission of references. It is your responsibility to ensure that referees are aware of the deadlines and that your application is submitted fully prior to the priority deadline of 31st January 2024. As previously stated, applications for some subjects may remain open after this date, but they can close at any time as places are filled. The programme will close for all applications on 31st May 2024. The programme does not open in Clearing.

Please check the UCAS website or contact PGDE Admissions Team for current information.

Questions about applying or an existing application?

Please email PGDE Admissions Team: pgdeadmissions@uhi.ac.uk