Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (Secondary) (English and Gaelic Medium) PGDE

Frequently Asked Questions

(For entry into academic year 2021/22)

These FAQs assume that the changes made to the programme structure and timelines for 2020/21 in response to delivery during Covid-19 Recovery Phases 3 and 4 will no longer be required. We are planning for Interviews to happen virtually in 2021.

1. How long is the course and how do these split into college and placement times?
37 weeks - from the end of August through until the beginning of the following June.

(The 2019–20 programme is shown below. Please note that this changes slightly each year and will not necessarily match all school holiday dates.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weeks 1 – 5</th>
<th>College (Inverness residential during week 1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weeks 6 – 7</td>
<td>School 1 Placement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 8</td>
<td>UHI Holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 9</td>
<td>College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weeks 10 – 15</td>
<td>School 1 Placement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weeks 16 – 17</td>
<td>College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weeks 18 – 19</td>
<td>UHI Christmas Holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weeks 20 – 23</td>
<td>College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weeks 24 – 28</td>
<td>School 2 Placement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weeks 29 – 31</td>
<td>College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weeks 32 – 33</td>
<td>UHI Easter Holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 34</td>
<td>College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weeks 35 – 40</td>
<td>School 3 Placement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weeks 41 – 42</td>
<td>College</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Can I do it by distance learning?
No, you must attend one of the UHI colleges where the programme is offered, with the exception of the Scottish Borders, where UHI offers this programme in Galashiels in partnership with Scottish Borders Council. Applicants for the Scottish Borders programme should already be settled in the Local Authority area.

The Secondary programme is offered in Argyll College UHI (Oban), Inverness College UHI, Lews Castle College UHI (Stornoway), Moray College UHI, North Highland College UHI, Orkney College UHI, Perth College UHI, the Scottish Borders (Galashiels), Shetland College UHI, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig UHI (Gaelic Medium only) and West Highland College UHI. The programme is sometimes available in Lochgilphead (Argyll College), Barra and Benbecula (Lews Castle College). 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 college, please refer to the website for up-to-date details.

3. When I’m in college do I need to attend 5 days a week?
In the weeks you are in college, you are expected to attend all presentations and take part in group and individual activities. Currently, cross-programme presentations and group sessions run in college on Mondays and Thursdays. Online individual learning activities are included on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, along with an online webinar 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 classes in college. In the placement module of the programme you must attend for 90 of the 95 days provided, 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 full days per week in school.

There is a three-day residential induction event in Inverness for students on the PGDE Secondary Teaching 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 colleges in the same intake?
No, you should only apply to the college at which you wish to study.

6. Can I apply to teach a subject through the medium of Gaelic?
Yes, the Gaelic-medium programme is offered in Argyll College UHI (Oban), Inverness College UHI, Lews Castle College UHI, Perth College UHI, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig UHI and West Highland College UHI (Fort William). 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 have to be fluent in spoken and written Scottish Gaelic at the start of the programme. As part of the programme you will develop your Gaelic-language skills in an educational context.

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 a primary teacher. Can I use your course to convert into secondary teaching? No. The UHI PGDE programmes are not open to applications from qualified teachers wishing to convert from primary to secondary or secondary to primary teaching. 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
colleges 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 college at which you are enrolled. A term-time address in the local authority area is therefore essential.

You will gain experience in two schools, during three blocks of placement totalling 19 weeks. Occasionally, placements are allocated within a neighbouring authority area, still within a 90 minutes’ commute, usually only in a few of the mainland colleges, where local placement places are also needed by student teachers from other universities. However, this will only occur when that local authority 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.

Scottish Borders applicants are enrolled for the Primary programme through Inverness College UHI, but all placements will be allocated in the Scottish Borders Local Authority area.

Please note that we do not reimburse travel expenses for school placements within a 90 minutes 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 the Local Authority area for my induction year?
Several of our local authority partners offer UHI PGDE graduates an induction year in the local authority area in which they complete the programme. Our partner authorities make the decision about their requirement for probationers during the PGDE programme year.

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: http://www.in2teaching.org.uk/teacher-induction-scheme/what--is-the-teacher-induction- scheme.aspx.

Please note that applicants who have been assessed by the University as having the international fee status (please see Section 19) 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 an interview. Please note that the UCAS priority application date is 15th January 2021. We will consider applications after this date if places remain available. The programme will close for all applications on the 31st May 2021. The programme 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 college 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 below.

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.

- ask the University to consider some credit from a Masters degree that relates directly to the teaching subject you are applying for. The University considers this on an individual basis.

The details of your 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 to 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)

**Subject-specific requirements for the subjects being offered by UHI:**

**Biology with Science** *(course code: X3BG)*

An undergraduate degree with at least 80 SCQF credit points relevant to the Biology curriculum in Scottish schools. 40 of the credit points must have been studied at SCQF level 8 or above.

**Business Education** *(course code: X3BS)*

An undergraduate degree with at least 80 SCQF credit points relevant to the Business Education
curriculum in Scottish schools (Accounting, Economics, and Business Management). 40 of the credit points must have been studied at SCQF level 8 or above.

UHI has a responsibility to make sure that candidates have an appropriate knowledge of information technology and will look for advanced skills from within a degree, HN units or ECDL. This should contain knowledge of spreadsheets, databases, presentation and word processing platforms/applications.

**Chemistry with Science** *(course code: X3CS)*
An undergraduate degree that contains 80 SCQF credit points relevant to the Chemistry curriculum in Scottish schools. 40 of the credit points must have been studied at SCQF level 8 or above.

**Computing Science** *(course code: X3CO)*
An undergraduate degree with at least 80 SCQF credit points which has 40 SCQF credit points at SCQF Level 8 or above from at least two of: computer systems, software development, databases or web design.
The other 40 credits are required in any computing area relevant to the computing curriculum in Scottish schools.

**English** *(course code: X3EG)*
An undergraduate degree with at least 80 SCQF credit points in English, of which at least 40 SCQF credit points must be in literature (this could include English translation) or Scottish literature and a maximum of 20 SCQF points in Media Studies. 40 of these credits must have been studied at SCQF Level 8 or above.

**Gaelic** *(course code: X130)*
An undergraduate degree with at least 80 SCQF credit points in Gaelic or in Celtic (but applicants must have specialised in Scottish Gaelic). 40 of these credits must have been studied at SCQF Level 8 or above.

Applicants must demonstrate their capacity to both read and write Gaelic. Applicants are required to demonstrate to the university they apply to that they are fluent in spoken Scottish Gaelic.

**Home Economics** *(course code: X3HO)*
An undergraduate degree with at least 80 SCQF subject-relevant credit points including 40 SCQF credit points at SCQF Level 8 or above from at least two of: consumer studies, food studies, food technology, textile technology or nutrition.
The other 40 credits are needed in any home-economics area relevant to the home-economics curriculum in Scottish schools: family studies, food science, health, hospitality, textile studies.

**Mathematics** *(course code: X3MA)*
An undergraduate degree with at least 80 SCQF credit points relevant to the Mathematics curriculum in Scottish schools. 40 of the credit points must have been studied at SCQF level 8 or above.

**Physics with Science** *(course code: X3PS)*
An undergraduate degree with at least 80 SCQF credit points relevant to the Physics curriculum in Scottish schools. 40 of the credit points must have been studied at SCQF level 8 or above.

**Technological Education** *(course code: X3TC)*
An undergraduate degree with at least 80 SCQF credit points relevant to the technological-education
curriculum in Scottish schools. 40 of the credit points must have been studied at SCQF level 8 or above. A minimum of 20 credits should come from list A and a minimum of 40 credits should come from list B:

- List A: technological subjects such as mechanical, electrical or electronic engineering/sciences, mechatronics, architecture, construction technology, building services
- List B: design-and graphics-related subjects such as computer-aided design, graphic design, computer-aided design manufacture, industrial design, product design

13. **Can I study for qualification in more than one subject?**
   Yes, you can work towards dual qualification in any of the subjects that UHI is offering, and Gaelic with any subject. If you would like to be considered for dual qualification, you should 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.

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 and Mathematics certificates and a full academic transcript of your degree(s), 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 course 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 NARIC, 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 colleges and/or other institutions. Please enquire with the PGDE admissions team.

16. **Do I need to provide 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 and Mathematics 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.

17. **What experience of work with children and young people should I have?**
   We would previously 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.

   The national recommendation for entry in 2021/22 states the following:

   *At present, it is difficult for all potential student teachers to access schools to gain experience in support of their application for programmes of Initial Teacher Education. Where possible, opportunities should be sought to gain experience in contexts which involve working with children and/or young people. Where this*
is not possible, Teacher Education Institutions should take particular care to explore potential student teacher’s suitability to working with children and/or young people as a part of the admission process.

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(-ies). 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 about funding?
When considering your application, we will make an assessment of your fee status, i.e. the level of tuition fees you will be required to pay if successful in gaining a place in 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 EEA area in the three years prior to 1 August 2021 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 STEM Bursary Scotland website: https://stembursaryscotland.co.uk/.

For further information on tuition fees and funding please go to the UHI website.

20. How do I apply?
Applications must be made through UCAS Undergraduate. To apply, please use UHI institution code H49 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 15th January 2021. As previously stated, applications for some subjects may remain open after this date but can close at any time as places are filled. The programme will close for all applications on the 31st May 2021. The programme does not open in Clearing.

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

Questions about applying or an existing application?
Contact PGDE Admissions Team:
Email: pgdeadmissions@uhi.ac.uk