



## Professional Graduate Diploma in Education

### PGDE Primary (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.

Programme Weeks in PGDE 2023-24
Programme starts on 28 <sup>th</sup> August 2023 Week 1 includes Residential days. 1 - 6 in UHI (blended learning)
READING WEEK
8 - 9 in UHI (blended learning)
10 - 15 Placement in School 1 for 6 weeks
16 - 17 in UHI (blended learning)
UHI CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS
20 - 22 in UHI (blended learning)
23 - 28 Placement in School 2 for 6 weeks
29 - 31 in UHI (blended learning)
UHI HOLIDAYS
34 - 39 Placement in School 3 for 6 weeks [summative]
40 - 41 in UHI (blended learning) Programme ends on Friday 7 <sup>th</sup> June 2024

#### 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 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 Primary programme is offered at the following UHI campuses: Argyll (Oban), Inverness, Moray, North, West and Hebrides (Fort William, Stornoway and Thurso), Orkney, Perth, Shetland and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig. Not every campus offers both the English Medium and Gaelic Medium programmes: Moray, North, West and Hebrides (Thurso), Orkney, Shetland and Scottish Borders

offer only English Medium; North, West and Hebrides (Stornoway) and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig offer only Gaelic Medium (See also Question 7).

The programme is sometimes available in other UHI Centres, including Lochgilphead (Argyll), Barra, and Benbecula (North, West and Hebrides). This decision is made annually (in June) and is dependent on the number of successful applicants in those areas.

### **3. Do I need to attend 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 scheduled sessions, and to take part in group and individual activities from an agreed UHI Centre. Currently, this involves timetabled collaborative engagement all day on Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays. There is flexibility for you to choose where and when you work to complete the online individual learning activities on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, but you will need to be available to take part in an online seminar discussion at a pre-arranged time on one of these days. Gaelic Medium students will also have Gaelic language input during these days. The timetable for Thursday afternoons varies from week to week in each University block.

### **4. Are there any other attendance requirements?**

Yes. You must have a minimum of 80% attendance and registers are kept of all scheduled sessions.

In the placement module of the programme, you must attend for 90 days, to meet the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) requirements for working towards the 2021 Standard for Provisional Registration as a teacher. Placements will be five full days per week in school.

We have one two-night Residential event for students on the PGDE Primary programmes in Week 1 (Induction). All students on the programmes come together in one location. This is an integral part of the core programme and provides a valuable opportunity for the whole UHI 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 when accepting their place on the course.

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

Yes, you can apply to several UHI campuses. These will count as separate choices on UCAS, however your application to the University of the Highlands and Islands is for the programme and will be considered once. If invited to a virtual Selection Event, you will only be invited to attend once, through one of the campuses to which you have chosen to apply. If successful, you will be offered a place at any one of the UHI campuses listed in your application, at the University's discretion, according to the availability of places across UHI. We therefore recommend that you consider all of your choices carefully before applying.

### **6. Can I apply for both the Full-time and Part-time PGDE programmes?**

If you have applied for both programmes and are successful in our Selection process (see Question 12), you will only be made an offer to one programme.

The part-time programme is not available in Gaelic Medium.

## **7. Can I apply to teach through the medium of Gaelic?**

Yes, the Primary Gaelic Medium programme is offered in Argyll (Oban), Inverness, North, West and Hebrides (Fort William and Stornoway), Perth and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig. You should apply to the PGDE Primary Teaching (Gaelic Medium) using UCAS course code X103.

You need 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. We encourage applicants to write their personal statement in Gaelic. Your school placements will normally be with Gaelic Medium classes, subject to Local Authority availability. You will be placed in classes that will allow you to experience teaching at the different stages of immersion and Curriculum for Excellence. Each week in addition to Gaelic language sessions you will also have a Gaelic seminar which follows the week's theme. All assignments are to be completed in Gaelic.

Additional information for Gaelic-speaking applicants can be found at:

- [PGDE Primary \(Gaelic Medium\) \(uhi.ac.uk\)](http://uhi.ac.uk/pgde-primary-gaelic-medium)

## **8. I am a secondary teacher. Can I use your course to convert into primary 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.

## **9. 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 via a national system, within the Local Authority partnered with the UHI campus at which you are enrolled. A term-time address within reasonable commuting distance of the campus and schools within that Local Authority area is therefore essential. The system calculates 'reasonable' as within 90 minutes travel time and we use this when allocating school placements.

You will gain experience in three schools, during blocks of placement totalling 90 days. Occasionally, placements are allocated within a neighbouring authority, usually only in a few of the mainland centres, where local placement places are also needed by student teachers from other universities. However, this will usually only occur when that neighbouring Local Authority is also 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. Successful applicants with addresses outside the Perth and Kinross postcode area will be allocated placements on the basis of the 90 minutes travel time being calculated as from the Perth campus.

Scottish Borders applicants are enrolled for the Primary programme through Moray, 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.

## 10. 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.

## 11. 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. 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 from across Scotland or can opt to follow the Flexible Route for 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 Question 21) will not be eligible to enter the GTCS Teacher Induction Scheme.

## 12. How are students selected for places?

Applications are reviewed in a three-stage selection process.

Stage 1 – this is a check that applicants meet the entry qualifications for 2024 – 2025. If so, the application is progressed to Stage 2.

Stage 2 – is a review of your personal statement and supporting reference. We recognise the ongoing challenges in gaining direct work or voluntary experience with Primary-aged children. We expect your personal statement and supporting reference to clearly demonstrate what has informed your sense of readiness to apply now to become a Primary Teacher (see Question 19). Applicants are strongly advised to seek a supporting reference from someone who can comment explicitly on your suitability for working with Primary-aged pupils. This review is based on academic judgement. Selected applicants are progressed to Stage 3.

Stage 3 - Selected applicants are invited to attend a virtual Selection Event. The Selection Event mirrors programme activities and is designed to assess you as a possible student teacher with the capacity to engage collaboratively in blended learning with peers. Applicants to the Gaelic Medium programme will participate in a Selection Event in Gaelic, where oral fluency in Gaelic will be assessed as part of the selection process. As these Selection Events are collaborative, online attendance at the date and time shown on your invitation is essential and we are unlikely to be able to offer alternative times. Selection panels will include representatives of the Primary programme team and at least one of our partner authorities.

The University makes offers of places on the programme after Selection Events have taken place across UHI.

Important note: We always get many more applicants than we have places for, so you should think carefully about relevant transferrable skills, interests, personal qualities, knowledge, and experiences, and how these can be evidenced in our professional selection contexts. Experience

is only one of the factors considered (in Stage 2), and the Selection panel apply their professional judgement in Stage 3 to assess applicant suitability for our blended UHI programme model.

### 13. 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 (please see Question 13 for further details).

The details of your qualifications (including any pending qualifications) must be clearly stated on your UCAS application form under the Qualifications section.

If you are completing the degree required for entry in the year you apply, it is your responsibility to ensure that you will have achieved it as required and provided evidence of this to the 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)
- 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
- Pass in Online Access Course in English at 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
- Pass in Online Access Course in Mathematics at SCQF Level 5 or 6, University of Aberdeen (D3 or above)

**Gaelic applicants are encouraged to apply for Gaelic pathway on the PGDE whether or not they currently hold the above English and Mathematics qualifications. Due consideration shall be given and, if successful, English/Maths qualifications may be set as conditions of entry.**

#### **14. Do I need an Honours degree?**

An Honours degree at 2:2 or above is preferred, as the teaching on the programme sits across Honours level and Masters' level. We will consider applicants not yet holding Honours who are able to evidence sufficient academic capacity to undertake PGDE study as follows:

- Applicants with a pending Honours degree will need to successfully complete their Honours year at 2:2 or above
- Applicants holding an existing Ordinary degree, who are no longer engaged in study, will need to provide a transcript evidencing an average of at least 60% (UHI Grade B equivalent) in all final year modules studied
- Applicants with a pending Ordinary degree will need to have achieved an average of at least 60% (UHI B Grade equivalent) across all SCQF Level 9 (or equivalent) modules being studied

Any offer subsequently made would be subject to the relevant condition.

#### **15. 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.

#### **16. What if I have non-UK qualifications?**

If you hold non-UK qualifications, you must email us scanned copies of your original degree, English and Mathematics certificates, 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 ENIC, the designated national agency for the recognition and comparison of international qualifications. (Please note that this service may incur a fee).

- [Home Page \(enic.org.uk\)](http://enic.org.uk),

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.

#### **17. When will I be asked for evidence of my qualifications?**

You will be asked to provide scanned copies of your current qualifications as part of the selection process. We will ask for your English and Mathematics certificates, and your degree certificate.

#### **18. Do I need Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme registration?**

Yes. 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 applicant.

## **19. What experience of work with children and young people should I have?**

It has previously been essential that you have recent experience of working or volunteering with children between the ages of 5 and 12 years in a Primary school context or related setting. This is still preferable for you in terms of understanding your own readiness and suitability.

As outlined in Question 12, we expect your personal statement and supporting reference to clearly demonstrate what has informed your sense of readiness to apply now to become a Primary teacher.

During the selection process (Stage 3), you will be expected to demonstrate a depth of understanding about the role of a Primary Teacher in schools and their communities and the activities you engage in will explore your potential suitability for working with Primary- aged children.

We strongly recommend that you consider this carefully when approaching your referee and when writing your personal statement, as applicants who are not invited to attend a Selection Event will not be allowed to submit an amended personal statement or additional reference.

## **20. 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 18) means that we **cannot** negotiate or guarantee in advance what adjustments will be possible before you are enrolled student with the University.

## **21. 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 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 relevant area in the three years prior to 1 August 2024 your eligibility for funding may be affected. For full eligibility criteria please visit:

- [Undergrad Funding - SAAS - Higher Education - Student Loan - Bursary](#)

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.

For further information on fees and funding please go to:

- [Considering university? - How much will it cost? \(uhi.ac.uk\)](#)

### Gaelic Students

Gaelic students are encouraged to apply for the Gaelic Education Grant from Bòrd na Gàidhlig. More information here: <https://www.gaidhlig.scot/en/funding/funding-schemes/gaelic-education-grants/>

The Teaching Bursary Scheme now includes Gaelic (medium and subjects) and is open to individuals wishing to undertake a one-year PGDE ITE course in Scotland that leads to the award of registered teacher status in Scotland's hardest-to-fill teaching subjects. More information here: <https://www.teachingbursaryinScotland.co.uk/>

## **22. How do I apply?**

Applications must be made through UCAS Undergraduate.

To apply, please use UHI institution code H49 and the course code for the programme:

- X100 for Primary (English Medium) or
- X103 for Primary (Gaelic Medium).

If you are applying to the Gaelic medium pathway, we encourage you to write your personal statement in Gaelic.

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 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024. However, we also recommend that you do not apply prior to the update of the UHI and programme website (between September and October) so that your application is made in full consideration of the latest guidance we can offer. This application window (the start of November – end of January) will also allow your personal statement to reflect current evidence of your readiness, rather than a stated intention of gaining contributory experience.

## **23. Questions about applying or an existing application?**

Contact PGDE Admissions Team: [pgdeadmissions@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:pgdeadmissions@uhi.ac.uk)