

Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (Primary) (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 Selection Events to happen virtually in February and March 2021.

This programme is closed for applications for August 2021. The programme does not open in clearing.

- 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 below. Please note that this changes slightly each year because of changes to school holiday dates.

Weeks 1 – 5	College
Weeks 6 – 7	First placement (SCHOOL 1)
Week 8	UHI October Holiday
Week 9	College
Weeks 10 – 15	Second placement
Weeks 16 – 17	College
Weeks 18 – 19	UHI Christmas Holiday
Weeks 20 – 23	College
Weeks 24 – 28	Third placement (SCHOOL 2)
Weeks 29 – 31	College
Weeks 32 – 33	UHI Easter Holiday
Week 34	College
Weeks 35 – 40	Fourth Placement (SCHOOL 3)
Week 41, 42	College

- 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 Primary 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.

3. When I'm in college do I need to attend 5 days a week?

We use a blended approach to learning. In the weeks you are in college, you are expected to attend all scheduled sessions, and to take part in group and individual activities. Currently, this means being in college all day Monday, Thursday and Friday. You can choose where 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 webinar discussion at a pre-arranged time on one of these days. The timetable for Thursday afternoons varies from week to week in each college block and will include Gaelic language input where relevant.

4. Are there any other attendance requirements?

Yes. You must have a minimum of 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 working towards the Standard for Provisional Registration as a teacher. Placements will be five full days per week in school.

There are two residential events for students on the PGDE Primary programmes, one in Week 1 of the programme and one just before Easter. All students on the programmes will come together in one location. These are an integral part of the core programme and provide valuable opportunities 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 these** when accepting their place on the course.

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

Yes, you can apply to several UHI colleges. These will count as separate choices on UCAS, however your application to the University of the Highlands and Islands will be considered in its entirety. If invited to a selection event online, you will only be invited to attend once. This will be arranged through one of the colleges to which you have chosen to apply. If successful, you will be offered a place at any one of the UHI colleges listed in your application, at the University's discretion, according to the availability of places across the UHI. We therefore recommend that you consider your choices carefully before applying.

6. Can I apply to teach 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 Primary Teaching (Gaelic Medium) using UCAS course code X103.

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.

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.

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

7. 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.

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 via a national GTCS system within the Local Authority, partnered with the UHI college at which you are enrolled. A term-time address within reasonable commuting distance of the college and schools within that Local Authority area is therefore essential.

You will gain experience in at least two schools, during blocks of placement totalling 19 weeks. Occasionally, placements are allocated within a neighbouring authority, 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 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 College UHI should note that we are unable to provide school placements in Angus, Clackmannanshire, Dundee, Fife and Stirling Council areas.

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

9. Can I do a placement in the same school that 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 initially selected on the basis of meeting the current qualification entry requirements, their personal statement and supporting reference.

We recognise the current difficulties 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.

Selected applicants will be invited to attend an online event arranged through one of the UHI colleges they have applied to. This is usually the one closest to their current address. The Selection Event includes collaborative, written and individual activities. Applicants to the Gaelic Medium programme will participate in a selection event along with English Medium applicants, in English. Following this, they will take part in a one-to-one conversation with a Gaelic speaker to demonstrate their fluency in the Gaelic language.

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.

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

We do always get more applicants than we have places for, so applicants are encouraged to think carefully about relevant transferrable skills, interests, personal qualities, knowledge and experiences, and how these can be evidenced in our professional selection contexts. Applicants are advised to seek a supporting reference from someone placed to comment explicitly on their suitability for working with Primary-aged pupils.

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 (please see Section 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 any of the qualifications required for entry 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 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)

13. 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 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 of the final year modules studied.
- Applicants with a pending honours degree will need to successfully complete their Honours year at 2:2 or above.
- 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.

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 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 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. 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.

17. 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.

18. 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.

The national recommendation for entry in 21/22 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.

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, 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 with will explore your potential suitability to working with Primary-aged children.

We 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.

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.

For further information on 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 the course code for the programme: X100 for Primary (English Medium) and X103 for Primary (Gaelic Medium).

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.

This programme is closed for applications for August 2021. The programme does not open in clearing.

Questions about applying or an existing application?

Contact PGDE Admissions Team:

Email: pgdeadmissions@uhi.ac.uk