Changes to the pre course Placement and Mentor requirement to commence the programme during this period of COVID19 for 2020/21

If you are not currently employed as a teacher and will be seeking a placement school, the following has been put in place in order to support our applicants. Please read the following before applying.

Due to the COVID19 situation for applications for 2020/21, we will offer a place on the programme to applicants who meet the entry criteria but due to school closures have been unable to secure a School and Mentor before embarking on the programme. However, we must emphasise that in order to complete the teaching practice module EDP380 and ultimately the programme overall, it is a requirement for Trainees to secure both a school and mentor. Ideally, you will have this in place before the winter break in December.

Please note that securing a mentor and school is the responsibility of the Trainee and not that of the University. A Trainee must complete all elements of the programme before they can graduate with a PGCE Education. However, you may take up to 3 years to fully complete and graduate, should this be necessary.

Advice to applicants for the PGCE Education International programme who are not employed in a school and are seeking a placement.

If you are looking for a placement school you may find this information helpful.

1. Make a list of all international schools in your country that run a curriculum that you would be able to work in. It does not have to be the English National Curriculum; it could be an American, French, Indian, or any other one. Indeed it does not even have to be a ‘National Curriculum’, but could be a system of education e.g. Montessori, Reggio Emilia, etc. But it must be one that you feel comfortable working with.

2. Email or ring schools to see if they would be happy to take on a PGCE trainee. Please ask if there is a central point for applications for placement. Do not contact individual teachers. At the end of this paper is a briefing that you might want to show a potential
school, or it could be the basis for what you wish to say to them about what is required if they allow you to work in their school. You will ideally have your school in place before you start on the programme but if not then you will need to find a suitable school before you can begin the teaching practicum module.

3. A good way into schools is to ask if you can come in and observe some lessons – let the school know you are thinking of doing a professional teaching qualification - and then talk face-to-face about the possibility of having a placement.

4. You will need to let the school know that you will require access to mentor support. You will ideally have a mentor that we approve before the programme begins so it is crucial that you discuss this with the placement school early on. If you cannot secure a mentor before the programme begins, you will need to have a mentor in place before you can begin the teaching practicum module.

5. If you find a school that is willing to consider you as a placement trainee, then you discuss this with the University. It is possible to conduct the teaching practice element in different schools but we will need to agree this beforehand.

**The Mentor**

The mentor is required to be someone who has experience of teaching and schools but not necessarily of mentoring. If they have already mentored other trainees elsewhere in the world that is an advantage but we will provide a full training manual for them to work from and in some instances where there is a large cohort, or where a member of staff from the University is visiting the locality, we will arrange face-to-face training.

Mentors should:

- initiate regular observations, get to know the trainee, their circumstances, concerns etc.
- provide professional support and help with any problems relating to professional problems raised by the trainee.
- introduce the trainee to "useful" people (staff) in the School, so that they can benefit from advice and help from a range and variety of colleagues.
• be prepared to offer advice and guidance, if asked, with the preparation of lessons and other teaching materials.
• observe the trainee's teaching and provide constructive feedback
• discuss the trainee's progress with other staff and provide feedback where necessary to the trainee.
• discuss and, if practicable, share teaching materials with the trainee.
• discuss construction of assessment strategies and lesson evaluations.
• listen actively and ask open and appropriate questions and reflect back feelings and opinion
• make suggestions without being prescriptive
• give constructive and positive feedback
**Information that you can discuss or give to a potential school**

**The programme and its background**

The University of Sunderland has offered this programme since 1999 when it began with 3 students in the United Arab Emirates. In 2019-20 there were over 650 students on the programme in almost 60 countries around the world. The growth of the programme has been remarkable and the robust recruitment is largely due to the reputation it has for producing knowledge and skilled education practitioners. The programme offers the same programme of study as the UK PGCE (but without QTS) and the University of Sunderland provision has an excellent regional, national, and international reputation.

The PGCE Education International is a thirty-six week programme of study available to graduates with appropriate degree qualifications.

The programme comprises one teaching practice module (split into two blocks of 6 weeks each), one taught subject skills/theory module, and two Masters modules. This is taught by distance learning (via the University’s VLE) and overseen by experienced academic staff employed at the university.

The programme delivers the same modules as the University of Sunderland’s on-campus teacher training programmes and has been adapted so that it can be delivered to early years, primary, secondary and post-16 teachers and to any subject specialism.

Since the beginning of the development of our Independent Distance Learning provision, the PGCE Education programme has been regularly modified to accommodate TRA (Teacher Regulation Agency) and DfE (Department for Education) initiatives and OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills). Quality assurance of the UK programmes is externally inspected by OFSTED.

The Programme addresses the requirements and professional standards set out by the Department for Education:

The main aim of the programme is to provide teachers already employed, or people aspiring to enter into employment as teachers, with the professional training and experience necessary to develop as an effective and reflective teacher. Central to this development are the teaching standards expected of newly qualified teachers.

However, UK Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) is not be awarded at the end of the PGCE Education programme as QTS is the state registration required by teachers working in the state sector schools in England. To achieve QTS, trainee teachers must do their training wholly or mostly in an English state school or complete the separate Assessment Only Route to QTS – also provided by the University of Sunderland for suitable candidates. [https://www.sunderland.ac.uk/study/short-courses-cpd/assessment-only-route-qts/](https://www.sunderland.ac.uk/study/short-courses-cpd/assessment-only-route-qts/)

For classroom teaching to be purposeful and efficient, trainee teachers also require relevant theoretical underpinning and knowledge to inform and develop decision making on school and classroom practice. This enables teachers to engage with and participate in change and to encourage an awareness of wider educational issues. This programme includes academic modules which are graded and work-based learning modules (the observed Practice element) which are pass/fail.

Most applicants to the programme are already employed as teachers, but a significant number are people who wish to become teachers. It is quite common for Learning or Teaching Assistants in a school to complete our programme. Many Head Teachers and Principals have found this programme to be a good way of developing their own teacher workforce according to the educational ethos of their school and it allows schools to see how someone develops as a teacher before offering them a full time teaching post.

**The placement- requirements and responsibility of the school**

The PGCE has one long teaching placement module. It is divided into two blocks. Each is anticipated as being 6-8 weeks long (to include holiday periods) and will usually take place in October to December and then again usually in February to April (for the September intake) and usually April to June and September to November (for the March intake). There is some flexibility over the exact days as we recognise local customs in international schools dictate that holidays do not always match the academic year in England. During the practicum it is
important that even though the required teaching – approximately 11 hours per week in TP1 and approximately 14 hours per week in TP2 - does not take up the whole teaching week, the trainees should be in school full time for that period in order to absorb the full school experience. They should be involved in break-time duties, lunch duties, extra-curricular activities and so on, as the school and mentor see fit. This will also help to ensure that the trainee can fulfil the professional requirements for the teaching standards.

The programme design is flexible and if the first practicum block cannot take place in the first semester of the programme, then the trainees can prioritise their academic work in the first semester and complete two back-to-back placements in the second semester of the programme.

It is a requirement of the programme that the trainee has a mentor who is able to observe the trainee teach at least once a week and then provide written feedback on their observations. Normally this would also entail providing oral feedback to the trainee and would usually involve approximately 1½ hours per week. The University makes a payment of £500 to the mentor for the two placements and their involvement in observing and providing weekly written feedback and actions for development plus the writing of an interim and final report on the trainee.

The feedback and assessment of the placement is based on the DfE UK Teachers' Standards (http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/reviewofstandards/a00205581/teachers-standards1-sep-2012) therefore having knowledge of these is important for the mentor. Having experience of working with trainee teachers in the past is helpful, but not essential, provided they are teachers. The mentor does not need to have the same subject background as the trainee. The University provides an online module space for mentors and advice on the process of mentoring. Specific details of the University’s reporting process are provided prior to the commencement of the programme.

To pass the programme the trainee has to consistently achieve the Teaching Standards during the practicum and evidence in support of this achievement is presented in an e-portfolio which is assessed by the mentor and the University. Assessment of practical teaching is also carried out either through sample visits by University tutors or through video recordings of lessons.
A placement school has no formal involvement or commitment to the academic modules of the programme which are delivered and assessed directly by the University, however, there is no reason why staff at the school may not give advice to the trainee if they so wish. It would be appreciated, however, if the school allowed trainees access, of at least two days per week during non-TP periods, to enable them to carry out essential assignment-related tasks.