University of Sunderland – School of Education PGCE Education (Independent Distance Learning)

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.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Is this an approved programme?

The Qualification Assurance Agency (QAA) in the UK requires all universities to undertake a rigorous approval process for their programmes. This involves scrutiny by other academics and stakeholders from outside the institution who will only allow a programme to be offered if they are satisfied with the rigour of the academic standards and the organisation to support it. This PGCE began in 1999 and was revalidated in December 2016 for a further five years. Annually, a report is written on this programme to monitor its quality and part of that process is a commentary by an External Examiner whose role it is to assure the University that the programme is comparable to other similar programmes, that it meets its stated aims and is maintaining quality standards. This programme has consistently exceeded these requirements.

Can I have an overview of the programme?

PGCE Education

The PGCE Education is a postgraduate teaching qualification. Where trainees are based in Secondary schools, they will teach and focus their academic work on the subject(s) for which their degree equips them. Primary trainees will teach a range of subjects in the class in which they are based. It is preferable that Primary teachers are able to teach English, Maths, and Science – though this can be discussed with the PGCE team during the application process. Secondary trainee teachers will focus on their specialist subject or small range of subjects.

This programme includes two, research-based Masters modules and, on successful completion of the programme, trainees may progress to Stage 2 of the MA International Education or MA Education programmes.

What is the course content of the programme?

The programme is split into two semesters and has four core modules. There is one taught module, two research modules, and one teaching practice module.

Progression through the programme is as follows: Subject Studies (EDP381)

This module examines the fundamental requirements of teaching, such as planning lessons, differentiation, assessment, behaviour management, teaching strategies and learning theory, in relation to your own specialist area and phase of teaching. During this module, you will investigate the curriculum you are teaching on placement. You will have the opportunity to audit your own subject knowledge and skills in relation to your placement curriculum and create a personal development action plan. You will also analyse and evaluate lesson plans and curriculum documents to understand and apply learning theory to your everyday practice. You will also review teaching strategies in your subject area or phase and justify them against research and best practice about how to support student learning.
Practice of Teaching (EDP380)

This module requires trainees to undertake teaching practice and develop professional knowledge about teaching institutions and teaching and learning and to make judgements about the routines, skills and strategies that support effective teaching. It provides trainees with the breadth and variety of experience in a work based learning environment to meet the UK DfE Teachers’ Standards identified in Government legislation current at the time of study, consistently and over a sustained period of time.

There are two blocks. The first requires trainees to teach 11 hours per week for 6 weeks. The second requires trainees to teach 14 hours per week for 6 weeks. We set block ‘windows’ for these practicums that are longer than 6 weeks. This is designed to account for regional variations with regards to holidays and school terms (etc.) and to also allow trainees to start teaching at the start of a school unit or scheme of work if they don’t align favourably with the start of each window. Trainees collect evidence and this is assessed by university staff against the UK DfE Teachers’ Standards.

Development of Learning: A Case Study (EDPM01) (Masters-level 7)

During your time in an educational setting you will identify and examine the way in which the school/college/setting in which you are placed addresses the particular educational needs of a particular small group of individual pupils/students and which shows how learning is developed over a short period of time, or alternatively, what could be done to enhance its development in the future.

Examples to consider could be the way in which the school/college/setting deals with those identified as having special educational needs; how the school/college deals with pupils who routinely do not engage in aspects of classroom learning or homework or with their peers; how the school supports more able and talented pupils; or how the school supports improvements in behaviour.

Please note that you will not study an individual pupil/student but the intervention, process, or aspect of teaching and learning put in place to support them.

Negotiated Individual Study in Education (EDPM97) (Masters-level 7)

This module provides you with the opportunity to structure and undertake a piece of independent academic study (usually in the form of action research) related to your particular vocational/professional development, which will encourage them to engage in intellectual challenge and dialogue. Students will develop both general and specific knowledge and skills, which will vary according to each student’s chosen projects. These will be negotiated and agreed between the student, the subject supervisor and the supervising university tutor. Students will also identify and develop key skills that will enhance their ability to transfer learning to further study and to the workplace. The students will each make an interim presentation of their research and a final written account of their learning.

Teaching and assessment

All teaching and learning materials will be located in the spaces provided on the University’s Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), known as Canvas.

We use a wide variety of teaching methods with tasks including required reading, directed activities and self-assessments.

There are online discussion forums where trainees are invited to debate current issues relevant to the module content and, if you live close to other students on the course, we encourage you to form a study group.

The teaching practice is work-based and conducted entirely in a school or other educational institution that you have secured a placement at or are currently working at. This is supported by a mentor and university academic staff.

We assess both the theoretical and practical elements of the course.

Assessment is through written assignments, a profile of evidence of teaching standards and observed teaching.

Does the programme award QTS (Qualified Teacher Status)?

This programme regularly has trainees from over 50 different countries and all countries have somewhat different conditions for awarding their own qualified teacher status (or similar). The programme is based on the UK Teachers’ Standards which in fact are remarkably similar to those in many other countries. As far as the requirements of getting
QTS in England (Scotland, Wales and both Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic are different) are concerned, the only trainees who get QTS are those who undertake their training in a state school in England and then complete the NQT – Newly Qualified Teacher - year afterwards.

However, for the market that this programme caters for – the international/private schools around the world - you do not need it unless the school only employs teachers who already have taught in the state system and have QTS. You will need to check with the school and consider your own position in this respect.

This programme should not be seen as an alternative route to gaining state registration (QTS). Although it may be possible to get QTS from an individual country, there is no guarantee that it will be granted. If QTS is a key driver for doing this programme, you are advised that this may not be the programme for you or, at the very least, you should take steps to assure yourself that any country you apply to may look favourably upon your request. Please note that there is an Assessment-Only Route to QTS available which can now be completed internationally – provided that you satisfy the rigorous and extensive entry criteria. Further information for this can be found at the University of Sunderland’s Assessment Only Route to QTS web page (https://www.sunderland.ac.uk/study/short-courses-cpd/assessment-only-route-qts/) and also below.

Do I get a DfE number?

No you will not. Only trainees who undertake their training in England and whose teaching practice is in a state school will automatically get a DfE number during their PGCE year.

Do I need a DfE number or QTS?

Some international schools may ask for this but it is meaningless unless the holder also has completed the NQT year and has full state registration. If a school does ask for QTS, they are probably also expecting you to be already trained and state registered in another country and in the case of many international schools that will mean England, the USA, Canada, New Zealand or Australia. This programme does not recommend for QTS.

Does successful completion of this programme allow me to teach in other countries?

The programme is marketed for in-service teachers, or pre-service teachers (those looking to join the teaching profession) in international schools around the world. The expatriate teaching community is an extremely fluid one and teachers tend to move around the world regularly. It is our experience over the past two decades that this award is recognized in many countries - indeed the programme has grown simply by word of mouth with its graduates, and teachers who have worked with trainees, recommending it. We cannot, of course, guarantee that any particular school will accept it, but we have good evidence that they will.

How can I get state registration?

The PGCE Education is not designed as a shortcut to English QTS. It is designed for the overseas market and this is made very clear on application. A declaration of understanding is signed by all applicants to the programme.

There is currently one way of obtaining QTS after completion of the PGCE Education – this is the Assessment-Only Route to QTS. No guarantee can be made that this option will remain open indefinitely but for the moment it is still both popular and available. We have carried out international assessments for QTS in China, Qatar, Kuwait, Dubai, Switzerland, Romania, Egypt and Vietnam and anticipate this will grow.

Overview of the Assessment Only Route to QTS:

The Assessment-Only Route to QTS is for experienced teachers, who have been teaching whole classes for a minimum of two years. For entry to the route you will need to have been teaching in at least two schools, for at least two years and across one of the following age ranges: 3-11 (primary), 7-14 (middle) or 11-19 (secondary). Typical applications to this route include people who have taught for more than two years in the independent sector or overseas.

The Assessment-Only Route to QTS allows you to demonstrate that you already meet all of the Teachers’ Standards for QTS. The assessment period is a maximum of 12 weeks.

We will ask you to present detailed preliminary evidence at interview – then for the final recommendation for QTS we will assess your teaching – normally at the school where you are currently working.
If you are awarded QTS, the next step is to undertake the period of NQT (Newly Qualified Teacher) induction. This includes a personalised programme of professional support and further assessment against the core professional standards for teachers normally organised by your employing school or local authority.

**Entry Requirements for the AOR to QTS:**

We require applicants to have the following:

- An honours degree normally a 2:2 or above
- GCSE grade C, or equivalent, in mathematics and English language. If you intend to teach at primary level you also need at least a grade C in a science subject
- Full proficiency in English language
- Recent significant experience of teaching in at least two schools
- Teaching experience across the breadth of the chosen age range either 3-11 (primary), 7-14 (middle) or 11-19 (secondary)
- An enhanced check from the Disclosure and Barring Service and Fitness-To-Teach approval (or equivalent for your country)
- References recommending you for the Assessment-Only Route from the Headteacher or Principal of the schools in which you have gained your experience

We invite potential students to an interview (these can also be carried out online) where you present a portfolio of initial evidence that shows clear progress towards meeting the QTS standards.

Further information for would-be applicants can be obtained from: jill.wilkinson@sunderland.ac.uk

**I am not currently employed as a teacher, how do I find a placement school?**

This is an Independent Distance Learning (IDL) programme and, as a prospective trainee on that programme, it is a requirement for completion of the practicum element of the programme that you find a school locally willing to host you throughout the programme. In particular, the school will need to be clearly informed about the arrangements they will need to put in place for the teaching practicum element. We are not able to help with finding placements for trainees, but are willing to provide information and talk to interested schools about the programme and its requirements. Further advice about finding a placement can be found on the PGCE Education website.

**How do I get a mentor and are there any special requirements for them?**

Your mentor needs to be someone who has experience of teaching and schools, but not necessarily of mentoring. The mentor is expected to have themselves completed a programme of teacher training. If they have already mentored other trainees elsewhere in the world that would be an advantage, but support and guidance is provided for mentors via the designated mentoring space on Canvas (the University of Sunderland’s Virtual Learning Environment).

**Mentor Requirements**

We would expect a mentor to be an experienced, qualified teacher with a minimum of 1 year post-qualification experience. The mentor does not have to have a UK teaching qualification.

Mentors will be expected to:

- initiate regular observations, get to know the trainee, their circumstances, their concerns, etc.;
- provide friendly professional support and help with any problems relating to professional problems raised by the trainee;
- introduce the trainee to "useful" staff in the school, so that they can benefit from advice and help from a range and variety of colleagues;
- be prepared to offer guidance, if asked, with the preparation of lessons and teaching materials;
- observe the trainee's teaching (once per week) and provide constructive feedback to the trainee;
- meet formally with the trainee (once per week) to discuss progress and set future targets;
- 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 with the trainee;
• listen actively, ask open and appropriate questions;
• make suggestions without being prescriptive;
• prepare interim and final reports on the trainee’s teaching;
• assist in the evaluation of the trainee’s evidence portfolio against the teaching standards.

Normally this would 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 writing an interim and final report on the trainee. On occasions, you can have two mentors, one per placement. This would mean that each mentor would receive £250 for the above work and commitment.

Is this a PGCE in Primary? / Is this a PGCE in Secondary? / Is this a PGCE in a specific subject?

This is a generic PGCE and does not specifically focus on any phase or subject. Within the academic modules, there is the opportunity to explore and develop themes that relate to age, phase, and subject, but the certificate that you get on successful completion will not specifically mention any subject or phase.

Any reference or supporting letter provided by the University will make it clear in which phase of education you did your training, the curriculum you taught, and subjects taught.

If I successfully complete the PGCE will I be able to teach in any phase i.e. primary and secondary?

Your PGCE will be based on the phase that you are working in while training and your academic assignments will most likely focus on that phase. Therefore, by the end of the programme you will be able to demonstrate a good understanding of that particular age group or phase. International schools may be willing to accept that you have a good subject knowledge from your first degree and that the PGCE has given you a good grounding in the aspects of teaching and, therefore, be willing to employ you outside the phase in which you trained. We cannot, however, comment on how likely it is that this would happen in any particular school. You should be able to show competence to teach in the phase you were in during training from the standards you achieved and the academic work you submitted and you should consider carefully the position if you are likely to wish to teach outside this in the future. This PGCE is a generic one and has the practice of teaching and learning generally integral to its aims.

We work with trainees from around the world and across many curricula and school structures but to help you understand what we mean by phases (or by the term Key Stages) please note the following:

The four Key Stages in the UK:

Early Years
Ages 3-4
Ages 4-5 Reception Year

Primary
Key Stage 1: Ages 5-7 Years 1 and 2
Key Stage 2: Ages 7-11 Years 3, 4, 5 and 6

Secondary,
Key Stage 3: Ages 11-14 Years 7, 8 and 9
Key Stage 4: Ages 14-16 Years 10 and 11

Post compulsory education
Key stage 5 Ages 16-18 Years 12 and 13

I do not have a degree already, can I still do the programme? I have a degree but is my degree suitable?

This is a postgraduate programme, so the entry requirement is a bachelor’s degree with honours. In certain circumstances (at our discretion), we can accept other qualifications if their content and specific background is of an equivalent or corresponding level. This is not automatic and we look closely at your qualifications and make judgements on individual cases. It is possible for you to send a copy/scan of your degree certificate to us before application so that we can tell you if it meets the minimum entry requirements. The email address for this is as follows: Pgceeducation.tne@sunderland.ac.uk
When can I start the programme and how long is it?

We have two entry points for the programme. At the present, our start dates are September and March. The programme is 36 weeks long.

Do I get to come to graduation?

Those who wish to take part in our graduation ceremony are welcome to do so. For the September intake, this is held in Sunderland around the second week of July each year after the main programme is completed. If you complete at a different time, then you can still attend graduation.

Why would I require proof of English language proficiency?

We require proof of English language proficiency from all students, including those from the UK. If your degree was studied in the medium of instruction of English then you may be exempt from providing the proof of English requirement (degrees from any UK University are exempt). Please check to see if your degree certificate has this stated on it or the transcript. If not, then please ask your University to provide a note on headed paper, which clearly states the degree and medium of instruction. However, if you cannot provide this, then you may have to undertake the Academic IELTS test to prove that you are ready to study at postgraduate level in the medium of instruction of English. A minimum IELTS band score of 6.5, with 6.5 in writing, and no less than 6 in Reading and Speaking and Listening.

Other types of evidence that we accept are GCSE/IGCSE in English Language (as a first language) of Grade C or above and Malaysian STPM Grade C or above if completed within the last 5 years. If you have any questions regarding proof of English, please email Pgceeducation.tne@sunderland.ac.uk for advice.

What is the process for paying the fees?

Self-Funded Students

£1000 will be due at least two weeks prior to the programme start date. The remaining fees will be split into three instalments that will be due throughout the programme.

Sponsored Students

The sponsored amount will be invoiced in one instalment. We will require the following to be emailed to Pgceeducation.tne@sunderland.ac.uk 1 month prior to the start of your programme (if this is not received by this deadline then this will result in the student being invoiced for full fees):

- Name of School/Company paying for the fees
- Name of the student along with the Student application number (e.g. 189095994)
- How much the School/Company is paying for on behalf of the applicant - It must be in £GBP
- Contact details of the school - Must include address, email and telephone number
- Point of Contact at this School/Company who will deal with any future enquiries relating to this invoice.
- Letter must be on official letter headed paper

How do I pay my fees?

Payment can be made at https://services.sunderland.ac.uk/payportal/. This is the quickest way for the University to receive your deposit and there are no chargers by the University for using this portal. Payments can also be made via bank transfer, but please be aware that there may be some hidden charges which you will be liable for. Bank details can be found on our website: https://www.sunderland.ac.uk/help/finance-scholarships/tuition-fees/paying-fees/

What can I expect to happen after I have applied?

We will consider your application as soon as possible, but it will be subject to certain checks first. In some cases, we may also need you to confirm school placements or provide some outstanding documentation. Once your application has been reviewed, you will be given a ‘conditional’ offer pending either paying of the £1000 deposit or English or both. Once you have met all conditions of your offer, you will then be sent an ‘unconditional’ offer. You will be advised to enrol at least two weeks prior to the programme start date (at which point your deposit will become non-refundable) and once enrolled, you will then be contacted by the FES registry and academic teams regarding induction before the start of the programme.

See the chart below for the application timeline but please note that trainees can be accepted onto the programme without a school and a mentor, though they will have to be secured before a trainee can begin the teaching practicum element of the programme.
Is there anything that I need to do before the programme begins, such as pre-coursereading?

We will provide successful applicants with a pack of Keeping Warm Activities. These are not compulsory but will be useful if you are very new to teaching and schools. Other than this, we do not expect you to do anything before we open the Virtual Learning Environment to you (1 week before the scheduled programme start date) but of course any reading you can do about education or teaching will be of benefit and any involvement you can have with schools in any way will help. You should make sure that you have a computer that is rated for multimedia use (typically with a minimum speed of 1GHz and a minimum memory of 256Mb, but the faster and with the greatest memory, the better). As all the tuition is web-based, you should also ensure that you have satisfactory internet connection.

Should each practical block be with a different key stage but same mentor?

Teaching across two key stages is recommended and usually with the same mentor. It is possible, however, to have a different mentor for each practice.

The practical teaching element is full time and although you are expected to teach 11 hours per week in the first block and 14 hours per week in the second block, you are still expected to be in school 5 days a week. This will allow you to enjoy the full school experience, attend meetings and undertake duties which your school and mentor see fit, carry out observations, meet with your mentor and other members of staff, and to collect data for (amongst other tasks) in relation to your academic modules.

If you are a full time member of teaching staff at the school then usually you would designate the teaching practice hours from within your normal schedule. While you would still have to have time for the activities/meetings/tasks mentioned above, much of this ‘school experience' would already be part of your schedule. Many of our trainees are in-service teachers or teaching assistants and, although it is more of a challenge undertaking the PGCE at the same time as full time employment, many have done it before you.

If you are a Teaching Assistant (TA) or Educational Assistant (EA) you may be able to work with classes that are already part of your schedule but this is an agreement that will need to be made with your school.

You would not necessarily be expected (particularly if new to teaching) to teach whole classes immediately. We can allow trainees to begin with observations, one-to-one, small group, and team teaching in the first week and then build rapidly to whole-class teaching. The expectation in your second practice would be that the majority of your teaching would be whole-class. This will be different for every trainee and of course some full time staff will already be teaching full classes as per their normal schedule.

Teaching practicum blocks in different schools

Yes, it is possible to do your two practices in two different schools. However, the schools would need to be in the same education phase (either primary or secondary). The subjects you are teaching and the phase you are teaching in should be clearly indicated when you provide your School Proposal form either as part of the initial application or before you begin your teaching practicum.