

PGDE SECONDARY EDUCATION



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



DREAMING / BELIEVING / ACHIEVING
A 21ST CENTURY UNIVERSITY



1. What are the minimum entry requirements?

A degree from a UK Higher Education Institution or degree of an equivalent standard from an institution outwith the UK. **NB. This is the minimum with which an applicant can apply. It may be that only applicants with a good Honours degree (2.2 or above) will be considered depending on how many places we have available.**

The degree should be in a subject relevant to the one to be taught and the minimum requirement is 80 credits, 40 of which must be at Level 8 or above in the relevant subject.*

SQA Higher Grade pass at levels A, B, C in English. SQA National 5 pass at levels A, B, C in Mathematics. Appropriate equivalent qualifications will be considered for entry to the PGDE (see Section 2).

Ideally candidates should have a degree in the subject to be taught, but those with a minimum of 80 credits at the appropriate level, in the relevant subject, contained within their degree may be considered. Those with a degree completely unrelated to the PGDE Secondary subject that they wish to study are not encouraged to apply, as they will not be considered under any circumstances.

*For those wishing to teach Secondary English it is necessary to have (within the minimum 80 credits) 40 credits in literature (this could include English translation) or Scottish literature and a maximum of 20 credit points in Media Studies.

1. What are the minimum entry requirements? Cont'd

Postgraduate qualifications in the relevant subject may be considered for entry onto the PGDE and can also be utilised where there is a shortfall of credits. A **maximum** of 30 credits from a source other than the undergraduate degree can be considered to 'top up' an existing undergraduate degree in this manner.

For Art & Design, Physical Education, Spanish, French and German please see specific entry requirements listed at the end of this document.



2. English and Maths requirements and equivalent qualifications

All candidates are required to have SQA Higher English at grade C or above, or qualifications that are considered the equivalent. These are:

- National Units – Communication 4 (SCQF level 6) and Literature 1 (SCQF level 6). These units are available at many further education colleges throughout Scotland;
- Higher ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) at grade C or above
- GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature – passes at C or above (England, Wales and Northern Ireland). Both qualifications must be held.
- Irish Leaving Certificate Higher English at grade H4 or above
- Higher Education Access Course - English (SCQF 6).
- Equivalent qualifications in other countries.

Certain English high school grades contained within qualifications from various territories throughout the world (such as International Baccalaureate, High School Diplomas from the US, German Abitur) can also meet the English entry requirements. However, this is entirely dependent on the level of study and grades involved, and these will always be checked on an individual basis. Please contact us for more information if you hold such a qualification.



2. English and Maths requirements and equivalent qualifications Cont'd

Acceptable Maths courses are:

- National 5 Mathematics at grade C or above;
- Standard Grade award in Mathematics at grade 1 or 2;
- National Qualifications in Mathematics at Intermediate level 2 – C or above;
- Irish Leaving Certificate Ordinary Maths at grade 03 or above;
- GCSE Mathematics grade C and above;
- Higher Education Access course – Mathematics (SCQF 5)
- Open University module MU123 – Discovering Mathematics – Pass.
- Equivalent qualifications in other countries

The minimum entry requirements for English and Maths are set by the Scottish Government and are non negotiable; anyone without the requisite qualification(s) must rectify this to be qualified for PGDE Secondary. Candidates can apply without meeting the requirements and be made an offer conditional upon them gaining the required qualification(s) prior to the PGDE Secondary course commencement date. Prospective candidates who wish to apply late in the admissions cycle without meeting the English and/or Maths entry requirements will most likely find it difficult to find a suitable course which will finish before the PGDE course begins.



3. How do I apply to the University?

Candidates can only apply for PGDE Secondary courses via UCAS, and not directly to institutions:

<http://www.ucas.com>

Due to the minimum entry requirements it is vital that candidates upload detailed information about their degree (e.g. a degree transcript) as well as their Maths / English Qualifications (e.g. SQA certificate) during the application process. Failing to provide this information could delay your application.

4. When should I apply?

Candidates can apply for PGDE Secondary courses from the beginning of the admissions cycle (normally mid-September) until the individual courses are closed by selectors. The UCAS equal consideration deadline is 15th January and so we would strongly advise that where possible you apply by this date to ensure that your application is guaranteed to be considered. If you apply after this date there is no guarantee that your application will be considered; this will depend on the individual competition level of the subject you are applying to. Each PGDE Secondary subject is given a target figure by the Scottish Government and courses will close to new applications when the individual target is met.



5. When does the programme commence?

It runs from the middle of August each year until mid June, half of which is spent on placement in schools.

6. Personal statement & reference – what do you look for?

We consider all information contained within the UCAS application when making our admissions decisions. This includes your academic grades (predicted and achieved), personal statement and academic reference. We look for evidence in your personal statement and reference of commitment, motivation and suitability to your chosen subject and the teaching profession as a whole. In your personal statement give details of relevant work and secondary experience you have undertaken, your knowledge of the Curriculum for Excellence and your understanding of the role of a teacher. Also detail work/life balance e.g. sport, hobbies, work, voluntary activities. Details about skills relevant to studying the PGDE and teaching generally should be included and supported with examples e.g. time management is a relevant skill but you should avoid listing all the skills you have and instead support a few key skills with examples.

You may also wish to engage with the memorandum on entry requirements to gain further information on on experiences, interests and wider achievements and the skills, attributes and dispositions desirable in a teacher.

<http://www.gtcs.org.uk/web/FILES/about-gtcs/memorandum-on-entry-requirements-to-programmes-of-ite-in-scotland.pdf>



7. Will I be interviewed?

Following careful consideration of application forms and references, suitable candidates will be invited for interview, which is an important part of the selection process. Please note that not all candidates will be invited for interview. Please note if you submit a late application and are invited to interview it is likely that this interview day will include a smaller number of candidates and could be an individual interview.

Interviews are normally held on the Ayr campus and candidates should be prepared to travel to the campus to attend their interview. In exceptional circumstances a video interview may be arranged. Please note that due to the requirements of the interview an on-line interview is not always possible for some subjects e.g. Physical Education requires engagement with practical activities.

COVID-19: Colleagues and applicants will follow appropriate health guidance from the Scottish Government when arranging interviews.



8. What kind of work experience do I need?

Selectors look for candidates who have relevant experience of working in formal or informal settings with children and young people. The following are considered good examples of relevant experience:

- Work experience or observation in a secondary school;
- Work experience with youth groups and after school clubs;
- Work experience which has involved training or coaching young people in a number of different types of setting from commercial organisations to sports groups.

The successful candidate will be able to draw on these experiences at interview to demonstrate their insights into the nature of teaching, learners and learning in whatever context they have worked.

9. Will I receive feedback on my application?

Due to the large number of applicants we receive, applicants who are not selected for interview will receive feedback via the UCAS decision track. We are happy to provide feedback to any unsuccessful applicant who has been interviewed. You should submit your request via email and we will aim to reply to you as soon as possible. Please note that we receive most feedback requests between January and March, so response at that time might be slightly delayed. As we deal with a very large volume of feedback requests, we do ask that you contact us by email admissions@uws.ac.uk. Please note that data protection legislation means that we may not be able to provide feedback to a third party unless you provide written consent.

10. Is funding available?

Applicants should apply to the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) www.saas.gov.uk/ after receiving an offer. Depending on your circumstances, you might be able to apply for additional funds to help with your study costs. English, Welsh and Northern Irish students can apply to Student Finance England, Wales or Northern Ireland as appropriate for fee, grant and loan support. Further information on funding can be viewed at: <http://www.uws.ac.uk/fundingandadvice>

For some secondary subject bursaries may be available to applicants who are considered career changers.

These are offered by Skills Development Scotland; more information can be found here:

<https://stembursaryscotland.co.uk>



11. Can I teach elsewhere if I gain my teaching qualification in Scotland?

If you gain your teaching qualification in Scotland, you will be eligible to teach in England, Wales and Northern and Southern Ireland. You should contact the General Teaching Council or Education and Local Library Board to register. The PGDE is a well recognised qualification throughout the world and you should contact the relevant education authority should you wish to teach in another country to check your eligibility.

12. Do I need to complete a Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) application?

Yes, if you are accepted to a teaching degree you must complete a PVG application prior to enrolment. An application will be sent from the University once you have accepted your offer. The fee for joining the scheme is £59. For information on the PVG scheme, please see their website at:

www.disclosurescotland.co.uk/pvg/pvg_index.html

13. How many days will I be on campus?

The on campus activities are delivered in a blended mode. This means that students will be expected to attend inputs on the Ayr Campus three days a week. Alongside this students will be expected to engage with online learning and independent study. When students are on placement there will be little need to be on campus but students will be required to be full time (5 days a week) in school for the duration of placement.



14. What modules will I study?

You will study three modules throughout the year. These are listed below and more information (including assessment information and expected study hours) can be found by clicking on the module descriptor links.

Subject Studies:

http://psmd.uws.ac.uk/ModuleDescriptors/ModuleDescriptorsTitlesA_Z/ModuleDescriptor.aspx?documentGroupCode=MD0002885

School Experience:

http://psmd.uws.ac.uk/ModuleDescriptors/ModuleDescriptorsTitlesA_Z/ModuleDescriptor.aspx?documentGroupCode=MD0002883

School and Professional Studies:

http://psmd.uws.ac.uk/ModuleDescriptors/ModuleDescriptorsTitlesA_Z/ModuleDescriptor.aspx?documentGroupCode=MD0002889



15. How many placements will I undertake?

Students will normally undertake three placements, normally totalling 18 weeks in school. Normally students will undertake their placements in two different schools. Students will be on placement full time but will have a reduced teaching commitment so as to accommodate time for development, mentoring and observation activities.

16. Will I be placed in a school close-by?

We work closely with the GTCS to place students close to their term-time address for placement but this is not guaranteed. Students could be expected to travel for a maximum of 90 minutes to their placement school.

17. How will I be assessed on placement?

For each of the placements both the school and your subject tutor will assess your teaching.



18. Who will be my tutor?

The Programme Leader for PGDE Secondary Programme is Elaine Wotherspoon.

Subject tutors are listed below:

Art & Design	Diarmuid McAuliffe
Biology with Science	Julie McLaughlin
Chemistry with Science	Julie McLaughlin
English	Louise Barrett
French, German Spanish	Sarah Wylie
Mathematics	Carol Webster
Physical Education	Steven McLean
Physics with Science	Julie McLaughlin

19. What are the chances of getting a job at the end of the probationary year?

Job prospects vary depending on the secondary subject you teach and the area you wish to teach in.

20. What are the differences if I choose to dual qualify in two subjects?

You will be required to attend Subject Studies classes in both subjects. This module will be assessed by one assignment in which you will focus on your first subject. You will gain experience of teaching both subjects on placement. You will be assessed formally in your second subject on teaching placement two and in your first subject on teaching placement three. If your subjects are considered cognate by the GTCS, e.g. Biology and Chemistry or Physics and Mathematics, you will be able to teach both during your probationary period, gaining full registration in both subjects at the end of a successful year.

Specific requirements for PGDE Art and Design

To be qualified for PGDE Art and Design, candidates must have a degree that contains at least 80 credits in Art and Design. Applicants must have coverage of both Fine (or contemporary) Art and Design within the 80 SQCF credits (20 credits may come from Digital Art/Design or Photography).

However, entry to the course is competitive and in almost all cases successful applicants will have full honours degrees in an Art and Design related discipline - it is essential that the degree contain study of substantial **studio-based** practical experience. Applicants who are invited to interview will be expected to bring a portfolio of work to the interview. More details on the preparation required for Art interviews can be found on our website.

Ideally, candidates should demonstrate the following throughout their application:

- Experience of meaningful involvement with adolescents
- Engagement with contemporary schools and teachers e.g. through voluntary or paid activity in school, periods of observation of learning and teaching, discussion with serving practitioners, etc.;
- Evidence of an informed interest in current educational issues & developments;
- Evidence of excellent oral, written, interpersonal skills and visual communication
- Evidence of sustained relevant experience in other aspects of the applicant's life;
- Evidence of continued commitment to art and design practice beyond art school;
- Successful applicants will therefore be expected to have subject expertise and enthusiasm, but also be able to provide evidence of wanting to work with adolescent learners and of having given due consideration to a career in secondary education.



Specific requirements for PGDE Spanish, French and German

Where possible, applicants should offer more than one language.

(i) Entry requirements for PGDE programmes for the first language offered.

For the first foreign language offered, applicants must:

- Have a degree with at least 80 SCQF credit points in the language they want to teach;
- Have lived for **six** months in a country where the language is spoken **before starting the programme**; and
- Prove to the university they apply to that they are competent in speaking the relevant language.

The applicant's academic study must include an element which will allow them to contribute to the wider aspects of programmes of study in schools, such as literature, cultural studies, area studies or languages in work.

While living abroad the applicant must have fully taken part in the language and culture of the relevant country. Applicants must normally live in the relevant country in blocks of at least three months.

Note: Residence requirements must be met before starting the programme and universities must ensure that this is the case before accepting applicants onto programmes.



Specific requirements for PGDE Spanish, French and German Cont'd

(ii) Entry requirements for PGDE programmes for second languages Applicants must fully meet the requirements for their first foreign language. They must also:

- Have a degree with at least 80 SCQF credit points in the second language they want to teach;
- Have lived for at least **three** months in a country where the language is spoken **before starting the programme**; and
- Prove to the university they apply to that they are competent in speaking the relevant language.

The applicant's academic study must include an element which will allow them to contribute to the wider aspects of programmes of study in schools, such as literature, cultural studies, area studies or languages in work.

While living abroad the applicant must have fully taken part in the language and culture of the relevant country. The period of three months must either be consecutive or in blocks of at least four weeks. The GTCS will answer any questions about registration and residency requirements for second languages.

Note: Residence requirements must be met before starting the programme and universities must ensure that this is the case before accepting applicants onto programmes.



Specific requirements for PGDE Spanish, French and German Cont'd

(iii) Native speakers of a modern foreign language:

Native speakers of a modern foreign language who have finished a degree in their own language which meets the requirements in paragraph 1 may train to teach their native language.

Students who are native speakers of a modern foreign language and have a degree in a language other than their native tongue which meets the requirements in paragraph 1 may train to teach that language plus their native tongue. For example, a French student with a degree in German can train to teach German and French.

Specific requirements for PGDE Physical Education

Applicants would normally be expected to have an undergraduate degree with 80 SCQF credit points coming from subjects in the following list:

- subjects related to physical education and involving a great deal of practical performance, such as sport, dance or outdoor pursuits
- subjects involving analysis of the aspects of physical education – such subjects include movement analysis, choreography, sports coaching, biomechanics, sports science, exercise physiology, sports psychology, health and fitness, studies in sports or dance or outdoor education, sports development or additional support needs in movement education.

Applicants will need to show that they are competent in practical skills. The university may set practical tests so that applicants can prove their ability. Applicants should also provide evidence of their personal involvement in relevant activities through:

- regularly taking part in appropriate physical activities
- having experience of teaching, coaching, instruction or leadership
- achieving national governing body awards or the equivalent or
- experience of training and performing at a high level.



If you have any further queries concerning the PGDE Education programmes, please contact;

Elaine Wotherspoon
Programme Leader

Emma McNeill
Divisional Co-ordinator

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Email: ask@uws.ac.uk

Further PGDE Secondary information, including course content and layout, can be found at our webpage: -
[http://www.uws.ac.uk/courses/school-of-education/postgraduate/professional-graduate-diploma-in-education-\(secondary\)](http://www.uws.ac.uk/courses/school-of-education/postgraduate/professional-graduate-diploma-in-education-(secondary))

Useful websites:

www.ucas.com

www.teachinginScotland.com

www.gtcs.org.uk

www.tes.co.uk

