

Applying for university undergraduate and initial teacher training courses

There are very specific ways to apply for different types of study in the UK, depending on the level you want to study. Applying for study is done through central organisations for the whole country, and this may be a system you are not familiar with. There are also specific timelines of when people can apply for courses at university.

Undergraduate study

If you would like to study full time for a Bachelor of Education (BEd), a Bachelor of arts (BA) or science (BSc) with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), or a general undergraduate degree in a particular subject (e.g. maths) there is a central organisation to apply to. This is called the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). Their website can be accessed at www.ucas.com. This is an online system which allows you to search for the course that you want, searching either by specific course name, subject area or location. You can only apply online, not by post. Each course at each university has a unique code (e.g. X400), and by clicking on the course you can find out more information. It is important to check the course you apply for has QTS attached to it. There will also be a link to the website for the university offering the course, where you can find further information. If you want to study part time, you can apply directly to universities and colleges; UCAS does not apply to part time courses. You can also search for part time courses through the website www.hotcourses.co.uk.

In order to apply for an undergraduate course, you need to meet the university entry requirements. UCAS has a system of tariff points, where completing different qualifications gives you a certain number of points (depending on the level and grade), and each course will have a minimum amount of tariff points to allow entry. To find these out, look up the course you want to do on the UCAS website, where you can find the entry requirements and how many tariff points you need. There is a list of accepted qualifications that give tariff points at:

<http://www.ucas.com/how-it-all-works/explore-your-options/entry-requirements/tariff-tables>

If you do not have the correct number of points, or if you are unable to access your certificates as proof of your former study, you will need to do further study to gain the amount of tariff points needed. One way of gaining these qualifications to meet entry requirements is through an Access to Higher Education course. These courses are normally one year full time during the day, and start in September each year. You can search for a course in your area through the Access to Higher Education website at <http://www.accesstohe.ac.uk/Pages/Default.aspx>

You can apply for undergraduate courses directly through:

www.ucas.com

People often apply for more than one course, or similar courses at more than one university. In some areas places may be limited, so this increases your chances of securing a confirmed place. The application form consists of your personal details (including education and employment), a personal statement you write saying why the university should take you, and a reference from someone who knows you and can say you would be a good candidate.

Your reference is normally someone who knows you academically, like a course tutor, or an ESOL teacher if you haven't taken another course in the UK. If this isn't possible, it should be a professional person who knows you very well. You do not have to do the application all in one go, you can save it and return back to it at a later date.

You will also need to pay a fee for submitting an application. The details of this cost are below:

- £23 – if you apply to more than one institution or for more than one course,
- £12 – if you apply to only one course at one university.

After you submit your application, there may be a bit of a wait before you receive a reply. During this time, you can track what is happening with your application online. If the university would like to offer you a place, you will receive an email or letter from UCAS, rather than the university directly. However, if the university wants you to come in for an interview, before offering a place (this sometimes happens), they will contact you directly. You must reply to an offer by a certain deadline, which is outlined below along with other key dates to be aware of when applying for a course. If you do not receive a place by applying through UCAS, there is still another chance, through a process called clearing. During this time, you can apply directly to universities, who advertise courses that still have places available. If you are successful, either through a UCAS application, or through clearing, your course will start in autumn time, normally late September / early October.

Key Dates:

| Date | Description |
|------------------|---|
| Early September | The application process begins for study the following year |
| 15 January | Closing date for applications (some art and design are later) |
| February onwards | Institutions begin offering places |
| 15 Jan – 30 June | Applications in this time will only be looked at if the institution still has vacancies |
| Mid July | Clearing begins for unfilled places |
| Late September | Clearing applications close |
| Early October | Courses start |

Postgraduate study applying for PGCE and SCITT courses

Before you apply

Before you begin applying for a Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE), there are a set of academic and non-academic requirements you need to have to be considered.

Academic requirements:

- UK undergraduate bachelors (honours) or overseas equivalent degree. If you want to teach in secondary, your degree must be directly relevant to the subject you hope to teach, e.g. a French degree if you wish to teach French, but there is some flexibility with shortage subjects like maths, where some providers may take past experience and A levels. For other subjects, like religious studies, a more general degree may be enough. If you wish to teach primary, some providers prefer you have a degree in a National Curriculum subject (English, Maths or Science). You can check this with the individual provider, as each is different. Note: to be eligible for a training bursary (for some shortage subjects) your degree must also be classed as a 2:2 or equivalent.
- GCSE English and Maths (as well as Science if you want to teach Primary) with grades A*- C or equivalent. You can get your overseas high school leaving certificate looked at by UK NARIC if you aren't sure you have these qualifications.
Note: Literacy and Numeracy Level 2 is not considered equivalent. GCSE English equivalent qualifications from another country are normally accepted only

when the language of study in the country is also English. Check with the Initial Teacher Training provider you want to study with – each one has a different view of which qualifications it will take and some might even provide their own equivalency tests.

- You must also have passed the professional skills test in numeracy and literacy prior to the start of the course.

Non-Academic requirements:

- **UK classroom experience:** it is necessary to have some experience in a UK mainstream school where you have the opportunity to observe a qualified teacher for the age group (and subject for secondary) that you intend to train to teach. If possible, it is best to observe lessons across several different year groups and key stages and it is recommended that you keep a record of what you have observed. The length of experience required varies from a few days to 15 days and depends on the course provider and the subject and age group you apply for.
- **Fitness to teach:** You must be medically fit to take a teacher training course, and when you accept a course the provider will send you a questionnaire to fill in, or request that your doctor fills in a form or provides evidence of a recent medical check.
NOTE: many disabled people are medically fit to teach, and by law employers make adjustments so disabled people can work effectively.
- **Declaration of Criminal Convictions:** Before you start a course you have to make the training provider aware of any past criminal convictions you might have. The provider will perform a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check for you. You will already be familiar with this process from volunteering in a school.

How do I apply?

Once you have met the requirements above, you apply for a PGCE or School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) through the Graduate Teacher Training Registry (GTTR).

All applications are made online through www.gttr.ac.uk

When you apply, they give you a unique application number. You use this number to track your application through the website. If you call one of your choices of provider, they will also ask for this number.

It costs £19 in total to make your application to your chosen providers, and you do this online with a debit or credit card.

When should I apply?

You should apply as early as possible for a PGCE the following year. The process opens mid-October each year, and the earlier you apply, the more chance you have to get a place.

For both primary and secondary courses it is highly recommended that you complete the form and send the reference by 01 December, as this ensures your application will be considered. After this date there is no guarantee that the providers you chose will have places left so they can chose not to look at your application.

For both primary and secondary PGCE you can apply until 30 June for entry that year. However, many courses can become full by January, and the GTTR processes applications in the order it receives them. The earlier you send your application, the earlier the provider will look at it. They process them when they receive them, rather than collect them all by the deadline then look at them together. It is strongly advised to complete your secondary application by the 30th November for courses starting the following September.

Completing the application form

All of the application process for a PGCE or SCITT is done online. You can save your application half way through, and then come back to it, if you cannot do the application all at once. The points below show you the process step by step:

- From the homepage www.gttr.ac.uk you can click the option “apply” on the left.
- Firstly, you register your details with the GTTR, including creating a password for yourself. Make a note of this password, as you will need it again.
- Once you register your details, you come to an instruction page called “welcome page”.
- At this stage write down your Personal ID number. This is the number you use to identify yourself if you need to call the GTTR or the providers you choose.
- To fill in each section, use the bar that appears on the left hand side of the page. You can move around between sections while you complete the application. Remember to save your work using the button at the bottom before you exit the website. When you fully complete a section tick the box at the bottom of the page which says “section complete”, then click “save”.

The form has five separate sections, which must all be completed. Throughout the

form you can click on the “?” next to each question to get help on that question. For questions which have a button “see list” next to them click on “see list” once, then click on your choice within the list that appears. The field on the application form will then automatically be filled in for you.

Personal Details

This section asks you for your address and other specific details. The further details section contains two questions you should take care in answering:

- Your fees will be paid by: In this section, you should select 02 UK, Chi, IoM or EU student finance services. This means you will be classed as a home student. If you put “01 Private Finance”, you will be expected to pay overseas student fees, which are very expensive. You can select your Local Authority where you live from the box that appears when you click on “see list” next to the question called “student support arrangements”.
- Residential Category: in this category it is important to select the category which is closest to your status in the UK. You can choose either Refugee, if you have refugee status, or Humanitarian Protection or similar, if you have HP, ILR, or DL. If you had refugee status, but have since become a British Citizen, select UK citizen or EU national.
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check: it is mandatory to have a (DBS) check completed before you start your course, so you should chose “yes” for this question.

Choices

You can apply for up to four different PGCE courses for secondary, and two for Primary. The course subject and age group should be consistent for all the applications; for example, four different PGCE Secondary French courses, rather than a mix of Primary and Secondary.

<http://www.gtr.ac.uk/students/coursesearch>

Use this part of the GTR website to find where you want to apply.

You can search by area, by course or by vacancies. It is a good idea to read all the individual requirements for the course before applying. For example, if you have IELTS you should not apply to universities which insist you have GCSE English (or an overseas equivalent). If you have any questions, call them before you make the application.

If you can, attend an open day at the provider, where you can ask questions and talk to tutors. On the application, for each course you wish to apply for, click on

“add choice”. When you put in the course codes, put in the course you most want to do first, then your second choice below, and fill in up to four choices (two choices for primary).

Education

In this section you should have your NARIC equivalency in front of you, so you can write down exactly what your qualifications are equal to in the UK. When putting down your degree equivalence, your UK NARIC equivalency will not say what class of degree it is equal to, however it is very important to fill in this section of the form with the class you were awarded for the original degree (before it was looked at by NARIC) or if your degree does not state a class then enter ‘Pass’ into this field. **If you do not fill in this section your application may automatically be rejected.**

You will need to add your GCSE level qualifications: if you have overseas equivalents from outside Europe chose “other (International Non EU Qualifications)” and put the name of your qualification (e.g. O level) under “exam”.

The section on other relevant qualifications is where you should include if you have the equivalent to a Masters Degree, a PhD or TEFL training. Again, put down the qualification as it appears on your NARIC equivalency.

Personal Statement and Work Experience

The personal statement is the most important part of the application, so you need to make full use of the space you have. You have 47 lines to fill, which is 1.5 to 2 pages of a Word document single spaced. It is a good idea to write your statement in Word, check for spelling and grammar, then cut and paste it into the application form. The statement should be detailed and talk about your work experience, but also your values, and what type of teacher you are. After the personal statement there is a section on work experience with 20 lines (600 characters).

NOTE: Approximately one to two weeks work experience or observation in a UK school is normally the minimum needed to be accepted on a course. If you have planned experience coming up after you submit the application, write this down too. The experience needs to be with the same subject and age range you want to teach.

The Department for Education has a very good tool that can help you focus on your experiences and why you want to teach, in doing so it will give you a better application.

<http://www.education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching/apply-for-teacher->

[training.aspx?source=taskbar](http://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/cv/pgcestatements.htm)

References

You will be asked to include references from two different people as part of the application. Normally, this is one academic reference from a degree course or other studying, and one from a previous employer in the UK education sector. It is ideal to have this from a school where you did paid or voluntary experience.

Give as many contact details as you can for each reference (email, address, phone and fax), and make sure to ask them first if they are willing to provide a reference for you. Email is preferable, as this may have a quicker response. Schools and employers in the UK are used to giving references, so don't be afraid to ask. If you can, let them know the GTTR will contact them. The person you put as principal referee (the first person they contact) can view all the information on your application to help them write your reference.

Once you have completed all sections on your form, click on "view all" to check that all the information is correct. Then click on "check form". You will then need to log back in to the form, go to the reference section and click on the link to email your references. Only when you do this will your references be requested.

NOTE: your application is incomplete without returned references from the people you selected to give your reference. You cannot send your application in without them. If they do not reply to the GTTR, your application may be rejected. It is a very good idea to contact them as soon as possible, so they have enough time to complete the reference, and your application does not miss the deadline. It can also be good to send them a gentle reminder a couple of weeks before the deadline. Your online application will show you when they have completed the reference for you. Check the status of your application frequently by logging in to the GTTR. When the references are returned you can then pay the application. At that point your application will be sent to your first provider.

If at any point during the application process you have questions or need help, ring the GTTR's customer service line on 0871 468 0469.

<http://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/cv/pgcestatements.htm>

If you click the above link, it will take you to an example of a personal statement from the University of Kent. If you google "PGCE statement" you will also find many more examples. Don't ever copy anything from other statements though, it is best to write from your experience and how you really feel about teaching.

Key dates

| Date | Description |
|-----------------------|--|
| Mid-October | The application process begins for study the following year |
| 01 December | First deadline for primary applications – you can still apply after this date, but the providers are often full after this |
| 30 June | Deadline for applications to GTTR |
| 01 July | Clearing begins for unfilled places (if you apply after this date, you will only go into clearing) |
| Early / Mid-September | PGCE courses start |

Applying for School Direct, Teach First and Assessment Only (AO) routes to QTS

School Direct

School Direct is a new school-led path to gaining qualified teacher status that includes some of the country's best primary and secondary schools. You could be selected by them with a job in mind for you.

Financial support is available throughout your training. School Direct programmes may also include a postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) in addition to the award of QTS with successful completion of the programme.

There are two separate School Direct training options:

- School Direct Training Programme is for high-quality graduates who want to be part of a school team from the beginning of their training. You may be eligible for a bursary of up to £20,000 to support you while you train.
- School Direct Training Programme (salaried) is an employment-based route for high quality experienced graduates with at least three years' work experience. You will earn a salary while you train.

How do I apply?

You can register and apply through the school direct application system at <https://education.gov.uk/schooldirectapplications/ui/landing>. This contains details

of all lead schools offering school direct. You can only search and apply to a 'lead school', which is the school with responsibility for the school direct places in their partnership. You will need to visit the lead school's website to find out more details on the names and types of schools in the wider partnership, and where you could potentially undertake your training.

Each school will indicate its application deadlines, however it is expected that places, particularly salaried places, will be in high demand. You should therefore complete and submit your application as soon as possible. You will need to contact lead schools directly for their application deadlines and which places may still be available for you to apply to.

In order to apply you must meet the academic requirements, as detailed above. If you are applying for a place on the School Direct Training Programme (salaried), you will be required to detail your employment history, showing that you have three years work experience.

You will also be asked details for your contact information, qualifications and educational history, including details of the institutions at which qualifications were gained as well as referees, including contact information.

You will be asked to submit a personal statement, which is your opportunity to explain why the school should offer you a place on the programme. You can use the guidance above to help you with this. Your statement for School Direct must be no longer than 900 words. It is recommended that you research your chosen school thoroughly before you begin writing your personal statement. It is a good idea to read your chosen school's official literature as well as visit its website.

Registration and applications are completely free. The application system allows you to save and manage your draft applications, and stores copies of your submitted applications for your reference. You are only allowed to submit three individual applications at any one time for School Direct places. If unsuccessful you will be able to apply to further schools (and only if you have not accepted a postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) place through the Graduate Teacher Training Registry (GTTR) or Teach First.

On your School Direct application form you will be asked whether you have made an application to the GTTR for a place, and if so, which teacher training provider you have applied to and your chosen subject.

Teach First

Teach First is an educational charity which offers two-year Leadership Development Programmes for those interested in an employment route into teaching. If successful, as a trainee, you would join Teach First and their university

partners for six weeks of intensive training before teaching in a school in a low-income community for two years, where you would achieve a postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE), a full time salary and real responsibility in the classroom from the your first day. You would also be supported with professional development, coaching and opportunities to network with supporters from all industry sectors.

Teach First places participants in England and Wales. You can visit the website to see the regions here graduates.teachfirst.org.uk/where-we-workindex.html. In order to apply candidates must have:

- A 2:1 degree or above,
- have a degree or A levels that satisfy the teaching subject requirements,
- a grade C (or equivalent) in maths and English (grade c in one science GCSE also required for primary teaching eligibility),
- flexibility to work anywhere where the programme is offered,
- and a commitment for the duration of the two year Leadership programme.

In addition candidate must demonstrate subject knowledge and the following competences: humility, respect and empathy; interaction, knowledge, leadership, planning and organising, problem solving, resilience and self-evaluation.

If successful, in your first year you would be paid a basic salary as an unqualified teacher; sometimes the school may pay more depending on your responsibilities, experience and location. In the second year participants are newly qualified teachers (NQT's) and are paid according to the qualified teacher scale.

Accommodation, transport and food expenses are provided over the Summer Institute (the residential training at the start of the programme before entering the classroom). Discretionary financial services are available to anyone requiring support during this period.

How do I apply?

To apply applicants must register and apply online at graduates.teachfirst.org.uk. Click on 'register here' under 'Apply now' where it will say whether applications are open for the following year's Leadership Development Programme.

You will need to complete the registration pages, a password will then be sent to your email address to enable you to access your application form. Applicants are required to complete and submit their application within 12 weeks of receiving the

password.

Assessment Only (AO)

If you are an experienced teacher with a degree, you can apply for a place on the Assessment Only (AO) route to qualified teacher status.

The AO route allows you to demonstrate that you already meet all of the standards for QTS, with out the need for further training.

How do I apply?

You will need to present detailed evidence to show this and your teaching will be assessed in a school by an accredited and approved provider. These are listed here www.education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching/teacher-training-options/experienced-teachers/assessment-only/providers.

You will also need to take the professional skills tests in literacy and numeracy before you can be accepted onto this route. In order to apply you can apply directly to an approved provider (via the previous link).

Good luck with your application!

