



**QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST**

SCHOOL OF
SOCIAL SCIENCES,
EDUCATION AND
SOCIAL WORK

**Initial Teacher Education
Postgraduate Certificate in Education
Application Guide (2024/25 Entry)**

Closing date: 1 November 2023

Contents

Welcome.....	2
Entry Requirements	3
Qualifications.....	3
English Language Requirement.....	3
General Information	4
Fees and Funding	4
Equal Opportunities	4
Fitness to Practice	4
Convictions.....	4
Certificate of Good Conduct	5
Additional Costs	5
Deferred Entry	5
Appeals and Complaints.....	5
Data Control	5
Completing Your Application	6
Undergraduate Academic Details	6
Postgraduate Academic Details.....	6
The Supplementary Application Form.....	6
Shortlisting and Interview.....	8
Interviews.....	8
Irish Medium Education (IME)	9
Late Applications	9
Document Checklist	10
Contact Details.....	10

Thank you for your interest in the Initial Teacher Education (PGCE) programme at Queen's University Belfast. We invite you to read the following information carefully before completing your online application and we hope that you find it helpful. Please also see the checklist at the end of this guide.

Welcome

We receive many high-quality applications to the programme each year – around 400 in total. We welcome all applications that meet our entry criteria.

This is a 36-week, full-time course leading to a professional qualification in Initial Teacher Education accredited by the [General Teaching Council \(Northern Ireland\) \(GTCNI\)](#) as conferring Eligibility to Teach (Qualified Teacher Status) in all publicly funded schools across the United Kingdom. Registration with [Teaching Council \(Ireland\)](#) is on an individual basis.

The PGCE course is based in the School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work at Queen's University Belfast and placements are undertaken in a variety of schools throughout Northern Ireland.

There are seven subject pathways:

- [English](#)
- [Information Technology/Computing](#)
- [Mathematics](#)
- [Modern Languages](#)
- [Religious Education](#)
- [Science](#)
- [Social Science](#)

Irish Medium Education (IME)

Additional places are reserved to prepare those who are interested in teaching their subject through the medium of Irish in Irish-medium schools. The [Certificate in Bilingual Education](#) is awarded in conjunction with [St Mary's University College](#).

Details on the content and structure of the PGCE are summarised in the programme specification, available at the Queen's University [Programme Specification web page](#).

We are happy to respond to any requests as to the suitability of your existing or planned qualifications; courses of study; or relevant experience prior to the submission of your application. Please refer to the [Contact Details section](#) below.

We look forward to receiving your application.

Entry Requirements

Please refer to the Document Checklist on page 9 before submitting your application.

Qualifications

Each PGCE subject has its own set of entrance requirements.

All applicants must have the following **at the time of application**:

GCSE Mathematics grade C/4, and GCSE English Language grade C/4 or equivalent qualification of similar breadth and depth acceptable to the University*. Please note Essential Skills Level 2 qualifications are not regarded as equivalent for entry to this professional course as the professional accrediting authority, the GTCNI, does not recognise them as equivalent.

*These are the qualifications required for eligibility to register with the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI) to seek employment as a teacher in a grant-aided school in Northern Ireland. If you are unsure about the equivalency of your Level 2 qualification you should contact the GTCNI Registration Team (registration@gtcni.org.uk).

For specific course entry requirements, please see the relevant entry on the online Course Finder:

- [English](#)
- [IT/Computing](#)
- [Mathematics](#)
- [Modern Languages](#)
- [Religious Education](#)
- [Science](#)
- [Social Science](#)

We reserve the right to enhance the shortlisting criteria if the course is over-subscribed.

Shortlisted applicants will be interviewed.

English Language Requirement

International students wishing to apply to Queen's University Belfast (and for whom English is not their first language), must demonstrate their proficiency in English. Non-EEA nationals must also satisfy UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) immigration requirements for English language for visa purposes. Evidence of an IELTS score of 6.5 (taken within the last two years), with not less than 5.5 in any component, or an equivalent qualification acceptable to the University is required.

This is in addition to the entrance requirement which requires that you have the equivalent of a GCSE English Language at Grade C.

For more information on English Language requirements for EEA and non-EEA nationals see: www.qub.ac.uk/EnglishLanguageReqs.

General Information

Fees and Funding

Unfortunately, university funding is not available, however successful applicants can apply for finance from relevant organisations. Before applying, you should check the [types of student finance](#) available and check if you [qualify for student finance](#). If you received funding for your undergraduate degree, you may be entitled to further financial support because the PGCE is a professional qualification.

The tuition fees listed in Table 1 are for the academic year **2023-24**. Tuition fees will be subject to an annual inflationary increase.

Table 1: PGCE fees 2023-24

Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland	England, Scotland or Wales (GB Students)	International and other EU countries
£4,710	£9,250	£18,800

Further information, including tuition fee payment options, payment schedule and university contacts is available on the [Undergraduate Tuition Fees webpage](#).

Equal Opportunities

The University's Equality and Diversity Policy is available to download as a [PDF](#) (170KB). Every effort will be made to make reasonable adjustments for those successful applicants who have a disability which may impact on their studies.

Fitness to Practise

It is a requirement of the course that students are 'fit to study' in a professional environment. We recommend that you familiarise yourself with the University's '[Fitness to Practise Procedure](#)'. Students who are not 'fit to practise' cannot take part in the practice elements of the course.

All students must complete a health assessment form prior to entry to the course. It is expected that students respond fully and honestly to all questions. These forms are checked by the University's Occupational Health (OH) and any successful applicant needing follow-up is contacted by OH and asked to attend a consultation.

Convictions

As the PGCE is covered by the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults legislation and the Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Groups legislation you must tell us about any items on a criminal record, including spent sentences and cautions (including verbal cautions), bind-over orders, Anti-Social Behaviour Orders and prosecutions pending. An enhanced police check will be carried out by Access NI on successful applicants.

If you acquire a criminal record/relevant item on a criminal record after you have applied, you must inform the Head of Admissions and Access Service in writing without delay.

Certificate of Good Conduct

If you were born outside the UK/Ireland or have lived outside the UK/Ireland for more than one calendar year, we will also require you to provide us with a Certificate of Good Conduct from any country that you have lived in for more than one calendar year. This is to establish if while living there you have or have not accrued any criminal charges or convictions. **This is in addition to undertaking the Access NI check.**

Advice on how to obtain a Certificate of Good Conduct may be found on the link below:

[Criminal records checks for overseas applicants - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

It is advisable that you arrange for Certificates of Good Conduct to be issued prior to leaving the country you currently reside in.

Additional Costs

Access NI: you must undergo an Enhanced Disclosure Check with Access NI which costs £33.

Placements: you have two mandatory post-primary placements (of eleven and twelve weeks). You are responsible for funding any travel (up to 30 miles from your address), accommodation and subsistence. These costs vary depending on the location of the placement provider. You are expected to dress professionally and may incur added costs for clothing. Costs will be incurred for the creation of teaching materials whilst on placement, which may be partly absorbed by the placement school.

Deferred Entry

There is currently no discretion for deferred entry except under exceptional circumstances (e.g., illness). If you are offered a place and do not take it up, you will normally be expected to re-apply the following year.

Appeals and Complaints

The Postgraduate Admissions Policy is available on the University's [Postgraduate Admissions Policy webpage](#). The Appeals and Complaints Procedure can be found at Appendix 5.

Data Control

The personal information provided by applicants will be used for the following purposes:

- To enable your application for entry to be considered;
- To enable the University to create your student record, should you be accepted;
- To compile statistics for use by the University or for reporting to relevant Government agencies and departments e.g., the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), but no identification information is included.

Your personal information will be processed in compliance with the data protection principles established under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The University

administers its obligations under this legislation in accordance with its Data Protection Policy which is available from the Registrar's Office [Information Compliance Unit web page](#).

Completing Your Application

New applicants will need to register via the [Direct Application Portal](#) to create an application account. If you are already a Queen's student with an active Qsis account, you can log in using your student number and Qsis password. Visit the [How to Apply web page](#) for more information and guidance on how to make an application via the Application Portal.

Undergraduate Academic Details

You must upload copies of your GCSE and A-level (or equivalent) certificates along with a copy of your university transcript showing all modules with marks (and degree award certificate, if available).

Your degree transcript(s) must show all the modules making up your award, with your name and the university's name included. **For those currently completing their degree, e.g., in final year, the transcript must include all modules, not just the modules completed to date.**

Transcripts must be in English. If your transcript or part thereof is in another language, you must include an **authorised** translation with your application.

If you have completed your undergraduate degree, you should also include a copy of your degree parchment.

The certificates and transcripts should be combined in one single document for uploading to the application portal.

If your application is successful, you will have to supply original documentary evidence of your qualifications at registration and enrolment.

Postgraduate Academic Details

If relevant, please upload your postgraduate transcript (see above about including all modules) and your degree award certificate, if available.

These should be combined in one single document for uploading. You can supply information on up to three postgraduate courses (see course 1, 2 and 3 tabs)

The Supplementary Application Form

The Supplementary Application Form (SAF) is an important part of the application process.

Please read the Guidance Notes on page 1 of the SAF carefully, as the information you supply will be viewed by members of the interview panel and, if you are offered a place on the course, by placement schools. Placement schools use this information when making decisions on placements, so you should include as much relevant information as possible. Examples include: your reasons for entering the teaching profession; any teaching experience you may have; work with young people; any industrial, commercial, professional or other work experience; and current occupation or special interests.

You can refer to your SAF when completing your online application.

You have a maximum of 500 characters in certain sections. You can adjust the font size and drag the text box borders to accommodate your text, but we ask that you keep to the character count where stated.

SAF Notes:

- **Modern Languages** applicants: add your specific language(s): French/Irish/Spanish. Other languages may be accepted, as a minor or joint, to these main languages. Refer to the [Course Finder](#) for further details.
- **Science** applicants: specify which of the following you wish to be considered for: Biology with Science; Chemistry with Science; Physics with Science.

You may nominate more than one science subject, for example, Biology as first choice with Chemistry as second choice.

With your agreement, we may offer you a place for your second-choice subject. However, you must have completed at least 50% of your chosen subject in the content of your degree modules. This applies to both your first and second choice. For example, normally, a Biochemistry degree has 50% Biology content and 50% Chemistry content which means you can apply for Biology or Chemistry.

- **Social Science** applicants: specify which of the following you wish to be considered for: Health and Social Care, Politics or Sociology.

You may nominate more than one, but you must have completed at least 50% of one subject in the content of your degree modules.

Referee Details

The application portal asks for details of two referees but only one is needed for an application to the PGCE.

Please supply the email, name, address and telephone details for **one character/professional referee**. This must be someone who can supply a character/professional reference, including an insight into your suitability for the teaching profession.

Ideally this should be someone who managed/supervised you, preferably for work or volunteering in a school or closely related activity that involved working directly with young people in an educational context.

Please ensure this information is current and correct.

- Referee 1: you should provide a referee who can supply a character/professional reference and can comment on your suitability for the teaching profession.
- Referee 2: you should enter your own email address, name, address and telephone number in the other referee section.

People who have known you only personally (e.g., family friends) or in the distant past (e.g., teachers) are not usually suitable.

Please advise your referee before you apply that they will be contacted by email to request a reference. Referees will be contacted as needed and only for shortlisted candidates, i.e., those invited for interview.

If you do not supply details of a referee your application will **NOT** be processed.

Selection Process

Shortlisting and Interview

The deadline for 'on-time' applications is **1 November 2023**.

Incomplete applications will not be reviewed by the shortlisting panel. For example, applications which do not include full transcripts, including all modules (whether completed or in-progress), proof of GCSE/ A Level qualifications and a completed Supplementary Application Form or do not include details of one character/professional referee.

Applications are assessed to decide whether the application meets the normal entry requirements. Those which do not meet the entry requirements are processed as unsuccessful.

Following shortlisting, you will either receive a letter (to the email address supplied when applying) inviting you to interview OR notification via the application portal confirming that you have not been shortlisted (unsuccessful).

Interviews

As part of your application, you should include any dates when you are unavailable for interview on the Supplementary Application Form. We will endeavour to avoid these dates when arranging your interview. You should make every possible effort to attend your interview on the arranged day/time as it may not be possible to offer an alternative date. **We will offer you a maximum of two interview dates.**

If you are unwell and unable to attend for interview, please contact the PGCE Admissions team at once (email: sseswpqceadmissions@qub.ac.uk).

If you consider yourself to have, or to have had, a disability and require reasonable adjustments to be put in place for your interview, you should specify these arrangements when confirming your attendance.

The majority of PGCE interviews, for shortlisted applications received by the closing date, take place between December and mid-February. Interviews will normally be held in-person on the QUB campus, however we do make reasonable adjustments for applicants living outside UK/Ireland.

A member of the PGCE team will contact you, **via the correspondence email that you have listed on your application**, regarding the interview and supply information on the format and any preparation that you must make. You should therefore check this email account regularly as interview invitations will not appear in the Application Portal. Your application status will stay as 'Pending' until it is amended to reflect one of the three outcomes described below.

There are three interview outcomes: **successful**; **unsuccessful**; and **waiting list**.

Unsuccessful decisions are processed as soon as possible after all interviews in a particular subject area are complete.

Following interview, unsuccessful applicants can avail of a personalised feedback report. The selection panel is unable to facilitate written or protracted correspondence with unsuccessful applicants.

Requests for feedback should be made to sseswpqceadmissions@qub.ac.uk

We process successful and waiting list decisions in batches, subject by subject. There can be a delay with some applicants hearing before others.

If you are **successful**, there are several steps you must take, for example, accepting your offer in the application portal and completing the **Consent to Share** and **Health Declaration** forms. Further information will be provided in our **PGCE Offer Holder Guide**.

If you are placed on a **waiting list**, you may be offered a place if one of the original offers is turned down. **You may be offered a place right up to the start of August 2024 and should therefore check your email regularly and be prepared to respond quickly.** If you have not been offered a place by mid-August, you have been unsuccessful in gaining a place and are encouraged to reapply the following year.

Irish Medium Education (IME)

The IME strand is an optional, additional qualification for those who want to teach their subject through the medium of Irish. You should specify in the Supplementary Application Form that you wish to be considered for an IME place. If you accept your PGCE offer, we will pass your information to the IME Co-ordinator in St Mary's University College.

After shortlisting by St Mary's University College, you will be called for an interview consisting of an oral and written test. Successful applicants attend a residential in July/August, as well as additional classes held on occasional Saturdays and in June 2024.

IME students complete their first placement in an English Medium School and the second placement in an Irish Medium School. These are arranged for you by university/college staff.

As IME places are limited, priority is given to applicants who can offer a subject other than Irish language, with Mathematics and Science being the most sought after.

If your IME application is unsuccessful or you decide at any stage not to pursue the IME option, your PGCE offer is still secure as the IME certificate is an optional qualification.

Late Applications

We continue to accept late applications after the closing date however they will be considered **only if there are places available after all the on-time applications have been processed.**

Normally we do not process or communicate about late applications before May/June at the earliest and August at the latest.

Not all subjects have places available after the on-time applications have been processed but you are encouraged to apply. If you have not heard from us by mid-August, then we will

not have been able to consider your application and you should reapply for the following year. Please note that we may not be able to respond to your application if it is late.

Document Checklist

What documents do I need to provide with my application?

- evidence of having achieved GCSE Mathematics/English Language (Grade C or above). Essential Skills Level 2 qualifications are not regarded as equivalent for entry to this professional course as the professional accrediting authority, the GTCNI, does not recognise them as equivalent. If you have misplaced your original certificates, we will accept the following in lieu of the originals. Please note that original certificates will be required should your application be successful.
 - Exam Board statements of results
 - School statements of results - these must be date stamped and have a unique identifier such as your date of birth
- a copy of your degree transcript(s) showing all the modules making up your award, with your name and the university's name included. For those currently completing their degree, e.g., in final year, the transcript from your university must include complete and incomplete modules. Transcripts must be in English. If your transcript or part thereof is in another language, you must include an **authorised** translation with your application.
- Those applicants who completed a degree in a country where English was not the language of instruction, must supply a certified translation of degree certificates/ NARIC print-out.
- Modern Languages programme: native speakers of languages other than English or Irish must supply **evidence of a qualification in a curricular language in addition to their mother tongue**, at Level B2 or above on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.
- Mathematics programme: applicants with a degree (or completing a degree) with high numerical content e.g., Accounting/ Finance/certain Engineering degrees, must include evidence of Maths A level at Grade B or equivalent.
- IT/Computing programme: must include evidence of relevant A Level(s).
- Science programme: must include evidence of relevant A Level(s)
- All applicants must also complete and upload a Supplementary Application Form (as one document).
- Please note that we are unable to process incomplete applications and they will not be shortlisted.

Contact Details

For questions about the application portal, e.g., technical difficulties or if your offer isn't showing in the portal, please contact:

Postgraduate Admissions
Admissions and Access Service, Queen's University Belfast
pg.apply@qub.ac.uk

For enquiries about the course and suitability, please contact:
PGCE Admissions Team
sseswpgeadmissions@qub.ac.uk

We look forward to receiving your application.

Updated 08 September 2023