

Professional Graduate Diploma in **PRIMARY** Education (PGDE)

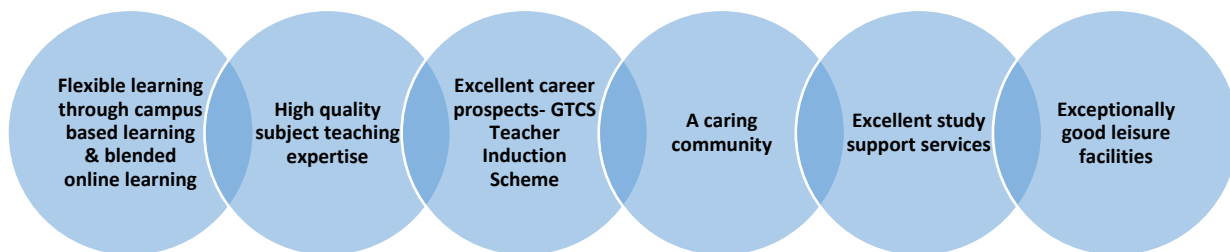
Information below is for entry in academic year 2025/2026 only

PGDE Primary Education- what makes us different?

The PGDE Primary full-time programme offers students a blended model of learning. During campus-based weeks, students will be on campus for up to five days, Monday through to Friday. Beyond this, students will engage with some timetabled weeks of online learning at a time and place of their choice. This structure is designed to offer individuals flexibility, whilst being committed to the requirements of the full-time PGDE programme. During school experience placements, students are required to be in school on a full-time basis, with the exception of **Placement+** days. On these 5 Placement+ days, (spread across placements) students work from home, where they meet online with their University Tutor, and tutorial group, in order to discuss the essential links between theory and practice. These LinC (Learning in Context) tutors will provide consistent relational support across the whole PGDE year.

The Careers and Employability Service at the University of Aberdeen has put together an online resource to support those interested in the PGDE. More information can be found [here](#).

University of Aberdeen, PGDE Primary, student experience



Who is the PGDE Primary programme for?

The University of Aberdeen has a proven ability in developing innovative approaches to Initial Teacher Education. The programme is aimed at graduates who have demonstrated an interest in teaching children through a range of experiences in both formal and informal settings. Our PGDE primary programme is accredited by the General Teaching Council for Scotland.

Students completing the PGDE programme will be awarded the Professional Graduate Diploma in Primary Education. You will have the opportunity to gain Masters' credits, transferable to further postgraduate study, during the programme in addition to the PGDE qualification.

Students enter the programme with a wide range of background experiences: some are recent graduates and have chosen teaching as their initial career; others are mature students who have decided to pursue a career change at a later stage.

This is a one-year, full-time campus-based learning programme. There is also a PGDE ONLINE programme for entry in 2025/2026, commencing January 2026. (See separate information leaflet)

PGDE Primary Education- programme outline

The table below shows the pattern of the courses for the full-time and distance learning routes.

Courses	Full-time Route
Education in Context Exploring the Curriculum	Semester 1 – Mid August to mid-December; through campus-based learning, blended online learning and school placement.
School Experience 1	10 weeks – usually in Upper Stages in Semester 1.
Informing Professional Practice/ Connecting the Curriculum	Semester 2 – Early January to beginning of June; through campus-based learning, blended online learning and school placement.
School Experience 2	9 weeks – usually in Early Stages in Semester 2.

The full-time PGDE programme starts on Monday 18 August 2025. Online registration will be available from approximately 14 August 2025.

School Experience placement dates are fixed each year, and each block must be undertaken on a full-time basis.

Assessment

To complete the programme, you will undertake four academic assessments enabling you to learn about educational theory and policy linked to school experience. Your teaching practice will also be assessed during school experience placements.

School Experience

School Experience placements are intimated to students by the University, who work in close partnership with the GTCS and Local Authorities. These will normally take place in two different schools (1 school for each placement).

The School of Education has formal partnerships with Local Authorities from Shetland to Fife and students on the PGDE Programme could be placed in any of these authorities for school experience.

Whilst it cannot be guaranteed that you will be placed in your home authority, your personal information will be used to inform the process. The national requirement is that no student will be required to travel more than 90 minutes, each way, to a school.

The School Experience placements give students the opportunity to contextualise and make links between the academic course inputs and their developing practice.

Entry Requirements

Successful applicants must, as a minimum, meet the requirements as set by the *Memorandum on Entry Requirements to Courses of Initial Teacher Education in Scotland* produced by the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS), which specifies general entrance requirements for all applicants and subject specific requirements for Secondary applicants. The current version of the Memorandum is dated September 2024 and can be viewed at: [GTCS_Memorandum on Entry Requirements to Programmes of ITE in Scotland 2024.pdf \(website-files.com\)](https://www.gtcs.org.uk/website-files.com).

Applicants to the PGDE should be familiar with using digital technology to recognise how it can be used to support learning and teaching. Applicants will also need to demonstrate appropriate interpersonal skills, attributes and dispositions which will allow them to effectively engage with young people, colleagues and school partners.

Please read, in full, the information provided in Selection Procedures regarding Qualifications, Personal Statement, and Reference.

For entry to the University of Aberdeen, **all PGDE Primary applicants** must have by the date term commences, the qualifications as detailed below under **1. Degree; 2. English** and **3. Maths**. Preference may be given to those who have, by the date of entry, an honours degree. In addition, preference **is most likely** to be given to those holding the English and Mathematics qualifications at the time of application.

Please also note the information provided under 4. and 5.

1. Degree

➤ An **undergraduate** degree validated by a University in the United Kingdom or an **undergraduate** degree of an equivalent standard from a higher education system outside the United Kingdom.

2. English at SCFQ Level 6

- SCE Higher grade award in English at Grade C or above or
- Higher ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) at Grade C pass or above, or
- HEI modules containing both Literature and Language elements such as:
- Cultures. The Open University SCQF level 7 Pass Grade 4 or above
- Discovering the arts and humanities. The Open University SCQF level 7 Pass Grade 4 or above
- University of Aberdeen Online English level 6 at Grade C3 or above
- A Level English, Grade D or above; or
- GCSE English Language **AND** English Literature, at Level 4 (previously Grade C) or above **IN BOTH**; or
- O Level English Language **AND** English Literature, Grade C or above **IN BOTH**; or
- Irish Leaving Certificate English at Higher Grade 4 or above or Higher Grade C2 or above; or
- National Course award (Higher Still) in English and Communication at Grade C or above; or
- National Units – Communication (NC) at Higher level and Literature 1 at Higher level ******; or
- Higher Education Access Course, or
- English of an equivalent academic standard from **outside** the UK.

**** Previously known as National Certificate Modules Communication 4 & Literature 1**

3. Mathematics at SCQF Level 5

- National 5 Mathematics at Grade C or above; or
- National 5 as Lifeskills Mathematics) at Grade C or above; or
- National 5 Applications of Mathematics at Grade C or above, or
- National 5 Matamataig ar Grade C or above, or
- National 5 Matamataig Fad-bheatha at Grade C or above, or
- National 5 Gniomhachas Matamataigs at Grade C or above, or
- Core Maths 4 Pass; or
- GCSE Mathematics at Level 4, or Grade C or above or Pass; or
- O Level Mathematics at Grade C or above or Pass; or
- Irish Leaving Certificate Mathematics at Ordinary Grade 3 or above or Ordinary Grade B or above; or
- International Baccalaureate Maths or Maths Studies at SL Grade 4 or above; or
- National Course Award Intermediate Level 2 Mathematics at Grade C or above; or
- HEI modules such as:
 - Discovering Mathematics. The Open University SCQF level 7 Pass Grade 4 or above.
 - Essential Mathematics 1. The Open University SCQF level 7 Pass Grade 4 or above.
 - Essential Mathematics 2. The Open University SCQF level 7 Pass Grade 4 or above.
 - University of Aberdeen Online Maths Level 5 at Grade C3 or above, or
- SCE Standard grade (credit level) award in Mathematics at Grade 2 or above; or
- SCE Ordinary grade award in Mathematics at Grade C or above; or
- Higher Education Access course, or
- Functional Skills Maths Level 2, or
- Mathematics of an equivalent academic standard from **outside** the UK.

The University will consult UK ENIC (The UK National Information Centre for global qualifications and skills), formerly known as UK NARIC, to determine whether qualifications achieved outside the UK meet the entry requirements detailed above.

4. Language/Science

In addressing the Scottish Government Languages Working Group report; **Language Learning in Scotland A 1+2 Approach** (2012) and the **STEM Education and Training Strategy**, the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) encourage universities to expect at least one SCQF Level 5 (e.g. National 5) qualification in either a modern language and / or a science subject.

5. Educational Background

Universities are required to ensure that an applicant's educational background (including the content of the undergraduate degree), provides a good basis for becoming a primary teacher. The University of Aberdeen will therefore look for evidence that an applicant has studied at least two of the following areas (as well as English and Mathematics) – science, social studies, expressive arts, religious and moral education, technology and modern foreign languages.

University of Aberdeen Online English and Mathematics

The University of Aberdeen has launched three online access courses, one in English at SCQF Level 6 and two in Mathematics, one at SCQF Level 6 and one at SCQF Level 5. All three are accepted by the University of Aberdeen for entry to teacher education. Students undertaking the online access course will need to complete the courses by the exit point in July 2025, with results available at the beginning of August 2025.

Full information on the Online provision, including costs, can be found at www.abdn.ac.uk/study/online/access-courses.php.

Previous Initial Teacher Education Study

The University of Aberdeen requires that applicants who have previously failed the PGDE Programme, or any programme of Initial Teacher Education at the University of Aberdeen, or elsewhere, or who have withdrawn from a programme whilst making unsatisfactory progress, must wait 3 years before applying for PGDE study at Aberdeen. If reapplying, candidates must provide evidence prior to interview that they have taken action to address previously unsatisfactory performance.

Career Prospects

Students who successfully complete the PGDE Programme may choose to opt into the GTCS Induction Scheme which provides a guaranteed one-year training place to every eligible student**. Students graduating with a Teaching Qualification from a Scottish Higher Education Institution are placed in a School by the General Teaching Council for Scotland in association with Local Authorities, on a full-time basis for one year. During this time, beginner teachers are required to meet the General Teaching Council for Scotland 'Standard for Full Registration'. Having attained the status of Full Registration, individuals are then eligible to apply for a permanent teaching post. Further information can be obtained from www.gtcs.org.uk.

Information on eligibility criteria and details about the Induction Scheme may be obtained from the Scottish Executive web site or their information leaflet Teacher Induction Scheme, details of both on the last page.

** Eligibility will normally be restricted to those students graduating from a Scottish Higher Education Institution with a Teaching Qualification whose training has been publicly funded. This includes students from other parts of the UK and other parts of the EU provided they have been assessed as eligible for Home Fees. This is regardless of how these fees are funded i.e. through SAAS, Local Education Authority, Self-Funded, Northern Ireland Education and Library Boards and so on.

Students who pay overseas or full fees are not in publicly funded places and are therefore not eligible to join the Teacher Induction Scheme. An Induction Year post will therefore not be allocated.

How to Apply to the Full-time Programme

For entry in August 2025, you apply online through UCAS (www.ucas.com). Telephone: 0371 4680468.

You must select the **UCAS Undergraduate route**. **Please do not apply via UCAS Teacher Training to any Scottish institution offering the one-year graduate teaching programme.**

Applicants to UCAS are required and expected to detail full academic history. This is essential for the reasons listed 1 to 5 on the previous page.

Applications to Aberdeen, received from UCAS, will be acknowledged by the University of Aberdeen by email.

The information declared to UCAS will be used by the University of Aberdeen to determine whether or not applicants meet or will meet the entry requirements. Applications with incomplete qualification information or applications that do not demonstrate ability to meet the entry requirements with regard to 1 to 5 on the previous page, will be rejected.

The official closing date for applications is 6pm on Wednesday 29 January 2025. This is known as the equal consideration date and guarantees that all applications received by this date will be considered. Applications received after this date will only be considered if vacancies are still advertised.

Please note that direct applications made directly to the University of Aberdeen will not be accepted.

Please note that applications for deferred entry to August 2026 will not be accepted.

Selection Procedures

Qualifications, Personal Statement, Reference

Applicants for the PGDE programme must first demonstrate that they will be able to meet the entry requirements (as previously outlined under points 1 to 5.). In the Personal Statement, if at all possible, the University of Aberdeen would expect to see reference to **some mainstream** Primary classroom experience, and that applicants **reflect** upon this as appropriate when they are applying for the Primary programme. This experience is important as it helps applicants learn more about the role they will be undertaking and ensure that teaching is a profession they would like to join. If an applicant is successful in securing an offer without relevant experience, they will be encouraged to try to gain this during 2025 before starting their course.

In addition, applicants should also explain in their Personal Statement, any wider work (voluntary or paid) with children as part of their applications. This could include holiday camps, kids' clubs, guides and scouts, visits to schools, etc. This information will help contextualise your previous experience and reasons for applying to teacher education programmes. Consideration is then given to the content of the application and the skills and experience relevant to teaching. References for applications to the PGDE should be Academic or Professional in nature (for example a University Tutor or Employer). Where applicants have gained recent experience in a mainstream school setting, it is recommended that a reference is given from School Staff. The referee should have had contact with the applicant within the past 5 years. **References will not be accepted from family, friends or acquaintances.**

Meeting the minimum entry requirements does not entitle an applicant to an interview or an offer of admission. The Personal Statement plays a critical role in determining suitability to be invited for interview.

Selected applicants are invited to attend an interview to gauge suitability for entry to initial teacher education.

Where a degree qualification is an undergraduate degree, preference may be given to those who have, by the date of entry, an honours degree. In addition, preference **is most likely** to be given to those holding the English and Mathematics qualifications at the time of application.

Interviews

Not all who apply will be invited for interview. As detailed above, selected applicants are invited to attend an interview to gauge suitability for entry to initial teacher education.

Following the interview, and based on the number of places available, offers are made via UCAS. Offers will either be unconditional or conditional. All entrants to the PGDE programme must hold the relevant entry requirements prior to commencement of studies. Places available are set by the Scottish Government, through the Scottish Funding Council and Universities are advised of their allocated places, usually in the February of each year. Under the UCAS protocols, those who apply by 6pm on 29 January 2025 should receive a decision by May 2025.

Interviews will generally be held online via Microsoft Teams. If you are invited to interview you will receive additional guidance about the process.

Only one interview will take place. In the event of applicants being unsuccessful after interview, applicants will need to wait until a new admissions cycle to apply again to be considered. A further application, via Late or Extra or Clearing for example, in the same cycle, will not lead to a further interview invite being issued or an offer of admission.

PVG Check

A Protection of Vulnerable Group (PVG) check through Disclosure Scotland will be conducted by the University prior to final acceptance. This is required of all applicants who accept an offer of admission, even those who have been checked previously. For non-UK applicants, or UK applicants who have lived outside the UK for any period of time, in accepting an offer of admission, an Enhanced criminal record check through Disclosure Scotland will be conducted and in addition, it will be necessary for the applicant to obtain a criminal record check from the country they are from/lived in. The PVG check is paid for by the applicant and is processed after an applicant confirms their firm acceptance of their place.

Funding for Full-time Students

Applicants accepted onto the programme apply to either the Students Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) or their Local Education Authority for assistance with fees.

Information relating to Tuition Fees will be finalised in the Spring of each year and provided at: www.abdn.ac.uk/students/finance/tuition-fees.php. Applicants from England, Wales and Northern Ireland should note that the study bursary offered to postgraduate initial teacher training (ITT) students studying in England, Wales or Northern Ireland does not apply if they accept an offer of a place at a Scottish institution.

Teaching outwith Scotland

Should you wish to teach outwith Scotland with a teaching qualification gained in Scotland you need to check its acceptability with the Education Authority of the country you wish to teach in; this includes England, Wales, Northern Ireland and European Union countries. The PGDE degree programme at Aberdeen is worth 120 credit points which is equivalent to 60 ECTS.

For More Information

If you require further information relating to your qualification for the English or Maths requirement, or if your qualification is equivalent to degree level, or if you have non-UK qualifications, please contact the PGDE Primary Admissions Co-ordinator, Hazel Seymour (hazel.seymour@abdn.ac.uk), in the first instance.

Admissions Office, Directorate of Student Recruitment
University of Aberdeen
University Office, Regent Walk, King's College, Aberdeen, AB24 3TX
Email: ugadmissions@abdn.ac.uk
Web: www.abdn.ac.uk/study

Visit the websites:
www.teachinscotland.scot www.teachinscotland.scot/become-a-teacher/primary
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