

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

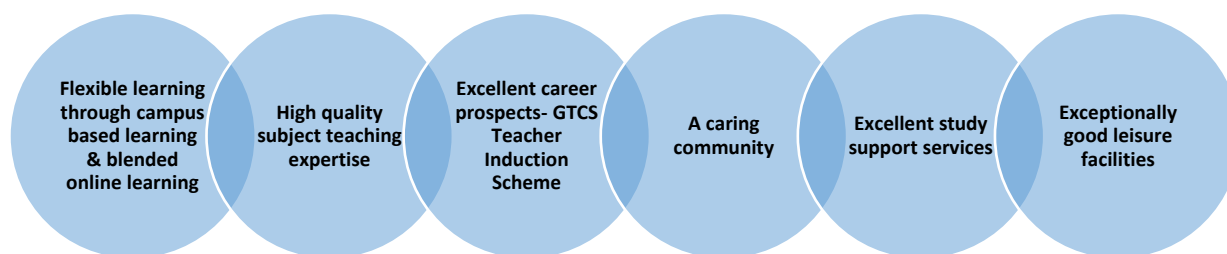
Information below is for entry in academic year 2025/2026 only

PGDE SECONDARY Education - what makes us different?

The PGDE Secondary is a full-time programme offering students a blended model of learning. During campus-based learning, students will be on campus for two consecutive days (Tuesday & Wednesday). **Beyond this, students will engage with 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 a full-time PGDE programme. During school experience placements, students are required to be in school every day, on a full-time basis.

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 SECONDARY, student experience



Who is the PGDE SECONDARY programme for?

The University of Aberdeen has a proven ability in developing innovative approaches to Initial Teacher Education. The programme is aimed at Graduates with relevant subject content in their academic study, who have demonstrated an interest in teaching children through a range of experiences in both formal and informal settings. The Programme is accredited by the General Teaching Council for Scotland.

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

The PGDE is a one-year, full-time campus based learning and blended online learning programme, incorporating school experience placements.

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.

The table below indicates the subjects currently available (at time of printing):

Subject	
Biology with Science	Mathematics
Business Education	Modern Foreign Languages ##
Chemistry with Science	Modern Studies
Drama	Music
English	Physics with Science
Geography	Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies
History	

French, German, Mandarin, Spanish.

Dual qualifications are possible in Sciences, Social Subjects and Modern Foreign Languages.

PGDE SECONDARY Education - Programme Outline

The table below shows the pattern of the courses.

Course	Full-time Route
<i>Learning and Teaching in Schools: Beginning to Teach</i>	Semester 1 – Mid August to mid-December; through campus-based learning, blended online learning and school placement
<i>Learning and Teaching in Schools: The Developing Professional</i>	Semester 2 – Early January to beginning of June; through campus-based learning, blended online learning and school placement
<i>School Experience 1*</i>	10 weeks during semester 1, split into smaller blocks
<i>School Experience 2*</i>	8 weeks during semester 2, split into smaller blocks

* Dates are subject to change depending on calendar variations and Local Authority school holiday patterns

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

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.

Students on the Secondary PGDE programme can undertake placements anywhere in Scotland. 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. **School Experience placement dates are fixed each year, and each block must be undertaken on a full-time basis.**

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/entry-requirements-to-programmes-of-ite-in-scotland-2024.pdf)

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

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

For entry to the University of Aberdeen, **all PGDE Secondary applicants** must have by the date term commences, the qualifications as detailed below under **1. Degree; 2. English** and **3. Maths**.

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.
- 80 SCQF credit points relevant to the teaching qualification/s being studied. Forty of the credit points must have been studied at SCQF level 8 or above. Points can be gathered from undergraduate and/or postgraduate level study where the credit is of direct relevance to the teaching of the subject for which application is being made. Some credit points are acceptable for entry to more than one teaching subject.

If a student wants a teaching qualification in more than one subject, appropriate credit points can be counted for entry to both subjects.

- Detailed information on Education in Scotland can be found at www.gtcs.org.uk/registration/becoming-a-teacher.

2. English at SCQF Level 6 – see text in red on below

- SQA or SCE Higher grade award in English at Grade C or above; or
- SCE Higher ESOL at Grade C or above; or
- 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
- HEI modules containing both Literature and Language elements such as:
 - University of Aberdeen Online English Level 6 at Grade C3 or above, (see below)
 - 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, 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 – see text in red below

- National 5 Mathematics at Grade C or above; or
- National 5 Lifeskills Mathematics at Grade C pass or above, or
- National 5 Applications of Mathematics at Grade C or above; or
- National 5 Matamataig at Grade C pass or above, or
- National 5 Matamataig Fad-bheatha at Grade C pass or above, or
- National 5 Gniomhachas Matamataigs at Grade C pass 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 Qualifications in Mathematics at Intermediate Level 2 Mathematics at Grade C or above; or
- HEI modules such as:
 - Discovering Mathematics MU123. 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 (see below), 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 Pass; 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.

Applicants **must** have English and Maths at the required level(s), or the equivalent, before commencing the PGDE Secondary programme. If applicants do not have their Maths and/or English qualification(s) in place prior to/ at the time of application, they may still be considered for a place and, if a place is offered, it will be on a conditional basis. The condition will need to be met before the programme commences.

Please also note that not meeting these English and Maths requirements may mean that you will not be eligible to apply for certain funding sources, e.g: STEM Bursary Scotland. Please be aware that if you intend to apply for funding, it is your responsibility to ensure you are eligible to do so.

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.

Please refer to the above lists for minimum required grades. Full information on the online provision, including costs, can be found at www.abdn.ac.uk/study/online/access-courses.php.

For 2025 entry only, applicants for PGDE Secondary in the subjects Biology, Chemistry, English, Geography, Mathematics, Modern Languages, Music and Physics, who do not have Maths and/or English at the time they commence the Programme, will be given free access to ONE of them in order to meet the GTCS requirements **before** their PGDE programme of study starts. To be eligible, the student must confirm that the University of Aberdeen is the institution at which they will commence their PGDE in August 2025.

Students who pay full fees or international fees are not eligible for a free Online Access course but are allowed to apply and pay for these courses.

Previous Initial Teacher Education Study

The University of Aberdeen requires that applicants who have 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.

Content of your Degree

The content of your degree must contain specific subject studies which are relevant to the intended teaching qualification. It must also be of appropriate breadth and depth for teaching the subject in Scottish secondary schools. **The information given below is correct as at time of printing; however, please check the GTCS website for details on the minimum entry requirements for specific subjects.**

For all subjects, a minimum of 80 SCQF credit points relevant to the teaching qualification/s being studied. Forty of the credit points must have been studied at SCQF level 8 or above. Points can be gathered from undergraduate and/or postgraduate level study where the credit is of direct relevance to the teaching of the subject for which application is being made. The degree content should **reflect** the curricular subject requirements.

Top-up courses are allowed; however, they must be obtained **before** entering the PGDE. A full-time academic year in Scotland normally allows you to take 120 credit points.

The following secondary subjects have specific requirements in addition to those stated above: Business Education; Drama; English; History; Modern Foreign Languages; Modern Studies; Music and Religious Education.

Business Education

You must have a minimum of 80 SCQF credit points from degree level study in at least two of:

- Accounting
- Business Management
- Economics

and should be able to demonstrate evidence of study related to relevant Information Technology skills.

Drama

You must have a minimum of 80 SCQF credit points from degree level study in:

- Drama,
- Theatre, or
- Performance

demonstrating a range of historical, theoretical and analytical approaches, including at least 40 SCQF credit points in the practical aspects of Drama or Performance such as devising, playwriting or performing. Applicants should also have some experience of collaborative practice.

English

You must have a minimum of 80 SCQF credit points from degree level study in English. At least 40 SCQF credit points must be in literature (this could include texts translated into English). A maximum of 40 SCQF credit points can be taken from any of the following areas:

- Advertising
- Creative Writing
- English Language
- Film
- Journalism
- Law
- Media Studies

History

You must have a minimum of 80 SCQF credit points from degree level study in:

- History, or
- Ancient History

with a maximum of 40 SCQF credit points from Archaeology.

Modern Foreign Languages – French, German, Mandarin and Spanish

Where possible, you should offer more than one language.

a) Academic Requirements

For each language taught, applicants must:

- have a minimum of 80 SCQF credit points from degree level study in the language you want to teach. Your academic study must include an element which will allow you to contribute to the wider aspects of programmes of study in schools, such as literature, cultural studies, area studies or languages in work.
- demonstrate that you are competent in speaking the relevant language or languages.

b) Residence Requirements

You must have lived abroad in a country where the language/s are spoken. While living abroad, you must have fully taken part in the language and culture of the relevant country. If you have spent one of your study years abroad, you will be considered as meeting the residence requirement. For the first language the residence requirement is six months, normally in blocks of at least three months.

For the second/other language the residence requirement is three months, normally in blocks of at least four weeks.

Residence requirements must be met before starting the programme and the University of Aberdeen will make sure this is the case before applicants are offered a place on the programme.

c) Native speakers of French, German, Mandarin and Spanish

Native speakers may be eligible to teach their native language if:

- You have SCQF credit points in that language which meet the requirements under **(a)**, or
- You have SCQF credit points outlined in **(a)** in a language other than your native tongue. For example, a French student with 80 SCQF credit points in German may be eligible to teach German and French.

Modern Studies

You must have a minimum of 80 SCQF credit points from degree level study from two separate subjects listed below. At least 40 SCQF credit points must be from either Politics or Sociology: -

- Criminology
- Economics
- Geography
- History or Economic History
- International Relations
- Law
- Politics
- Sociology
- Social Policy

Music

You must have a minimum of 80 SCQF credit points from degree level study in Music which includes studying music over at least three years. You are also expected to: -

a) Demonstrate intellectual music skills (some of which should be advanced) across the following:

- Musical repertoire and musical contexts
- An understanding of interdisciplinary approaches (e.g. music and the relationship to other disciplines)
- Analysing, synthesising and interrogating musical materials

b) Demonstrate you are competent in practical musical skills (some of which should be advanced) across the following:

- Instrumental performance
- Vocal performance
- Keyboard performance

c) Have experience of music technology in some format (e.g. use of microphones, experience of recording and producing)

You must meet all the requirements of (a). If you do not meet the requirements of (b) or (c) you will have to demonstrate competence through an interview process.

✚ Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies

You must have a minimum of 80 SCQF credit points from degree level study from two or more of the areas listed below: -

- Religious Studies
- Theology
- Sociology of Religion
- Psychology of Religion
- Philosophy
- Divinity
- Anthropology of Religion

If you wish specifically to teach **Religious Education in Catholic Schools**, you must have a minimum of 80 SCQF credit points in: -

- Religious Studies
- Theology
- Divinity

Which may include a maximum of 20 credit points in Philosophy related to religion.

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 are available 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 international 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, but students in this position can apply for the flexible probation route.

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

Applications to Aberdeen, received from UCAS, will be acknowledged by email. In the Aberdeen acknowledgement, applicants will be asked to submit information on degree transcripts. This information is essential to enable the application to progress.

It is worth noting that demand for places can be particularly high for some Secondary subjects.

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 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** Secondary classroom experience, and that applicants **reflect** upon this as appropriate when they are applying for the Secondary 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/young people as part of their application. 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 online interview to gauge suitability for entry to initial teacher education.

Interviews

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

Following interviews, 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 starting 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 UCAS protocols, those applying by 29 January 2025 should receive a decision by May 2025.

Interviews will take place via Microsoft Teams. If you are invited to interview you will receive further information by email about the interview process.

Only one interview for the secondary subject applied for will take place. In the event of applicants being unsuccessful after interview for that secondary subject, applicants will need to wait until a new admissions cycle to apply again to be considered. A further application for the same secondary subject, 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 to check if your qualification is equivalent to degree level, or if you have non-UK qualifications, the PGDE Secondary Admissions Co-ordinator, Cathy Reid (c.a.reid@abdn.ac.uk), can provide guidance.

To find out whether your degree contains the necessary credits please email Cathy Reid as above and your enquiry will be sent to the most appropriate subject specialist.

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

Visit the websites:

www.teachinscotland.scot www.teachinscotland.scot/become-a-teacher/secondary
www.saas.gov.uk
www.scotland.gov.uk www.abdn.ac.uk/education
www.gtcs.org.uk www.disclosurescotland.co.uk

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