



Memorandum on Entry Requirements to Programmes of Initial Teacher Education in Scotland

September 2024

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. General information on qualifications	3
3. Registration with GTC Scotland	4
4. The Teaching Qualification (Primary Education)	4
5. The Teaching Qualification (Secondary Education)	5
6. Secondary subjects with specific requirements	7
Appendix A Qualifications accepted as equivalent to the English and Mathematics requirements	12
Appendix B Summary of entry requirements for Primary and Secondary Education.....	14

1. Introduction

Under the terms of the Public Services Reform (General Teaching Council for Scotland) Order 2011, it is for the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTC Scotland) to determine what constitutes a recognised teaching qualification for individuals seeking registration with GTC Scotland as a school teacher.

As part of this process, and after due consultation, GTC Scotland sets minimum entry requirements for the teacher education programmes in Scotland provided by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) that lead to a recognised teaching qualification.

As long as an applicant meets the minimum entry requirements, it is for HEIs to decide whether to accept or reject an applicant in line with their general admissions policy. As some programmes are very popular, HEIs may require applicants to have more than the minimum entry requirements. HEIs also look for evidence that applicants have the necessary qualities for, and commitment to, teaching as a career.

Any enquiries about the acceptability of qualifications should be directed to HEIs.

A list of current ITE programmes and providers can be found on our website.

To promote equality and diversity in the teaching profession, application processes must meet all equalities legislation requirements. ITE providers should mitigate institutional barriers and any potential bias throughout the recruitment and selection procedures to ensure all applicants are given equal opportunity to be selected onto an ITE programme. Where required, reasonable adjustments should be made to support individuals through the admissions process. We recognise the necessity of proactively recruiting students from diverse groups – particularly those currently underrepresented in teaching – in conjunction with Scotland's ambition to ensure a teaching profession that is reflective of our diverse communities.

The entry requirements outlined in this Memorandum relate to admission to teacher education programmes beginning in the academic year 2025 and beyond, until such time as a further edition of the Memorandum is published.

2. General information on qualifications

There is no lower or upper age limit for applying for a place on an ITE programme. The qualifications needed for entry are set out in terms of the levels and credit value as defined in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). All applicants must meet the minimum requirements in this Memorandum before the programme starts (or the teacher education component in concurrent programmes).

Prior to entry to an ITE programme, applicants must:

- have appropriate levels of English (SCQF level 6) and Mathematics (SCQF level 5). The qualifications that are accepted as these essential minimum entry requirements are in Appendix A.
- be competent in the use of digital technology appropriate to use in teaching and learning.
- demonstrate appropriate interpersonal skills, attributes and dispositions which will allow them to engage young people, colleagues and partners in effective collaboration.

It is for HEIs to decide the acceptability of individual qualifications. Where an HEI offers a primary ITE programme which also prepares students for a specific focus such as teaching in the Gaelic Medium or teaching British Sign Language, HEIs will determine specific entry requirements in addition to the minimum requirements outlined in the Memorandum. This is also the case for secondary ITE programmes preparing students to teach in the Gaelic Medium. All such arrangements are subject to GTC Scotland accreditation.

Any enquiries about the acceptability of qualifications should be directed to HEIs.

A list of current ITE programmes and providers can be found on our website.

The system of selection of student teachers must take into account available reports on individual applicants, their experiences, interests and wider achievements.

HEIs should conduct interviews to allow applicants to demonstrate their openness to learning about the skills, attributes and dispositions desirable in a student teacher.

Applicants aspiring to be a teacher should show that they:

- are committed to the professional values of social justice, integrity and trust and respect
- can understand what it means to be a trusted teacher and have a willingness to engage with the Code of Professionalism and Conduct
- are self-directed and resilient
- are interested in developing understanding and awareness of the current context of education in Scotland
- **are capable of meeting the Standard for Provisional Registration which specifies what is expected of a student teacher at the end of ITE who is seeking provisional registration with GTC Scotland.**

3. Registration with GTC Scotland

When a person successfully completes a teacher education programme at a Scottish HEI they will receive a teaching qualification.

By law, they must register with GTC Scotland before they can be employed as a teacher. An individual wishing to teach in either a local authority school or in the independent sector must register with GTC Scotland, in terms of the Requirements for Teachers (Scotland) Regulations 2005 and the Registration of Independent Schools (Prescribed Person) (Scotland) Regulations 2017, respectively. A teacher's fitness to teach (i.e. in term of conduct) will be considered at the point of application for registration.

Information about registration can be found in GTC Scotland's Registration and Standards Rules.

4. The Teaching Qualification (Primary Education)

General points

(i) The Teaching Qualification (Primary Education) is awarded after a person has successfully completed one of the following:

- a four-year combined undergraduate degree programme leading to a named award which includes a teaching qualification
- a four-year concurrent undergraduate degree programme leading to a named award and a separate teaching qualification
- a PGDE programme following an undergraduate degree
- a postgraduate or integrated Master's programme including a teaching qualification.

A list of current ITE programmes and providers can be found on our website.

(ii) The minimum entry requirements for admission to a teaching qualification (primary education) programme are as follows:

- For the four-year combined undergraduate degree, other undergraduate degree programmes and integrated Master's programmes, the applicant must have:
 - SCQF level 6 (for example, Higher Grade), in at least four subjects (one of these must be in English) and
 - SCQF level 5 Mathematics (for example, National 5).

- For the one-year (or equivalent) PGDE programme or postgraduate Master's, the applicant must have:
 - an undergraduate degree validated by an HEI in the United Kingdom or an undergraduate degree of an equivalent standard from an HEI outside the United Kingdom
 - SCQF level 6 English (for example, Higher Grade)
 - SCQF level 5 Mathematics (for example, National 5).

(iii) HEIs may also expect at least one SCQF level 5 qualification in either a language and/or a science subject. ITE programmes with areas of specific focus, such as teaching in the Gaelic Medium will set entry requirements beyond those outlined in this Memorandum.

HEIs should make sure that an applicant's educational background (including the content of their undergraduate degree) provides a good basis for becoming a primary teacher. They will therefore look for evidence that the 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 languages.

All enquiries about the acceptability of non-UK undergraduate degrees should be directed to HEIs. A list of current ITE programmes and providers can be found on our website. When necessary, HEIs will ask GTC Scotland for advice.

5. The Teaching Qualification (Secondary Education)

General points

(i) The Teaching Qualification (Secondary Education) is awarded in a particular subject or subjects of the secondary school curriculum after a person has successfully completed one of the following programmes:

- a four-year combined undergraduate degree
- a combined undergraduate degree or a concurrent undergraduate degree including studying a subject, studying education, and school experience
- a PGDE programme following an undergraduate degree
- a postgraduate or integrated Master's programme including a teaching qualification.

(ii) Teaching qualifications (secondary education) can be awarded in the following:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| • Art and Design* | • English* | • Music* |
| • Biology with Science | • Geography | • Psychology |
| • Business Education* | • History* | • Physical Education* |
| • Chemistry with Science | • Home Economics* | • Physics with Science |
| • Computing Science* | • Languages* | • Religious Education (RMPS)* |
| • Dance* | • Mathematics | • Technological Education* |
| • Drama* | • Media Studies | |
| • Economics | • Modern Studies* | |

Note: The subjects marked with an asterisk (*) have specific entry requirements in addition to those outlined here, see section 6.

As well as teaching their own subject (or subjects) it is expected that registered teachers will contribute as appropriate to the teaching of interdisciplinary learning.

- (iii) The minimum academic entry requirement to qualify to teach a particular subject is 80 SCQF credit points.
- (iv) It is possible to gain teaching qualifications in more than one subject. Not all subjects are available in a particular academic year and some are only available at certain HEIs. Some subjects may be available only with other subjects. (Please note that the requirements of 5 (iii) must still be met).
- (v) For some programmes, such as Physical Education, Dance and Music, applicants will need to show that they are competent in practical skills. HEIs may set practical tests so the applicants can demonstrate their ability.
- (vi) ITE programmes with areas of specific focus, such as teaching in the Gaelic Medium, will set entry requirements beyond those outlined in this Memorandum.

All enquiries about adequacy of qualifications should be directed to HEIs.

A list of current ITE programmes and providers can be found on our website.

Undergraduate degree programmes

- (i) HEIs will assess applications for admission using the entrance requirements of their institutions.
 - Applicants for admission to such programmes must have SCQF level 6 English (for example, Higher Grade), and Mathematics at SCQF level 5 (for example, National 5).
- (ii) It is a feature of such undergraduate degree programmes that students do not need to decide straight away whether to follow the parts of the programme which lead to a secondary teaching qualification.
 - However, to enter the teacher education parts of these programmes, students must have English at SCQF level 6 (for example, Higher Grade) and Mathematics at SCQF level 5 (for example, National 5).
 - There should also be an interview process prior to candidates being accepted on to the TQ element of a programme.

Postgraduate (Secondary) programmes

The minimum entry requirements for admission to all postgraduate (secondary) programmes are as follows:

- An undergraduate degree validated by an HEI in the United Kingdom or an undergraduate degree of an equivalent standard from an HEI outside the United Kingdom.
- 80 SCQF credit points relevant to the teaching qualification or qualifications being studied. 40 of the credit points must have been studied at SCQF level 8 or above. Such credit points can be gathered from undergraduate and/or postgraduate degree 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.
- SCQF level 6 English (for example, Higher Grade)
- SCQF level 5 Mathematics (for example, National 5).

All enquiries about the acceptability of degree content should be directed to HEIs. A list of current ITE programmes and providers can be found on our website. When necessary, HEIs will ask GTC Scotland for advice.

Summary of entry requirements for Primary and Secondary Education can be found in Appendix B.

6. Secondary subjects with specific requirements

The following subjects have specific requirements (as well as the general requirements stated above):

Art and Design

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

- Fine Art (or Contemporary Art) or Design. (20 credit points may come from Digital Art/Design or Photography).

Business Education

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

- Accounting
- Economics
- Business Management.

Additionally, applicants should be able to demonstrate evidence of study-related relevant Information Technology skills.

Computing Science

Applicants must have a minimum of 80 SCQF credit points with 40 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8 (or above) from degree level study in at least two of:

- Computer Systems
- Software Development
- Databases
- Web Design.

The other 40 credit points are required in any computing area relevant to the computing curriculum in Scottish schools.

Dance

Applicants must have a minimum of 80 SCQF credit points from degree level study in Dance or related Dance subject.

Applicants should also provide evidence of their personal involvement in relevant activities through:

- having relevant, current experience of coaching, instruction, participation or leadership in Dance
- experience of training and performance of Dance at a high level
- achieving national governing awards and/or national qualifications in Dance
- knowledge of the history of dance including the study of dance in its social and historical contexts within traditional, ethnic and non-western dance cultures
- knowledge of general stage presentation (including lighting, stagecraft, stage make-up and knowledge of the range of dance styles which may include ballet, tap, modern/jazz, contemporary, hip hop, etc.)
- knowledge of choreographic skills and dance composition
- knowledge of the wider health and wellbeing aspects of dance including injury prevention and nutrition.

Drama

Applicants 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

Applicants must have a minimum of 80 SCQF credit points from degree level study in English. A minimum of 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:

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

History

Applicants 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.

Home Economics

Applicants must have a minimum of 80 SCQF credit points including 40 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8 (or above) from degree level study in either food, nutrition or professional cookery programmes or textile technology programmes.

The other 40 credit points can come from the above or any of the other relevant areas outlined in the table below:

Topic	Brief content
Family Studies	Parenting; childhood studies; family lifestyles; socioeconomic influences; environmental issues.
Food Science	Food chemistry; composition of foods; processing and manufacturing of foodstuffs; functional properties of foods; biotechnology; microbiology.
Health	Health promotion; health education; determinants of health; lifestyles and health; environmental issues; health and food policies.
Professional Cookery	Practical food preparation skills; food preparation techniques; safety.

Languages

All the languages taught in Scotland are valuable – there is no hierarchy of language. The entry requirements outlined here take account of the context in which languages are taught. Where possible, applicants should offer more than one language.

French, German, Italian, Mandarin and Spanish

(i) Academic Requirements

For each language taught, applicants must:

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

(ii) Residence Requirements

Before starting the programme of ITE, applicants must have lived abroad in a country where the language/s are spoken, during which they must have fully participated in the culture of the country and immersed themselves in the target language. Applicants who have spent one of their study years abroad will be considered as meeting the residency requirement. For the first language to be taught, the residence requirement is six months, normally in blocks of at least three months.

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

(iii) Native speakers of French, German, Italian, Mandarin and Spanish

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

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

Gaelic

Applicants must have a minimum of 80 SCQF credit points from degree level study in Gaelic or in Celtic (but they must have specialised in Scottish Gaelic).

Applicants must demonstrate their capacity to both read and write in Gaelic. Applicants are required to demonstrate that they are fluent in spoken Scottish Gaelic.

Heritage languages such as Bengali, Arabic, Hindi, Polish, Punjabi and Urdu

Applicants must have completed a degree equivalent in standard to a degree from the United Kingdom and have studied their native/heritage language at SCQF level 7, or equivalent. Applicants must demonstrate to the HEI they apply to that they are fluent in writing and speaking their native/heritage language and English. Applicants must show a commitment to developing their knowledge of language-learning pedagogy.

Modern Studies

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

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

(i) demonstrate intellectual music skills (some of which would 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.

(ii) Demonstrate that they are competent in practical musical skills (some of which should be advanced) across the following:

- Instrumental performance
- Vocal performance
- Keyboard performance.

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

It would be expected that all applicants should meet the requirements of (i). Applicants who do not meet the requirements of (ii) or (iii) will have to demonstrate competence through an interview process.

Physical Education

Applicants are expected to have a minimum of 80 SCQF credit points from degree level study coming from subjects in the following list:

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

Applicants need to show that they are competent in practical skills. HEIs may set practical tests so that applicants can demonstrate their ability.

Applicants should also provide evidence of their personal involvement in relevant activities through:

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

Religious Education

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

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

- Psychology of Religion.

Applicants wishing specifically to teach Religious Education in Catholic schools must have a minimum of 80 SCQF credit points in:

- Religious Studies
- Theology
- Divinity.

This may include a maximum of 20 credit points in philosophy related to religion.

Technological Education

Applicants must have a minimum of 80 SCQF credit points from degree level study. A minimum of 20 credit points should come from list A and a minimum of 40 credit points should come from list B.

List A

Technological subjects, such as Mechanical, Electrical or Electronic Engineering/Sciences, Mechatronics, Architecture, Construction Technology and Building Services.

List B

Design and Graphics-related subjects, such as Computer Aided Design, Graphic Design, Computer Aided Design Manufacture, Industrial Design and Product Design.

Applicants must demonstrate to the HEI that they have the capacity to develop their practical skills.

A list of current ITE programmes and providers can be found on our website.

Appendix A

Qualifications accepted as equivalent to the English and Mathematics requirements

English requirements (SCQF level 6)

One of the following:

- Higher English at band C or above
- National Units – Communication 4NC (SCQF level 6) and Literature 1 (SCQF level 6)
- Higher ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) at Grade C pass or above
- 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
- GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature – passes at Level 4 or above (England), Grade C or above (Wales) and Grade C/Level 4 or above (Northern Ireland). **Both qualifications must be held.**
- Higher Education Access course
- Irish Leaving Certificate English at level 5
- Equivalent qualifications in other countries.

Mathematics requirements (SCQF Level 5)

One of the following:

- National 5 Mathematics at Grade C pass or above
- National 5 Lifeskills Mathematics at Grade C pass or above
- National 5 Applications of Mathematics at Grade C pass or above
- National 5 Matamataig at Grade C pass or above
- National 5 Matamataig Fad-bheatha at Grade C pass or above
- National 5 Gnìomhachas Matamataigs at Grade C pass or above
- Standard Grade award in Mathematics at Credit (Grade 1 or 2)
- National Qualifications in Mathematics at Intermediate level 2 at Grade C or above
- 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
- GCSE Mathematics Grade 4 and above (England), Grade C or above (Wales) and Grade C/Level 4 or above (Northern Ireland)
- Higher Education Access course
- Functional Skills Maths Level 2
- Irish Leaving Certificate Mathematics at level 4
- International Baccalaureate Maths or Maths Studies at SL Grade 4 or above
- Equivalent qualifications in other countries.

Older qualifications

One of the following:

English

- SCE Higher Grade in English
- National Certificate Modules – Communications 4 and Literature 1
- National course award (Higher Still) in English and Communication at Grade C or above
- GCSE English Language and English Literature Grade C or above
- GCE Ordinary in English language and GCE Ordinary in English literature (Grade A, B or C).

Mathematics

- SCE Ordinary Grade in Mathematics (Grade A, B or C)
- National Certificate Modules – Core Mathematics 4
- GCSE Mathematics Grade C or above
- GCE Ordinary in Mathematics (Grade A, B or C).

HEIs are responsible for assessing equivalence of qualifications in terms of entry to teacher education programmes. Any enquiries about the acceptability of qualifications should be directed to HEIs.

A list of current ITE programmes and providers can be found on our website. When necessary, HEIs will ask GTC Scotland for advice.

Appendix B

Summary of entry requirements for Primary and Secondary Education

Sector	Teaching qualification	
	Undergraduate	Postgraduate
Primary	<p>SCQF level 6 (for example, Higher Grade), in at least four subjects (one of these must be in English); and</p> <p>SCQF Level 5 Mathematics.</p>	<p>An undergraduate degree validated by an HEI in the United Kingdom or an undergraduate degree of an equivalent standard from an HEI outside the United Kingdom; and</p> <p>SCQF level 6 English; and</p> <p>SCQF level 5 Mathematics.</p>
Secondary	<p>SCQF level 6 English; and</p> <p>SCQF level 5 Mathematics.</p>	<p>An undergraduate degree validated by an HEI in the United Kingdom or an undergraduate degree of an equivalent standard from an institution outside the United Kingdom.</p> <p>80 SCQF credit points relevant to the teaching qualification or qualifications being studied, 40 of the credit points must have been studied at SCQF level 8 or above. Such credit points may be gathered from undergraduate or postgraduate degrees where the credit is of direct relevance to the teaching of the subject for which application is being made.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>SCQF level 6 English; and</p> <p>SCQF level 5 Mathematics.</p>



The General Teaching Council for Scotland

We are the independent regulator for teachers in Scotland. We work to enhance trust in teachers in the public interest by setting, upholding and promoting high standards.

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