



# Becoming a teacher

# Nation guide

Scotland 2023/2024

Careers and Employability Services

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# 1. Introduction: Considering teaching as a career

This nation guide is part of a series which includes teaching in England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Ireland and has been produced by The Open University Careers and Employability Services (CES) to help prospective and current students who are considering teaching as a career. The contents are subject to change, so please make sure that you check all information carefully and regularly before making any final decisions.

Making the decision to train to be a teacher is just the start of your journey. There are entry requirements to meet, different routes to becoming qualified to consider as well as the process of applying for initial teacher education (ITE). Once qualified there are then the demands of finding your first role and this is all before overseeing a group of students for the first time.

This guide outlines some of these issues but it is important that you continue to seek advice throughout your studies.

## What makes a good teacher?

There are far too many attributes to list in establishing what makes an effective teacher and probably some subjectivity as well. Enthusiasm for teaching although important, is not enough. The work of a teacher is complex, demanding and sometimes stressful. Additionally, teachers will know that the reality of the hours they work are beyond those that are timetabled, and workload issues are well publicised.

That said, there can be tremendous job satisfaction. However, you might want to consider the following questions.

- Am I passionate about education and making a difference to those I will teach?

- Can I demonstrate the consistent high standards of personal and professional conduct required to uphold the trust of my students, colleagues, and profession?
- Am I reflective, resilient, and open minded enough to adapt, embrace change and develop my practice as education evolves during my professional career?

Just remember that your age and background are not an issue. One of the strengths of the profession is that it attracts applicants from all walks of life who do a fantastic job. Mature entrants have life experience that is welcomed and of great value to the teaching profession.

You can learn what being a teacher is really like with the free OU FutureLearn course – [Becoming a Teacher](#). This course is for anyone thinking about becoming a teacher; it will help you to decide if teaching is for you, give you a sense of what teaching is really like and help you to start writing your application for initial teacher education.

## **Work experience will help you decide**

Before you make your final decision to teach, it is wise to gain some experience of working in the age range and setting you wish to teach. You'll also develop valuable insight into the day-to-day duties of a teacher, as it is impossible to get a real flavour of the profession from research alone. Attaining relevant work experience is desirable prior to applying for the training routes into the profession so this is something you will need to start thinking about early on. Above all else, getting classroom experience will help you decide if teaching is the right career choice for you.

If you already have some classroom experience, you may want to consider other experiences that can add value. You'll find information about ways to build relevant experience in [Skills and experience](#).

## **What age range do you want to teach?**

This is a really important question you'll need to answer before you apply for entry onto initial teacher education. In Scotland, the age range of children in primary education is 3–12 years and the age range of children in secondary education is 12–18 years. [The Curriculum for Excellence in Scotland](#) is designed to provide a flexible curriculum from 3 to 18 and is divided into two phases: the broad general education and the senior phase. The broad general education begins in early learning and childcare (at age 3) and continues to the end of S3 (the third year of secondary school).

There are eight curriculum areas:

- Expressive arts
- Health and wellbeing
- Languages (including English, Gaelic and modern languages)
- Mathematics
- Religious and moral education (this differs in Roman Catholic schools)
- Sciences
- Social studies
- Technologies

Teachers wishing to teach in the secondary sector must be qualified in their chosen subject.

## **Availability of teaching posts and training places**

In Scotland, the Teacher Workforce Planning Group has the responsibility to predict the number of teachers needed.

The total number of student teacher places available for initial teacher education (ITE) programmes is estimated at 4070 for 2023/24, a decrease of 200 places from 2022/23. The decrease is from a reduction in Primary PGDE places, with all other intake targets remaining unchanged.

A breakdown of allocated places can be found on the [Scottish Funding Council](#) website which hosts a downloadable PDF guide to intake targets for 2023/24.

## **So, you want to become a teacher?**

You will need to ask yourself some questions about your experience and goals in relation to getting into teaching. Whatever your current situation, you should thoroughly research the appropriate choice of modules for your degree and check the entry requirements with each initial teacher training (ITE) provider you are applying to.

### **Question 1: Do you have experience in the age range and setting you want to teach and feel confident this is the right career for you?**

If not, read [Skills and experience](#) for ideas on how to gain experience.

### **Question 2: Do you meet the entry requirements for teaching?**

If not, read [Training to teach in Scotland](#) for advice on your training options. Also read [Frequently asked questions](#).

### **Question 3: Do you know which training route you will take?**

If not, read [Training to teach in Scotland](#) for advice on your training options. Also read [Frequently asked questions](#).

### **Question 4: Are you happy with your study pathway and module choices?**

If not, contact your Student Support Team if you are a current Open University student.

Finally, do make sure you understand the timescales of when you will need to apply for initial teacher training. If you need further support visit the OU's [Careers and Employability Services](#).



## 2. Where to start

Many OU students enter teaching and, in general, a degree from the Open University is very appropriate preparation. However, the choice of what you study can be critical in ensuring that you gain entry into initial teacher training and ultimately get a job in the teaching profession. The BA/BSc Open (Honours), tailored to your own requirements (also known as the Open degree), might be a useful choice for teaching but you must ensure that the modules within the degree are appropriate for the age range and setting you wish to teach. Alternatively, you may choose a named BA/BSc with a particular focus, but if so, you need to make absolutely sure the modules provide you with the necessary subject knowledge for your chosen ITE course.

Many initial teacher education (ITE) providers will ask for at least 50% of your degree to cover the subject knowledge they require. A degree in the specialist subject area you wish to teach is particularly appropriate for the secondary sector, further education, and higher education sector. For primary teaching there may be specific subject knowledge requirements to meet the needs of Curriculum for Excellence, please check with your ITE provider.

Please be aware that in assessing your suitability to teach, initial teacher training providers may have differing views on your module and degree choice. You are strongly advised to check this out with each provider you may wish to apply to before embarking on your degree (or as soon as possible if you are already studying). You also need to ensure that you keep regularly up to date with changing requirements in this area. You may need to do this **each year** that you are studying with the OU to ensure that you are still on the right track towards a teaching career.

OU students should be aware that, depending on when you take your final module, your degree may not be awarded until December. Most initial teacher training providers will expect you to officially have your degree classification confirmed **before** you start teacher training. Please check the entry requirements, including expectations on your degree content with any teacher

training providers you are considering or have applied to as these can change year on year.

If you have an overseas qualification, an incomplete qualification from another institution or a professional qualification and are not sure if you meet the entry requirements for initial teacher training, you should check this with your chosen teacher training provider.

If you are a current student, after reading this guide, you may want to talk in more depth to one of the OU's Career and Employability Consultants about your application for initial teacher training. You will find a range of materials and support on the [Careers and Employability Services website](#). Information and advice on choosing qualifications and modules at the OU can be accessed from the [OU's prospectus](#).

## **What are the entry requirements for a career in teaching?**

Here we will focus on the main academic and non-academic requirements for teaching in early years, primary and secondary. You will find requirements for further education and higher education in [Training to teach in Scotland](#).

### **Academic requirements**

- For PGDE programmes, you'll need to hold an undergraduate degree awarded by a UK higher education provider, or a recognised equivalent qualification.
- You'll need to have achieved a standard equivalent to SCQF Level 6 or above in English (e.g., Higher Grade), and SCQF Level 5 in Mathematics (e.g., National 5, Intermediate 2 or Credit Level Standard Grade).
- If you intend to apply for undergraduate degree programmes, you must have achieved three other National Qualifications (in addition to your Higher English qualification) at SCQF Level 6.

## Non-academic requirements

You will also need to consider:

- Classroom experience in the age range and setting you wish to teach. See [Skills and experience](#) for how to arrange this.
- If you're training to be a teacher in Scotland, you are required to be a member of the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme. This helps training providers in Scotland to identify potential trainee teachers who are barred from working with children, young people, or vulnerable adults. For more information, go to the [Scottish Government website](#) and enter 'PVG scheme' in the search bar, or visit the [GTCS In2Teaching website](#).

Options for OU students needing acceptable qualifications for teaching in English and maths are the [National Extension College](#) and [Online Access Courses](#) by the University of Aberdeen via distance learning. A number of further education colleges and community learning programmes deliver National 5 and Higher-level qualifications and may offer flexible modes of delivery. The OU module [MU123 Discovering Mathematics](#) may be considered as alternatives to a National 5 by some teacher training providers.

If you have qualifications from outside the European Economic Area (EEA), the [UK National Information Centre for the recognition and evaluation of international qualifications and skills](#) (UK ENIC, formerly known as UK NARIC) can give advice on whether qualifications are equivalent. They may also be able to provide certification.

If you are in the position of having secured the necessary English and Maths grades you require but cannot find proof of your results you will need to contact the SQA's Replacement Certificate Service (or an equivalent service if you were educated outside of Scotland). From this service you can order:

- Replacement Certificates

- Course Syllabus (pre-1993)
- Authentication of Qualifications for 3<sup>rd</sup> party companies.

The minimum entry requirements to programmes of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) in Scotland are set by the **General Teaching Council for Scotland** (GTCS), but university entry requirements may vary. Check with initial teacher education providers before applying.

### 3. Skills and experience

As well as the knowledge gained from OU study, students develop many transferable skills and attributes that are highly valued by employers. Being able to juggle OU study with work and family commitments involves time management, self-reliance, problem-solving, resilience and prioritising tasks effectively. You may want to do a more in-depth analysis of your skills and achievements using the resources on the [Careers and Employability Services](#) website or with [Your Career Planning Guide](#). This will help you identify and evidence your strengths. Also, the [Teach in Scotland](#) website gives you an insight into the skills and experience required.

Trainee teachers must also meet the Standard for Provisional Registration (SPR) which covers what is expected of a student teacher at the end of initial teacher education who is seeking provisional registration with GTC Scotland. Having gained the SPR, all provisionally registered teachers continue their professional learning journey by moving towards the attainment of the Standard for Full Registration. We recommend you review these standards which can be found on the [GTC Scotland](#) website.

On completion of a PGDE programme, you'll have the option of the [Teacher Induction Scheme](#) (TIS), which provides a guaranteed one-year training post in a local authority to every eligible student graduating with a teaching qualification from one of Scotland's universities. If you're not eligible, do not wish

to join the TIS, would prefer part-time work, are teaching in an independent school, or want to achieve full registration in a second subject, the [Flexible Route](#) is another way to gain the Standard for Full Registration. This forms part of the probation process. Please note that the Flexible Route requirements are changing as of 1 August 2023, which you can read about via the link above.

## **Getting work experience**

### **Why do I need work experience?**

Above all else, getting classroom experience will help you decide if teaching is the right career choice for you. You'll develop valuable insight into the day-to-day duties of a teaching role. It is impossible to get a real flavour of the profession from research alone. Recent work experience in the age range and subject you want to teach can also be helpful for your application and any interview for initial teacher training. You can often build your experience as you study.

### **What additional experience would be useful?**

You aren't just limited to work experience in a formal education setting. You may wish to add to this with experience in different settings such as summer camps, after school clubs and guides or scouts. The list really is endless in the ways volunteering or paid work could enhance your suitability.

You could also try and get experience in more than one setting and age range. For example, if you are interested in teaching primary you could try and get experience in more than one school. You may also want to consider other experiences such as private tutoring, sport coaching, mentoring, or volunteering, that puts you in touch with your target age range. Some students have even completed TEFL training (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) and taught both in the UK and abroad. There are also exchange programme such as [The Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme](#) and the British Council scheme - [Teach abroad as an English language assistant](#).

In summary, you will need to start your planning on this early before you apply to teach, as it can often take time to sort out arrangements and find the time to commit to these experiences. Do read through the [Prospects guide](#) for further ideas on securing teaching experience.

### **How much work experience do I need?**

You may have heard of a minimum requirement of ten days experience in schools, but school experience is not a formal entry requirement for initial teacher training (ITT). However, higher levels of school experience do make for a stronger application, but it is by no means an essential application prerequisite. Given the current climate, school experience has been difficult to organise over the last 18 months, so most ITE providers are sympathetic and take this into account.

### **How can I arrange getting school experience independently?**

Organising your own school experience is often the most effective route to getting work experience and can require some confidence and perseverance on your part in getting it organised. The [Teach In Scotland](#) website offers common sense advice to help you secure school experience. Please note, if you're going to be doing 'regulated work' the school will ask you to join the [PVG scheme](#).

### **Making the most of your experience**

It's useful to break down your thoughts and activity into before, during, and after your work experience. Before any placement, write down what you want to learn from the experience and what information you want to know. This might include researching the school you are going to and understanding the roles of teacher and support staff.

During your placement, make a record of any creative and innovative teaching styles you have observed and how lessons are tailored to cater for students with different abilities and backgrounds.

After your experience, decide if there are still gaps in your knowledge and whether you need further experience. Write a reflective account that can be used for a personal statement.

## Getting paid experience

As well as volunteering many OU students are already working or seeking roles in education whilst they study such as [teaching assistant](#), [special educational needs \(SEN\) teaching assistant](#), [private tutoring](#) and [learning mentor](#). Some students may decide to delay applying for initial teacher training and look to gain further educational experience to develop their skills and confidence further.

## 4. Training to teach in Scotland

There are two main ways to enter the teaching profession in Scotland, depending on whether you already possess a degree or not:

- A four-year undergraduate MA or BA Hons degree course with a teaching qualification at a Scottish university.
- A one-year full-time Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) at an institution that offers the Teaching Qualification (Secondary Education) or the Teaching Qualification (Primary Education).

While many of these courses are full time and require attendance at a university campus, there are several new teacher education programmes designed to offer flexibility and encourage diversity in the profession listed on the [Teach In Scotland](#) website.

Teaching in Scotland requires you to have a degree. Completion of an initial teacher education programme will mean you will gain the required Teaching Qualification (TQ). Education institutions will also be looking for evidence that candidates have the necessary qualities for, and commitment to, teaching as a

career. Some courses are very popular and may ask for additional qualifications.

The [Curriculum for Excellence](#) in Scotland is designed to provide a flexible curriculum from 3 to 18, to include the totality of experiences which are planned for children and young people through their education. The Broad General Education (BGE) provides a rounded education from approximately age 3 (early years) until age 13/14 (S3). The BGE is divided into five curriculum levels (early, first, second, third and fourth) across each of the eight curriculum areas.

The senior phase curriculum follows on from the BGE for approximately ages 15 to 18 (S4-6). This is where pupils begin to sit Scottish national qualifications which are set by the Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA).

Registration with the [General Teaching Council Scotland \(GTCS\)](#) is required in order to teach in any local authority nursery, primary, secondary, special school or further education college. Those qualified outside Scotland will also need to apply for registration.

There is a real shortage of qualified Gaelic-medium teachers in Scotland. To address this there are full-time Gaelic-medium primary PGDE programmes at The University of Edinburgh, The University of the Highlands and Islands and the University of Strathclyde. The University of Strathclyde and The University of the Highlands and Islands also offer secondary PGDE courses for Gaelic as a subject, as well as a PGDE course for teaching other subjects through the medium of Gaelic. In addition, The University of Edinburgh offers a Gaelic Teacher Training programme at undergraduate level.





## Early Years and Childcare

Formal qualifications in Early Learning and Childcare vary dependent on the role. To progress and qualify you can either:

- Complete a course (with work-based practice) and then apply for a job.
- Apply for a job and train as you work.
- Apply for a Modern Apprenticeship and train as you work.

You might start in support roles and then develop into an Early Learning and Childcare Practitioner position, before eventually becoming a Lead Practitioner or Manager. You can find out more about how to explore starting your career in this sector on the [Early Learning and Childcare Careers](#) website.

Many Scottish universities offer the BA Childhood Practice degree with graduates eligible to register as a manager/lead practitioner with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC).

OU Students wishing to develop a career in early years may want to consider the postgraduate M. Ed Early years qualification, offered by the University of Strathclyde and the University of Aberdeen. Please note that these programmes are designed for fully qualified teachers currently practising in nursery or P1-3 settings. Before you start working in Early Learning and Childcare you will need to join the PVG Scheme through [Disclosure Scotland](#).

## Primary teaching

It is important to recognise that the following are minimum entry requirements for post-degree teacher training. For entry into PGDE (primary), initial teacher education institutions do not require a specific degree subject. However, they need to ensure you understand primary education in Scotland and 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 may, 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 modern foreign languages.

You need to have a National 5 Mathematics or equivalent (SCQF level 5) as well as a pass in Higher English at grade C or above or equivalent (SCQF level 6). There is also the requirement of an additional 3 SCQF level 6 qualifications. Information on equivalent qualifications is available on the [Teach in Scotland](#) website. Other relevant qualifications may be accepted in place of these but always check with the ITE provider first.

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, GTC Scotland encourage universities to expect at least one SCQF level 5 qualification in either a **modern language** and/or a **science** subject, as detailed in their revised memorandum on [Entry Requirements for Initial Teacher Education programmes in Scotland](#).

When initial teacher education institutions in Scotland are considering applications, they will want to make sure that the candidate's educational background provides the necessary foundation for working as a primary teacher. One way of planning your degree might be to work towards at least 360 credits balanced across the range of the primary curriculum. However, there are several dangers in doing so:

- You will end up with a broad-based OU degree, which may be relevant to primary teaching, but could close off other career options. This is fine if you are sure that this is your chosen career – otherwise it might be wise not to close all other options, including entry into secondary teaching.
- Spreading yourself thinly over a range of subjects may make it difficult for you to achieve your best performance. A good degree classification may not be the most important criterion, but competition among graduates can be intense, especially at institutions with strong reputations in a specific area, which will be particularly important if the choice of location is limited.

If you are in any doubt, you should seek advice from the institution you are applying to for initial teacher education. Your Student Support Team is also available to help you should you wish to discuss your programme of study.

The OU offers a qualification [Q94 – BA \(Hons\) Education Studies \(Primary\)](#) which contains modules specifically addressing primary education skills and subject knowledge.

## **Secondary teaching**

Secondary teaching in Scotland requires you to have a degree. Scottish initial teacher education programmes are available through nine universities and the conservatoire. All will also be looking for evidence that candidates have the necessary qualities for, and commitment to, teaching as a career. It is important to recognise that the following are minimum entry requirements for post-

degree teacher training. Some courses are very popular and may ask for additional qualifications.

For entry to PGDE (Secondary), you should hold a relevant degree, and this should normally contain 80 credits relevant to the teaching qualifications being studied, of which 50 credits must be as part of an undergraduate degree. There may be additional requirements for certain subjects. Up-to-date information on these can be obtained from the Teach in Scotland website and the revised memorandum on [Entry Requirements for Initial Teacher Education programmes in Scotland](#). Students are always advised to confirm choices with the initial teacher education institution they are intending to apply to. It is advisable to aim for an Honour's degree, as most other applicants will be competing with this level of qualification. Applicants for secondary teaching must have achieved a standard equivalent to SCQF Level 6 or above in English (e.g. Higher Grade), and SCQF Level 5 in Mathematics (e.g. National 5). Information on equivalent qualifications is available on the [Teach in Scotland](#) website. Other relevant qualifications may be accepted in place of these, but always check with the initial teacher education institution first.

Graduates will only be allowed to top up their degree with a **maximum of 30 credits** to meet the 80-credit requirement and these must be obtained **before** entering a PGDE course.

OU students should be aware that, depending on when you take your final module, your degree may not be awarded until December. Initial teacher education providers will expect you to officially have your degree **before** you start on their course. Please check the rules of entry with any providers you are considering, well in advance of applying as rules can change every year. Your degree must include the minimum requirements relevant to at least one of the subjects specified on the [Teach in Scotland](#) website.

Studying for the PGDE, it is possible to gain teaching qualifications in more than one subject and it can be attractive to ITE institutions and employers if you can teach more than one secondary subject. However, not all subjects are available

in each academic year, and some are only available at certain universities. Some subjects may be available only with other subjects. The credit point minimum for each subject may still apply, so you need to bear this in mind if you plan to teach more than one subject and select your undergraduate degree modules accordingly.

### **Applying for primary and secondary initial teacher training**

Although the PGDE is a graduate entry course you are required to submit your application via the [UCAS applicant system](#). You can find the appropriate UCAS code in the 'key facts' section of the PGDE course pages. Both undergraduate and postgraduate Scottish teacher training programmes are listed in UCAS Undergraduate Apply. Please note, you can only apply once in a cycle, with up to five choices.

You will also be able to track your application and respond to offers. [Primary](#) and [Secondary](#) higher education institutions offering initial teacher education can be found on the [Teach in Scotland](#) website. Information on initial teacher education programmes is released ahead of time usually by the start of each academic year. You can now search for courses starting in 2024 in the UCAS search tool.

You can also register and start your UCAS application in the UCAS Apply 2024 system, but you won't be able to send it to providers until early September 2023.

You **should apply as soon as possible** to give yourself the best chance of getting the teacher training place you want. For many OU students they will be applying for initial teacher education whilst they study their final module. Your **degree result will need to be confirmed prior to commencing teacher training**. The majority of OU students will have their classification confirmed by late July, although for a minority of students, depending on when you take your final module, your degree may not be awarded until December. The [UCAS Teacher Training](#) website has a range of guides and video resources to take you through the application process step by step.

## Further education teaching

Teachers in further education (FE) work mainly with post-16 and/or adult learners. However, The Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) programme means colleges are now offering more vocational courses to school pupils from S4-S6. According to [Colleges Scotland](#), there were 26 colleges in Scotland serving around 213,135 students and employing over 14,000 staff in 2022. You can keep up to speed about further education and the sector on the [Colleges Scotland website](#).

FE teachers teach at all levels including basic skills, academic teaching and vocational training. To teach vocational courses you'll be expected to be experienced and qualified in your professional field. For academic subjects you will have at least a degree or relevant subject in the qualification you will teach.

The Teaching Qualification in Further Education (TQFE) is the core teaching qualification available to college lecturers in order to be considered for registration. Currently, the TQFE is delivered by two Teacher Education Institutes (TEIs): [University of Aberdeen](#), and [University of Stirling](#). As these are in-service qualifications, TQFE participants are normally employed as lecturers, trainers or instructors when they join the programme. However, the [University of Stirling](#) also offer a Pre-Service Route for those aspiring to become College Lecturers.

Another qualification accepted in the FE sector is the Professional Development Award (PDA) Teaching Practice in Scotland's Colleges. Again, this is normally taken as part of an in-service route.

Vacancies in the FE sector are usually advertised on the [myjobscotland.gov.uk](https://myjobscotland.gov.uk) website. You may find it useful to use the person specification for advertised vacancies to establish the expectations of employers in terms of knowledge, skills, experience and qualifications.



## Higher education lecturing and research

To become a university lecturer, you will normally need to study for masters or PhD qualifications in the area you want to teach. Lecturers for more specialised or vocational subjects can often enter with experience in that field, and a teaching qualification, rather than a PhD.

Some research students undertake part-time teaching responsibilities while still registered as students, which is a valuable way to build up teaching experience. In the early stages of a career, it may be very difficult to gain a permanent contract as a HE lecturer and many are on sessional and fixed-term contracts.

There are a range of websites to help you understand the competitive academic jobs market. We recommend you visit the [Vitae](#), [Jobs.ac.uk](#) and [Prospects](#) websites.

## OU Associate Lecturer

Students on OU modules organise their own study time, which can be a difficult skill to master. As an Associate Lecturer, you become the 'face' of the OU for a group of students whose learning you support. They make a vital contribution to the quality of teaching and learning and support students by:

- Teaching and assessment (online and for some modules by post).
- Individual contact by email, phone or post.
- Group tutorials and day schools (face-to-face or online).

To become an Associate Lecturer with the OU, you will need to have a degree or a professional or vocational qualification in the subject area you wish to teach. Your academic specialism or professional experience must be complemented by a personal commitment to the education of adults, and an appreciation of the challenges for adult learners who are studying at a distance. It is essential that Associate Lecturers understand and accept the diversity of OU students and their learning needs. In addition, many Associate Lecturers teach full or part-time at other education institutions.

Not all OU modules ask for previous teaching experience, so it is important that you read the person specification to find out if it is a requirement for the module(s) you apply to tutor. For more information see [Teaching with the OU](#).

You can register your interest in working for the OU by completing the [expression of interest form](#). Please note, however, that the expression of interest service does not form part of our formal recruitment process and that it is your responsibility to identify suitable vacancies.

You can also apply for other externally advertised [OU Jobs](#) including [residential school teaching posts](#).

## **5. Specialisms in teaching and other education-related careers**

This section contains information on other areas of teaching such as alternative settings and broader roles in the education sector that you might want to consider. You should ensure that you carefully research how you can train for these and what the implications might be for planning your OU study.

### **Teaching English as a Foreign Language**

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) involves teaching English, either in the UK or overseas, to students whose first or main language is not English. TEFL teachers work in commercial language schools, primary and secondary schools, in FE and in the community. There are also opportunities in development organisations, government departments, volunteer organisations, multinational companies and [The British Council](#). Some may also teach in industry while others are self-employed. Students may be of all ages and levels, and in various class sizes, depending on where you teach. Classes are usually taught in English, even with beginners.

TEFL is increasingly a graduate role, and it is now more difficult for those with no formal qualifications to obtain posts, and almost impossible in the UK. If you



have a good basic education and an excellent command of English, it is still sometimes possible to find work in the private sector abroad with no training or experience, but a degree is often required.

Many language schools in the UK and abroad offer training courses ranging from short introductions lasting a couple of days to intensive certificate courses lasting four to six weeks.

Deciding which course to take depends on whether you want a dedicated career in TEFL or if you want to use your qualification to gain experience and see the world. The two most commonly accepted courses are:

- [Trinity College London CertTESOL](#) (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages)
- [Cambridge CELTA](#) (Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults).

There are lots of courses out there so make sure you are getting something that meets the international standards of **100 course hours and 6 hours of live practice teaching**. Be very wary of online only courses that do not offer this. It is worth noting that CertTESOL and CELTA are the only two TEFL qualifications that are listed by the British Council as an acceptable introductory teaching qualification that meets their standards and requirements.

## Special education

The law that relates to additional support for learning is the [Education \(Additional Support for Learning\) \(Scotland\) Act 2004](#) as amended. The Scottish Government pupil census in 2016 recorded that 93% of pupils with additional support needs spend all their time in mainstream classes.

### Additional Support Needs (ASN) Teacher

To become an [Additional Support Needs \(ASN\) Teacher](#) you must hold a teaching qualification (TQ). Many ASN teachers move into this area once they have been teaching for a few years and have gained experience. Registration is available in Additional Support Needs (ASN) from the [GTCS](#). This registration

covers the 3–18 years age range. This registration will be available to teachers who are eligible for provisional registration with GTC Scotland in a mainstream registration category and who hold an appropriate ASN award.

## **Other education-related careers**

The focus of this guide has been on mainstream teaching roles across a variety of age ranges, although we recognise the education sector is diverse. For this reason, you may want to explore teaching in alternative settings to mainstream education or even explore broader roles in the education sector. Community, environmental, health and heritage education are just a sample of the settings you could explore.

Many OU students also decide to develop their experience in the classroom through support roles such as [Teaching Assistants](#) before committing to initial teacher training. The [Education Alternatives publication](#) by AGCAS is also a recommended read to understand and explore your options further.

## **6. Resources and support for potential teachers with a disability**

It is regrettable that individuals with disabilities are under-represented in the teaching profession, but this should not stop you from considering teaching. Many disabled students and graduates are able to work without the need for specific adjustments or support, but for some students, additional support can help enable access to work.

### **Your individual circumstances**

We recommend that you read the appropriate guidance document available below and make informal enquiries, as part of an information gathering exercise, to find out how the disability guidance relates to you.

In Scotland, [The Equality Act 2010](#) and [Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001](#), require teacher training providers to ensure they are not discriminating against applicants with disabilities or additional support needs (ASN).

Applicants with disabilities are under no obligation to disclose these. The decision to disclose is a personal one, please refer to our downloadable guide for further advice:

- [Your Career Planning Guide \(Section 5: Equality and Diversity Issues\)](#)

You will also find some helpful information on the OU's [Disability support](#) webpages and two recordings:

- [The Access to Work programme \(webinar\)](#)
- [How to explain a disability with employers \(podcast\)](#)

Initial teacher education providers do have a responsibility to ensure that individuals have the health and physical capacity to teach and will not put children and young people at risk of harm. This means all successful applicants are likely to be asked to complete a fitness questionnaire prior to commencing teacher training.

## **Additional resources**

- [Supporting Dyslexic Trainees and Teachers](#)  
This guide from the University of Southampton explores strategies for dyslexic teachers and useful resources.
- [Disabled Teachers Network](#)  
A US-based organisation but welcome educators with disabilities from any country. Resources include discussion forums and an E-newsletter.
- [The National Education Union](#)  
Represent and support disabled teachers and hold an annual disabled teachers conference. The NEU have produced guidance on good practice that should be put in place by all employers including

their [disability equality toolkit: Reasonable adjustments and case studies](#).

- [Get into Teaching](#)

Further advice and support if you are training to teach and have a disability.

## 7. Funding for teacher training

Tuition fees for eligible students from Scotland are paid by the [Student Awards Agency for Scotland](#) (SAAS). Funding for the PGDE is treated in the same way as full-time undergraduate programmes. If you're eligible, SAAS will pay your tuition fees straight to your PGDE university. The [SAAS Undergraduate funding page](#) has further information on eligibility and repayment.

In addition, [bursaries of £20,000 per student](#) will be available to career changers wishing to undertake a one year Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) Initial Teacher Education (ITE) course in Scotland, that leads to the award of registered teacher status in the hardest to fill STEM subjects (2022 entry: maths, computing science, technical education, physics, chemistry and home economics.) For further information on the 2022 STEM Teacher Education Bursary applications, please check the [STEM Bursary Scotland](#) website.

From April, you can apply for your tuition fees, loan, bursary and grants. You should apply as soon as you know the course you want to do.

Also remember that most Scottish universities have their own bursaries and scholarships. Access to these will depend on your own academic and financial circumstances. We recommend you visit your chosen university website for more details and advice on how and when to apply.

## 8. Frequently asked questions

This section provides basic advice on some of the frequently asked questions relating to teaching from OU students. However, we recognise each student's circumstances are different, which is why there are times our general advice may be inaccurate and not apply, so always make sure you complete your own research.

### **Can I still teach with an Open degree?**

There are many teachers with an Open degree, but it is important you have a good knowledge of the subject you will be teaching which also depends on the setting and age range. This means there will be different expectations between early years, primary, secondary, FE and HE. Contact your preferred initial teacher training providers for specific advice.

### **How much of my degree needs to relate to the Curriculum for Excellence?**

This will depend on whether you are teaching primary or secondary and you will need to consider the views of the providers you are applying to. For primary teaching, you should show a good understanding of the broad general education subjects from early years through to the end of S3. For secondary education, the Memorandum on Entry Requirements to Programmes of Initial Teacher Education in Scotland states you must have 80 [SCQF](#) credit points (40 of which must be at SCQF Level 8) relevant to your chosen subject and that you meet any other requirements that subject might have. But please read through the [specific requirements from GTC Scotland](#) as well as confirming entry requirements with your chosen ITE provider.

### **Is it possible to get on a teacher training course without the required National Qualification Awards in English and Mathematics?**

A National Qualification Course award in English at SCQF Level 6 (Higher Grade English or an accepted alternative) and a National Qualification Course award in Mathematics at SCQF Level 5 (National 5 Mathematics or an accepted

alternative), are essential requirements for entry to all teacher education programmes. Options for OU students needing acceptable qualifications for teaching in English and maths are the [National Extension College](#), and [Online Access Courses](#) by the University of Aberdeen via distance learning. A number of Further Education colleges and community learning programmes deliver National 5 and higher-level qualifications and may offer flexible modes of delivery. The minimum entry requirements to programmes of initial teacher education (ITE) in Scotland are set by the [General Teaching Council for Scotland](#) (GTCS), but university entry requirements may vary on accepted alternatives. We strongly recommend checking with the ITE provider before applying.

### **Can I teach with a third class or ordinary degree?**

Most initial teacher training providers will not consider applicants without at least a 2:2, so you are highly unlikely to be accepted if you have an ordinary degree (without honours) or a third-class honours degree. In exceptional cases, there may be providers who are more open and will look at what skills and school experience an applicant brings or if they are undertaking postgraduate study. In this scenario, researching and contacting them before applying is essential.

### **Are UK teaching qualifications valid abroad?**

They may well have equivalence and currency, but this answer is completely dependent on the country, institution, curriculum and regulations. For these reasons, we recommend that you independently research the requirements for the country you are interested in moving to and that you contact schools in the region. The TES Institute also has a useful article on this subject: [Which qualification do I need to teach abroad?](#)

### **Can I still teach with a criminal conviction?**

There isn't a definitive yes or no answer to this, as it depends on what the conviction is. Teaching is exempt from the [Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974](#) and as a potential trainee teacher gaining a place on an ITE course will mean

you need to register on the [PVG Scheme](#), managed and delivered by Disclosure Scotland. This means you must disclose any convictions. Your first step is to get advice based on your individual circumstances. We recommend contacting the national charity [NACRO](#) for further advice or alternatively [APEX Scotland](#).

**Is it possible to teach in primary schools if you have trained in secondary (and vice versa?)**

It is possible to be a primary or secondary GTC Scotland registered teacher and add additional subjects/ sectors to a current registration. So primary teachers can apply to add registration as a secondary teacher and vice versa. However, you would still need to meet the academic and/ or professional learning requirements for which the additional professional registration is sought. Further details can be found on the [GTC Scotland website](#).





# Appendix 1: OU contact information

For advice about choosing OU qualifications and modules visit [The Open University website](#) or call Student Recruitment.

## Student Recruitment

The Open University PO Box 197  
Milton Keynes  
MK7 6BJ

Phone: +44 (0) 300 303 5303

Email via [www.open.ac.uk/contact](http://www.open.ac.uk/contact)

## Scotland

The Open University  
10 Drumsheugh Gardens  
Edinburgh  
EH3 7QJ

Reception: +44 (0) 131 226 3851.

## For Welsh speakers

If you would prefer to discuss your study needs in Welsh, please contact The Open University in Wales, based in Cardiff, where we will be pleased to offer personal guidance as well as information about the services available. You may contact us by letter, phone or email, or you are welcome to visit us. We recommend that you make an appointment first to make sure an appropriate adviser will be available.

Although we are able to offer a range of services for Welsh speakers, our study materials and teaching are normally in English.

Phone: +44 (0) 29 2047 1170



Email: [wales@open.ac.uk](mailto:wales@open.ac.uk)

## **I siaradwyr Cymraeg**

Os yw hi'n well gennych drafod eich anghenion astudio yn Gymraeg mae croeso i chi gysylltu â'r Brifysgol Agored yng Nghymru yng Nghaerdydd lle byddwn

yn falch o roi cyfarwyddyd personol i chi yn ogystal â gwybodaeth am y gwasanaethau sydd ar gael. Gallwch gysylltu â ni drwy lythyr, galwad ffôn neu neges ebost, neu, os yw hi'n well gennych, mae croeso i chi ymweld â ni. Byddem yn argymhell i chi wneud apwyntiad gyntaf i sicrhau y bydd arbenigwr priodol ar gael.

Nodwch, os gwelwch yn dda, er ein bod yn gallu cynnig ystod o wasanaethau i siaradwyr Cymraeg, bod ein deunyddiau cwrs ac addysgu fel arfer yn Saesneg.

Rhif ffon: + 44 (0) 29 2047 1170

Ebost: [wales@open.ac.uk](mailto:wales@open.ac.uk)

## **Republic of Ireland**

Enquiry and Advice Centre in Dublin

Tel: +353 (1) 678 5399 or

The Open University in Ireland

Tel: +44 (0)28 9032 3722.

Email: [ireland@open.ac.uk](mailto:ireland@open.ac.uk)

# Appendix 2: Careers information

## The Open University

For careers information and advice visit the OU's [Careers and Employability Services](#). This website also contains a number of case studies of current and former OU students who have gone into teaching. OU students can also access forums and webinars related to teaching and education. You will need your OU login details to view these.

For details of OU qualifications and modules, visit the [Open University prospectus](#).

## Prospects

[Job sectors on Prospects](#) provide comprehensive guides to different career areas including teaching and education.

[Job profiles on Prospects](#) enable you to search for careers such as early years teacher, primary/secondary school teacher, further/higher education lecturer, English as a Foreign Language teacher or special educational needs teacher.

## TARGETjobs

[TARGETjobs](#) provides detailed information and advice on routes to becoming a teacher, choosing and applying for a teacher training course and funding.

## Teach in Scotland

You can register with [Teach in Scotland](#) to get a free guide to choosing a career in teaching.

## UCAS Teacher Training

[UCAS](#) offers information and advice on routes into teaching as well as support around the application process.

## **General Teaching Council Scotland**

[GTC Scotland](#) is the independent self-regulating body for teaching in Scotland.

Tel: +44 (0) 131 314 6000

Email [gtcs@gtcs.org.uk](mailto:gtcs@gtcs.org.uk)

### **Student and Probationer guidance**

The advice that was previously hosted on In2Teaching.org.uk has been integrated to help teachers on their journey from student teacher, to provisional to full registration with GTC Scotland.

[Access advice for Student Teachers](#)

[Access advice for Probationer Teachers \(Newly Qualified Teachers\)](#)

