



Programme Specification

A statement of the knowledge, understanding and skills that underpin
a taught programme of study leading to an award from
The University of Sheffield

1	Programme Title	International Postgraduate Certificate in Education (iPGCE)
2	Programme Code	EDCT005
3	JACS Code	X300
4	Level of Study	Postgraduate
5a	Final Qualification	International Postgraduate Certificate in Education
5b	QAA FHEQ Level	Level 7
6a	Intermediate Qualification(s)	None
6b	QAA FHEQ Level	Not applicable
7	Teaching Institution (if not Sheffield)	Not applicable
8	Faculty	Social Sciences
9	Department	School of Education
10	Other Departments involved in teaching the programme	None
11	Mode(s) of Attendance	Part-time, Distance Learning
12	Duration of the Programme	1 year
13	Accrediting Professional or Statutory Body	Not applicable
14	Date of production/revision	January 2018, March 2026

15. Background to the programme and subject area

The iPGCE is a fully-online programme, aimed at both experienced and new practitioners, enabling all students to build on their experiences through critical reading and reflection, and taking each student's individual position as the start of their learning journey. Through carefully considered support measures and close links between students' academic and professional development needs, the programme offers flexible development for both those beginning their journey into teaching, and those who are already experienced educators.

The structure of the programme builds a strong basis of pedagogical knowledge at both theoretical and practical level, with assessment of an educational task, a literature-based assignment, and a small-scale research study. An introductory period at the beginning of the programme ensures all students feel comfortable not only with the technology, but also with the collaborative, discursive, and reflective elements of the programme. The iPGCE lays the groundwork of developing reflective practitioners who are not only well-grounded in educational theory, but also able to conduct research into their own practice and potentially drive change in their respective institutions. Students have the opportunity to continue their professional and academic journey via the MA in Education, Teaching and Learning, which seamlessly builds on the iPGCE. The programme is designed to enable students to identify their own professional development needs relevant to their own contexts, to consider the nature of professional learning and professional development, to learn how to evaluate policy and research critically, and to develop research activities which enable them to drive change and innovation in their own context. The programme draws an international community of learners, and building a network of reflective professionals who share their learning and development is consistently highlighted by our students as a key strength of the programme.

The School of Education has considerable expertise and experience in providing education for teachers and other educationalists (in PGCE/PGDE, Masters programmes, EdD, PhDs) in many contexts. and is therefore well placed to respond positively and effectively to this international market. This programme offers the flexibility required in the 21st century, and is therefore ideally positioned to serve the wide range of needs of a variety of educational professionals.

16. Programme aims

The programme aims to:

1. Develop students' critical understanding of research principles, policy and practice relating to education in general and to education in their own professional and cultural contexts;
2. Promote a deeper understanding of a range of educational practices, including planning, teaching, and assessment strategies related to students' professional needs and interests;
3. Develop students' understanding of the relationship between research, scholarship, policy and practice, and use of this to reflect critically on their own professional contexts and practice;
4. Develop students' own ability to conduct rigorous classroom-based research or policy analysis in order to bring about innovation at classroom and institutional levels, and to disseminate their work as appropriate.

17. Programme learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding:

On completion of the iPGCE programme, students will be able to demonstrate:

K1	Knowledge and understanding of educational theory and key research in both general educational and subject-specific fields, and their application in educational contexts on a local and global scale.
K2	Critical understanding of educational principles and policy (at local, national and international level) and their impact on teaching and learning in an institutional context.
K3	Critical understanding of the nature of professional learning and the central role of critical reflection and practitioner research in enabling principled and informed change and innovation.
K4	Knowledge and understanding of the pedagogical implications arising from learners reflecting on their experiences on this programme.

Skills and other attributes:

On completion of the iPGCE programme, students will be able to demonstrate:

S1	A critical approach to educational literature, and an ability to evaluate and reflect on its implications for their own personal and professional theories and practices.
S2	An ability to produce written work, which clearly synthesises theory, research, policy and practice, drawing on a wide range of relevant literature, and developing a clear and sustained argument.
S3	An ability to plan, implement, and reflect on an educational activity, drawing on relevant pedagogical and policy literature.
S4	An ability to express clearly, coherently and reflexively their positions with regard to theory, research, policy and practice, and to reflect critically on these in relation to their own professional contexts and practice.
S5	An ability to develop and apply research skills in relation to an ethically conducted small-scale study of relevance to their professional context.

18. Teaching, learning and assessment

Development of the learning outcomes is promoted through the following teaching and learning methods:

The programme is fully online. An introductory period during the first weeks of the programme consists of reflective tasks, learning to use the library, and online discussions, setting the expectations for the rest of the programme and ensuring all students begin the first module on a similar footing. The University has its own online learning environment (MOLE), and this will be used in conjunction with other technologies, as appropriate, in line with the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy, to develop a flexible approach. Teaching and Learning takes place at numerous levels:

Independent Study

This method is fundamental to and continuous throughout the course. Students will critically engage with, reflect on and formulate perspectives on important issues and debates concerning teaching, schools and other

teaching institutions, and education from relevant academic and other literatures (K1, K2, K3, S1, S3). The iPGCE will have a dedicated space on MOLE (shared with the MA Education, Teaching and Learning to enable creation of study interest groups and facilitate progression) comprising on-line study units, video presentations and other teaching- and research-related materials and resources, which facilitate research-led teaching and introduction to the work of various staff members in the School of Education (K1, K2, K4, S1, S4). Independent enquiry will have a collaborative dimension in a community of practice experienced through regular dialogue with both staff and other students, and debate in a range of independent activities facilitated technologically, as outlined below.

Interactive Collaboration

All students on the programmes are professionals, at varying stages in their career, and the programme actively seeks students to connect with each other and share their learning and reflections through interactive, scheduled discussions, both at synchronous and asynchronous level. The programme is not just a pathway for students' individual learning journeys, but a "community of learning" (L&T Strategy, Excellence in Practice). The diversity of the student body is a particular strength, and students will be actively encouraged to explore their role from a variety of perspectives, through a local, national, and global lens (TUOS Strategic Plan) (K3, K4, S4, S5). This forms an important aspect of students' journeys to becoming "self-directed learners" (L&T Strategy, Excellence in Practice).

Personal Supervision

Each student is assigned a personal supervisor. This supervisor will be advising on assignment proposals and drafts, as well as completing the marking of the student's work. This will facilitate the establishment of a relationship, and marking policies facilitate the "carrying forward" of feedback to ensure progressive growth and development (K1, K2, K3, K4, S1, S2, S3, S4, S5).

Opportunities to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes are provided through the following assessment methods:

Assessment develops as the programme progresses. The first module consists of two pieces of work (each 3,000 words in length) to ease transition into the programme, and to allow a dual focus on reflective practice (Assignment 1 - K1, K2, K3, K4, S1, S2, S3, S4) and advancing the students' skills in critical use of literature (Assignments 1 and 2 - K1, K2, K3, K4, S1, S2, S3, S4), while beginning to identify areas of particular interest, and/or development needs.

Assessment for Module 2 consists of a report on a small-scale research study, allowing students to explore relevant educational theory, and ensuring that all students have the opportunity to conduct research and explore what difference this might make to practice (K2, K3, K4, S1, S2, S4, S5).

19. Reference points

The learning outcomes have been developed to reflect the following points of reference:

- University of Sheffield Learning and Teaching Strategy (2016-2021)
- Faculty of Social Sciences Learning and Teaching Plan
- School of Education Strategic Plan
- Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (Masters level descriptors)
- Sheffield Masters Graduate (Final Version, LTC Autumn 2016-17)
- QAA Framework
- University of Sheffield Strategic Plan
- Feedback from external examiners

20. Programme structure and regulations

Students will take two online 30-credit modules for the programme, over the course of one academic year. Each module is taught by means of access to specially developed online resources, and to tutorials and asynchronous group discussions.

Modules 1 and 2 consist of a wide range of structured teaching materials on Teaching and Learning and Practice-based Enquiry. These consist of: an introduction to general principles within education, including teaching, planning, assessment, and policy; opportunities to pursue an issue or area related to students' own

context and/or subject with the aim of furthering subject-pedagogical knowledge and understanding critical reflection; and support for carrying out a piece of classroom- or institution-based research.

Assignments are submitted at the end of each semester, unless a module has multiple assessment points (e.g. Module 1).

In order to qualify for the award of iPGCE, students are required to complete successfully two assignments of 6,000 words or equivalent, based on the work of the two online modules.

Detailed information about the structure of programmes, regulations concerning assessment and progression and descriptions of individual modules are published in the University Calendar available on-line at <http://www.shef.ac.uk/govern/calendar/regs.html>.

21. Student development over the course of study

The students' subject specific knowledge and understanding is developed in relation to the focus of each module and is supported by means of online materials and communications and tutorial support. Students are supported in the development of skills, knowledge and understanding through reading and online group discussions. The progression built into the programme with regard to the development of critical awareness, ability to synthesise research and write critically is reflected through the online modules and is reinforced through the non-assessed university support resources. The development of key skills runs throughout the programme and students are taught critical reading and writing skills, including literature reviews, and are supported in the development of appropriate academic conventions. Building on the initial assignment, the planning and implementation of a teaching activity, critical engagement with the literature expands in future assignments, not only in the way students engage with the literature, but also in terms of selecting and evaluating appropriate sources in relation to their own research.

As students progress throughout the course, they are expected to think of themselves not only as practitioners, but progressively as potential innovators and change-makers, considering the role they and their research might have within their relevant context. Reflective practice is built into all assignments, with Module 2 focusing specifically on how the students' research might impact on their wider practice. As such, dissemination (at an appropriate level) of student research will be actively and progressively encouraged

22. Criteria for admission to the programme

Detailed information regarding admission to programmes is available from the University's On-Line Prospectus at <http://www.shef.ac.uk/courses/>.

A person may be admitted as a candidate who:

- is a recognised graduate in an appropriate discipline or has gained educational qualifications deemed acceptable by the Head of School; or
- has completed not less than three years' service in educational work approved by the Head of School, and submitted evidence of a suitable level of academic writing, in the form of a 2,000 word academic essay on an educational topic of the candidate's choice.

For students whose first language is not English, the School of Education requires an IELTS score of 6.5 with a minimum of 6.0 in each component, or equivalent. Students should have a post in an educational context or have the opportunity to work or volunteer in an education context during the programme.

23. Additional information

This specification represents a concise statement about the main features of the programme and should be considered alongside other sources of information provided by the teaching department(s) and the University. In addition to programme specific information, further information about studying at The University of Sheffield can be accessed via our Student Services web site at <http://www.shef.ac.uk/ssid>.