



The  
University  
Of  
Sheffield.

## 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

### Programme Details

1. Programme title	Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)
2. Programme code	EDCT012 PGCE (Core) EDCT009 PGCE (Lead Partner)
3. QAA FHEQ level	Level 7
4. Faculty	Social Sciences
5. Department	School of Education
6. Other departments providing credit bearing modules for the programme	Not applicable
7. Accrediting Professional or Statutory Body	Department for Education (DfE)
8. Date of production/revision	October 2023, March 2026

Awards	Type of award	Duration
9. Final award	Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)	1 year (non-standard dates - early start required)
10. Intermediate awards	Postgraduate Certificate in Applied Professional Studies	1 year (non-standard dates - early start required)
	Professional Graduate Certificate in Education	1 year (non-standard dates - early start required)

### Programme Codes

11. JACS code(s) <i>Select between one and three codes from the <a href="#">HESA website</a>.</i>	X130		
12. HECoS code(s) <i>Select between one and three codes from the <a href="#">HECoS vocabulary</a>.</i>	100465		

## Programme Delivery

13. Mode of study	Full-time
14. Mode of delivery	Full-time

## 15. Background to the programme and subject area

The University of Sheffield has provided courses in initial teacher training for over 50 years. The PGCE is designed to prepare student teachers to teach in the 11-19 age range. University tutors and teachers in partnership schools who contribute to the course aim to help student teachers acquire understanding and competence in strategies of teaching, learning, assessment and classroom management.

The course has been carefully designed to enable students to develop into critical and reflective practitioners, able to examine and develop their existing beliefs about teaching and learning in secondary education. Students learn this experientially, from their university-based as well as their school-based work. They are encouraged to learn about existing pedagogical theory from literature as it relates to practice, and to formulate their own personal theories. They also learn to value the role played by research in pedagogical development, and to develop and apply research skills themselves to educational issues.

Students benefit from a range of innovative teaching methodologies, in both subject specific work and the broader field of Educational and Professional Studies. In line with the research profile of the School of Education, the programme is research led, and benefits from the expertise in teaching and research of its tutors, as well as guest lectures and seminars from leading academics and practising teachers.

University of Sheffield initial teacher training is highly rated by OFSTED and its quality is indicated by its position in the national league tables. In 2022 we were successfully reaccredited through a rigorous process applied to all ITE providers in the country. During this process, 20% of providers were unsuccessful in their application for reaccreditation and are no longer able to offer ITE. Our newly accredited programme is due to launch in September 2024. We have a long record of excellent recruitment and students arrive with strong academic profiles. ITE graduates from the University of Sheffield are much sought after and the proportion of students progressing into the teaching profession is higher than the national average.

## 16. Programme aims

The Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) aims to:	
<b>A1</b>	develop students' critical understanding of research, policies and practice relating to education in general and secondary education in particular;
<b>A2</b>	facilitate a developmental approach to their own professional practice through engagement with advanced scholarship and application of transferable skills of analysis and reflection;
<b>A3</b>	develop students' understanding of the relationship between research and practice.

## 17. Programme learning outcomes

<b>Knowledge and understanding</b>		
On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:		
		<b>Links to Aim(s)</b>
<b>K1</b>	Pedagogical theory and key research in both general educational and subject-specific fields, and its application in secondary schools.	A1
<b>K2</b>	Educational policy and its impact on teaching and learning as well as on schools as institutions.	A1, A3
<b>K3</b>	The nature of practitioner research.	A1
<b>K4</b>	Achievement of the Teachers' Standards as set out by the Department for Education as related to knowledge and understanding.	A2, A3
<b>Skills and other attributes</b>		
On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to:		
<b>S1</b>	Synthesise theory, research, policy and practice, drawing on relevant literature, and developing a clear and sustained argument.	A1
<b>S2</b>	Demonstrate a critical approach to such literature, and an ability to evaluate and reflect on its implications for their own personal theories and practices.	A1, A3
<b>S3</b>	Express clearly and coherently their positions with regard to theory, research, policy and practice.	A2
<b>S4</b>	Achievement of the Teachers' Standards as set out by the Department for Education as related to skills and professional values.	A2, A3

### Programme Learning Outcomes for exit awards

Students who are recommended for the award of Postgraduate Certificate in Applied Professional Studies will have demonstrated K1-K3 and S1-S3 only.

Students who are recommended for the award of the Professional Graduate Certificate in Education will have demonstrated K1-K3 and S1-S3 at UG Level 6 only (failed assignments are reassessed against L6 assessment criteria) and K4 and S4.

## 18. Learning and teaching methods

The programme's teaching is research-led. It makes reference to cutting-edge research in pedagogy and draws on staff's own scholarship activity whilst also encouraging the development of students' own research skills in relation to their practice. The curriculum offered goes well beyond the minimum requirements set out in the Core Content Framework for Initial Teacher Training ([Initial teacher training \(ITT\): core content framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612227/initial_teacher_training_core_content_framework.pdf)). Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own professional development, learning to analyse their own teaching, assess their pupils' learning, and reflect on the implications for improvement. They are also encouraged to adopt a rigorous, research-driven approach, which enables them to innovate, evaluate critically and enhance learning standards. As such, much of the course is conducted through workshop activities, with individual and small-group tutorials to offer space for reflection.

Development towards learning outcomes is enabled through the following teaching and learning

methods:

**Seminars (staff and student led):** used to develop students' subject-specific knowledge and understanding, analytical skills and critical reflection. These are held in subject groups as well as cross-curricular Educational and Professional Studies groups and generally engage students in activities to enable them to construct their own ideas and compare them with those of others through discussion and reflection. (K1, K2, K3, S1, S2, S3).

**Lectures:** a limited number of lectures are used to expose students to key information in areas such as Teaching and the Law, seeking a first teaching post, behaviour management and EAL. (K1, K2, K4, S4).

**Workshops:** used to develop subject-specific knowledge and understanding, cognitive and analytical skills and a range of key transferable skills. Generally contain active group work. (K1, K4, S3, S4).

**Tutorials:** used to respond to students' enquiries and engage in dialogue on coursework; to promote further reflection and analysis through discussion and questioning with regard to teaching activity; to develop students' ability to reason effectively and communicate arguments and points of view clearly and professionally. Students may also arrange to meet tutors when necessary in the University or in schools. Much use is made of e-mail and telephone contact. (S2).

**Intensive training and Practice (ITAP) weeks:** four weeks are planned through the year, each with a specific focus on a key area of teaching practice such as developing routines at the start of lessons. Each week is a blend of university-based and school-based elements, and the aim is to begin the week by learning about the specific area of practice, trial it in school, receive feedback, re-try and then reflect on development so far. (K1)

**Blackboard/PebblePad:** students are able to participate in on-line discussions, share and evaluate resources, have access to key readings, and produce reflective journals. (K1, K2, S1, S2, S3).

**School Placements:** used to develop students' ability to apply their knowledge to practice. Teachers in partnership schools contribute to and support the aims of the course to help students acquire understanding and competence in strategies of teaching, learning, assessment and classroom management. This takes place through observations of student teaching, feedback, evaluation and regular meetings with school-based staff. (K1, K2, K3, K4, S4).

**Written reflections:** student teachers regularly reflect on their development using the Teacher Development Portfolio on PebblePad. (A2, S1, S2, S3).

## 19. Assessment and feedback methods

Assessment is a blend of:

Subject-specific and cross-curricular assignments marked at Masters level.

Formative and summative assessment of teaching on placement. This assessment is a collaborative process between university subject tutors and school-based subject mentors. Communication is enabled between all parties by using our Teacher Development Portfolio, hosted on PebblePad and shared between students, tutors and school-based mentors. The formative assessment methods allow students to understand their progress throughout the year, and target setting and individual support is used to enable all to successfully meet the Teachers' Standards by the end of the second main school placement.

## 20. Programme structure and student development

The PGCE is complex because of the interrelated nature of theory and practice, university and school-based learning and professional and academic development. This requires a holistic approach to student development throughout the course and for this reason a non-modular approach is necessary.

The ITT Criteria (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/initial-teacher-training-criteria>) state that

the course must last a minimum of 180 days. This includes 120 days of school placement, 20 days of Intensive Training and Practice (10 days of which must be in school) and 40 days of university-based provision. One third of Semester One is spent in the university and two thirds in school, whereas in Semester Two four fifths of students' time is school based.

Students who successfully complete the academic elements of the programme at Masters level as well as the school experience are considered for the award of Postgraduate Certificate in Education. The small number of students who do not succeed in all elements of the PGCE programme, may be considered for one of the following exit awards – Postgraduate Certificate in Applied Professional Studies: a 60 credit M level award, recognising success in the academic elements of the programme at Masters level.

- Professional Graduate Certificate in Education: a 60 credit H level award, recognising success in the academic elements of the programme according to Honours Level criteria plus successful completion of school experience, leading to the recommendation of Qualified Teacher Status

### **Student development:**

The early weeks of the course blend university-based learning with school-based practice. The university-based elements introduce key elements of pedagogical knowledge and reflective practice. At this early stage, any school-based practice is low-stakes and not assessed. Students will teach elements of lessons with small groups at this stage. During these early weeks, students undertake the first two Intensive Training and Practice weeks (see Section 18) to support their development in key areas.

As the course progresses, students develop their ability to apply this knowledge to practice through an incremental increase in the proportion of school-based, compared to university-based, learning. Assessment requirements also increase as the course progresses to reflect the rapid professional development required of students.

Students are expected to take responsibility for their own professional development, thus becoming increasingly autonomous as the course progresses. Their skills in analysis and reflection are enhanced by use of a range of reflective tools, for example the Teacher Development Portfolio in which they record evidence of progress and set targets for further development across all elements of the course.

The above aspects of academic and professional development are reflected in the research dimension of the course and the significance of research for pedagogical development is considered throughout the course.

The final stages of the course offer students the opportunity to consider their future professional development as Early Career Teachers by means of an ECT transition document.

Following completion of the PGCE, students can elect to go on to study for the Masters in Applied Professional Studies in Education (MA APSE). This course is specifically designed to follow on from the PGCE course, and supports teachers in the early years of their careers.

Detailed information about the structure of programmes, regulations concerning assessment and progression and descriptions of individual modules are published in the University Calendar available online at <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/calendar/>.

## **21. Criteria for admission to the programme**

A First degree class 2.2 or above (or equivalent qualification) in a relevant subject.  
For Maths, Physics or Physics with Maths, either a first degree class 2.2 or above (or equivalent qualification) in a relevant subject, or a first degree class 3 or above, plus relevant A level at grade B or above (or equivalent qualification).

Additional entrance requirements to meet national legislation (currently, GCSE grade C or above or Grade 4 or above in English and Mathematics).

## 22. Reference points

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

Subject Benchmark Statements

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements>

Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (2014)

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks.pdf>

University Vision and Strategic Plan

<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/vision>

[Initial teacher training \(ITT\): core content framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

## 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>.