

## UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

**GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

# SECONDARY PGCE – GENERAL INFORMATION

The University of Exeter has an excellent record in Initial Teacher Education (ITE), graded ‘outstanding’ by Ofsted in all aspects. **The training is delivered within a strong school-university partnership informed by Government policy and up-to-date research in secondary education.** The secondary PGCE course has developed effective working relationships with some 150 schools across the SW region. Your school-based work (teaching practice) will be based in two of these schools.

The Secondary PGCE year starts in September. **Before you join the university, you will spend two weeks of preliminary experience in school: one week in a primary and one week in a secondary school.** These should be schools of your choice, preferably maintained (state-funded) schools convenient to the area in which you live. They do not have to be members of the Exeter ITE Partnership. It is your responsibility to contact the two schools and you should arrange to visit them in the autumn term, before the start of the university term. Schools usually co-operate fully with requests for observation visits once you have had a place confirmed on the PGCE course. We provide a small number of tasks to be completed during your preliminary experience weeks so that you can make the best use of your time in the two schools.

The university teaching term starts at the end of September/early October. Whilst you will spend most of the autumn term based on the St Luke’s campus, you will spend two weeks during the second half of the term in your first placement school. The school will organise induction activities to introduce you to its staff, systems and procedures. You will also meet your Principal Subject Tutor (PST) responsible for your work in the department and be assigned to a Mentor who will take an overview of your professional progression as a teacher. You will be expected to undertake some short episodes of teaching during these two weeks.

From January, you will spend almost all your time in school. Your first placement will last until close to the end of the spring term, when you will transfer to your second placement school. Again, a brief programme of activities will be arranged to familiarise you with a new and difference school context but you will be expected to being teaching the classes on your timetable rapidly, as your confidence in teaching will now be much higher. You will return to your second school after the Easter break to complete your training. During your school-based work, you will connect back with the University on five occasions for seminar days, spaced at roughly monthly intervals. These seminar days are an opportunity for university tutors to support your work in schools with further theoretical input and also give you the opportunity to reflect on and share good practice with other trainees, as well as re-establishing social contacts and activities! The seminar days are a valuable and important part of the PGCE course.

The schools in which University of Exeter teacher trainees work are situated throughout the SW region, from Penzance in the far west to Poole and Bournemouth in the east and across Devon and Somerset. **Every effort is made to take into consideration the personal circumstances and preferences of trainees when allocating their placements.** Trainees generally live in and around Exeter for the autumn term, and then move to the area their placements will be in. **If you already live in the area, and especially if you have family commitments such as children at school, we will do our best to arrange school placements for you that are as convenient as possible.** However, our flexibility in this respect is very limited. We cannot guarantee that your school placements will be close to where you live so it is essential that you do not enter into an annual accommodation contract if you are moving into the Exeter area to start the PGCE. Most trainees wait until the autumn term to arrange their accommodation for their school-based work when they have met other trainees going to the same school or area. To help with this, once you start the course, you will have access to a list of short-term accommodation throughout the region. Although not vetted by the University, the details in this list have been passed to us by schools, private individuals and former trainees and have been helpful in the past in assisting trainees and groups of trainees find accommodation for the spring/summer terms.

The Exeter Model of ITE is progressive and developmental, supported at all stages by university and school tutors. When you start work in school, you will at first observe lessons and participate in a teaching support role, depending on the activities included in each lesson. You will rapidly start to teach discrete parts of lessons, known as ‘episodes’, (for example, an English trainee might introduce a poem to the class). You will be responsible for the planning and delivery of these episodes after discussion and with the support of your PST (Principal Subject Tutor, the subject-specialist teacher in your department who is responsible for your day-today support and supervision) and the class teacher (who may be the same person). Gradually, as your confidence in class builds, you will teach longer episodes, working towards taking whole lessons as and when you and your PST agree that it is appropriate for you and the pupils you teach. Your ‘contact time’ with classes in school is limited to about twelve hours per week, so that you can prepare for all episodes and lessons that you teach, undertake appropriate assessment as you begin to take responsibility for your classes, and also have time for detailed critical reflection on your teaching performance and how this is related to your pupils’ learning. In addition, there will be set tasks and two Masters level university assignments to complete.

Your progress will be formally discussed with you on a weekly basis by your PST. You will also meet with your Mentor (a teacher from a different department who takes an overview of your progress) in a ‘supervisory conference’ three times per term to review your progress and to set targets for your further professional development as a teacher. Contact with the university is maintained during your time in school by visits from a university visiting tutor (UVT) who will supervise your school-based work. Normally your UVT visits you twice: once in the spring term and once in the summer term. Extra visits may be arranged if necessary to support your training. Your schools will provide progress reports at the end of each ‘phase’ of training within the Exeter Model of Teacher Education. During final placement, your placement school will provide a summative, school-based work assessment that contributes to the university recommendation for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) at the end of the course. The university will make this recommendation to the Department for Education when you have obtained a satisfactory final progress report on your school-based work, as well as achieving a pass mark or better for your two university assignments (submitted beginning of January and end of April). These assignments are assessed at level 7 (masters). Successful completion of the Secondary PGCE programme means that you will be awarded a Post Graduate Certificate in Education with 60 masters’ level credits. These credits would enable you to progress smoothly onto the part time MA in Education programme at the University of Exeter following your PGCE year.

The campus at St Luke’s provides a very pleasant backdrop with a distinctive collegiate atmosphere for the university element of your training. A range of facilities are available, including an extensive educational library with a well-stocked journals section, computer suites, sports hall with swimming pool, and cafe. Additional facilities are available on the main university campus, a short bus ride away across town. The St Luke’s campus is shared with the School of Sport and Health Science and with the Medical School. Car parking on the campus is restricted and regulated by official permits. While on the PGCE course, you are therefore advised to make travel arrangements that do not involve bringing a car into the city. A park-and-ride scheme is operated from car parks situated on some of the city approach roads and we strongly encourage you to make use of such schemes if you travel in from outlying areas. The bus station is conveniently situated for the St Luke’s campus, being about five minutes’ walk away along the Heavitree Road.

If you have any queries or concerns about the Secondary PGCE course at Exeter, please bring them with you to interview when you will be given a chance to raise any issues about the course content and organisation or the facilities available.

