



**QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST**

SCHOOL OF
SOCIAL SCIENCES,
EDUCATION AND
SOCIAL WORK

Initial Teacher Education

Post-Primary Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)

Application Guide (2026/27 Entry)

Application Deadline: 1 November 2025

If you apply after 1 November, we might not be able to consider your application. This depends on how many successful applications we receive on time. We process late applications if there are still places available for that subject.

Thank you for your interest in the Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programme at Queen's University Belfast.

Before you begin your online application, please read the information in this guide carefully. It's designed to help you understand the application process and what to expect.

At the end of this guide, you'll find a checklist to make sure you've completed all the necessary steps.

We hope you find this guide helpful as you prepare to apply!

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Each year, we receive over 400 high-quality applications for the PGCE programme. We welcome all applications that meet our entry requirements.

The PGCE is a **36-week, full-time course** leading to a professional qualification in Initial Teacher Education. The qualification is accredited by the [General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland \(GTCNI\)](#) and confers **Eligibility to Teach (Qualified Teacher Status)** in all publicly funded schools across the UK. Please note: Letters to assist with [Teaching Council \(Ireland\)](#) registration are produced on request.

The PGCE course is delivered by the School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work (SSESW) at Queen's University Belfast and school experiences (placements) take place in a range of schools throughout Northern Ireland.

Queen's University offers seven post-primary PGCE pathways:

- English
- Computing, Digital Skills and Creative Enterprise
- Mathematics
- Modern Languages
- Religious Education
- Science
- Social Science

Irish Medium Education (IME) Strand

Extra places are available for applicants interested in teaching their subject **through the medium of Irish** in Irish-medium schools. IME places are **limited**. Priority is given to applicants who offer a subject **other than Irish language**, with **Mathematics and Science** being especially sought after.

- IME students also complete the **Certificate in Bilingual Education**, awarded in partnership with [St Mary's University College, Belfast](#).
- The IME strand is an **optional, additional qualification**.

If your IME application is **unsuccessful**, or you choose **not to pursue** the IME strand at any stage:

- Your **PGCE offer remains valid**
- The IME certificate is **optional** and does not affect your core PGCE qualification

IME Selection Process

If you wish to be considered for an IME place:

- Indicate this clearly in your **PGCE application**.

- If you accept your PGCE offer, your details will be shared with the **IME Co-ordinator at St Mary's University College**.

After shortlisting by St Mary's University College, you will be invited to an interview that includes:

- An **oral test**
- A **written test**

Successful IME applicants will:

- Attend a **residential programme** in **July/August**
- Participate in **additional classes** held on occasional Saturdays and in **June 2026**

IME School Placements

These are arranged by university/college staff. IME students will complete:

- **First placement** in an **English-medium school**
- **Second placement** in an **Irish-medium school**

PGCE Course Details

A summary of the course content and structure is available in the **programme specification**, which you can find on the Queen's University [Programme Specification webpage](#).

Late Applications

We continue to accept late applications after the application deadline of 1st November 2025, however they will be considered **only if there are places available after all the on-time applications have been processed**. Some subjects are full after the on-time applications have been processed and we will close the application portal for these subjects.

Normally we do not process or communicate about late applications before May/June at the earliest and early August at the latest.

If you have not heard from us by mid-August, then we will not have been able to consider your application and you should reapply for the following year. Please note that we may not be able to respond to your application if it is late.

Need Help?

If you have questions about your qualifications, planned studies, or relevant experience, we're happy to help before you submit your application. Please contact: **PGCE Admissions Team**, sseswpgeadmissions@qub.ac.uk

For questions about the application portal, e.g., technical difficulties or if your offer isn't showing in the portal, please contact: **Postgraduate Admissions, Admissions and Access Service, Queen's University Belfast**, pg.apply@qub.ac.uk

We look forward to receiving your application.

Entry Requirements

Academic Qualifications

Each PGCE subject pathway has its own distinct entry requirements, please see the online Course Finder for details:

- [English](#)
- [Computing, Digital Skills and Creative Enterprise](#)
- [Mathematics](#)
- [Modern Languages](#)
- [Religious Education](#)
- [Science](#)
- [Social Science](#)

To apply for the PGCE programme, you must meet the following criteria **at the time of application**:

Degree Requirement

- You must hold—or be completing this academic year—an **Honours degree** that is acceptable to the University.
- At least **50% of your degree content** must be in the subject you wish to teach through the PGCE pathway.
- If you are successful in obtaining an offer following completion of the selection process, you must provide official confirmation that you have satisfied any conditions of your offer by 12 noon on **Thursday 27th August 2026** as the course will commence on Monday 7th September 2026.

A Level Requirement

- Some PGCE subjects may also require an **A level qualification**.

GCSE Qualifications

- You must have **GCSE Mathematics** and **GCSE English Language** at **grade C/4 or above**, or an equivalent qualification that is acceptable to Queen's University Belfast.
- These qualifications are required to register with the professional accrediting authority, the **General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI)**, and to be eligible to teach in grant-aided schools in Northern Ireland.
If you're unsure whether your Level 2 qualification is equivalent, please contact the GTCNI Registration Team at registration@gtcni.org.uk.

Important:

- **Essential Skills Level 2** qualifications are **not accepted**, as they are not recognised as equivalent by the professional accrediting authority, the GTCNI.
- **University Access courses** must meet the standards set out in [DE Circular 2010/03](#). This means the modules must be in **English Language** and/or **Mathematics**, and content must be comparable in breadth and depth to GCSEs.

Important: having a higher qualification (such as a degree) does not necessarily replace the need for GCSE or A level qualifications.

English Language Requirements for International Students

If you're an international student and **English is not your first language**, you must show that you are proficient in English.

- **Non-EEA nationals** must also meet the **UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI)** requirements for English language to obtain a student visa.

To meet these requirements, you'll need to provide:

- **Evidence of an IELTS score of 6.5**, taken within the last two years, with **no individual component score below 5.5**,
- Or an **equivalent qualification** that is acceptable to Queen's University Belfast.

This is in addition to the general entry requirement of having the equivalent of GCSE English Language at Grade C.

For full details on English language requirements for both EEA and non-EEA nationals, visit: www.qub.ac.uk/EnglishLanguageReqs

Health Assessment & Fitness to Practise

Health Assessment Requirement

To study on this professional course, you must be deemed **'fit to study'** in a professional environment.

- If offered a place, you will be required to complete a **Health Assessment Form** before starting.
- You will need to provide your **vaccination record**.
- Please answer all questions **fully and honestly**.
- The form will be reviewed by the University's **Occupational Health (OH) team**. If further information is needed, they will contact you directly to arrange a follow-up consultation.

We recommend familiarising yourself with the University's ['Fitness to Practise Procedure'](#). Students who are not deemed 'fit to practise' will not be permitted to participate in the **practice elements** of the course.

Convictions & Criminal Records

Disclosure Requirement

As the PGCE falls under **Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Groups legislation**, you must disclose **any items on your criminal record**, including:

- Spent sentences and cautions (including verbal cautions)
- Bind-over orders
- Anti-Social Behaviour Orders
- Prosecutions pending

An **enhanced disclosure check** will be carried out by **Access NI** for all successful applicants. This will incur a cost of £32 to the applicant.

If you acquire a criminal record **after submitting your application**, you must inform the **Head of Admissions and Access Service** in writing **without delay**.

Certificate of Good Conduct

If you were born outside the UK/Ireland or have lived outside the UK/Ireland for **more than one calendar year**, you must provide a **Certificate of Good Conduct** from each country where you resided for over a year.

This is in addition to the Access NI enhanced disclosure check.

Guidance on obtaining a Certificate of Good Conduct is available at:

[Criminal records checks for overseas applicants - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants)

It is advisable to arrange for these certificates **before leaving the country** you currently reside in.

Deferred Entry

Deferred entry is **not normally permitted**, except in **exceptional circumstances** (e.g., illness).

If you are offered a place but do not take it up, you will usually be expected to **reapply the following year**.

Submitting an Application

Before You Apply

Check Your Documents:

Please review the **Document Checklist** (page 17) before starting your application to ensure you have everything required.

Application Portal:

Visit the [How to Apply](#) webpage for detailed guidance on submitting your application via the **Queen's Portal**.

- **New applicants** must register on the Queen's Portal to create an account.
- **Current Queen's students** can log in using their Queen's email address and password.

Application Steps:

Guidance is provided within the portal. You'll be taken through several steps, including:

- Personal information
- Course selection
- Previous study
- Referee details...and more.

Shortlisting Criteria:

We reserve the right to apply enhanced shortlisting criteria if the course is over-subscribed.

Interviews:

Applicants who are shortlisted will be invited to attend an interview.

Important:

Please ensure the email address you provide is **correct and active**, as all communication will be sent to this address.

Application Deadline

The deadline for **on-time applications** is **1 November 2025**.

Applications received **after this date** may not be considered. This depends on the number of successful on-time applications received for each subject.

Incomplete Applications

Applications will **not be reviewed** by the shortlisting panel if they are missing any of the following:

- Full academic transcripts (including all completed and in-progress modules)
- Proof of GCSE or A Level qualifications (where required)
- A completed Supplementary Application Form (see below)
- Referee contact details

Academic Details – Required Documentation

Certificates and Transcripts:

You must upload the following documents with your application:

- **GCSE certificates** (or equivalent) **and A-level certificates** (or equivalent), where required
- **University transcript** showing:
 - All modules (completed and in-progress)
 - Marks for each module
 - Your full name
 - The name of the awarding university
- **Degree award certificate** (if available)

For Current Students:

If you are currently completing your degree (e.g., in your final year), your transcript must include **all modules**, not just those completed to date.

Degree Parchment:

If you have completed your undergraduate or postgraduate degree, please also upload a copy of your **degree parchment**.

Language Requirements:

Transcripts must be in **English**. If any part of your transcript is in another language, you must include an **authorised English translation** with your application.

Verification at Registration:

If your application is successful, you will be required to present **original documentary evidence** of your qualifications during registration and enrolment.

Supplementary Application Form (SAF)

You must upload a completed Supplementary Application Form (SAF) – this is a Word document (available for downloading in the ‘Documents’ section), which you must complete and upload (see screenshots below). Your application will not proceed to the shortlisting stage if you do not submit a completed SAF.

The following **series of screenshots** show where to find the blank SAF in the online application portal, and how to download/ upload after you have completed it.

The document folders below highlight where you need to provide evidence in support of your application. If a folder has Required set to Yes, you must provide evidence in order to submit your application; if Required is No, you may return to your application after submission to upload the evidence, but please be aware that this could result in a longer processing time.

To upload evidence, please click the Actions arrow and select Upload. Where applicable, additional information on what should be included in the evidence upload is provided.

Documents

Add new document

Document Type ↑	Description	Required	Uploaded	Actions
Secondary/High School Level Qualification		Yes	No	▼
Supplementary Information		Yes	No	▼

You can either click on 'Supplementary Information' or click on the red Actions arrow.

Supplementary Information	Yes	No	▼
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Upload

The View Details popup will open and display the following:

View details

Document Type

Supplementary Information

Applicants for this course are required to complete and upload a supplementary form as part of their application. **Download form here**, complete and upload below.

There are no records to display.

Attach a file



Choose files No file chosen

If you upload a document in error, please ensure you delete it before continuing.

Save

Download the blank SAF from the 'Download form here' link (in red), complete it, use the 'Choose files' button to select the document you have completed, and click on Save to upload it.

Once uploaded, the Supplementary Information document bucket will show that Uploaded has changed to Yes, and you can now move on to the next step in your application.

Document Type ↑	Description	Required	Uploaded	Actions
Secondary/High School Level Qualification		Yes	No	
Supplementary Information		Yes	Yes	

Supplementary Application Form (SAF) Guidance

Importance of the SAF:

The **Supplementary Application Form (SAF)** is a key part of your application. Please read the **Guidance Notes on page 1** of the SAF carefully before completing it.

Who Will See Your SAF:

The information you provide will be reviewed by:

- Members of the **interview panel**
- **Placement schools**, if you are offered a place on the course

Placement schools use the SAF to help decide whether to accept you for a placement. You should include **as much relevant information as possible**, such as:

- Your reasons for entering the teaching profession
- Any teaching experience
- Work with young people
- Industrial, commercial, professional, or other work experience
- Your current occupation or special interests

Using the SAF During Your Application:

You can refer to your completed SAF when filling out your **online application**.

Character Limits:

Some sections of the SAF have a **maximum of 500 characters**.

You may adjust the **font size** and **resize text boxes** to fit your content, but please **keep to the character limits** where specified.

Referee Details – What You Need to Provide

Referee Information:

You must supply the following details for **two character/professional referees**:

- Full name
- Email address
- Postal address

- Telephone number

These referees should be able to provide a reference that includes insight into your **character** and **suitability for the teaching profession**.

Who to Choose:

Ideally, your referees should be individuals who have **managed or supervised you**, particularly in:

- Paid or voluntary work in a school
- Activities involving direct work with young people in an educational setting

Who Not to Choose:

Avoid listing referees who:

- Have only known you personally (e.g., family friends)
- Knew you a long time ago (e.g., former teachers)

Before You Apply:

Please inform your referees in advance that they may be contacted by email to provide a reference. Referees will only be contacted **if you are shortlisted for interview**.

Accuracy Matters:

Ensure all referee details are **current and correct** to avoid delays in processing your application.

Shortlisting and Interview

Shortlisting Process and Outcomes

All applications are reviewed to determine whether they meet the **standard entry requirements**. Applications that do **not meet the criteria** will be marked as **unsuccessful**.

After shortlisting, you will be notified in one of two ways:

- **If shortlisted:** You will receive an **interview invitation by email** (sent to the address provided in your application). We aim to give a minimum of 10 working days' notice of interview.
- **If not shortlisted:** You will receive a **notification via the application portal** confirming your application was unsuccessful.

Interview Process

Availability:

Please indicate any dates you are **unavailable for interview** on your Supplementary Application Form. We will try to avoid these dates, but you should make every effort to attend the interview as scheduled. A **maximum of two interview dates** will be offered.

Unable to Attend:

If you are unwell and cannot attend your interview, contact the PGCE Admissions Team immediately: **sseswpgceadmissions@qub.ac.uk**

Accessibility:

If you have a disability and require **reasonable adjustments** for your interview, please specify these when confirming your attendance.

Interview Format

- Most PGCE interviews for **on-time applications** take place between **December and mid-February**.
- Interviews are normally held **in person** on the **Queen's University Belfast campus**.
- Reasonable adjustments are available for applicants living **outside the UK/Ireland**.

Interview Invitation

A member of the PGCE team will contact you via the **email registered on the Queen's Portal** with:

- Interview details
- Format
- Preparation instructions

Important: Interview invitations will **not appear in the Application Portal**. Please check your email regularly.

Application Status & Outcomes

Your application status will remain '**Under Review**' until it is updated to one of the following:

- **Successful**
- **Unsuccessful**
- **Waiting List**

Unsuccessful decisions are processed after all interviews in a subject area are complete.

Feedback is available upon request for unsuccessful applicants.

- Request feedback at: sseswpgceadmissions@qub.ac.uk
- Please note: The selection panel cannot engage in extended correspondence.

Successful and waiting list decisions are processed in batches by subject.

Next Steps After Interview

If Successful:

You will need to:

- Accept your offer via the application portal
- Complete the **Consent to Share** and **Health Declaration** forms. Further details will be provided in the **Offer Holder Guide**.

If Placed on the Waiting List:

- You may be offered a place if another applicant declines their offer.
- Offers may be made **up to the start of August 2026**.
- If you have not received an offer by **mid-August**, your application has been unsuccessful. We encourage you to **reapply the following year**.
- If you wish to be **removed from the waiting list**, please notify us at:
sseswpgceadmissions@qub.ac.uk

Fees and Funding

Course Fees

Course fees are listed on the [Course Finder](#).

Student Finance

Successful applicants may be eligible for financial support. Before applying, check:

- What types of student finance are available
- Whether you qualify for funding

If you received funding for your undergraduate degree, you may be entitled to further support, as the PGCE is a **professional qualification**.

Further Information

Details on tuition fee payment options, schedules, and university contacts are available on the [Undergraduate Tuition Fees](#) webpage.

Equal Opportunities

Queen's University is committed to equality and diversity. Further information is available at <https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/wellbeing/PoliciesProcedures/StudentEqualityDiversity/>

The **Equality and Diversity Policy** is available to download as a PDF.

Reasonable adjustments will be made for successful applicants with disabilities that may impact their studies.

Appeals and Complaints

The **Postgraduate Admissions Policy** is available on the [Postgraduate Admissions Policy](#) webpage. The **Appeals and Complaints Procedure** is outlined in **Appendix 5** of the policy.

Document Checklist

Required Documents for Your Application

Incomplete applications **will not be shortlisted**. You must upload:

1. **GCSE Mathematics and English Language certificates** (Grade C or above)
 - *Note:* Essential Skills Level 2 is **not accepted** by the accrediting body (GTCNI).
 - University Access courses must meet **DE Circular 2010/03** requirements.

If your original certificates are unavailable when submitting your application, we will accept the following alternatives **for shortlisting purposes only** while you source replacement copies.

- Exam board statements of results
 - School statements of results (must be date-stamped and include a unique identifier such as your date of birth)
2. **Degree transcript(s)** showing:
 - All modules (completed and in-progress)
 - Your name and the university's name
 - Transcripts must be in **English**. If not, include an **authorised translation**.
 3. **Applicants with degrees from non-English instruction countries** must provide:
 - Certified translation of degree certificates
 - NIC-NARIC print-out
 4. **Programme-Specific Requirements:**
 - **Modern Languages:** Native speakers of languages other than English or Irish must provide evidence of a qualification in a curricular language at **Level B2 or above** (CEFR).
 - **Mathematics:** Applicants with numerically focused degrees (e.g., Accounting, Finance, Engineering) must provide evidence of **Maths A Level at Grade B or equivalent**.
 - **Religious Education:** Applicants with a 2.2 or above in Theology/Religious Studies must provide **A Level Religious Studies at Grade C**.
 - **Science:** Must include evidence of relevant **A Level(s)**.
 5. **Supplementary Application Form (SAF)**
All applicants must complete and upload the SAF.

We look forward to receiving your application and wish you the very best with your application.

Last Updated 5 September 2025