**PGCE Secondary Application Frequently Asked Questions**

**What degree class will you accept?**

* We accept candidates with good honours degrees. The majority of candidates have a 2.1 or above, though there is likely to be greater flexibility in shortage subject areas. However all applications are given serious consideration and we do take account of applicants who can demonstrate that they have other strengths and/or experiences that would make them suitable for a teacher training course.

**What if my degree doesn’t exactly match the subject I wish to teach?**

* The answer to this can be complex. Normally we would expect that at least 50% of your degree would be directly related to the subject you wished to teach. However there are cases where a related degree may be acceptable, e.g. many engineering degrees may include a substantial amount of maths which would be suitable for that subject, or a degree in sociology may be acceptable for a history course.
* Ultimately you need to be able to demonstrate to us that you have sufficient subject knowledge to teach your chosen subject. There are subject knowledge booster courses that exist for shortage subject areas which help to make up shortfalls.

For more information visit the TA Premier Plus website <http://www.education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching/premier-plus.aspx>

**I gained my qualifications in another country. Will you consider me?**

* You may be required to provide us with evidence of the comparability of your qualifications. If they are of equivalent level, we will be pleased to consider your application. Details of comparability of qualifications can be found at the NARIC website ([www.naric.org.uk](http://www.naric.org.uk))

**I don't have a GCSE in English/Maths at C grade - do you offer equivalence tests?**

* If you are currently studying for a required GCSE, please indicate this on your application. In this case, any offer that is made will be subject to a condition that you pass, at C grade or above, before the beginning of the course. You will be required to show proof of your qualification.
* There are some qualifications that are regarded as equivalent to a GCSE in English by the government and you will need to discuss your qualifications with the PGCE Admissions Team to ascertain whether you need to undertake further/alternative study (please note that IELTS qualifications are not considered equivalent).
* We do offer equivalence tests, though there will be a charge of £50.

**The course is described as M level, what does that mean?**

* During the course you submit three assignments which are then marked at Masters level. Two are based in your subject area and another in a general area of education which you will choose as a special study during the course. You will receive support in preparing yourself for these assignments. If all assignments are considered to be at M level you will be awarded 60 credits towards a full M level degree in education. If two assignments are considered to be at M level then you will be awarded 40 credits towards a full M level degree in education. These can either be transferred to another institution or you can undertake further study at Southampton where we have designed courses to build on the work you have undertaken.

**Is it necessary to spend time in a school before submitting my application?**

* We would strongly recommend that you gain experience of working with young people or visit a secondary school prior to application. This provides a useful discussion point during the interview, will help you decide whether this is the career for you and, if you have not gained any experience prior to interview, it may form one of the requirements of joining the course. However, please note that we consider a wide range of factors when short-listing, and good school experience alone will not guarantee an interview.
* If your own educational experience has been in a different country with a very different education system, you are advised to spend a substantial amount of time in an English school - perhaps a few weeks or longer - to orientate yourself and develop a firm grounding of knowledge before this very intensive course starts. You may be able to visit a school as an adult helper, or even take a temporary post as a teaching assistant.
* For those on shortage subjects the TA Premier Plus service can help with gaining school experience http://www.education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching/premier-plus.aspx

**What other requirements are there?**

* Health Requirements

You will be required to complete a form describing your state of health which will be checked against the DfES Fitness to Teach criteria. There is a charge of £25.00.

* Legal Requirements

Before starting on a PGCE programme you will be required to provide an Enhanced Disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau to confirm that there are no criminal offences on your record which should bar you from teaching. There is a charge of £44. Visit [http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/agencies-public-bodies/crb/](http://www.southampton.ac.uk/education/postgraduate/taught_courses/pgce_secondary.page#modules) for more information.

**What are you looking for in an application?**

* **degree classification** - a good honours degree is required. This is normally a 2.1 (or equivalent), but there is likely to be greater flexibility in shortage subject areas. All applications are given serious consideration and we do take account of applicants who demonstrate particular strengths in other respects (e.g. other qualifications, experience) are considered each year;
* **good qualifications in other appropriate subjects** e.g. strong A-levels, GCSEs (or equivalent);
* **depth and breadth of educational background** - e.g. appropriate qualifications and other experiences to support teaching;
* **quality of personal statement** - this should present a reasoned case for acceptance of the applicant, and should be well-presented in every sense;
* **relevant work in school and/or in another appropriate capacity with children** - including what the candidate has gained from this experience;
* **range of interests and skills** of benefit to secondary schools - e.g. work experiences, qualifications and interests in sport, the arts, etc;
* **references**- these should be from a person academically or professionally qualified to comment on the applicant's suitability; we expect where possible an academic reference which indicates evidence of the ability to study at Masters level.

**When can I apply for the course? Is there a closing date?**

* All applications have to be done through the GTTR (<http://www.gttr.ac.uk>) and the process starts in September/October each year. Though there is no official closing date for applications, although once the course has reached its quota of places we will have to close that particular course to further applications. We recommend that you apply as early as possible to stand the best chance of getting a place.

**Can I contact you to find out if my application will be considered?**

* We hope that the information provided here will answer most enquiries. All applications are read carefully, and decisions are made on the basis of a range of factors, including the quality of the letter of application and references. **In case of doubt, it is up to you as applicant to convince us of your suitability.**
* **Please note that decisions are made only on receipt of your GTTR application**. It would be wrong of us to raise or lower your hopes on the basis of any informal enquiry.
* All enquiries should be made to the **Professional Training Team** at soepgce1@soton.ac.uk

**And if my application is not successful?**

* We are sorry to disappoint any applicants, but as a much sought-after course we expect qualifications beyond minimum GTTR requirements and are very selective. As typically we shortlist fewer than half of all initial applications, it is unfortunately not possible to offer formative individual feedback to the many who are unsuccessful. If your application is unsuccessful, this could be for a number of reasons, and we hope that you will be successful elsewhere.

**If invited to interview, what can I expect?**

* The interview has three main components. You will be expected to prepare a short presentation to the interviewers and other applicants called for interview. There will be a written task. There will also be a formal interview. The interviews will be carried out by two people; one will be a course tutor and the other will normally be a school-based mentor. You will be given specific instructions about what you need to prepare when you are invited to interview.

**What are you looking for at interview?**

* We are looking at three particular areas:
	+ secure and appropriate subject knowledge – this is wide ranging and includes substantive knowledge of the subject, secure conceptual awareness, a rationale for the place of the subject on the curriculum and some knowledge of misconceptions and difficulties that the subject may pose for young people;
	+ professional awareness and attitude – this includes your attitude towards teaching and young people and your awareness of the current pressures and issues confronting teachers today, based on your own experience of schools and reflection;
	+ performance at interview – this is a broad area, but includes your ability to present ideas confidently and fluently, enthusiasm and your potential to engage effectively with young people.

**What funding can I expect to get to help with the course?**

* See the separate section on Funding (<http://www.education.soton.ac.uk/courses/index.php?link=types.php&type=5>)
* There are TA Bursaries available for most PGCE students. The amount you will receive is linked to your subject and degree qualifications. For more information please see the TA website http://www.education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching/funding/training-in-england/postgraduate-funding.aspx

**How is the actual course structured?**

* Click [here](http://www.southampton.ac.uk/education/postgraduate/taught_courses/pgce_secondary.page#modules) for an overview of the typical course content of the PGCE Secondary. Effectively two thirds of the course is based in school and one third in university. Some weeks will be entirely university based, others will be split between university and school and the rest will be in school. You will be based in two schools. One prior to Christmas where you will spend a number of weeks split between university (3 days) and school (2 days), before undertaking a 5 week teaching placement (where you will teach a 30% timetable). After Christmas you move to a second school and again spend a few weeks split between university (3 days) and school (2 days), before doing a 13 week placement (with a 50% timetable).

**Can I arrange my own schools for the two placements?**

* No. We have a formal partnership with a large number of schools and only work with these schools. These cover the Isle of Wight, to Portsmouth, Basingstoke, Andover, Salisbury, Bournemouth and Poole. You will be allocated to a school within this area.

**If I am offered a place, can the University help with accommodation?**

* We would advise you to contact the Accommodation Office in the Student Services Building (Building 37, Highfield Campus). http://www.southampton.ac.uk/studentservices/

**If I am offered a place, can I choose to defer?**

* Where accepted candidates wish to defer, each case is considered individually. Deferrals are only granted where compelling reasons exist.

**I am working overseas and will not return to the UK until next summer. I realise that I will be unavailable for interview. Is there any way in which I can apply for next September?**

* We advise you to apply in the normal way clearly outlining your circumstances. Your application will be considered on its merits in the normal way, and may lead to an invitation to interview in July or August. If successful, we would offer you a place subject to places still being available. However in some non-shortage subjects where there is stiff competition for places it is unlikely that you would be able to apply for the course starting in September, but you may be considered for the following year.

**What if the course is full?**

* If the course is full, then your application will be passed onto your other choices of institution. If you wish to study specifically at Southampton then there may be a possibility that places become available if someone drops out prior to the start of the course. If we have your details then we may contact you to see if you are still interested in taking up a place. Alternatively we suggest that you submit an application for the following year at the earliest possible opportunity.

**Where else can I find advice on teacher training?**

* The TA website has lots of information which may be of use to you <http://www.education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching/>