Course overview

The PGCE Secondary course is a one year, full time Initial Teacher Education (ITE) qualification for people with content in their first degree of at least 50% in biology, or chemistry or physics, who want to teach 11 – 16 year olds with enhancement at post 16.

The PGCE Secondary Programme has been designed to enable trainees to demonstrate evidence of having met the Teachers' Standards that lead to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). All trainees undertaking the University-led PGCE route into teaching will work towards securing 60 master’s level credits. This is an integral part of the programme. We strongly believe that innovative and effective teaching and learning is made possible through a teacher’s full engagement with research informed practice and underpinning theories of learning. This is fostered in two academic modules and developed in two School Based Training placements. Trainees on the PGCE Secondary Programme will be well supported in becoming critically reflective teachers capable of inspiring their pupils to learn, achieve and flourish.

At the University of Hertfordshire, trainees will be supported and taught by specialist tutors with unparalleled experience, knowledge and research informed expertise. Our partner schools provide opportunities for trainees to learn about the pedagogic and professional concerns, issues and responsibilities of all teachers.

You will have two school based training placements, where, you will develop your skills to become an excellent classroom teacher. Training to teach is exciting, rewarding and demanding; by the end of the course you will be well prepared for employment as a Newly Qualified Teacher.

The programme is offered on a full time basis only and 100% attendance is required Monday-Friday.

The University-led Secondary PGCE has given me the space and time to reflect on current educational practice. It has afforded me the opportunity of undertaking research in my school and has given me the tools to evaluate my own practice. Both the school-led and subject days have helped me to feel confident as I approach my NQT year.

PGCE student
Why study at Hertfordshire

• Excellent tuition and support - the teaching quality and excellent provision in the School of Education have been consistently recognised by trainees, partner schools, employing schools and Ofsted
• Programme of study designed to produce first class teachers - newly validated content ensures currency in today’s education climate
• Widening participation - we challenge stereotypes and seek to break down barriers to entering and continuing in the profession
• High levels of student satisfaction - excellent retention rates

About the course

Science trainees will work in small groups with a highly experienced tutor in the module Learning and Teaching in Subject Studies Science. The expectation is that you will analyse, interpret and interrogate the value and validity of a range of issues connected to the pedagogy of teaching biology, chemistry and physics, drawing independent, autonomous conclusions that bear close academic scrutiny. You will be introduced to materials and approaches to science teaching and make informed judgements about their effectiveness, as well as to requirements for planning, enacting and evaluating effective teaching in the subject. Reflective practice is an essential element for ensuring on-going progress in meeting the Teachers’ Standards for Qualified Teacher Status.

Applications and interviews

Our students are resourceful, communicate well, have a wide range of interests and display resilience. In order to assess these qualities, each successful applicant is interviewed.

To ensure teaching is the right career for you and for you to gain insight into current practice, we recommend where possible, that all applicants have at least 5 days recent work experience in a state secondary school prior to application. In your personal statement, you are advised to state the time spent in school and demonstrate your ability to reflect on this experience.

Professional skills test

Prior to registering on a teacher training course you must pass the Professional Skills Tests in literacy and numeracy. For further information see: sta.education.gov.uk

Additional support

• Learning Resources Centre open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
• Support from university tutors to develop your classroom practice, subject knowledge and to provide pastoral care
• Designated university tutor to visit you in your school-based training
• Designated school mentor to monitor progress and set targets
• Access to one of the UK’s most sophisticated on-line learning environments, StudyNet
• A Student Centre that provides advice on issues such as finance, University regulations, legal matters, counselling, careers guidance and accommodation
• An International Students Centre
• A Faculty Disabilities Officer
• Student representatives on the Programme Committee

Career prospects

At the end of the programme successful trainees are recommended for Qualified Teacher Status and are ready to start their teaching career.

The School of Education has an excellent record of employment for trainees on their initial teacher training programmes, and those who actively seek a teaching post at the end of their programme are successful in joining the profession.

There are further opportunities to continue your studies with a master’s degree.

Contact us:
University-led PGCE Admissions Tutor:
Hala Seliet  H.Seliet@herts.ac.uk

UCAS codes

Biology: CX11
Physics: F3X2
Chemistry: F2X1

Entry requirements:

Minimum 2.2 (Hons) degree required awarded by a UK university (or equivalent) with at least 50 per cent in biology, chemistry or physics dependent on course. GCSE English language and mathematics at grade C or above (or equivalent). Recent (within the past year) work experience in a state secondary school of at least 5 days. Professional Skills Tests in literacy and numeracy and an interview to assess personal suitability for teaching. Applicants with a biology Honours degree are considered if they have achieved A-level chemistry or physics or have enough components of them in their first degree supported by AS-level. Applicants with a 3rd in their first degrees are considered if they hold a postgraduate degree in biology. Applicants with overseas qualifications must have them validated by NARIC before applying.

During registration on the programme, you will be required to complete a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) barred list and criminal records check.

Course length:

Full time, 1 year

Website address:
go.herts.ac.uk/PGCE

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