



**Essential Guide to Applications  
for PGCE Teacher Training Courses  
starting September 2023**

We are delighted that you are considering applying to London Metropolitan University to train to teach. We have a superb record of educating high quality entrants to the profession.

These guidelines have been written to enable you to complete your application with confidence and to avoid some of the ‘application pitfalls’ which can await the unwary candidate...

## Table of Contents

|                                                 |           |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b><i>Preparing to apply</i></b> .....          | <b>3</b>  |
| Research into teaching .....                    | 3         |
| Research your subject .....                     | 3         |
| Research the different training routes .....    | 4         |
| Eligibility.....                                | 5         |
| The Teachers’ Standards .....                   | 5         |
| <b><i>Completing your application</i></b> ..... | <b>7</b>  |
| <b><i>Preparing for interview</i></b> .....     | <b>9</b>  |
| Presentation .....                              | 9         |
| Interview .....                                 | 9         |
| Diagnostic Assessments .....                    | 10        |
| <b><i>What happens next?</i></b> .....          | <b>11</b> |
| Conditional Offer .....                         | 11        |
| Fitness to Teach Health Form .....              | 12        |
| No Offer .....                                  | 12        |

## Preparing to apply

### Research into teaching

When preparing to apply for teacher training, it is essential to do some research into the education world:

- Research the UK education system and the role of a teacher in the present day – do not rely on your own experiences as a school-pupil. The world of education has changed enormously even in the last 5 years!
- The role of a teacher is constantly changing; it is important for you to understand how teaching works in the contexts in which you will be operating. You will be expected to be able to talk about this in an interview situation:
  - Find out about current thinking and research in education. What is being discussed?
  - Read up on educational developments that are in the news, in the [TES](#) or other newspaper education pages, such as [The Guardian Education](#).
  - Develop an understanding of the pastoral role of a teacher – what do teachers do other than teach?
  - Find out about specific issues that teachers are dealing with currently, and what the debates are around them

### Research your subject

Research the particular subject or phase that you are applying to teach. What are the requirements of this particular phase or subject?

- Many people assume that unless they have a degree in a particular subject, then they will not be able to train as a teacher in that subject. This is not strictly true.
  - Many people would have the necessary knowledge in a particular subject to be able to train to teach it.
  - The requirement is for a degree, possibly in a related subject, and also to be able to demonstrate that your subject knowledge is good enough.
  - You may also be able to undertake a Subject Knowledge Enhancement course (SKE), to improve your knowledge.

For example, many Secondary Maths teachers have degrees in Accountancy, Engineering, Economics or other subjects with a high maths content; they will then brush up and enhance their maths through a SKE

For another example, many Secondary Modern Foreign Languages teachers have degrees in other subjects, but because they are a 'native speaker' of a language, they are able to train to teach that language.

- In researching your chosen phase or subject, you should also explore the aims of the subject and what methodologies are employed currently:
  - what key topics or texts are covered? These are likely to have changed considerably since you were at school.
  - How is it represented in the National Curriculum?
  - How is it assessed - both externally, through SATs or GCSE exams, and internally, through school and teacher assessments?
- If you are considering a 3-7 age range, you will need to look at the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage as well as the National Curriculum.

### Research the different training routes

- The 'gold standard' for teacher training courses are those which offer QTS plus PGCE (**Qualified Teacher Status** plus master's level **Postgraduate Certificate in Education**).

### **All the London Met training courses give QTS plus PGCE.**

- Make sure that you are applying for the correct route for you. There are three main routes offered by London Metropolitan University:
  - University-led PGCE courses: the most popular route into teaching, based in university with two extended school placements
  - Graduate Teacher Apprenticeships with PGCE: employment-based route into teaching, in which you are an employee of the school, working as a teacher up to 80% of a timetable, with 20% release for training.
  - School Direct unsalaried PGCE courses: almost identical to the university-led PGCE but linked to a specific school partnership or location. Most appropriate for someone who needs to be working in a very specific locality.
- Please note the following about the different routes:
  - places on the apprenticeship employment-based routes (salaried routes) are in very short supply and are usually taken by candidates who have a lot of experience of working in schools. Employing schools want to be sure that they are taking on somebody who can 'hit the ground running', fulfilling all the aspects of being a teacher from Day 1.
  - The majority of candidates are more suited to a university-based course; these courses are by far the most popular route into teaching, giving you all the practical experience you need, as well as the supportive environment offered by the university.

- Do not be fooled by false claims:
  - all routes into teaching give a minimum of 120 days school experience;
  - all routes into teaching give contrasting school placements.
  - Being based solely in a school for your training is not any better – in fact, for most people it is less good than a university-led route, which offers a more supportive, scaffolded approach to the learning, enabling you to develop your teaching skills in a more.

**All London Met routes into teaching involve training days in university combined with extensive practical experience.**

### Eligibility

Research your own eligibility for the training:

- Do you have the right qualifications? Look at the individual course pages for London Met PGCEs to find the requirements for each subject or phase.  
<https://www.londonmet.ac.uk/courses/routes-into-teaching/postgraduate/>
- If any of your qualifications are from overseas, are they equivalent? Check with NARIC: <https://www.naric.org.uk/naric/>. You may need to obtain a certificate of equivalency, depending on where your original qualifications were obtained
- Would you need to undertake a GCSE equivalency test? We can advise you on equivalency tests and how to go about them
- Would you be eligible for student finance or a bursary? This will be assessed during the application process, but it would be important to know of any issues early  
<https://www.gov.uk/teacher-training-funding>.
- If you are looking to apply for an apprenticeship, you would need to be eligible for Student Funding (with minimum 3 years residency in UK).

### The Teachers' Standards

“Teachers make the education of their pupils their first concern and are accountable for achieving the highest possible standards in work and conduct. Teachers act with honesty and integrity, have strong subject knowledge, keep their knowledge and skills as teachers up-to-date and are self-critical. Teachers forge positive professional relationships and work with parents in the best interests of their pupils.”

Preamble to the [Teacher Standards](#)

Teaching is emotionally demanding work, and levels of work-related stress, anxiety and depression are higher within education than within many other occupational groups. There is an increasing recognition that the nature of teaching and learning and the contexts in

which this takes place demands what we might call 'everyday resilience'; that the capacity to be resilient is an important factor in teaching and teacher effectiveness over time.

Competence standards relating to teaching, personal and professional conduct have been issued by law. [The Teachers' Standards](#) set a clear baseline of expectations for the professional practice and conduct of teachers and define the minimum level of practice expected of teachers in England.

You are strongly encouraged to familiarise yourself with these standards before applying for this programme.

## Completing your application

Applications are all undertaken through [DfE Apply](#). This is a new service, introduced in October 2021.

The application window opens in October, for the following academic year. Early applications are more likely to succeed.

In completing your form, there are a few key things to bear in mind:

- **Employment record:** you need to give a full account of your activities and employment since leaving full time education. This will be important for DBS, but also will give useful background. Don't assume that if your employment was not 'relevant' you should not put it down.
- **Academic record:** similarly, give as complete a record as you can, including A Levels or equivalents.

Any other courses or training you have undertaken should either go into the academic section or, if no space, mention it in your personal statement.

- **References:** Under a new system starting this year (2022/23), you will not be asked for references immediately when you apply; you will now only be asked to supply details of referees if you have gained an offer of a place.

**Please note, we take your references very seriously as a key part of your application. If your referees are not suitable, we will ask you to nominate another referee:**

Ideally you will be able to supply 1 professional and 1 academic referee. Employers and university tutors, where possible, offering insight into how you might engage with the subject and role of a teacher. If you have worked in a school, we would normally expect a reference from the school management.

Referees should not be family members or friends. Even if your employment was in a shop or catering establishment, your boss's opinion of you as an employee is important to demonstrate your strengths and qualities.

So-called 'character references' from acquaintances or ex-colleagues are rarely as useful or acceptable as those from academic or professional leaders.

Warn your referees and talk about the application with them – if they delay it could hold up your progress. Discussing it with them will also give them a clearer idea of the sort of relevant detail that would be good to include. For example, employers may not know much about your academic ability, but they would be able to comment

on some of the transferable skills: how well you work with others, your reliability, your interest in learning etc.

- **Personal Statement:** this is crucial for your application:
  - Make sure you have spent time writing a good personal statement. This is your first opportunity to make a good impression. Try to use a good writing style and include relevant discussion.
  - **Always proof-read.** Check for accuracy of spelling, punctuation and grammar, as well as for clarity and style. Do this more than once.
  - Ask somebody else to check it through and give you honest feedback.
- These are the things you should include:
  - The personal statement is in two parts; do not repeat yourself from one part to the next.
  - If there is any study or exam that you plan to undertake prior to the course, explain this in your personal statement, particularly where it relates to your eligibility to join the course.
  - Use your personal statement to demonstrate your understanding of education and engagement with education matters. Be prepared to answer questions in interview on what you have written!
  - Demonstrate what you would have to offer as a teacher. If you have not taught before, think about other things that you have done which might demonstrate the types of skill which you will need as a teacher. What transferable skills do you have? Have you ever worked in a customer-facing role, for example?
  - If you have undertaken another role in education (pastoral or personal mentor, teaching assistant etc.) make sure that you are able to demonstrate an understanding of what you will need to learn to become a teacher.
  - More information about how to write a strong personal statement can be found [here](#).

## Preparing for interview

Each interview is slightly different. Please ensure that you read the guidelines and instructions for each specific interview.

For the last couple of years all our interview processes have been online, however, we are starting to move back to in-person interviews in the university.

For an online interview, you will be invited to a 'meeting' usually on Google Meet. You will be asked to prepare a presentation, which will vary depending on the subject. You will then be asked to discuss your presentation with the interviewer. There will be some standard interview questions and there will be the opportunity for you to ask questions.

If your interview is face to face, you will undertake the same tasks.

### Presentation

All London Met interviews will ask you to undertake a presentation. The nature of this will depend on the course you have applied for. However, it is essential that you prepare yourself well to undertake the presentation:

- Research the topic and be prepared to talk about your sources
- Practise the presentation aloud, either to a critical friend or in the mirror.
- Make sure that you are aware of the types of technology you can use (if any – some courses specifically ask for no technology to be used in the presentation).
- If you are using technology, ensure that you can work it under pressure, and that you have a back-up. Most teachers will have a Plan B in their head, specifically for if the technology does not work.
- The interviewer is likely to ask you some questions as a follow up to your presentation. Be prepared for this – they will not be trying to catch you out, but to give you an opportunity to discuss your understanding and to demonstrate your ability to talk about ideas.

### Interview

There will also be a 'formal' interview. The questions are generally very similar for each interview, to ensure that the process is fair. Again, the interviewer is aiming to give you positive opportunities to demonstrate why you will make a good teacher. In thinking about how to answer questions, prepare yourself to talk about relevant experiences or transferable skills which you have demonstrated.

The interviewer is also likely to ask you about any aspects of your application which need clarifying or which might affect your ability to take up an offer.

Please also prepare some questions yourself and be ready to ask them.

Please note: the rules, regulations and entry criteria for teacher training are set out by the DfE; London Metropolitan University has implemented an interview process which enables us to assess whether you meet these criteria, which we do as impartially as we are able.

On the London Met [Routes into Teaching](#) page, there is a series of blogposts aimed at giving you detailed information on improving your application and preparing yourself.

## Diagnostic Assessments

You will also be asked to undertake short Maths and English diagnostic assessments. These are designed to ensure that you have the core competencies required of a teacher. These assessments are mainly used to set learning targets for pre-course and during the course. The university is responsible for ensuring your Maths and English are of an appropriate standard by the end of the course.

### Maths Assessment:

This will consist of 30 questions, each worth 1 mark, divided into 3 key topic areas:

- 1) Ability to undertake mathematical sums and calculations
- 2) Ability to solve mathematical problems
- 3) Ability to understand graphs and data

### English Assessment:

This will consist of a short (500 word) hand-written discussion on an educational topic which will be given to you at the start of the assessment. It is designed to assess your ability to:

- a) Write clearly, accurately and legibly. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are part of the assessment.
- b) Present ideas and structure a discussion or argument on the set topic.

## Subject Knowledge Assessments

For courses at secondary level in particular, you will be required to demonstrate your subject-specific knowledge. This might be through a set of exam questions, or through discussion during the interview.

There may be some discussion during the interview as to whether you require a **Subject Knowledge Enhancement** course (or SKE), particularly designed for those who may be a bit rusty, or who have not studied the subject to degree level.

## What happens next?

After the interview, you should expect to hear within a few days, whether your interview has been successful.

### Conditional Offer

If you have been successful, you will receive a conditional offer. There are some conditions which everybody will have to meet, and there are some which may be specific to you or the particular course which you have applied for:

Everybody will need to complete the following:

- Fitness to Teach Health Form
- DBS application
- Statutory Declarations regarding criminal convictions and barred lists
- Original certificates for GCSEs and Degree
- Proof of residency
- Photo ID

Some people will also need to supply:

- NARIC letter or certificate of equivalency
- GCSE Equivalency certificates
- Degree transcripts
- Overseas police checks
- Evidence of visa status
- GP or health specialist letters
- Statements regarding criminal convictions
- Application for Bursary or for Student Finance

You will need to accept the conditional offer and then to meet all of the conditions before you are able to enrol.

**If you have not met the conditions, you will not hear about enrolment and you will not be able to enrol.**

**All conditions must be met before enrolment.**

**Please note: student finance needs to be in place as soon as possible. Please do not delay your application, otherwise you may be asked to make temporary payments yourself.**

## Fitness to Teach Health Form

As a training provider, we have a responsibility to ensure that trainees have the health and physical capacity to teach and will not put children and young people at risk of harm. The activities that a teacher must be able to perform are set out in the [Education \(Health Standards\) \(England\) Regulations 2003](#). Under these Regulations, we are responsible for ensuring that only trainees who have the capacity to teach remain on the programme.

Successful applicants offered a place on an ITE programme will be asked to complete a fitness questionnaire prior to commencing the programme. This will be assessed by our Occupational Health team.

You may be asked to provide further information in a meeting with the assessor, or a letter from your GP or specialist.

Applicants should at an early stage disclose any disability that may have implications for fitness to teach and contact our [Disabilities and Dyslexia Service](#) team for professional advice where necessary. People with disabilities or chronic illnesses may have the capacity to teach, just as those without disabilities or medical conditions may be unsuitable to teach. Any assessment of individual is fit to teach will take account any reasonable adjustments that could be made to assist the applicant in working in the teaching profession.

Our research demonstrates that where early disclosure occurs, disabilities are less likely to have a negative impact on the training course.

## No Offer

If you are unsuccessful at interview, you will receive a letter giving an explanation as to why it is felt that you are not yet ready to train to teach.

You will be given some suggestions for areas that the interviewer feels would help you to progress towards a successful application in the future.

It will be disappointing, but often it takes potential candidates a few years to ensure that they are prepared and ready for a career in teaching. We are happy to support you in this journey.

**Good luck with your application!**