

PGCE Primary and Early Years with QTS

Course Handbook 2026/27



Contents

How to use this course handbook	3
Welcome to PGCE Primary & Early Years with QTS	4
Course welcome	4
About your course	5
Meet the team	5
Course structure	6
Course aims.....	6
Learning and teaching on your course	7
Your modules	8
Your assessment	8
Academic conduct.....	8
How to submit	9
Your term dates	9
Your attendance requirements	10
Your future	11
Supporting your studies.....	12
Your Personal Academic Tutor (PAT)	12
Your student voice and feedback	12
Your course accreditation	12
Your placements and work-based learning	12
Your uniform	13
Your fitness to practise.....	13
Your Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check	14
Your occupational health	14
Your other student support services.....	15

How to use this course handbook

This handbook has been designed as a reference tool for your course specific information to help you get started. It includes information about:

- Your course team and how to contact them
- The contents of your course and where to find more details
- Specialist requirements and resources for your course
- How to get support

We hope you find this useful.

Welcome to PGCE Primary & Early Years with QTS

Course welcome

We are really pleased to welcome you to the PGCE Primary and Early Years with Qualified Teacher Status course. We hope that you will have an exciting and rewarding experience as you join us on your journey to becoming an excellent primary school teacher. This guide is designed to give you some information about the University but in particular, to enable you to understand the aims and structure of the course as well as the types of assessment methods you will encounter.

At Birmingham City University we have designed the ITE curriculum as a carefully crafted coherent sequence of experiences and activities that will support you to succeed in the classroom. Our curricula encompasses the full entitlement described in the Initial Teacher Training and Early Career Framework as well as integrating additional analysis and critique of theory, research and expert practice that we feel is appropriate. We believe that the quality of teaching is the most important factor in improving outcomes for pupils. We recognise that it is an entitlement of all trainees to work with and learn from expert colleagues as they practise, rehearse and refine approaches. We give high importance to mentoring that enables trainees to receive high quality clear and structured feedback from expert colleagues as they apply knowledge and understanding of the evidence in the classroom to understand how practice can be improved. This year will be challenging but rewarding and as a course team we will support you every step of the way.

We look forward to working with you throughout your studies and supporting you as you embody our four professional core values: committed, creative, confident, and collaborative and develop the skills and knowledge needed to be a Primary School Teacher.

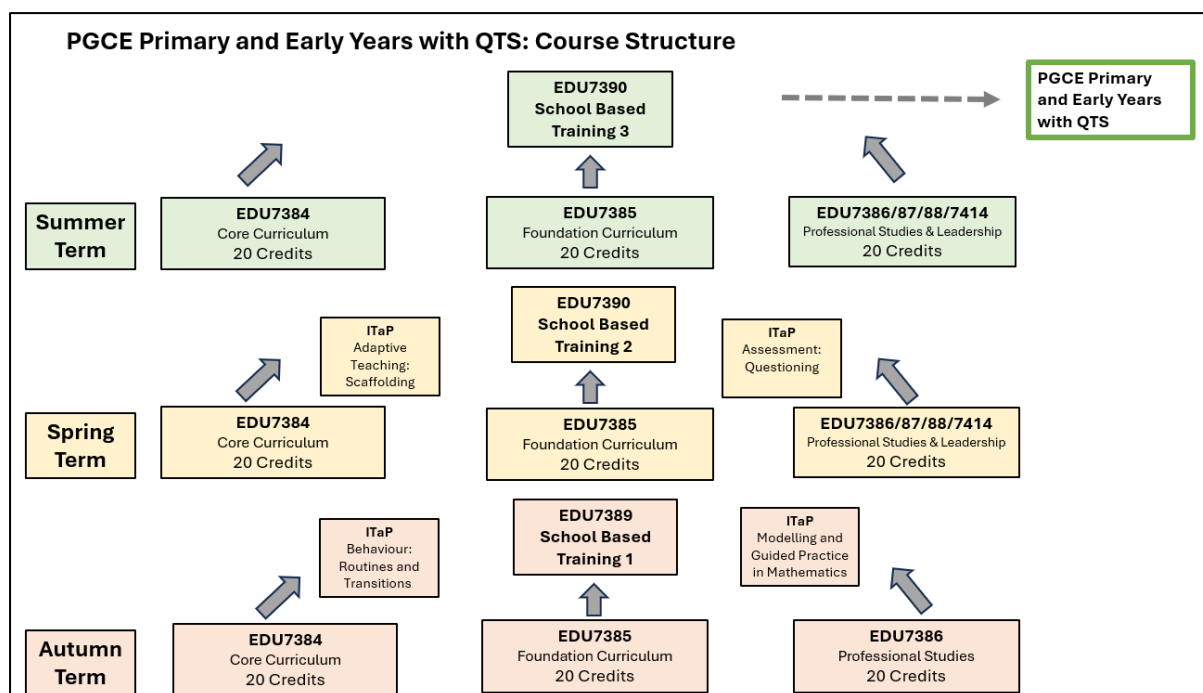
About your course

Meet the team

PGCE Primary Course Team email: PrimaryandEarlyYearsPGCECourseTeam@bcu.ac.uk

PGCE Primary Education Course Leader Name: Alison Pemberton Smith Specialist area: Mathematics / Placement Contact details alison.pemberton@bcu.ac.uk	
PGCE Primary Education Deputy Course Leader Name: Florence Hayles Specialist area: Languages Contact details florence.hayles@bcu.ac.uk	
PGCE Primary Education Deputy Course Leader Name: Laura Williams Specialist area: Geography Contact details laura.williams@bcu.ac.uk	

Course structure



Course aims

The course aims to:

- Enable you to become a committed, confident, creative and collaborative primary school teacher who is equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to lead the learning for a range of learners. You will develop your confidence in taking a lead in school and contributing to the wider profession.
- Develop your ability to enhance your own practice through reflective and critical evaluation of curriculum, research, policy and practice. You will apply this understanding in the classroom, enhancing children's learning.
- Enable you to become a highly accountable and professional teacher with a commitment towards equality, diversity and inclusion and to make a positive contribution to your community. You will be aware of, and respond to, the needs of a range of children e.g. EAL, SEND and Looked After Children, within society, and be prepared to engage in multi-agency working.
- Enable you to become a reflective future leader of learning in innovative practice and with a commitment to optimising life chances for all children with the ability to respond to change and manage it positively.
- Develop your understanding of the value of education for all children within a global context. You will utilise best practice from across the globe to enhance your teaching and enrich opportunities for children.

Learning and teaching on your course

The course is based on a shared vision for educational excellence with the schools in our partnership and this reflects our commitment to partnership working. Trainees on the course benefit from working with and learning from outstanding classroom teachers in schools and at university. The school-based elements of the course will afford trainees enhanced opportunities to spend time in school and will allow them to make links between their observations and experiences and the taught course in university. Schools will undertake to provide trainees with a variety of opportunities to observe best practice which addresses the trainees' development needs. The Department for Education's (2012) Teachers' Standards which lead to the recommendation for the award of QTS will be assessed summatively. Trainees will be assessed formatively against the curriculum using the BCU ITE Curriculum Themes and Assessment framework.

The course is designed to recognise that trainees develop their understanding of, and skills in, teaching in a gradual way. The first block of university teaching prepares the trainees for their first teaching block placement. The second block of university teaching allows trainees the opportunity to reflect upon their experiences in school and further prepare them for subsequent placements. All of the academic modules involve the trainees in reflecting on their developing understanding of primary and early years teaching and taking responsibility for their own professional development. Trainees will also develop their teaching skills through carefully designed School Based Training (SBT) experiences. The SBT experiences are developmental and progressive. The work undertaken in school is closely aligned to the academic modules and is assessed against the relevant professional competencies, currently The Teachers' Standards (DfE 2012) at the end of the course.

Through our commitment to inclusive values, this course will empower trainees to address issues of equality, diversity and justice to optimise the life chances for all children they teach. Graduates from the PGCE Primary and Early Years course at Birmingham City University will be confident to meet the challenges of inspiring children to achieve their goals and to overcome disadvantage and barriers to learning. All trainees will consider in depth special Educational Needs, Disability and Inclusion.

School Based Training

The course offers the opportunity to complete 120 days in school to meet the requirements of the DfE for 'qualified teacher status', to become an Early Career Teacher (ECT). School placements are vital in providing opportunities to develop professional skills and enabling demonstration of the BCU Themes, in line with the Initial Teacher Training Early Career Framework.

Your modules

Level 7 Modules

Code: EDU7384
Title: Core Curriculum
Credits: 20
Status: Core
Assessment: Coursework/Assignment

Code: EDU7385
Title: Foundation Curriculum
Credits: 20
Status: Core
Assessment: Coursework/Assignment

Code: EDU7386 / 7387 / 7388 / 7414
Title: Professional Studies and Leadership
Credits: 20
Status: Core
Assessment: Coursework /Presentation

Code: EDU7389
Title: School Based training 1
Credits: 0
Status: Core
Assessment: Placement

Code: EDU7390
Title: School based training 2
Credits: 0
Status: Core
Assessment: Placement

Your assessment

All trainees will complete module assessments for credit bearing modules which must be passed - all are marked in percentages. The remaining non-credit bearing modules will be assessed summatively at the end of the course against the DfE Teachers' Standards (2012) and will be marked on a pass/fail basis. During the course you will be assessed formatively against the BCU Assessment Tracker with a Pass/Fail point at the end of SBT1 and SBT3.

Assessments are distributed across the year with set submission and return dates. All written work is submitted electronically. Trainees will be given a guidance sheet for each assessment which will include specific criteria against which it will be marked.

Academic conduct

Good academic conduct is important for doing well in your assessments. Structuring your work well, demonstrating and referencing your research, and using appropriate language are all essential skills. For support with academic skills and conduct please see here: [CAS Student Resources: Study Guides | Moodle](#)

How to submit

Your assessment details, deadlines, and submission portals are all available on your module Moodle sites. Further questions about your submissions should be directed to your module leader, and their contact details and office hours can also be found on your module Moodle sites.

Your term dates

PGCE Indicative Timetable 2026-2027					
Week beg.	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
31-Aug-26	BH	Induction	Induction	Home School	Home School
07-Sep-26	Professional Stud	Safeguarding - PS	Foundation	CORE	Foundation
14-Sep-26	Professional Stud	Safeguarding - Catch up	Foundation	Care Act Briefing	Foundation
21-Sep-26	Professional Stud	Foundation Act Briefing & PSL Subject Choices	Foundation	CORE	CORE
28-Sep-26	Professional Stud	SBT1 Briefing	Foundation	ITAP Behavioural Unit Day 1	CORE
05-Oct-26	SBT1 - PPSE	SBT1 - PPSE	Foundation	SBT1 - PPSE	CORE
12-Oct-26	ITAP Behavioural School Day 2	SBT1 - PPSE	ITAP Behavioural Unit Day 3	ITAP Behavioural School Day 4	CORE
19-Oct-26	ITAP Behavioural Unit Day 5	SBT1 - PPSE	SBT1 - PPSE	SBT1 - PPSE	SBT1 - PPSE
26-Oct-26					
02-Nov-26	SBT1 - EDU7385 Hand-	SBT1	SBT1	SBT1	SBT1
09-Nov-26	SBT1	SBT1	SBT1	SBT1	SBT1
16-Nov-26	SBT1 - RM1	SBT1	SBT1	SBT1	ITAP Med and GP Unit Day 1
23-Nov-26	SBT1 EDU7385 return	ITAP Med and GP School Day 2	SBT1	SBT1	ITAP Med and GP Unit Day 3
30-Nov-26	ITAP Med and GP School Day 4	SBT1	ITAP Med and GP Unit Day 5	SBT1	SBT1
07-Dec-26	SBT1	SBT1	SBT1	SBT1	SBT1
14-Dec-26	SBT1 - PM1	SBT1	SBT1	SBT1	SBT1
21-Dec-26					BH
28-Dec-26	BH				BH
04-Jan-27	Foundation	Foundation	Foundation	Care Act briefing & SBT2 Briefing	PSL Leadership
11-Jan-27	Professional Studies	CORE	SBT2PPSE	SBT2PPSE -	PSL Leadership & PSL Ass Briefing
18-Jan-27	ITAP Scaffolding Unit	SBT2PPSE	SBT2PPSE	SBT2PPSE	PSL Leadership
25-Jan-27	ITAP Scaffolding School Day 2	SBT2PPSE	SBT2PPSE	ITAP Scaffolding Unit Day 3	PSL Leadership
01-Feb-27	ITAP Scaffolding School Day 4	SBT2PPSE	SBT2PPSE	ITAP Scaffolding Unit Day 5	PSL Leadership
08-Feb-27	SBT2 - EDU7384 Hand	SBT2	SBT2	SBT2	SBT2
15-Feb-27					

22-Feb-27	SBT2	SBT2	SBT2	SBT2	SBT2
01-Mar-27	SBT2 RM2 EDU7384	SBT2	SBT2	SBT2	ITAP Quarantining Uni Day1
08-Mar-27	SBT2	ITAP Quarantining School Day2	SBT2	SBT2	ITAP Quarantining Uni Day3
15-Mar-27	ITAP Quarantining School Day4	SBT2	ITAP Quarantining Uni Day5	SBT2	SBT2
22-Mar-27	SBT2 PM2	SBT2	SBT2	SBT2	BH
29-Mar-27	BH				
05-Apr-27					
12-Apr-27	Core/Foundation	SDL	Core/Foundation	PSL Presentation	PSL Presentation
19-Apr-27	Core/Foundation	SBT3 Briefing	Professional Stud	Secondary Exp	Secondary Exp
26-Apr-27	SBT3 – PPSE	SBT3 – PPSE	SBT3 – PPSE	SBT3 – PPSE	SBT3 – PPSE
03-May-27	BH	SBT3 – PPSE	SBT3 – PPSE	SBT3 – PPSE	SBT3 – PPSE PSL Return
10-May-27	SBT3	SBT3	SBT3	SBT3	SBT3
17-May-27	SBT3 – 1 Lesson	SBT3 – 1 Lesson	SBT3 – 2 Lesson	SBT3 – 2 Lessons	SBT3 – 2 Lessons
24-May-27	SBT3 60%	SBT3	SBT3	SBT3	SBT3
31-May-27	BH				
07-Jun-27	SBT3 80% RM3	SBT3	SBT3	SBT3	SBT3
14-Jun-27	SBT3	SBT3	SBT3	SBT3	SBT3
21-Jun-27	SBT3	SBT3	SBT3	SBT3	SBT3
28-Jun-27	SBT3	SBT3	SBT3	SBT3	SBT3
05-Jul-27	SBT3 PM3	SBT3	SBT3	SBT3	SBT3
12-Jul-27	ECT Day in uni	ECT Day in uni am Standards	PDT Standards Completion	PDT Standards Completion	PDT Standards Completion

Your attendance requirements

The University wants you to succeed with your course and has policies in place to monitor your attendance and policies which support you if your attendance falls below our agreed standards.

If attendance falls below these standards consistently, students may be at risk of withdrawal from their course. To avoid this, students are encouraged to engage with support including Personal Academic Tutors and the Student Retention Team. Policies regarding student attendance can be found [on the Student Contract page](#).

The content of the course meets the requirements of Qualified Teacher Status accreditation, and students pursue their studies with due diligence, ensuring that they avail themselves of the educational opportunities made available. Students should take responsibility for their own learning through attendance at sessions, workshops, and periods of school-based training and through being suitably prepared for them.

100% attendance is expected, and any absence should be authorised by the Course Leadership Team, Lead Mentor/Personal Academic Tutor.

If absent from university teaching sessions, students will notify their Lead Mentor/Personal Academic Tutor, the tutor leading the session and notify MySRS. For further guidance see Student Engagement Policy.

Holidays are not to be taken during term time.

Your future

As part of the course you will spend a lot of time in school developing your skills as a teacher. Our trainees are very employable, and many are subsequently employed by placement schools. Your experiences in university and school ensure you are well prepared for your first post.

While on the course we support you with making applications, personal statements and support for your transition to Early Career Teacher.

Supporting your studies

Your Personal Academic Tutor (PAT)

We recognise that success at university is shaped not only by academic achievement, but by personal development, wellbeing, and career readiness. The following framework outlines how PATs will proactively support students across four core pillars:

- Academic Support - Guide students through academic challenges and ensure progression through regular check-ins on grades, attendance, and skill development.
- Personal Development - Support students in identifying their strengths, setting goals, and building the confidence and skills needed to grow personally, academically, and professionally throughout their university journey.
- Wellbeing Support - Provide a first point of contact for wellbeing support, providing a safe space to talk, signposting to specialist services, and helping students navigate personal challenges that may impact their studies.
- Employability Focus - Prepare students for their future careers through placement support, CV development, and connections to the university careers team.

Your student voice and feedback

Your voice matters throughout your course and there are many opportunities for you to get involved. For more information on the student voice system at BCU, please see here: [Representation](#)

Your course accreditation

QTS is awarded by the DfE on recommendation by the University. It therefore sits outside the modular assessment framework.

To be recommended QTS you must satisfy the Teachers' Standards (2012). You will be summatively assessed against these Standards at the end of the course. You will be formatively assessed on your school placements against the BCU ITE Curriculum Themes. The school-based training module outcomes reflect this process. Professional discussions throughout the year at review and progress meetings will provide evidence against the BCU ITE Curriculum Themes that are clearly linked to the Teachers' Standards.

Your placements and work-based learning

This course complies with the requirements of the Teachers' Standards published by the DfE (2012) which identify the Professional Standards that all trainee teachers must meet if they are to be recommended to the DfE for Qualified Teacher Status. As a trainee on this course, you will therefore spend sustained periods of time working in

schools or settings so that you can demonstrate that you have met the DfE Teachers' Standards 2012.

You will be assessed formatively against curriculum and the BCU ITE Curriculum Themes and at the end of the course by the Teachers' Standards by teaching colleagues and Lead Mentors. Schools participating in this training process will receive a proportion of course resources after concluding a formal partnership agreement. The partnership agreement requires schools or settings to ensure that their staff are familiar with mentor procedures for trainee placements, that appropriate staff attend mentor training sessions about teaching practices and that trainees receive appropriate levels of support whilst on teaching practice.

Your uniform

When in school, professional dress should be adopted and be in line with the dress policy of the school. Trainees should discuss this with schools prior to their first day.

In university some sessions may require specific dress e.g. PE. Lecturers will communicate specific needs prior to sessions. There is an expectation that trainees take part in all sessions and are dressed appropriately.

Your fitness to practise

Some of the University's courses prepare students for entry into professions where they must meet certain behavioural and/or health requirements if they are to practise the profession. As your course falls into this category, you need to be aware of the University's Fitness to Practise procedures available on iCity at <https://icity.bcu.ac.uk/Student-Affairs/Appeals-and-Resolutions/Fitness-to-Practise> or via the [Student Contract](#) section of BCU website.

This course will prepare you for entry to a profession which makes high demands on its entrants in terms of their professional conduct, values and attitudes. On rare occasions the School may need to invoke the University's Fitness for Practice/Study policy which can be found at <https://icity.bcu.ac.uk/student-services/Complaints-and-Appeals/Fitness-for-Practise>

Examples of when this might occur include:

- when you have physical or mental health problems which may put you or others at risk;
- when you demonstrate unprofessional behaviour;
- where there are serious breaches of The Teachers' Standards and/or the ITT Criteria;
- disclosure of information about yourself or your previous conduct that you have not already disclosed on your application form or in your interview that may impact on your suitability to teach;

- you have previously been removed from an ITT course because you have behaved in a way that indicates you may not be suitable to work with children, or you have left a previous ITT course before completing;
- when you have committed an offence under the University's Student Disciplinary Procedure which raises doubts about your professional suitability. Professional conduct of trainees on teaching practice

Your Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check

We expect all students on this course to act in an honest and trustworthy manner and that your conduct, behaviour and attitudes are always compatible with your professional code of conduct. Before you commence on your course we will judge your good character through a DBS check. Once you have fully enrolled on your course you must inform us about any new involvement you have had with the Police. Students are expected to complete a self-declaration each year.

Please note that failure to inform us of any involvement with the Police could be viewed as unprofessional conduct and this may also be considered in addition to the original offence.

In cases where involvement with the Police has occurred, you will be invited to attend a Disclosure and Barring Service Panel.

Further information can be found on iCity: <https://icity.bcu.ac.uk/hels/Health/Student-Governance/DBS/Index>

Your occupational health

Some Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) set 'good health' requirements for entry to educational courses leading to professional registration. Good health is necessary to undertake practice and means that students must be capable of safe and effective practice with supervision throughout their course of study.

OH Works Ltd is an independent Occupational Health (OH) service that will process your health clearance to ensure you are fit to enrol at the University and fit for your practice placements and will be responsible for your Occupational Health throughout your time at university. Your other student support services

Navigating life as a student is exciting but can be complicated. To help simplify it for you, please use [YourBCU Toolkit](#) to learn about, and navigate, our support services including:

- Support for a disability
- The library and learning resources
- Joining a student society

- Careers advice
- Accommodation
- Financial support
- Mental health and wellbeing support

Your other student support services

The University has a number of services available to support you during your time as a student. If you have any queries and are unsure of where you should ask, your Student Support Centre is available to help. If the team can't answer your query straight away, they will ensure that your query is directed to the relevant colleagues within the University.

Information on locations, opening times, telephone number and the online enquiry portal can all be found here: [Contact details - Contact details for current students | Birmingham City University](#)