

SECONDARY PGCE SELECTION PROCEDURES GUIDANCE

This document is a guide to all those involved in the admissions process. All entries to ITT courses are governed by the DfES minimum requirements for trainee entry and selection to initial teacher training which are detailed in policy Circular 02/02 'Qualifying to Teach.'

All those involved in the Selection Procedures need to be aware of the UK legislation which relates to recruitment.

Admissions guidelines

There are three main parts to the selection process:

- Screening of GTTR applications
- Schools experience (whenever possible)
- Interview.

1. The GTTR applications

Applications are received from the GTTR in batches. The record is maintained as a shared database.

A criteria sheet is attached and these are passed on to the subject tutor for assessment.

As outlined on the Selection for Interview Form, the application is looked at in relation to how well the applicant meets, or will meet by the start of the course, the criteria outlined in the selection procedures. These are summarised by the cells on the front of the record sheet.

It is vital that the application is read thoroughly so that a decision is made whether to proceed to the interview phase or reject the applicant at this stage. Those rejected are passed back to the Admissions team and then on to the applicant's next choice of institution by the GTTR.

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Key points:

Qualifications and Experience

- **Is the degree relevant to the subject area the candidate is applying for?**
 - Is there evidence of degree knowledge in the subject? (a substantial part of degree or substantial study/work experience elsewhere)
 - If not does the applicant argue the relevance of the degree or work experience to teaching?

Where there is no obvious connection between a degree and a national curriculum subject, the applicant's breakdown of degree content and an outline of the links in the 'reasons for teaching' section is necessary.

Normally their degree must have substantial coverage of a main area of the subject they wish to teach.

- **Do the qualifications declared on the application form meet the minimum requirements in English and Maths** (See appendix A for the extract from Circular 02/02 QtT trainee entry and selection requirements)

By the start of the course applicants must have a minimum of GCSE Mathematics and English Language grade C or above or equivalent. If applicants have non-UK qualifications or the qualification status is unclear, refer the application to the admissions administrator for a UK NARIC check.

UK NARIC gives a service to applicants wishing to check the equivalence of their qualifications to UK standards.

The UCCLES website also has a list of kite marked access courses. Those that are clearly listed as access to teacher training normally

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have English and Maths equivalence. The admissions administrator has a full list of acceptable access courses and English Language/Maths GCSE equivalent qualifications.

- **Does the applicant have experience of working with secondary aged pupils?**

Work experience with pupils in a UK mainstream state secondary school setting is strongly recommended and may demonstrate a commitment to secondary education.

- **Is there time for the applicant to gain secondary school work experience?**

Tutors need to alert trainees to where experience is essential or strongly recommended.

Checks

- **Criminal record declaration**
- Has the applicant declared a criminal record?
- Does this need to be explored before interview?

Although all applicants will have to receive an enhanced certificate from the Criminal Records Bureau, applicants may need to seek advice from the DfES/Home Office as to whether or not they will be allowed to teach well in advance of the course starting. Generally speaking, the severity of the conviction, and those crimes related to violence, children, and drugs may affect the applicant getting clearance from the CRB. (Details can be found in circular DfEE 11 /95 with guidance in circular 9 /93.

Once a place has been offered the CRB application process will start.

Quality of Application Form

This section of the selection for interview form focuses on the candidates commitment and their ability to communicate clearly in standard English. In terms of the former consider:

- Is it clear why the applicant wants to train to teach?
- Does the applicant have particular experiences that would make a good trainee?
- If an applicant has a non-national curriculum degree subject, does the applicant discuss the relevance of the degree to the national curriculum?

In terms of the form overall and the personal statement in particular a judgment needs to be made on:

- Presentation of the form
- Spelling
- Grammar
- Structure and style

Reference

We will normally need an academic reference. However, if the applicant has been out of full time education for more than 5 years a reference from an employer will be satisfactory. A reference other than from a friend or neighbour is absolutely essential.

Seek evidence that the reference is commenting on known skills and experiences.

If not are there clear issues that may affect the suitability to train on a PGCE course?

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Proceeding from the Selection for Interview Stage

If a **decision to reject** is made, tutors must ensure that their reasons are clearly recorded against the cells on the record sheet and that the form is signed and dated.

The white GTTR form should also clearly be marked as 'reject' and signed.

An applicant can be rejected for not meeting any one of the selection criteria summarised in the cells on the record sheet. However it is often the case that poor applications are weak in a number of areas.

If the application is not satisfactory to proceed to the next phase and some clarification is necessary (e.g. qualification status, a second reference), refer back to the admissions administrator. Tutors may also refer applications to other tutors for a second opinion before making a final decision.

If a **decision to proceed** to the interview phase is made, issues to discuss at interview should be noted on the Selection for Interview form. This may refer to some of the above issues if it is felt there is a need to explore these further. Identify a suitable date for interviews.

2. The interview stage

The interview stage.

The purpose of the personal interview is to ensure that *'...entrants possess appropriate personal and intellectual qualities to be teachers'* (QtT R1.1)

It is very important during the interview that applicants are made to feel that they are engaged in a fair and equitable process. The observations made by the interviewers should form the basis of the general impression of the applicant's suitability for teaching. It is

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recommended that the panel use 'behavioural interviewing': questions about their actual experiences or behaviour in the past as opposed to 'situational interviewing': questions which relate to a situation they may face as a teacher. The latter form of interviewing is not a good way of predicting future behaviour.

Pre-Interview Planning of interview team

Interviewers should meet to carry out pre-interview planning.

Brief the practising teachers about:

- Conduct of the panel
- Keeping the interviews to time, guarding against accusations of bias resulting from too long or too short interviews
- Guidance on making notes during an interview (all notes can be seen by applicants so only note factual information)

Interviewers should:

- Ensure they are clear which criteria are essential and which are desirable
- Ensure they understand what will indicate competence for each criteria
- Agree length of interviews
- Agree order of questioning and who will ask which questions
- Agree and plan areas of questioning.
- Agree and plan individual timings.
- Agree signals for "Stop", "Help".
- Note areas that need to be checked out from application form evidence (This is usually the university tutor's responsibility).
- List any information that needs to be told to candidate.

Although all members of the interviewing panel have equal status it is the responsibility of the university tutor to:

- **Prior to the interview**
 - Stop telephone calls and personal interruptions. (Remember to check for noisy building/renovation works that might be taking place nearby – and tests of fire alarms/evacuations)
 - Plan room: style, privacy, uncluttered, no blinding lights.
 - Arrange reception of candidates and identify who is going to escort them to interview.

- **During the interview:**
 - Welcoming the candidate and putting them at their ease
 - Dealing with introductions and formalities
 - Outlining the structure of the panel
 - Ensuring the proceedings are manifestly impartial, and that panel members are aware of, and implement, Equal Opportunity policy
 - Giving panel members a chance to follow up
 - Bringing the interview to a close in a firm, friendly manner
 - Giving the candidate chance to add or correct anything or ask questions
 - Ensuring that appropriate identification and relevant educational certificates have been seen and copied for the file

- **After the interview:**
 - Directing assessment discussion after panel members have made their own assessments
 - Noting the final, agreed panel assessment on pro-forma (orange interview sheet)
 - Checking back on the interview session and reviewing notes with the panel
 - Handing back to Secondary Administrator/Admissions Administrator the completed assessments together with all personal papers.

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