

PGCE Science: Biology

The PGCE Science: Biology one-year course prepares you for life as a science teacher, with a specialism in biology. The course develops your skills and abilities in understanding the complexities which surround the teaching and learning of science; the subject knowledge and the pedagogy.

We hope to develop you as a reflective teacher who considers carefully the choices in how to teach Science: Biology and makes informed decisions about how you work best with students.

Entry requirements

All applicants to the Secondary PGCE course must hold a degree or equivalent qualification in the area they wish to teach. In addition to this you will be required to have a grade C in GCSE mathematics and English, or equivalent. DfES require us to check original certificates; you therefore cannot start a PGCE course unless you already hold these qualifications. Your degree content must be at least 50% biology relevant to the National Curriculum. You should have 2 science A levels and a good pass in GCSE science or the equivalent.

Course content

The course is 36 weeks long of which 24 weeks are spent on placement in a partnership school. There are five phases: Preparation (university and some school-based activities); School Placement 1 (seven week placement in school); Development (university and one week in your second school); School Placement 2 (12 week block placement and some university days); Completion (two further weeks in second school and two weeks in university).

The course is essentially one of professional training combined with academic study appropriate to a course at Masters' level. Much of the work of the first term is a direct attempt to prepare you for teaching situations that you may face on school placements. It should give you opportunities for developing your own thinking which can be trialled when practising those facets of teaching which are most directly related to the classroom and the laboratory

situation. Time will be given to, for example: the preparation of: lesson materials; the organisation of laboratory work; and the use of demonstrations. These are only a sample of the techniques to manage and engage classes. Some are general skills that all teachers must develop regardless of their subject; others will be specific to the sciences.

The curriculum work is also concerned with broader and longer term aims. Students will wish to familiarise themselves with current developments arising from and linked to the National Curriculum and various government initiatives.

It is impossible to isolate the teaching of science from broader educational issues such as increasing awareness of the need for education to be connected to the remainder of pupils' lives, to the concerns of society as a whole and to the world of work and leisure beyond school. So, on this course you will find that we have tried to integrate the theory and the practice and to ensure that you have a sound theoretical understanding on which your practice is based.

We aim then to prepare you to become a science teacher by helping you to develop both personally and professionally. We believe that an education through science should generate a sense of curiosity, promote creative thinking and enable pupils to develop into reflective citizens ready to play a full part in a democratic society.

Assessment

All students have to complete six modules, five of which require a written assignment. In addition all students complete two teaching placements and have to pass the TDA



Standards for the Award of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).

Progression

As postgraduate programmes, PGCE courses at this university are assessed at Masters level. On successful completion of the PGCE course you will be awarded 120 credits. For those students who successfully complete their induction year there is an opportunity to transfer credits to the MEd course which is awarded on completion of a 60 credit dissertation. (Transfer is subject to a satisfactory reference from your PGCE tutor and induction tutor). Local schools have a high regard for Birmingham Science: Biology PGCE students. All 20 of the 2005-06 cohort successfully completed the course and were appointed to teaching posts, 17 in local maintained comprehensive schools. Many of our former students hold promoted posts in our partnership schools.

When to apply

Applications, via the GTTR www.gttr.ac.uk can be made from 1 October for the following September start. There is one intake per year. You can apply throughout the year although the course usually becomes full before April.

Learn more

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This leaflet was written several months in advance of the start of the academic year. It is intended to provide prospective students with a general picture of the programmes and courses offered by the School. Please note that not all programmes or all courses are offered every year. Also, because our research is constantly exploring new areas and directions of study some courses may be dropped and new ones offered in their place.