

**COVID-19 Guidance Student FAQ**  
**Student Teacher Professional Placements in Scotland**  
**Publication date: 19 February 2021 (v1)**

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## **1. Background**

This document is intended to answer questions which student teachers in Scotland may have about their placements during session 2020/21 in the context of Covid-19 following the publication of the national [COVID-19 Guidance | Student Teacher Professional Placements in Scotland](#). Please note that university and local authority partnerships will now plan to put the 19 February 2021 guidance into practice and universities will advise their students of specific arrangements at the earliest opportunity; time will be required, however.

## **2. COVID-19 Guidance | Student Teacher Professional Placements in Scotland**

The 19 February 2021 national [Guidance](#), which was developed through national partnership, sets-out positive ways in which student teachers in Scotland will be supported to progress towards their goal of becoming teachers (See 3.6). It is intended that the guidance will provide reassurance to, among others, students and Higher Education Institution (HEI) staff who have had a highly challenging year due to COVID-19.

## **3. General Information**

**3.1 When will placements begin?** All partners endeavour to provide as many quality student placement opportunities ideally from 1 March 2021, and up to the end of the summer term (See [Guidance](#), 7.2). It should be recognised, however, that some schools may be unable to offer a previously agreed placement due to their particular circumstances.

**3.2 In the context of Covid-19, what happens if I am matched to a school in a different authority to the one in which I live?** Your HEI will provide you with a letter which authorises you to cross local authority boundaries as an essential part of your education.

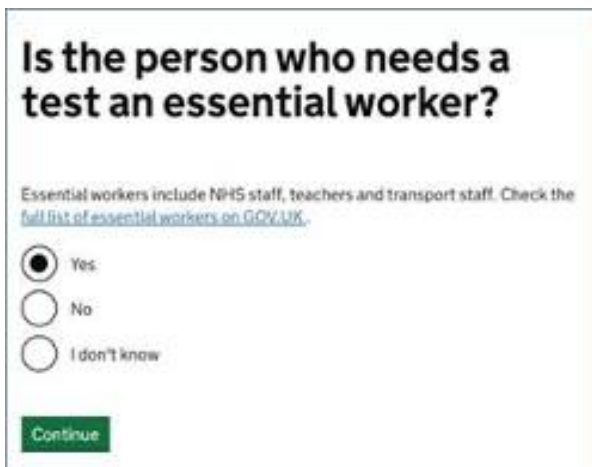
**3.3 Will I need to be tested before or during placement?**

**3.3.1 Home Testing:** Some authorities will provide the opportunity for students to opt into their COVID-19 asymptomatic testing programme. This would involve students being given Lateral Flow Device (LFD) test kits. Students would take test kits home and, twice weekly, following clear instructions for use, and undertake the tests themselves. They would then register positive, negative and void results on a web-based portal, with the results shared with NHS Test and Protect. The processes that should be followed by individuals depending on a positive, negative, or void result are clearly explained in the supporting material. Arrangements for students opting into the programme will be made locally, between placement schools and their students. Students will receive advice from their institutions.

**3.3.2 Testing Centre PCR Tests:** A test can also be booked by individuals via ‘Get a Free NHS test’ to check if they have coronavirus: [www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test](http://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) Student teachers will not require an invite code to book a test. When booking a test, student teachers should follow the instructions, below (See [Guidance](#), 3.8). The person needs to click on the booking process link and scroll down the page: [www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test](http://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test)



The next page they are presented with asks if they are an ‘essential worker’ to which they should answer ‘Yes’:



They will then need to work through the questions which ask about symptoms clicking ‘no’, they don’t have any. After a couple of pages (say ‘no’ at each), they will be presented with the screen, below, which sets out the other reasons that they could be requesting a test. They should select: ‘I’m in Scotland or Wales and I work in health or social care, education or in an emergency or prison service’:

## Why are you asking for a test?

- I've been told to get another coronavirus test
- I'm ordering for someone I live with who has coronavirus symptoms
- My local council or health protection team has asked me (or someone I live with) to get a test, even though I do not have symptoms
- I'm part of the National Tactical Response Group (NTRG), or someone I live with is
- I'm in Scotland or Wales and I work in health or social care, education or in an emergency or prison service
- I'm a personal assistant in England employed by an individual to provide home-based adult care and support
- None of the above

Continue

This will then lead to the pages to input their personal and contact data, and the availability of appointments at nearby test sites will be displayed.

**3.4 Will I be classed as a key worker?** Students are not classed as Key Workers (Note: they are 'Essential Workers' for testing purposes (See 3.3.2). However, as an essential professional work placement in the context of students' courses and programmes, travel to and from your place of work is permitted. When in school you will be afforded similar levels of mitigation/protection as other members of staff.

**3.5 Will my children, who have not yet returned to school, be entitled to a 'key worker' place in their school while I am on placement?** Student teachers do not have 'Key Worker' status. Consequently, there is no guarantee of school places for their children.

**3.6 In light of what has happened to 4<sup>th</sup> year dental students having to repeat a year, will this be considered for ITE students?** A similar requirement, to repeat the final year, is not envisaged for student teachers. Universities, represented by the Scottish Council of Deans of Education (SCDE), together with GTC Scotland (GTCS), Association of Directors of Education (ADES), and the Student Placement Management Group (SPMG), have finalised a national approach to ensure that student teachers have the opportunity to progress.

**3.7 What if I need to self-isolate during placement?** This situation has been experienced in semester 1. Students should seek advice from their HEIs who will be able to advise.

**3.8 Will I be able to extend my placement if it is disrupted?** Once revised placement dates have been agreed by university and local authority partnerships, it

will not be possible to extend placements further. Beyond the ability of placement schools, local authorities, and HEI partnership administrators, to be in a position to agree to extensions, non-placement-based learning is a vital part of programmes of Initial Teacher Education and will have been planned for this time.

**3.9 What would happen in the event that I am unable to attend or complete my course/programme due to illness?** It would depend on the number of days missed. For example, a retrieval might be appropriate. Alternatively, a deferral of studies might be suitable. Students should contact their HEI for guidance.

**3.10 If a student is asked to self-isolate, is not unwell, and is able to engage with their course, what would happen in this situation?** If a student is well and not experiencing symptoms while self-isolating, they should continue to engage with their course via remote working. If on placement, their engagement would be virtually (if it were in operation in their placement school). A student should also undertake other learning experiences as outlined by their HEI.

**3.11 In the primary education context, what if an individual class is quarantined?** If an individual student and their primary school class are asked to isolate due to a specific class quarantine measure, it may be that children's learning continues remotely and that students can participate. This can count as attendance, according to the percentages detailed in the guidance (See [Guidance](#), 3.2-3.5) and outlined in this FAQ document. If children's learning does not continue remotely, students still have the opportunity to continue their own learning via alternative learning experiences (See [Guidance](#), 3.7) and will be guided by their own HEIs.

**3.12 What if placement is further delayed?** A national approach to the progression of student teachers has been agreed and it will be revisited in the event of further school closures.

## **4. Details for PGDE and concurrent degrees**

**4.1 Is it a minimum of 55% direct teaching that I need in my PGDE/concurrent undergraduate year?** At least 55% school placement experience is required (55% of 18 weeks is 10 weeks, i.e., 50 days: See [Guidance](#), 3.2-3.4).

**4.2 What is the maximum remote teaching which can contribute to the PGDE/concurrent undergraduate year?** Remote teaching (See [Guidance](#), 3.5) can contribute up to a maximum of 20% (10 days) of school placement experience across the academic year 2020/21.

**4.3 Can I do remote teaching for my placement observation?** Remote teaching cannot be assessed and counted as a placement observation towards meeting the Standard for Provisional Registration (SPR).

**4.4 What happens if I am off on the day of my university tutor observation and it cannot be rescheduled?** Students will be offered an extension placement in the Autumn 2021 (See [Guidance](#), 4.4.4) if another visiting university tutor observation is not possible by in-person or virtual means.

**4.5 How will I be assessed on placement?** Assessments must be undertaken through in-person observation or virtual observation by an HEI tutor (See [Guidance](#), 4.3), dependent upon the student teacher's placement context. For clarity, this observation must be of a student teacher's 'in person' classroom teaching.

**4.6 What is a virtual observation?** A 'virtual observation' is understood as the use of electronic approaches to support the process of observation and reflection on practice as part of the assessment process. Your institution has details of what would constitute a virtual observation, if required (See [Guidance](#), Appendix A).

**4.7 What happens if, through no fault of my own, I cannot meet the minimum requisite 55% school placement classroom experience?** An extension placement will be required in the Autumn 2021 to provide an opportunity to meet the Standard for Provisional Registration (See [Guidance](#), 4.4.4).

**4.8 What happens if my placement school is closed in a local lockdown?** If a student fails to meet the Standard for Provisional Registration or school placement classroom experience attendance requirements (minimum 55%) due to local lockdown, an extension placement will be offered in the Autumn 2021 (See [Guidance](#), 4.4.4).

**4.9 What would happen if I cannot reach the requirement of at least 55% of school placement classroom experience even with the extension?** Students would be recommended for retrieval in accordance with programme regulations and would be a part of Group 3 (See [Guidance](#), 4.4).

**4.10 Will there be financial support for students during the extension period?** Financial support arrangements for students during the extension period will be outlined separately.

**4.11 What happens if I do more than 20% of my teaching online when on placement? Can this count towards my overall placement experience?** If your online teaching exceeds 20% of your total time on placement, then the excess will count towards the 45% part which is done outwith the actual school-based placement.

## **5. Details for Final Year Undergraduate Degrees**

**5.1 Is it 55% direct classroom teaching that I need in my final undergraduate year?** The minimum 55% requirement is applicable across the final two years of an undergraduate degree (See [Guidance](#), 3.3).

**5.2 What is the maximum remote teaching time which can contribute to the undergraduate direct classroom teaching 55%?** Remote teaching can contribute up to a maximum of 20% (8 days) of school placement experience (See [Guidance](#), 3.3).

**5.3 Can I do remote teaching for my placement observation?** Remote teaching cannot be assessed and counted as a placement observation towards meeting the Standard for Provisional Registration (SPR).

**5.4 How will I be assessed on placement?** Assessments must be undertaken through in-person observation or virtual observation by an HEI tutor (See [Guidance](#), 4.3), dependent upon the student teacher's placement context. For clarity, this observation must be of a student teacher's 'in person' classroom teaching.

**5.5 What is a virtual observation?** A 'virtual observation' is understood as the use of electronic approaches to support the process of observation and reflection on practice as part of the assessment process. Your institution has details of what would constitute a virtual observation, if required (See [Guidance](#), Appendix A).

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**5.7 What happens if I am off on the day of my university tutor observation and it cannot be rescheduled?** Students will be offered an extension placement in the Autumn 2021 (See [Guidance](#), 4.4.4) if another visiting university tutor observation is not possible by in-person or virtual means.

**5.8 What happens if my placement school is closed in a local lockdown?** If a student fails to meet the Standard for Provisional Registration or school placement classroom experience attendance requirements (minimum 55%) due to local lockdown, an extension placement will be offered in the Autumn 2021 (See [Guidance](#), 4.4.4).

**5.9 What would happen if I cannot reach the requirement of at least 55% of school experience even with the extension?** Students would be recommended for retrieval in accordance with programme regulations and would be a part of Group 3 (See [Guidance](#), 4.4).



**5.10 Will there be financial support for students during the extension period?**

Financial support arrangements for students during the extension period will be outlined separately.

**5.11 What happens if I do more than 20% of my teaching online when on placement? Can this count towards my overall placement experience?** If your online teaching exceeds 20% of your total time on placement, then the excess will count towards the 45% part which is done outwith the actual school-based placement.

**6. Details for undergraduate degrees (except final year)**

**6.1 Will I need to make up for lost placement time during the remaining year(s) of my undergraduate programme?** Students will not be asked to meet unreasonable demands. The wellbeing of students is paramount, and mitigation will be considered for students at each stage of programmes/courses.

**6.2 How will I be assessed on placement?** Advice on the assessment of placement will be available from HEI course and programme leaders.

**6.3 Will there be more tutor visits during the remaining year(s) of my undergraduate programme to make up for the lack of them in our course/programme to date?** The support and assessment of students will be designed to be commensurate with the duration of future placements. Decisions would be taken in light of the prevailing national context with fair and proportionate assessment processes informing decisions.

## 7. HEI Points of Contact

This FAQ is designed to support student teachers in getting rapid answers to common questions. Please ensure that this FAQ document is read in full before making contact with the appropriate named person in the table below.

| HEI   | Name                                  | Position  | Contact Details  |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| University of Aberdeen                                      | Dr John Mynott                        | Head of Initial Teacher Education   | <a href="mailto:john.mynott@abdn.ac.uk">john.mynott@abdn.ac.uk</a>   |
| University of Dundee  | Paola Sangster                        | Programme Director: PGDE Primary/Secondary                                  | <a href="mailto:p.z.sangster@dundee.ac.uk">p.z.sangster@dundee.ac.uk</a>   |
| University of Edinburgh                                     | Dr Zoe Robertson                      | Director of Teacher Education   | <a href="mailto:zoe.robertson@ed.ac.uk">zoe.robertson@ed.ac.uk</a>   |
| University of Glasgow                                       | Mary Lappin<br><br>Dr Kevin Proudfoot | Deputy Head of School of Education<br><br>Director of Learning and Teaching | <a href="mailto:Mary.Lappin@glasgow.ac.uk">Mary.Lappin@glasgow.ac.uk</a><br><br><a href="mailto:Kevin.Proudfoot@glasgow.ac.uk">Kevin.Proudfoot@glasgow.ac.uk</a> |
| University of Glasgow - School of Interdisciplinary Studies | Dr Shaista Shirazi                    | ITE Programme Lead  | <a href="mailto:shaista.shirazi@glasgow.ac.uk">shaista.shirazi@glasgow.ac.uk</a>   |
| Edinburgh Napier  | Andrew Gallacher                      | Head of Teacher Education   | <a href="mailto:A.Gallacher@napier.ac.uk">A.Gallacher@napier.ac.uk</a>   |
| Queen Margaret University                                   | Dr Simon Hoult                        | Lead for Initial Teacher Education  | <a href="mailto:SHoult@qmu.ac.uk">SHoult@qmu.ac.uk</a>   |

|   |                          |   |  |
|---|--------------------------|---|--|
| Royal Conservatoire Scotland                  | Moira Summers            | Joint Head of BEd & PGDE                    | <a href="mailto:m.summers@rcs.ac.uk">m.summers@rcs.ac.uk</a>                 |
| University of Stirling                        | Jane Smithson            | Director of Initial Teacher Education       | <a href="mailto:jane.smithson@stir.ac.uk">jane.smithson@stir.ac.uk</a>       |
| University of Strathclyde                     | Professor Aileen Kennedy | Director of Teacher Education               | <a href="mailto:aileen.kennedy@strath.ac.uk">aileen.kennedy@strath.ac.uk</a> |
| University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) | Professor Morag Redford  | Head of Teacher Education                   | <a href="mailto:morag.redford@uhi.ac.uk">morag.redford@uhi.ac.uk</a>         |
| University of the West of Scotland (UWS)      | Louise Barrett           | Senior Lecturer (Initial Teacher Education) | <a href="mailto:louise.barrett@uws.ac.uk">louise.barrett@uws.ac.uk</a>       |

**7.1 General Teaching Council for Scotland:** You can leave a message with GTC Scotland's main switchboard on +44 (0)131 314 6000. GTC Scotland now operates an automated voicemail service. In order to help them to deal with your enquiry in the most effective way, please leave your name, daytime telephone number and a brief reason for your call. Alternatively, complete the contact form available on their website.