



Studying Education

If you are interested in studying education at postgraduate level there is a tempting range of courses which allow you to specialise in almost any area of education which interests you. (For study at undergraduate level, see the note at the end of this sheet.)

If you want to train as a teacher, please refer to *Teacher training* in this series. If you are interested in training as a teacher of English, please refer to *Study English language teaching* in this series.

Why study education in the United Kingdom?

- You can study at institutions with an international reputation for educational research.
- UK degrees and academic awards are recognised for their high quality throughout the world.
- UK universities have a tradition of welcoming overseas students and you will be made to feel at home.
- The opportunity to improve your fluency in English will improve your job prospects and help both you and your employer develop international links.

1 What do I need to think about?

There are several reasons for engaging in the study of education at a postgraduate level, and you should first be clear about your own reasons.

- You may be a qualified and experienced teacher wanting to advance your knowledge in your own main sphere of teaching, whether it is a curriculum area (like science education) or a particular phase or stage of education (like early years education, secondary schooling, or further and higher education).
- You may be mainly interested in gaining a higher degree or academic award to enhance your academic qualifications, and because you enjoy intellectual and academic challenge.
- You may want to *develop* your career in a particular direction, and need to strengthen your knowledge and understanding of specific aspects of education, such as leadership, organisational management, policy issues or curriculum development.
- You may want to *change* the direction of your career and require professional training and a recognised qualification in areas such as counselling and guidance, or educational psychology.
- You may want to move into educational research or teaching in a higher education institution, and need experience and evidence of research capability in order to do this.

Which of these is closest to your situation? Thinking clearly about this will help you to make the right choice about the kind of course or programme that is best for you, and – just as important – what you want to get out of it in personal, academic, professional or career terms.

What courses and programmes are there?

UK courses in education designed for teachers and other education professionals		
Academic award	Who would take it?	Qualification and credit requirements
Postgraduate certificates and diplomas Qualifications in their own right that can also lead into a Master's course	Teachers and others who want to specialise in a particular area of education, and may not wish to commit themselves to a full Master's degree	PG Certificate: 60 credits at Master's level PG Diploma: 120 credits at Master's level Certificates usually take three to six months full time. Diplomas usually take up to nine months full time
Master's degrees Higher degrees which include a dissertation on a topic studied in depth	Teachers and others who want to specialise in a particular area of education or several related areas for a full Master's degree	MA (Master of Arts) MSc (Master of Science) MEd (Master of Education) 180 credits at Master's level Normally one year full time
Professional doctorate Doctoral programmes which combine taught units, coursework, and individual research with a thesis	Mid-career education and training professionals whose work requires them to have a high level of research capability and an informed understanding of policy and practice	EdD (Doctor of Education) 540 credits at doctoral level
Research degrees Higher degrees consisting of individual research work, leading to a publishable thesis	Anyone wanting to undertake original academic research into a specific area of interest, and who already holds a good honours degree or Master's degree or equivalent	MPhil (Master of Philosophy) Minimum usually one year full time PhD or DPhil (Doctor of Philosophy) Usually three years full time
Other courses , including short courses, individual study attachments and tailor-made courses, are available.		

2 What subjects can I study?

Almost any education and education-related subject. There is a huge range. In most universities you register for study in a particular area or specialism (which provides depth, coherence and unity in your studies). Many programmes also offer opportunities to take modules outside a specialist area (providing breadth, flexibility and variety). Examples of the range of subjects and topics are:

- adult and continuing education
- arts education
- assessment and evaluation
- bilingual and multilingual education
- careers and educational guidance
- child development
- community studies
- continuing professional development
- counselling and guidance
- curriculum design and evaluation
- distance education
- early childhood studies
- education and development
- management and leadership
- management and policy studies
- mentoring and coaching
- multicultural education
- nursery education
- organisation development
- philosophy of education
- planning
- primary and nursery education
- professional training in educational psychology
- educational psychology
- religious education
- research methods in education

- educational disability and rehabilitation
- English as a second language
- further education
- globalisation and education
- higher education
- inclusive education
- information technology in education
- initial teacher education
- international and comparative education
- language studies/linguistics
- rural education and development
- school effectiveness and improvement
- science education
- secondary education
- special education
- teaching and learning
- urban education
- vocational education
- women's studies
- youth and community studies.

In many places it is also possible to specialise in a particular school curriculum area not listed above, such as modern foreign languages, business education, citizenship education or mathematics education.

The best guide to what is available is published by UCET – *University Courses in Education in the UK Open to Students from Overseas*. This is revised annually and is normally published in May of the year preceding the academic year to which it applies (for example, publication in May 2005 for courses running in 2006/2007). A reference copy should be available in your nearest British Council library. Copies are available direct from UCET.

You can look for courses on the following websites:

Education UK www.educationuk.org
 Prospects www.prospects.ac.uk
 Hobsons www.postgrad.hobsons.com

Checklist: Choosing the right course for you


- There are so many courses on offer that it is vital that you do careful research in advance to ensure you find the right one for you. Start your search on www.educationuk.org or www.prospects.ac.uk or www.postgrad.hobsons.com but always obtain prospectuses from all the institutions you are considering. Look at the institutions' websites and talk to the staff if possible.
- Universities and higher education colleges offer a wide variety of courses and it is difficult to compare institutions. There are many sources to consult about the quality of teaching and research. Look at the independent reviews conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency www.qaa.ac.uk/students and the information available on the new Teaching Quality Information site www.tqi.ac.uk. There are no official performance tables for universities, but some newspapers such as *The Times* and *The Guardian* publish unofficial league tables. The tables vary enormously depending on the factors assessed and the weightings used. Read the tables critically and do not base your final decision on the ratings alone.
- Bear in mind other factors, such as cost, location and size of the institution, international mix of students on the programmes, provision of supervision for dissertations and available facilities.

4 Modes of study and assessment

Some courses can be studied part time. Many Master's degrees, for example, can be taken over a period of four years. However, you should note that under visa regulations students from outside the European Economic Area are not permitted to study part time and can only study full time.

Distance learning is possible in two ways:

- specialist distance learning courses making extensive use of online materials and email communications are offered by many universities. In some cases this is supported by in-country teaching where universities have established 'offshore' programmes in particular countries.

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- the Open University's Faculty of Education and Language Studies provides material, assessment and tutorial support for students in Western Europe, and several modules for their MA in education are now available throughout the world.

Assessed coursework (rather than assessment by examinations) is the almost universal method of assessment. This can embrace a variety of specific approaches, ranging from traditional essays to portfolios of tasks or investigations completed against specified guidelines and assessment criteria, in which there is often considerable scope for students to include reports and analyses of action research projects and presentations based on personal professional experience.

Taught classes, group seminars and workshops as well as formal lectures are typical modes of teaching and learning. In most courses, class sizes are small – perhaps 10 to 25 or so – though there may be larger groups in some courses, particularly where a programme of study includes core units or modules that all students are required to follow (such as an introduction to research methods).

A central feature of UK postgraduate teaching is individual or small group tutorial supervision, where you will have the opportunity to consult with academic tutors about your progress in general and specific aspects of your studies as you work on them.

5 How do I apply?

Entry qualifications

You should check with the institutions you are interested in for the exact nature of the qualifications or experience which they require. In general, for entry to postgraduate programmes all institutions will expect you to hold a university degree or the equivalent qualification from your home country. For further information see *Choosing your postgraduate programme* in this series.

There are no national guidelines about the equivalence of overseas qualifications to UK ones. You should contact the institutions you are interested in to check the acceptability of your particular qualifications. Some information can be obtained from the National Academic Recognition Information Centre for the United Kingdom (NARIC). For further information see www.naric.org.uk.

Checklist: Your next steps

- Before you apply for a UK course in education, do some thorough research at home (or in the countries where you would like to work) about the best qualifications for the career you would like to follow.
- A good first source of information is the UCET handbook, which lists all the UK universities offering educational first and postgraduate degrees and other awards (see 'Where can I find more information?'). You can also search the British Council website www.educationuk.org, www.prospects.ac.uk and www.postgrad.hobsons.com
- Always obtain the course prospectus or study the online version. Find out whether you have the required entry qualifications. This includes the English language ability required by the institutions you intend to apply to. For an undergraduate course this may be an IELTS score of 5.5 to 6.5, while for a postgraduate course an IELTS score of 6.0 to 7.0 may be required. Ask your local British Council office where and when you can take the test.
- Institutions will have their own application procedures and guidelines. Check what these are and then stick to the deadlines.

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7 What else do I need to know?

You should bear in mind immigration requirements when considering whether to study in the UK. Requirements vary according to your nationality or citizenship and the length of time you want to study. You will not be allowed to extend your permission to stay in the UK for more than two years on courses that are below degree level and are of less than one year's duration. The UKCOSA website will give you further information on this topic – www.ukcosa.org.uk/pages/guidenote.htm

Note in particular that you will not be given permission to enter the UK as a student if the school, college or university that you want to study at does not appear on the UK Department for Education and Skills Register of Education and Training Providers. You can check the register by clicking on 'Browse the Register' at www.dfes.gov.uk/providersregister/

For practical advice on living in the UK download *Studying and living in the UK* from www.educationuk.org/bc_img/body/articles/pdfs/stud_live_uk.pdf

Note about undergraduate study of education

This information sheet is about studying education at postgraduate level, but there are also many opportunities for the study of education at undergraduate level, as part of a bachelor's degree or other academic award.

Many of these undergraduate awards also include professional qualification as a teacher (see *Teacher training* in this series for more information).

But there are also many universities and other higher education institutions offering undergraduate degrees in what is usually called Education Studies, which do not involve training to teach and the assessment for that professional qualification.

For information about Education Studies and related degrees, refer to the Universities and Colleges Admission Service website at www.ucas.ac.uk and follow the links to do a course search for Education Studies.

8 Where can I find more information?

British Council

Website www.educationuk.org
www.educationuk.org/scotland

For further information, you can find details of your nearest office at www.britishcouncil.org/home-contact-worldwide.htm which includes links to all our country web pages and a worldwide address book giving contact details for all offices.

Universities Council for the Education of

Teachers (UCET)
Whittington House
19-30 Alfred Place
London WC1E 7EA
Telephone +44 (0)20 7580 8000
Fax +44 (0)20 7323 0577
Email info@ucet.ac.uk
Website www.ucet.ac.uk

Universities UK

Woburn House
20 Tavistock Square
London WC1H 9HQ
Telephone +44 (0)20 7419 4111
Fax +44 (0)20 7388 8649
Email info@universitiesuk.ac.uk
Website www.universitiesuk.ac.uk

National Academic Recognition Information Centre for the United Kingdom (UK NARIC)

Oriel House
Oriel Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire GL50 1XP
Telephone +44 (0)870 990 4088
Fax +44 (0)1242 288 611
Email info@naric.org.uk
Website www.naric.org.uk

The Open University

Customer Contact Centre
PO Box 724
Milton Keynes MK7 6ZS
Telephone +44 (0) 19 0865 3231
Fax +44 (0) 19 0865 4806
Email general-enquiries@open.ac.uk
Website www.open.ac.uk
Check website for possible contact details in your home country.

Council for International Education (UKCOSA)

9-17 St Albans Place
London N1 ONX
Telephone +44 (0)20 7288 4330
Fax +44 (0)20 7288 4360
Website www.ukcosa.org.uk

Other useful resources

University Courses in Education in the UK Open to Students from Overseas (UCET, published annually in May) – comprehensive handbook of initial, postgraduate and short courses available to students from overseas

While every effort has been made to ensure that the information given here is correct and up to date, the British Council accepts no legal liability for its accuracy, currency or completeness.

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