PME Frequently Asked Questions

Registration

Q: How will I know if I am eligible for Registration as a Post-primary Teacher in Ireland?
A: Completing the PME will not render you eligible for teacher registration in Ireland. The determining factor for recognition as a post-primary teacher in Ireland is your primary degree. The Teaching Council is the sole arbiter of what constitutes eligibility for post-primary teacher registration in Ireland. It is charged with doing so in terms of EU regulations and the Education Acts of 1997 and 1998. It is your responsibility to ensure that a) your primary degree renders you eligible for entry into the PME and b) you will qualify for registration with at least one subject on completion of the PME.

Q: I have accepted a PME offer for NUI Galway from PAC. When will NUI Galway make its formal offers of PME placement?
A: On receipt of acceptance of offer online you will be directed to an acceptance of offer webpage where you must read all details carefully (http://www.nuigalway.ie/postgrad/pgde_offers_website.html). You must print out and complete certain documents on this webpage and return to (a) Postgraduate Admissions Office and (b) School of Education. Important: please note the deadlines associated with these documents carefully. It is also recommended that you print out and retain other important documents on this page for your information. The only documents you will be receiving by post after the PAC acceptance deadline are the Garda Vetting Forms for completion and return to the Postgraduate Admissions Office. Likewise, upon acceptance of a place it is important to check the Professional Master of Education course webpage http://www.nuigalway.ie/courses/taught-postgraduate-courses/education-professional-master.html#course_overview

Q: The documentation from PAC office with my offer of a place references a range of forms i.e. Garda Vetting, PME Student Information Form, PME School Placement School Agreement Form. What do I do with these?
A: The forms are returned as follows:

Garda Vetting: Refer to Garda Vetting invite which you will receive via email.
PME Student Information: Sinéad Coyne (sinead.coyne@nuigalway.ie), School of Education, NUI Galway, by June 4, 2019
PME School Agreement Form: COMPLETE and RETURN this form to Sinéad Coyne, School of Education, NUI Galway, by 23rd August 2019

Disability – Support, Disclosure and Confidentiality

Q: I have a disability – do I need to disclose and where can I seek support?
A: Disclosure of a disability is a personal decision and it is your right not to disclose if you wish. Your decision may have important consequences later on, so in making your decision, it is best to be as informed as possible about what the potential benefits may be. Please contact the Disability Support Service (http://www.nuigalway.ie/disability/) in the university and they will advise you on the disclosure process. It is important to be aware
that the University cannot provide reasonable accommodations, which may benefit you before and/or during school placement, unless you disclose your disability.

School Placement - FAQs

Q: Does NUI Galway find a host school for my School Placement in first year?
A: No. NUI Galway does not engage in the placement of PME Student Teachers for School Placement in first year. It is the sole responsibility of the PME applicant to find a school that will facilitate her/him in fulfilling the School Placement component of the PME during the first year. If an applicant embarks on the PME programme without having secured a placement school, it is the responsibility of the applicant to secure a school for the PME Year 1 placement by 30th September 2019. You will be teaching in one school during Year 1 and another school during Year 2. The Year 2 placement can be arranged during Year 1 and the School of Education will provide further advice during Year 1.

Q: How do I find a Host School for School Placement [SP]?
A: Please see “List of Approved Schools” here.
We strongly recommend that you look for a placement school as soon after the Easter break as possible! (29th April 2019 onwards).

Be aware that looking for a PME placement school is like looking for a teaching job!
We strongly advise you to prepare a high quality CV and cover letter (personalised to the relevant school principal), that you present yourself in person (dressed as a teacher!) and try to meet with either the principal/deputy principal, PME coordinator (in some schools there is a designated teacher who looks after PME students) and/or a teacher who teaches one of your subjects. Many schools, especially schools in and around Galway city, are inundated with phone calls from successful PME applicants so you should think about ways that will make you stand out! As is the case when applying for a job, a strong reference can be of immense benefit to an applicant. Especially if you are not from the area and are not known in the schools, it is recommendable that you talk to the principal of your own second-level school and/or to a former employer and ask if they can support you through a reference (or possibly a phone call if they have any contacts with schools on our list).
Some post primary schools agree to grant SP hours based only on the PAC offer while others don’t entertain requests for SP hours until the NUI Galway offer has been secured.

Q: How many hours do I have to teach throughout the year?
A: You will be required to teach 6 - 8 classes for each week on School Placement in Year 1. Please see Academic Calendars on the programme website for more information (http://www.nuigalway.ie/courses/taught-postgraduate-courses/education-professional-master.html#course_overview)

Q: What subjects are eligible for my School Placement [SP] timetable?
A: Ideally, SP is conducted in the individual student teacher’s subject(s) which is/are listed as approved teaching subjects by the Teaching Council. It is the student teacher’s responsibility to arrange his/her SP in accordance with this regulation. If, on securing a placement school, a student teacher experiences difficulties in arranging all SP hours in her/his degree subjects, please contact the School of Education at education@nuigalway.ie Above all, do not agree to a timetable that runs counter to requirements by the Teaching Council and School of Education, NUI Galway [see also previous question].
Q: As a Student Teacher, what if my host school is unable to provide a SP timetable based on the subjects for which I will be registered by the Teaching Council?
A: Sometimes, schools are unable to provide all SP hours to Student Teachers in their recognised teaching subject(s). Student Teachers are not to agree to such a SP timetable until they have first consulted with the School of Education, NUI Galway.

Q: Are there some classes/year groups that are not eligible for SP hours?
A: As instructed above, SP hours can be conducted only in the curricular subjects for which you will be registered as a teacher by the Teaching Council. While you will benefit greatly from assisting teachers with class groups such as Special Educational Needs, or Leaving Certificate Examination Year, you may not be given full responsibility for a regularly scheduled class with such groups.

Q: I understand that a School Placement Tutor [SPT] will work with me to assist me, and to support my development as Student Teacher throughout the PME year. My question is how many classroom based assessments are conducted on my SP performance?
A: School Placement classes are subject to a number of visits by a designated SP Tutor. In most cases, the SP tutor will conduct final assessment of the student teacher’s performance in the classroom. Student teachers will be visited by a tutor at least three times in the year. Please note that while three is the minimum number of visits to be made by the assigned tutor, student teachers are eligible for Second Opinion as well as Extern and incidental assessment visits by the School of Education throughout the School Placement programme.

Q: As a Student Teacher, what are my obligations to my host school?
A: During their school placement blocks, student teachers are expected to become fully immersed in the life of the school community. Some school principals require the student teacher to be present for the full school day. This “presence” may include being available to management outside scheduled SP hours. The School of Education supports principals who require that student teachers be present in the school throughout the day. Such hours, however, are not configured in the required SP (teaching) hours. Supervision/substitution hours also cannot be included in the required SP hours.

Observation/Initial School Experience

Q: I understand I must complete a period of Observation/Initial School Experience. What does this mean? And what does it entail?
A: Observation/School Experience consists of 14 hours: 7 hours in a primary school and 7 hours in a post-primary school. Student teachers arrange this Observation/School Experience themselves. There is a designated “window” within which to conduct the cumulative 14 hours in the first semester and a number of “free days” from lectures/tutorials, etc. will be scheduled to allow observation/initial school experience. A school observation form will be available from Induction onwards.

Q: Where do I conduct my Observation/Initial School Experience?
A: Generally, post-primary observation is completed in the school where the student teacher has arranged to conduct School Placement (SP). However, this is not a requirement. Primary school experience can be carried out in a school of choice. Please note that Observation is not to be conducted in either primary or post primary schools until September.