

PME Frequently Asked Questions

Programme Delivery 2021/22 Academic Year

Q: How will the PME Year 1 programme be delivered during the next academic year? Do I need to attend lectures on campus?

A: Due to the continuing uncertainty in the context of Covid-19 and the need for students to secure placement schools before programme start the following is planned for the academic Year 2021-22.

Semester 1:

- **College block 1 (6 Sept-8 Oct)**
 - **All teaching will be delivered online apart from 2-3 days.**
 - PME Year 1 students will be required to **attend campus for small-group Microteaching**, one day during week of 20th and one day during week of 27th September.
- **School placement block 1 (11 Oct – 12 Nov)**
 - **All school placement blocks will take place in students' placement schools** and will be supervised by an NUIG school placement tutor.
- **College block 2 (15 Nov-10 Dec)**
 - College block 2 will be **delivered online** with the **option of attending some small-group workshops and tutorials** on campus, subject to Health and Safety and university regulations. **If possible all students will attend campus for 1-2 days.**

Semester 2:

- Further information will be provided regarding course delivery during semester 2 in due course. **It is anticipated that online delivery will continue** for college block 3 (7 Feb-4 March) with **some college days on campus where possible.**
- If circumstances allow, students will be given the **option of attending some small-group workshops and tutorials on campus.**

We will keep all applicants who have accepted PME offers updated regarding programme delivery, timetables etc.

Q: Do I need to book accommodation in Galway?

There is **no need for students to book accommodation in Galway unless you wish to stay and/or teach in Galway during PME Year 1. As outlined above, online delivery will remain an option throughout PME Year 1** with some days of face-2-face delivery on campus throughout the year, subject to Health and Safety and university regulations.

Q: How many days/hours will PME study entail?

A: The PME programme is a full-time programme and students are expected to be available for study and school placement on a full-time basis. During college blocks, live lectures, workshops and tutorials will mostly be delivered between Monday and Thursday. There will be a mixture of live online classes and pre-recorded

material/independent study tasks which will allow for some flexibility. Please be prepared for a full-time and demanding Professional Masters programme.

Offers

Q: I have accepted a PME offer for NUI Galway from PAC. When will NUI Galway make its formal offers for the PME programme?

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. 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 [by mid-July 2021].**

PME Student Information: **Sinéad Coyne (sinead.coyne@nuigalway.ie), School of Education, NUI Galway, by June 1, 2021**

PME School Agreement Form: **COMPLETE and RETURN this form to Sinéad Coyne, School of Education, NUI Galway, by 27th August 2021**

Q: Can I defer my offer/PME place? I am not in a position to start this year but would like to start one year later.

A: No, you cannot defer your offer/PME place. If you cannot start the PME you will need to apply again (and your application will be assessed and scored again) for the year in which you want to commence your studies. PME applications are administered by the Postgraduate Application Centre and usually open in September the year previous to programme start.

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 2021. 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!** (12th April 2021 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! **Please note that physical visits to schools may not be possible due to Health and Safety regulations in the context of Covid-19. Please call the school to enquire whether you can visit in person before going to any school.**

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 8 - 10 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: Do I need to teach both my subjects and do I need equal numbers of classes in each subject?

A: Ideally you will have the opportunity to teach both of your teaching subjects. You do not need a perfect balance between the classes you teach in each subject. It might be that you teach more in one subject and less in the other. It may, sometimes, be difficult to find a school that can offer you classes in both of your teaching subjects. This may be the case if a small number of students are taking a certain subject in the school or a subject may not be offered at all. If you cannot find a school where you can teach both of your teaching subjects you can still accept a placement offer. Even if the school can, initially, not offer you teaching in both subjects, opportunities for teaching, observation or team-teaching may arise throughout your placement. Even if it is not possible for you to teach one of your subjects during PME year 1 you can gain experience teaching that subject in your Year 2 placement school.

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 a SP timetable that includes subjects outside of their subject expertise 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 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 observations are conducted by school placement tutors?

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 usually be observed in the classroom by a tutor at least three times in each year.

Please note that while three is the *minimum* number of observations conducted by an assigned tutor, student teachers are eligible for Second Opinion as well as Extern

and incidental assessment observations 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. Given the current Covid-19 restrictions students are not required to secure a primary school for observation prior to starting the PME programme.***

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: How will I know whether the Teaching Council will recognise my primary degree for the purpose of registration in one or two teaching subjects?

We (NUI Galway) are not the regulatory body, the Teaching Council (www.teachingcouncil.ie) are, and as such we cannot address applicants' queries in this regard (questions around what subjects you would be qualified to teach). During the PME application process you needed to self-assess your qualification(s) against the Teaching Council curricular subject requirements for post-primary teachers, available at <https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/news-events/latest-news/curricular-subject-requirements.pdf>. You also submitted your transcripts as evidence that you have fulfilled the subject-related criteria.

Once you have embarked on the PME programme, the Postgraduate Application Centre will send your subject declaration forms together with your transcripts to the Teaching Council Registration section for review. The Teaching Council will then communicate with PME students regarding the outcome of the individual assessment, i.e. they will notify you whether you fulfil all requirements in one or two subjects and/or whether there is a shortfall (this could relate to credits or content areas). PME students normally receive this communication in February/March in PME Year 1. If shortages are identified you will be able to make up these shortages, usually by taking on additional studies and/or providing further evidence.

It is important to stress, again, that the Teaching Council is the regulatory and registration body in Ireland and, as such, has sole authority with regard to the assessment of curricular subject requirements as well as registration upon completion of the PME programme. NUI Galway is not involved in these processes.

Q: I have identified a shortfall in one of my teaching subjects. Is it possible to take on additional modules in my subject area(s) to address this shortfall during my PME studies?

Yes, if you have identified a shortage in one of your subject areas you can take on an additional module(s) during the PME, subject to approval by the PME programme director. PME students can take extra credits (usually up to 5 ECTS per year). Students interested in taking additional modules need to research possibilities, make arrangements with the relevant subject department, and incur fees for additional modules separately. Please contact www.nuigalway.ie/student-fees/ for details related to module fees. Any additional subject-related studies would be unrelated to the PME programme and the School of Education.

At NUI Galway, students taking additional modules can register as Occasional Arts students, see further information at <https://www.nuigalway.ie/undergrad-admissions/non-schoolleavers/occasionalstudents/>. If you are considering this option, and once you have identified relevant modules and discussed the possibility of participating with the relevant department, you should contact the PME programme director in August/September, and before registering for additional modules, to request approval. The School of Education will approve additional studies (up to 5 ECTS per year) under the condition that the additional studies don't interfere with your PME engagement.

Please note that the PME programme is a demanding full-time programme. It is therefore important that you consider your ability to take on additional studies carefully.