

# Curriculum and Pedagogical Approach

The PGCE Teacher Development programme is taught through two modules – Module 1: *Thinking about Learning*, and Module 2: *Learning in Teaching*.

## Module 1: Thinking about Learning

This module has been designed to engage participants in reflecting further on their own professional development to date. All participants use a portfolio developed in response to their current as well as previous teaching and reflect on engagement with activities, discussions with their critical friend, and responses to peer and tutor feedback. With a focus on learning within their teaching, participants study through reading material organised into three themes: **Observing Learning**; **Supporting Learners**; and **Teachers as Learners**. These three themes, presented over 10 sessions, enable participants to achieve the planned aims and learning outcomes which are assessed through the following three elements of coursework:

1. Responses to activities specified in Module 1 themes;
2. Six recorded observations; and
3. A short, 2,000-word essay.

## Module 2: Learning in Teaching

This module follows on from the first but focuses, through exploration and reflection of practice, on three further themes: **The Assessment Challenge**; **Supporting Learning**; and **The Reflective Practitioner**. Activities include lesson planning, the creation and development of pedagogic materials, and the evaluation of their use in school settings. They will be supported by professional and academic material available through the VLE on topics such as observing effectively, learner differences, the learning cycle, peer engagement, communities of practice and learning from colleagues. The curriculum will enable participants to continue to achieve the planned learning outcomes of the programme and develop competency in relevant teaching standards. The learning outcomes are assessed as with Module 1 through the following coursework:

1. The completion of responses to activities specified in Module 2 themes;
2. Six recorded observations of teaching; and
3. One 4,000-word assignment consisting of three short essays (of approximately 1,000 words each), which critically examine the themes of the module and contextualise them in the Teacher Participants setting; and a further 1,000-word essay which offers the opportunity for further discussion, reflection on practice, and a conclusion to the final assignment.

## Presenting the Curriculum

The PGCE Teacher Development programme utilises an innovative approach to professional development for teachers. In order to open access to low cost but high

the tutors use a different set of ‘teaching tools’ relying on knowledge and their understanding of teachers’ needs globally rather than the more regular responding to participants’ needs through interaction. During academic year 2021–22 we piloted synchronous virtual face-to-face elements to further support participant teachers. These occur in the first two months of the programme and are offered in Modules 1 and 2 as part of our ‘check-in’ points.

## Teaching through Assessment

Many teachers are aware of Assessment for Learning (AfL) as first outlined by Paul Black and colleagues in 1998 (materials accessible through the [Assessment Reform Group](#) accessed May 2022). The approach to supporting participants on this programme is an elaborate AfL approach where both formative and summative assessment approaches are expected to inform future learning. Assessment pedagogies are a strength of the programme. We originally had three types: forum discussion, formative written feedback, including Critical Friend feedback, and summative written feedback. Following our pilot during 2021–22 we have added a fourth: virtual face-to-face dialogue. Feedback is critical not only as a mechanism to support the learning, but as a model for reflective practice too.

### Forum discussion

In this programme, forum discussion involves identifying one day when a member of the team will respond to activity on a forum. However, it involves peer engagement as well as tutor input and is articulated as a form of formative assessment in that learning will be facilitated. To minimise tutors’ input, as noted, just one day is identified for the tutor to engage but participants will be encouraged to interact with each other through the module activities. Through the programme area these forum discussions are linked to pre-course activities and named items for the portfolio, all of which are the remit of the Programme Director. The oversight of this work will take place over a period of time but will be limited to the amount of time identified in Table 1. Within the two modules, forum discussion activities have been identified as ‘check-in points’ and enable the team to see that all participants are engaged, give some response on the published ‘check-in date’ and so support learning. For 2021, the tutors have also agreed to offer virtual F2F check-in opportunities on these dates, which are recorded for those who cannot attend.

### Formative written feedback

In this programme, tutors will offer formative written feedback at agreed intervals (see Table 1) during the programme. This has been agreed in order to support continued learning throughout the programme rather than just at the end of module teaching which is the norm on other UCL Institute of Education programmes. This formative feedback will be on the following six elements:

- Philosophical Statement
- Observations 1 and 2 (Module 1)
- Draft of Module 1 essay
- Draft of short essay 1 (Module 2)
- Draft of short essay 2 (Module 2)
- Draft of short essay 3 and synopsis (Module 2)

### Critical Friend

As we cannot engage with one to one, F2F discussions, and we recognise the importance of these, we have set up a system where each participant teacher identifies a critical friend in their own setting (usually a colleague) to have ‘professional discussions’ about their teaching. The critical friend is encouraged to observe teaching (each module has at least six





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continue directly to complete both modules in one year, but as is obvious in Table 2 below, Presentation 2 and 3 participants work across the traditional academic year.

Of course, things happen and plans to engage with professional