

PME Frequently Asked Questions

Programme Delivery 2023/24 Academic Year

Q: How will the PME Year 1 programme be delivered during the next academic year?

A: The first year of the programme will be delivered on-campus.

Semester 1:

- **College block 1 (4th Sept- 6th Oct)**
 - Teaching will be delivered on campus between Monday and Thursday.
 - Students will also engage in asynchronous independent study activities so will need access to a computer and an internet connection.
 - Fridays are generally kept free for meetings with placement schools and initial school experience (classroom observation)
- **School placement block 1 (9th Oct – 10th Nov)**
 - **All school placement blocks will take place in students' placement schools** and will be supervised by a University of Galway school placement tutor.
- **College block 2 (13th Nov – 15th Dec)**
 - Teaching will be delivered on campus between Monday and Thursday.
 - Students will also engage in asynchronous independent study activities so will need access to a computer and an internet connection.

Semester 2:

- **School placement block 2 (2nd Jan – 2nd Feb)**
 - **All school placement blocks will take place in students' placement schools** and will be supervised by a University of Galway school placement tutor.
- **College block 3 (5th Feb – 1st Mar)**
 - Teaching will be delivered on campus between Monday and Thursday.
 - Students will also engage in asynchronous independent study activities so will need access to a computer and an internet connection.
- **School placement block 3 (4th Mar – 19th April)**
 - **All school placement blocks will take place in students' placement schools** and will be supervised by a University of Galway school placement tutor.
 - **Easter will take place during this placement, there will be no placement teaching during the holiday period.**
- **Concluding College weeks (22nd April – 3rd May)**
 - Students will complete and submit all remaining course work. Final teaching will also be delivered on campus over a 2 day period.

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

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, lectures, workshops and tutorials will mostly be delivered between Monday and Thursday. Please be prepared for a full-time and demanding Professional Masters programme. Classes will predominately start at 9am and finish at 5pm, barring methodologies which often run until 7pm.

Offers

Q: I have accepted a PME offer for NUI Galway from PAC. When will University of 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 the Postgraduate Admissions Office **and** the School of Education. **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 receive by post after the PAC acceptance deadline are the Garda Vetting Forms. Please complete and return your vetting documents to the Postgraduate Admissions Office**

Q: The documentation from PAC pertaining to my offer 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 2023].

PME School Agreement Form: Complete and return to the PME Administrator, School of Education, University of Galway, by 23rd August 2023.

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

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** (<https://www.universityofgalway.ie/disability/>) in the university and they will advise you on the disclosure process. It is important to be aware that **unless you disclose your disability the University cannot provide reasonable accommodations.**

School Placement - FAQs

Q: Does University of Galway find a host school for my School Placement in first year?

A: No. *We do not engage in the placement of PME Student Teachers for School Placement.* 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. If an applicant begins 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 29th September 2023.

You will teach in a different school in each academic year. The Year 2 placement can be arranged during Year 1; 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”

We strongly recommend that you **look for a placement school as soon as possible after receiving your PME offer!**

Be aware that looking for a PME placement school is like looking for a teaching job!

We strongly advise you:

- *Prepare a high quality CV and cover letter* (personalised to the relevant school principal),
- *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 recommended 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 will not entertain requests for SP hours until the University of 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 (<https://www.universityofgalway.ie/postgrad-admissions/faqs/informationforprofessionalmastersofeducationcandidates/>)

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 PME administrator. Above all, do not agree to a timetable that runs counter to requirements by the Teaching Council and School of Education.

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 be difficult to find a school that can offer you classes in both of your teaching subjects. This may be the case if only a small number of students are taking your subjects 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 does not initially 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 us in the School of Education.

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 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 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 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.***

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 do I register as a student with NUIG?

A: Registration for taught postgraduate courses will open in **August/September**. If you have received confirmation of your course acceptance (via email from the **admissions office**) you will be invited to register using the online student portal. Please visit the [registration webpage](#) for more detailed and up to date information regarding registering. If you have any queries regarding the process please email registration@universityofgalway.ie. **Please note that it is mandatory to register as a student**, failing to do so will affect your eligibility to go on school placement as well as prohibit access to online student services, block you from receiving a student ID card, and restrict access to the library.

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 (University of 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 began 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. The University of 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 the fees office (<https://www.universityofgalway.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.

Students taking additional modules can register as Occasional Arts students. Further information is available at this webpage: <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 will not 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.

Q: How do I obtain confirmation of my student status/have forms filled by the college?

A: Should you require documentation confirming your status as a registered student at NUIG you can do so by logging in to your [student portal](#) and selecting “print registration statement” in the top right hand corner of the screen. This will give you an official .pdf document confirming your status as a student and the course you are attending. Should you require it to be signed and stamped by the college you can email the **student registry helpdesk** at universityof[galway.ie](#) or call them on 091 495 999. If you have a form that you need completed by the university you can also email it to the registry helpdesk. They have a helpdesk downstairs in the **Áras Uí-Chathail** building on campus where you can have documents completed, signed and stamped in person. Please see their [webpage](#) for further information on the services offered.