

Message from Professor Kate Ireland, Director of the Centre for Teacher Education

To all University of Warwick PGCE students and trainees (cc. partner schools for information)

Friday 01 May 2020

- **Update and FAQs regarding the consideration of QTS**
- **Clarification on how the University's PGT COVID-19 Mitigation Policy relates to our PGCE courses.**

Update about the consideration of QTS

Thank you for the recent opportunity to attend your SSLCs and for your positive feedback on our regular communication. It is good to know that you are keeping in touch with your tutors to ask questions and seek further clarification on the QTS work. In response to student and SSLC queries and feedback, please find our answers to trainee frequently asked questions:

When will we find out about the decision to award QTS?

The recommendation for the award of QTS is made following the final exam boards in early July on completion of all of the assessed elements of the PGCE including academic modules and school placements. QTS is not awarded separate to the full PGCE qualification.

OK, so when do I find out if I have passed the placement component of the course?

As a result of the suspension of placements, all ITT providers have been asked to determine those trainees who were on a trajectory to meet the Teachers' Standards by course completion. We are in the final stages of completing the quality assurance of this process. Our aim is to advise any trainees who would require a further period of practice in the next academic year as soon as possible and no later than the end of May. All other trainees will be considered to have passed the school placement element of the course.

What evidence will be considered in making a judgement about my trajectory toward meeting the standards?

Trainees trajectory toward meeting the standards will be judged on the basis of all school-based assessments of practice. The most recent Assessment Point will be important in this but will not be the only basis on which decisions are made. All trainees for whom the trajectory is not clearly defined by the recent Assessment Point will be reviewed by the course teaching team and by one of our external examiners. Evidence for meeting all eight standards, plus Part Two of the standards and the Pre-amble will be considered.

Will mitigating circumstances for absences be considered in the case of students who have to cover home learning or other caring responsibilities?

The University has made changes to the mitigating circumstances process for all students in response to Covid-19 issues. Details can be found on the webpage below:

<https://warwick.ac.uk/insite/coronavirus/student-faqs/>

If you have any specific concerns or difficulties in your own personal situation that are not resolved by these changes please contact your personal tutor.

How will my NQT year differ from normal?

We expect that school will recognise the reduced experience that this years' trainee teachers have had as a result of school closures. However, it is up to individual schools to decide how to provide additional support and whether to reduce teaching timetables. Along with other ITT providers, we are advising the DfE of the importance of supporting schools in recognising the additional challenges that you might face. The implementation of the Early Career framework has been deferred for next year.

Will Warwick University support us in the NQT year?

As an NQT you are entitled to support from your employing school in the form of training, mentoring and adjustments your timetable. In addition to this we are planning to provide some extra support for you in the Autumn term to help you as you begin new posts or to support you if you are still seeking employment next term. We will provide details of the nature of this support over coming weeks. The University will lead on providing additional support for University-led core trainees, and Lead schools and Alliances will be asked to take a role in relation to their trainees on the School Direct training and salaried routes. Additional optional sessions will also be organised in the final month of the course to help you in preparing for your first post.

You may also find that you thrive on the trust that is put in you as NQTs and that the challenge of an increased teaching load is balanced by the autonomy of being able to work independently and develop your own identity as a teacher. Not

every trainee finds the NQT year challenging, it will depend on who you are as a teacher and the ethos and leadership of the school that you work in.

How the PGT COVID-19 Mitigation Policy relates to our PGCE courses

On Tuesday this week, the University communicated the [‘PGT Covid-19 Mitigation Policy’ to all students](#). This policy aims to provide a framework where the likely general detrimental impact of COVID-19 on student study and achievement across the University is mitigated.

We want to clarify which elements of this policy do apply to you as a PGCE student and which do not, given that your course has specific assessment conventions and a key professional element.

1) Degree Classification (the award of ‘merit’ or ‘distinction’)

The policy states that ‘The calculation will be based on the best 120 credits achieved by the student rather than the (usual) weighted averages across all modules taken.’

The changes here do not relate to the award of PGCE (as the PGCE is a 90 credit award).

However, if you progress to our MA programme (180 credit award), this means that your future MA Classification will be based on the mark you get for your dissertation and a further 60 credits of the Masters level (level 7) modules for which you got the highest marks.

2) Failed modules:

This change is only relevant to students on other courses at the University. All modules on the PGCE are ‘core’ (ie. Integral to meeting the required course learning outcomes) and therefore need to be passed in order to be eligible for award.

3) Re-examination of failed assessments:

A) Level 7 Modules: Subject Studies and Reflective Practice/Professional Studies
No change for PGCE students as a right to re-submit has always applied to assignments for your PGCE Level 7 modules

Students continue to have one opportunity to resubmit unless they have been given the opportunity to resubmit as a first attempt (normally due to mitigating circumstances).

For more information about this, you can read the [Assessment Conventions for the award of PGCE](#)

B) Level 6 Professional Practice module

This module continues to have a specific rule as it is closely related to your placement(s). The below is taken from the [Assessment Conventions for the award of PGCE](#):

“3 (c) Where a student has failed in Professional Practice the student may be offered an opportunity for re-examination on one occasion within one year of failure providing the examination board is of the opinion, on the basis of the evidence available to it at the time of the initial assessment, that such re-examination is (on the balance of probabilities) likely to be successful. In the event that a student is offered the opportunity for re-assessment the student shall be required to complete a further continuous period of professional practice equal to the length of the original period of professional practice before presenting themselves for re-examination.”

5) Interim Boards of Examiners

No changes to PGCE courses.

6) Mitigating Circumstances, Extensions and Self-certification

a) Module assignment deadlines

As previously communicated:

- A two-week extension has been applied to all assignments which were/are due for submission in the period 23 March - 3 July 2020
- Students may also now self-certify for extensions of up to 5 working days
- Students requiring an extension of more than 5 working days should follow the normal procedure for notification of mitigating circumstances via [Tabula](#) > **My Student Profile** > **Personal circumstances**

b) Right to defer assessments:

The University has now made provision for each department to permit the deferral of assessments where it is deemed in the students' best interest (and the student is in agreement). If you feel that you need to defer an assessment to a later date, please discuss this with your personal tutor who will then approach CTE's Senior Tutor, Rachel Cooper, to consider this for authorisation. Please note that if you request a deferral of any assessments, you would not be eligible to be awarded QTS until all your assessments are completed and marked and have been considered by the course Exam Board.

Further signposting:

We recognise that these are challenging times and that you will all have your own lives and commitments to manage alongside your studies with us. We highly recommend that you consider accessing the resources available through the University's Wellbeing

Support Services. Feel free to take a look at what is available even if you don't feel you need help now as this might be useful for you to return to in future.

<https://warwick.ac.uk/services/wss/>

Best wishes,
Kate

Handwritten signature of Kate Ireland in black ink.

Professor Kate Ireland,
Director of CTE