

Briefing for the Public Petitions Committee

Petition Number: [PE01738](#)

Main Petitioner: David Molloy on behalf of Future Teachers of Scotland

Subject: Student teacher bursaries for full-time placement students

Calls on the Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to provide bursaries to undergraduate teaching students undertaking full-time work placements.

This brief provides background on the routes into teaching in Scotland and the role of the General Teaching Council for Scotland in overseeing and regulating teacher education in Scotland. It then considers the requirements relating to time spent on placement while taking part in teacher education, expected hours of participation in full-time higher education, and finally it outlines the financial package for living support available to Scottish domiciled full-time degree students studying at Scottish institutions.

Background

There are a range of routes into teaching in Scotland whether seeking to work in a primary or secondary school setting. The two main routes are through a four-year degree in primary or secondary education or via a postgraduate diploma in primary or secondary education, where the student already has degree level qualifications in another subject.

This guide: [So you want to teach in Scotland](#) has more details, including information on alternative routes into teaching.

The General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) oversees standards in teaching and teacher education. As part of that role, the GTCS oversees the programmes of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) that are offered by Scottish universities.

The Public Services Reform (General Teaching Council for Scotland) Order 2011 Part 4 states that:

29 (1) It is for the GTCS to determine what constitutes a recognised teaching qualification for individuals seeking registration as a school teacher.

29 (2) A determination may make such provision about the education and training required to attain such a qualification as the GTCS thinks fit.

The GTCS in its [policy statement](#) on accreditation of programmes of ITE in Scotland notes that it “seeks to ensure that programmes of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) are professionally appropriate, demanding and prepare students for registration as a primary or secondary teacher.”

The [Guidelines for Initial Teacher Education Programmes in Scotland](#) (most recently published in June 2013) set out the GTCS policy on the content, nature and duration of programmes leading to teaching qualifications for primary and secondary teaching. These requirements are said to be met through accrediting all programmes of ITE in Scotland.

Time Commitments (on placement and academic study)

The GTCS guidelines for ITE programmes state that teacher education should: “have an appropriate balance of professional studies, subject studies and relevant school educational placement experience”. Further:

“School experience placements (or other relevant educational placement experience such as within Children’s Services provision) must provide the practical context to illustrate and develop the skills, understanding and content being developed in the programme. They will normally be undertaken in blocks of time; but may also include a series of days. Each placement block must be assessed.”

For undergraduate students (typically a four-year full-time programme) the guidelines state that at least 30 weeks of the degree must be devoted to school / educational placement experience. More than half of this should occur in the final two years, with a substantial block taking place in the final year. For the ‘concurrent degree’ (where ITE is part of a degree with another subject) and postgraduate study, the requirement is a minimum of 18 weeks of placement experience.

The GTCS notes (via personal communication) that most ITE programmes do not include placement only in year 3. Most deliver placements across years 2-4. Where a programme does deliver placements in year 3, the expectation would be that the student teacher would not be on a full-time timetable. Rather they would be taking time while on placement to consider the wider aspects of education in context and spend time in preparation/reflection as well as having mentoring time.

At higher education level, there is no statutory definition of full-time study. Each university and individual programme of study will have its own expectations of the hours of study that are required to complete the credits or programme set.

An honours degree is made up of 480 credits (typically this will involve four years of study, with 120 credits taken each year of the programme). At degree

level, typically, universities estimate that each 10 credits requires 100 hours of study (including time on face to face delivery, tutorials, lecturer directed tasks and assessments and personal study). On that basis, one-year of full-time study (120 credits) would involve on average 1,200 hours of study. Typically, the expectation is that hours of study will increase as the student progresses through a four-year degree programme. Over 38 weeks (a typical academic year) this suggests a student on a full-time degree programme would be involved in study activity for over 31 hours per week.

Living cost support for full time undergraduate study

Scottish domiciled students who are pursuing a full-time degree programme in teacher education (and those taking a postgraduate teaching qualification) will generally be entitled to the same package of student support as other full-time undergraduate degree programmes.

The amount that a student will get for living cost support will depend on the student's household income. The maximum package of support is available to those from low income households (where household income is below £21,000). Details of the package of support for young students and those who are financially 'independent' of their parents including the mix of student loan and bursary support by different household incomes is presented below:

When you apply, we will process your funding based on your gross (before tax) household income as set out below:

Young students

Household income	Bursary	Loan	Total
£0 to £20,999	£2,000	£5,750	£7,750
£21,000 to £23,999	£1,125	£5,750	£6,875
£24,000 to £33,999	£500	£5,750	£6,250
£34,000 and above	£0	£4,750	£4,750

Independent students

Household income	Bursary	Loan	Total
£0 to £20,999	£1,000	£6,750	£7,750
£21,000 to £23,999	£0	£6,750	£6,750
£24,000 to £33,999	£0	£6,250	£6,250
£34,000 and above	£0	£4,750	£4,750

You can choose how much loan you want to take (up to £4,750 a year) no matter what your household income is. Visit www.saas.gov.uk for more information.

Source: [Student Awards Agency Scotland funding guide 2019-2020](#)

Over a period of 52 weeks (the full calendar year) those on the highest level of student support (£7,750) will have a living cost allowance of £149 a week, while those who only access the standard living cost loan (£4,750) will have a living cost allowance of £91 a week.

Most programmes of undergraduate study do not provide additional funding for the costs associated with participation on placements. However, there are two notable exceptions highlighted by SAAS in its 2019-2020 funding guide:

- Students in receipt of the Nursing and Midwifery Bursary (£8,100 per year) can also claim for help with extra travel and accommodation costs for placements.
- Those studying one of the Allied Health Professions in Scotland can claim, on top of the normal undergraduate student support package, for help with extra travel and accommodation costs for placements.

Suzi Macpherson
Senior Researcher
6 September 2019

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