### Frequently Asked Questions

#### What is the Primary Partnership?

The Partnership is a network of schools across Norfolk and Suffolk who work with UEA to deliver the Primary PGCE initial teacher education programme. Schools' involvement in the Partnership can range from offering school-based training experience through placements to offering a School Direct route in conjunction with UEA, or working with UEA on CPD modules, to having a representative on the Primary Partnership Management Committee, which oversees the shape of the course.

#### What do schools offering a placement have to do?

In order to gain Qualified Teacher Status the PGCE trainees must spend at least 120 days in schools. At UEA the experience is split between two main school placements.

The Partnership Agreement sets out in detail what the responsibilities of a placement school are, but in summary these are:

- Provide trainees with classroom experience in a specified age range. Trainees will normally work primarily with one class, taking an increasing responsibility for whole class teaching as the placement progresses.
- Support trainees' professional development and complete documentation that monitors and tracks their progress through their school-based experience.

#### How much of school staff time will it take?

The main commitment will be from the Class Teacher supporting the trainee. The Class Teacher will need to be available to work alongside the trainee in a range of ways during the placement. As the placement progresses the trainee will need increasing opportunities to teach the class independently. The class teacher will need to be available to undertake regular informal observations and fortnightly formal observations during block placements. Each trainee should have a weekly professional development meeting to review their progress.

In addition, Class Teachers will need to be released twice during each placement to attend meetings with the UEA Tutor team and other teachers from across the Partnership. UEA pays supply cover for the first meeting associated with each placement, and the UEA trainee(s) will teach the class during the second to enable their class teachers to attend.
• **What support does UEA offer?**

Prior to trainees undertaking the school-based component of their training, they will have received substantial training at UEA based on the Teachers’ Standards and preparing them to make positive contributions to their placement schools from the outset of each school placement.

Each trainee will have a named UEA Tutor, responsible for the oversight of their training. Tutors will visit trainees in their placement school and are available to discuss any issues that emerge.

The PGCE team also offer information and training sessions through the year for Class Teachers who are supporting trainees in schools. UEA pays travel costs to attend meetings.

• **How much teaching experience does the class teacher need to have before they can mentor a trainee teacher?**

Trainee teachers will need to be supported throughout their school placement by a teacher undertaking the role of a mentor. The mentor will need to be an experienced teacher who is able to model good practice in teaching and provide high-quality coaching and mentoring to enhance trainees' professional development. A Headteacher should use their knowledge and professional judgement to decide whether a particular teacher meets the above criteria. Any teacher undertaking this role is expected to attend Class Teacher meetings, and engage with professional discussion and documentation provided by UEA. If a teacher is new to the mentor role they must be supported by an experienced mentor from within the school or cluster.

Trainee teachers must not be allocated to the class of a newly qualified teacher (NQT).

• **Can we offer placements if the school is on Special Measures?**

Trainee teachers are not placed in schools on Special Measures.

We have to satisfy ourselves that our partnership schools have the capacity to undertake their responsibilities to our trainee teachers. If a school is placed in special measures or identified as having serious weaknesses during a school placement it may still be possible for any trainees in the school to continue, especially if the improvements to be made do not affect the age range in which they are training.

We are aware of the increased demands placed upon schools and teachers in these situations. Both the school concerned and UEA will need to be confident that the trainee would not be disadvantaged by the school experience. If a trainee teacher were placed in such a school the placement would be kept under close review, for the benefits of all concerned.

• **Can I place a trainee teacher in a class with two job-sharing teachers?**

This is a matter for the Headteacher, who has to judge whether or not the trainee teacher will be able to achieve the Teachers’ Standards by working in a class shared by two teachers. It is important that the trainee teacher is able to plan with the appropriate support of both class teachers and receive consistent and effective support and guidance, particularly in areas such as planning, behaviour and class management.
• **How might hosting a trainee teacher impact on their class teacher’s appraisal?**

Working closely with a trainee teacher can have many benefits for a class teacher. It is an opportunity for a teacher to develop and demonstrate mentoring and coaching skills and evidence how they have contributed to trainee teacher development. Working with trainees also enables experienced teachers to spend additional time working with identified individuals and groups of pupils, which has the potential to support and evidence pupil progress. These opportunities have the potential to impact positively on a teacher’s appraisal through performance management.

• **What is a Language Trainee?**

A number of trainee teachers following the KS2 (7-11 years) pathway will be undertaking a PGCE Languages specialist option. These trainees usually hold a qualification in at least one language and their language skills are assessed at the interview stage. They must have the opportunity to teach, and be assessed in, their language specialism (French, German or Spanish) during their School B placement. If you would be able to accommodate this, then please indicate as such on the Placement Offer form.

• **Why are the placement blocks organised as they are?**

UEA has been delivering the Primary PGCE programme for a number of years and has structured the school-based experience in various ways. In consultation with the teachers and Headteachers on the Primary Partnership Management Committee we have adopted the current pattern as we believe it provides trainees with an opportunity to see the progress of pupils across the year.

The structure is reviewed annually by the Primary Partnership Management Committee.

• **Why do trainees have to gain experience in two consecutive age groups?**

The National College for Teaching and Leadership set out regulations for the training of teachers, which specify that trainees must gain experience in two consecutive age ranges covering a four year span. These are:

- FS and KS1 (3 – 7 years) or
- KS1 and Lower KS2 (5 – 9 years) or
- Lower KS2 and Upper KS2 (7 -11 years)

It is necessary for trainee teachers to have a placement in each of the specified consecutive age groups.

• **What happens if I offer a place in Y3 or Y4 (LKS2) and need to change it to a Y5 or Y6 (UKS2) place (or vice versa)?**

Please contact us at the UEA as soon as possible to alert us of the need to change any placement offered. This is particularly important if the change to placement is outside the age range initially specified (FS/KS1/LKS2/UKS2). If the teaching practice has not already started it may be possible to accommodate such a change in a number of ways. However, if a trainee teacher has already started the placement and there is no possibility of moving the trainee teacher within the two year age range specified for the practice (eg LKS2 or UKS2), we would need to find an alternative placement for them.
• **What happens if one of my classes is a mixed key stage class?**

We have to assure the National College for Teaching and Leadership that the trainee teacher is getting appropriate experience in the age group specified for that placement. Therefore, if one of your classes is a Year 2/3 class and the majority of the children are Year 2 children, then we would be able to place a trainee teacher requiring a placement in Key Stage 1 in that class. The same principle can be applied for Reception/Year 1 classes.

Please contact us at the UEA if you would like to discuss the particular circumstances in your school.

• **How are students allocated to placement schools?**

The UEA Tutor team look at the training route, strengths, experience and residence of the trainees and match these to the available placements. We tend not to place trainees in schools with which they have an existing connection to ensure fair and equitable training and assessment for all trainees.

• **Why are you asking for this information now and not in September?**

Gathering this information now allows us to do some provisional planning and gives us an idea of the placements that will be available for our new intake of trainee teachers.

• **What happens if things change and we can no longer take a trainee?**

We recognise that placements offered may need to be withdrawn by schools for a range of reasons e.g. staff turnover or changes in school circumstances due to the outcome of an inspection. Please let us know as soon as possible as any change can have an impact on a number of placement allocations.

• **What will happen if one of the classes is going on a residential visit during the practice period?**

We encourage trainee teachers to go on educational visits (residential or otherwise) with schools as it can provide worthwhile experience in working with children in out-of-school contexts. Generally we would support the view that a trainee teacher should participate in a visit that involves the class/year group in which they are teaching when it occurs during their placement, unless it is likely to negatively impact upon the requirements of the practice and/or their ability to meet the Teachers’ Standards by the end of the placement.

• **Can we offer a single placement for School A?**

Feedback has shown that trainees working in a pair during their School A placement benefit from an increased level of confidence and peer support during planning, teaching and feedback after lessons. We do however realise that it is not always possible to host 2 trainees in the same class and we welcome the offer of all School A placements. Allocations will be prioritised as follows: Schools who offer paired placements; Schools who offer two placements in the same key stage; Schools who offer two placements; single placements.