

# University of Plymouth's Student Trainee Teacher Background Checks

## Introduction and Scope

The University of Plymouth, by virtue of its Institute of Education, is a registered provider of initial teacher education (ITE). As such, the University is required by law to undertake certain checks of those students enrolled on programmes in which students are placed in an education or childcare setting.

This document is intended to inform placement providers (schools, colleges and nurseries) about the background checks University of Plymouth completes for individual students in order that they may be cleared to undertake placement learning in an education or childcare setting. Therefore, there is no requirement for placement providers (schools, colleges and nurseries) to perform any further checks. More detailed information to corroborate this is included in this document.

Other checks undertaken to determine suitability for the education profession which are not covered in this document include, amongst others; Fitness to Teach process with occupational health checks, assessment of the appropriate intellectual and academic capabilities and personal qualities, attitudes, ethics and values to meet the standards for QTS (Qualified Teacher Status) or to work in the FES (Further Education and Training) sector.

## Students included in background checks

Students on non-salaried routes that lead to QTS or University of Plymouth Pre-Service FES sector students are included in the background checks undertaken by the University. Therefore, students enrolled on the following programmes are checked:

- BEd programmes (FS/KS1, KS1/KS2 and Special Educational Needs)
- PGCE Primary (FS/KS1)
- PGCE Primary (KS1/KS2)
- PGCE Secondary (Art and Design, Drama, English, Geography, History, Mathematics, Music, Science with Biology, Science with Chemistry, Science with Physics)
- PGCE (Incorporating the Diploma in Education and Training)
- Cert Ed (Incorporating the Diploma in Education and Training)

Additionally, all non-ITE undergraduate students in the Institute of Education undergo the DBS check and are required to self-declare in relation to childcare disqualification as a standard protocol so that they may undertake placement in a childcare setting as part of their studies, but not in relation to gaining QTS or to work in the FES sector.

## Students not included in the University of Plymouth's background checks

As the awarding body, University of Plymouth is not required to complete checks for the PGCE Primary students enrolled on the SCITT programme delivered by [Devon Primary SCITT](#).

Additionally, the University of Plymouth does not complete checks for students studying their programme at any of the UoP partner colleges who deliver ITE programmes where the University is the awarding body, namely:

- PGCE (incorporating the Diploma in Education and Training)
- Cert Ed (incorporating the Diploma in Education and Training)

However, the University is informed that the partner college has obtained satisfactory checks for the relevant students.

### Reference Regulation(s): Responsibility for completing checks;

*'Providers should confirm in writing to schools that a non-salaried trainee's criminal record check, including a check of the children's barred list, has been completed and that the individual has been judged by the provider to be suitable to work with children. Providers are not required to provide any information to schools in addition to this confirmation. Schools may wish to record this confirmation in their single central record, but they are not required to do so.'* [ITT Criteria – Supporting Advice, April 2019](#)

*'For trainees on routes other than School Direct salaried, the accredited provider such as an HEI or a SCITT is responsible for ensuring that checks have been completed by requesting sight of the original DBS certificate and keeping a record of the fact that it has been seen.'* [UCET, DBS Guidance, Mar 2019](#)

*'For those training to teach in FE colleges, the ITT provider is responsible for ensuring that checks have been completed in respect of pre-service trainees, while employers are responsible for those on in-service programmes. In each case the responsible organisation should confirm to the other that checks have been made.'* [UCET, DBS Guidance, Mar 2019](#)

*'Further checks should not be made by providers, schools or colleges if they have received notification from the responsible organisation that a satisfactory enhanced check has been obtained.'* [UCET, DBS Guidance, Mar 2019](#)

## University of Plymouth placement related staff background checks

University visiting tutors and mentors in their capacity to support or assess students on placement are not required to be checked.

### Reference Regulation(s); University staff checks

*'ITT tutors who only have occasional contact with pupils and do not carry out regulated activity do not require checks provided they are at all times accompanied by someone (e.g. a trainee) who has been checked.'* [UCET, DBS Guidance, Mar 2019](#)

## Background checks undertaken by the University of Plymouth

The following 3 main background checks are conducted when a prospective student submits an application for entry to any of the programmes within the remit of the University of Plymouth checks as detailed above:

1. **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check** – this is also known as the 'enhanced with list checks'. Where a student has spent over 12 months in another country outside of the UK in the last 10 years an overseas check is required to cover these periods to provide checks which span the student's adult life.
2. **Prohibition Order Check** – The University of Plymouth as an ITE provider must check that candidates are not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State and/or are not prohibited to teach in another country of the European Economic Area (EEA).
3. **Childcare Disqualification** - The Department for Education has published statutory guidance on the application to schools of the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009 and related obligations under the Childcare Act 2006. As an ITE provider, the University of Plymouth makes a compulsory request that students inform the University if they or if they are aware that anyone in their household is disqualified from working with children.

In addition to the above checks, all students are required to read the document 'Keeping Children Safe in Education – Part 1'. The University tracks and monitors when the students have completed reading this document at the start of the academic year and in advance of placement experience.

## Timing and frequency of background checks

### Initial Checks

All 3 of the checks numbered above are initiated once a student submits an application for one of the relevant programmes listed above. The progress of each check is monitored and tracked by the Admissions Team and subsequently by the Faculty Programme Administration Team where there is an outstanding clearance at the point of enrolment to the programme.

### Subsequent Checks

The DBS certificate no longer expires and remains valid unless there is a change to any relevant factor, therefore the Department for Education do not require students to complete a new DBS if the original was issued over 3 years prior. We recommend that students register with the DBS update service and the University can then make subsequent checks when necessary.

The Prohibition Order check is only completed once during the admissions process for each student. Should a student, during their period of study at the University, commit an offence and thus be entered onto the Prohibition List, the University would be notified accordingly and relevant action taken.

Childcare Disqualification – For the duration of a student's programme of study, it is the student's responsibility to inform the University if their circumstances change in regard to the factors that affect the clearance of this check. It is the University's responsibility only to ensure that students are made aware that they should inform us of any relevant changes.

In summary, continuous study, including additional periods for repeating programme elements will not trigger any checks beyond the initial checks as outlined above. However where there is a break in study, checks may be required and will be instigated as appropriate.

#### Reference Regulation(s); Validity period of checks:

*'There is no official expiry date for a criminal record check issued by DBS. [DBS checks: guidance for employers, Apr 2019](#)*

*'There is no requirement to complete separate checks in respect of time spent in different schools... Additional checks are not required during the course of programmes, including those lasting for more than three years. Requests for repeat disclosures should be refused unless there is cause for concern.'*  
[UCET, DBS Guidance, Mar 2019](#)

## Process and method of completing background checks

1. **DBS (including barred list check)** – The University Admissions Team, at the point of application to ITE programmes direct the students to complete the online DBS application via the online disclosures website by way of issuing the link to the webpage and a PIN number. The University also recommends that the student registers for the DBS update service.
2. **Prohibition Order** – The list of prohibited teachers can be found via the Teacher Services System and the University checks and records outcomes for each student applicant against this list as part of the admissions process. Students are not invited to interview or admitted to the programme of study if they are listed.
3. **Childcare Disqualification** – When a student accepts the offer of a place on the programme, the University Admissions Team request the completion of a mandatory form that requires them to confirm if they or anyone they live with are disqualified from working with children. Any student answering that they or anyone they live with is disqualified are contacted for further details and due procedure invoked.

## Background checks data storage

The DBS certificate number and date of issue are recorded by the Admissions staff on the University's central student record system (UNIT-e). The University receives the background checks information from our partner colleges for the students enrolled with them on the PGCE and Cert Ed Incorporating the Diploma in Education and Training. Again this is then stored in the individual student's record on UNIT-e. This complies with the [data handling regulations](#) stipulated by the [Disclosure and Barring Service](#) and in line with [Plymouth University's Records Retention Schedule](#).

## Information that the University will share with placement providers about individual students' checks

The University will inform placement providers prior to the commencement of the placement, only that the checks have been completed. The University will not share the specific detail of any of the individual checks carried out on students, for instance DBS numbers will not be issued. There is no requirement for schools, colleges or nurseries to receive this information.

### Reference Regulation(s): Sharing of Information

*'Providers should confirm in writing to schools that a non-salaried trainee's criminal record check, including a check of the children's barred list, has been completed and that the individual has been judged by the provider to be suitable to work with children. Providers are not required to provide any information to schools in addition to this confirmation. Schools may wish to record this confirmation in their single central record, but they are not required to do so.'* [ITT Criteria – Supporting Advice, Apr 2019](#)

*Registered bodies such as ITT providers should not under any circumstances share details of the content of DBS certificates with third parties such as schools or colleges. Neither is it considered good practice for schools or colleges to request such information direct from trainees.* [UCET, DBS Guidance, Mar 2019](#)

## University of Plymouth Contacts

If you wish to contact the University in relation to this document please do so by emailing [artshumcompliance@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:artshumcompliance@plymouth.ac.uk)

### Statutory guidance and documents used in reference to this paper:

- [Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006](#)
- [Childcare \(Disqualification\) Regulations 2009](#)
- [Initial Teacher Training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice \(15 April 2019\)](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(September 2018\)](#)
- [Disclosure and Barring Service - Information Leaflets](#)
- [UCET, DBS Guidance, Mar 2019](#)
- [Data Protection Act 2018 \(DPA\)](#)
- [General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\) \(EU\) 2016/679](#)