



# **GTCS Review of Memorandum for Entry into Programmes of Initial Teacher Education**

**Submission**

14.03.24

# About the Open University in Scotland

The Open University in Scotland supports people across Scotland to develop their knowledge, acquire new skills and achieve life-changing qualifications.

In 2022/23 we were proud to help over 19,500 students study around their professional or personal life at a pace and level that worked for them. In 2021/22 (the last year for which HESA data is available) we were the fourth largest university in Scotland and by far the largest provider of flexible, part-time study.

Flexible study is core to our offer with 73% of our students working either full-time or part-time in 2022/23.

Most of our graduates (85%) remain in the location where their study is undertaken, which means their talent and skills benefit local communities.

We offer high-quality distance learning to students, lifelong learners, communities, employees and businesses. Our students range from school age to 92. We have formal partnerships with 16 regional colleges and collaborate with local authorities, the NHS, social care, the third sector and employers across Scotland. Our innovative national schools programme, Young Applicants in Schools Scheme, helps S6 pupils access a broader curriculum and bridge school to university level study.

We are committed to widening access to higher education building on our founding principle of being open to everyone, regardless of age, income, geography and background. The majority of our undergraduates in Scotland are eligible for a part-time fee grant to help towards their tuition fees. In 2022/23 28% of our undergraduates in Scotland declared a disability and 22% live in remote or rural areas. In the same year, 23% of our undergraduate entrants joined with qualifications below standard university entrance level and 21% were resident in the most deprived areas of Scotland.

As part of the UK's only four nations university, we are funded to teach students resident in Scotland by the Scottish Funding Council. Over 150 staff operate from our Edinburgh offices with over 400 associate lecturers working across the country.

OU research ranks in the top third of UK universities according to the Research Excellence Framework and we are a trusted partner of many leading organisations for teaching and research including the BBC, NASA, and the United Nations. Our free platform, OpenLearn, reaches over 300,000 learners in Scotland.

Find out more: [open.ac.uk/scotland](https://open.ac.uk/scotland)

# CONSULTATION QUESTIONNAIRE

## Literacy and Numeracy requirements

**Q1:** Do you agree that there should be no change to the current literacy requirement?

Yes

No

Don't know

**Q2:** Do you agree that there should be no change to the current numeracy requirement?

Yes

No

Don't know

## General comments

**Q15:** Is there anything else you would like to mention that we haven't specifically asked about?

The Open University in Scotland is very encouraged and pleased to see the specific inclusion of level 1 (SCQF level 7) Open University modules within appendix B of the memorandum.

The OU is in a position to provide a flexible, distance-learning option that maps well against the current standard used by initial teacher education (ITE) providers as an entry requirement for English and Maths. Providers accepting the use of level 1 modules (SCQF Level 7) carrying 30+ credits for entry onto teaching programmes would allow learners to access a flexible, distance-learning route that could be funded by SAAS (for those with an annual personal income <£25,000). This alternative offer for English and Maths qualifications would benefit those who experience barriers to entering ITE such as geographical location, funding, taking flexible pathways into learning, over subscription of courses at colleges, and many others. In addition to this, taking an OU level 1 module (SCQF Level 7) will also provide an important transitional experience of higher education for those wishing to enter into undergraduate ITE routes at university.

Widening access to the teaching profession by recognising alternative pathways and access courses has been highlighted in at least two Scottish Government reports in recent years (i.e. *Teaching in a diverse Scotland: increasing and retaining minority ethnic teachers report* and *A Blueprint for*

*Fairness*) and therefore there is also a clear driver in higher education policy linked to the acceptance of these modules.

The new language included in the memorandum, also offers a great opportunity to extend the teaching profession, recognising the value of entrants who bring a range of experiences with them, who may face barriers to entering the teaching profession. The inclusion of a variety of qualifications in place of Higher English and National 5 Maths will hopefully also address barriers to ITE applicant recruitment in some geographic areas, giving pathways into the profession which are coherent with the equity and diversity principles of the GTCS.

