Finding School Work Experience
Obtaining school experience is not an entry requirement for teacher training courses like the PGCE. Having some experience in a school can help you decide if teaching is the right career for you and could help to strengthen your application regardless of which route you choose.

**How Much Experience do I need?**

Check with the providers themselves. Most are keen on “recent experience” — which usually means experience gained in the last 2/3 years. As a general rule, the more experience you’ve got in a variety of UK state schools, the stronger candidate you will be.

**Does Experience in Other Settings Count?**

The best experience is most closely-related to what you want to teach. For example if you’re looking to teach secondary History you would be expected to have observed some secondary History lessons in a school.

Other experience, e.g. being a scout leader, teaching English abroad, doing some private tutoring, would all count as great additional experience and would definitely be worth referring to on your personal statement - but you will still need the minimum amount of directly relevant experience asked for by the teacher training provider as well.

**Do I Need a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check?**

Some schools may allow you to come and observe lessons without a DBS check if you aren’t going to be left alone with pupils at any stage. However, many require a DBS from all visitors as a matter of policy — so try not to leave things until the last minute as these can take four weeks or more to complete: gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check/overview

**How Can I Arrange School Experience?**

Contact the government’s Teaching Line to register your interest in teaching and ask for help with finding work experience: education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching, have an on-line chat or call 0800 389 2500.

If you’re a graduate or in your final year, the Teaching line staff will tell you about the School Experience Programme. It may be possible for them to arrange an observation day for you in Primary and also in secondary subject areas (especially in shortage subjects such as maths and science). Find out more on: education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching/school-experience/sep

The Teaching Line also runs a work experience portal which lists primary and secondary schools willing to provide work experience. Once you’ve registered with the Teaching Line you can ask to access this.

The new Graduate Teaching Internship (GTI) Scheme is salaried and is designed to provide you with school experience, and a chance to “try teaching” for between one and three school terms, enabling you to make an informed decision about teaching as a career. See tryteaching.org for more info.
Exploit Any Connections You Have!

To find work experience most quickly use your connections – approach schools where you have previously studied, or speak to teachers you already know or friends of friends who work in education.

Contact Schools Directly to Arrange Your Own Experience

get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/ is a database of all the educational establishments in England and Wales.

You will need to approach this search in an organised and professional way, and may find that you need to contact a number of different schools before you have any success. Don’t just send enquiries off to generic contact email addresses - telephone or visit the school and ask who would be best to contact as this varies from one school to another. Going in in person is often a good way to speed up the process! Schools are very busy places and tend to be inundated with work experience requests, so they may not always reply immediately, or at all if you just email.

Schools involved in the School Direct scheme should be more open to offering work experience – search the UCAS database for lead schools: ucas.com/ucas/teacher-training/find-training-programme. Locally, have a look at teachnorthwest.com, which lists some local School Direct partnerships and can also be used by applicants to try and source work experience. If you’re applying for University-led PGCE courses it may be worth contacting the teaching course leaders to see if they can offer any help.

Gain Experience Through Volunteering

If you are not on a tight deadline, this can be a very good way of gaining experience in schools.

- Register on the MMU Union volunteering database theunionmmu.org/your-opportunities/volunteering to see if there are relevant placements listed.
- Your department may organise relevant schemes, e.g. HLSS offers opportunities for their students to deliver workshops to school pupils about studying Humanities mmu.ac.uk/hlss/schools-liason/
- You could also consider literacy programmes in primary schools, e.g. beanstalkcharity.org.uk or mentoring schemes such as reachoutuk.org.
Gain Experience Through Paid Employment Opportunities

- Join the Jobs4Students mailing list mmu.ac.uk/jobs4students—Jobs4Students advertise MMU Widening Participation Team’s Outreach Ambassador Scheme which has many opportunities across the different MMU faculties with projects in local schools, e.g. primary school mentoring, Art days, and GCSE level subject mentoring.
- Use MyCareerHub mmu.ac.uk/careers/my-career-hub/—find paid work opportunities with young people in the summer holidays, such as the National Citizenship Service, and part-time tutoring roles, e.g. those offered by local tuition centres such as explorelearning.co.uk and kipmcgrath.co.uk
- Find relevant paid work in after school clubs, LEA play schemes etc, try: direct.gov.uk - click on individual local authority sites from here e.g. Manchester.gov.uk. Locally, look at https://greater.jobs/ which lists roles within the 10 Greater Manchester local authorities. Graduates may be able to find work as teaching assistants, behaviour support assistants or cover supervisors, all of which are great roles for gaining relevant experience for teaching.

Aspiring Teachers Programme at MMU

- If you’re interested in applying for teacher training at MMU specifically have a look at the university’s Aspiring Teachers Programme. This has limited places but aims to give MMU students assistance with applying to our programmes and experience in a school. There is currently no webpage for this—look out for further information via moodle or email.

Careers & Employability Support

The Careers & Employability Service offers a range of support to Manchester Met students and graduates:

- **Detailed careers guides:** Our full range of careers guides, including information on finding and applying for work and further study opportunities are available on our website:
- **Ask a Careers Question Online:** Get online advice through My Career Hub, ask your question at any time and receive support via email.
- **Careers Consultant Appointments:** Book a 30 minute appointment to discuss working or studying abroad with a Careers & Employability Consultant.
- **Term-Time Drop-Ins: Birley 1.40**
  Applications Drop in - Wednesday 1-3 / Careers Guidance Drop in Thursday 10-3
- **Careers Events:** Meet employers and enhance your employability by attending our workshops, employer events and careers fairs.

For more information visit mmu.ac.uk/careers