



Queen Margaret University  
EDINBURGH

# PGDE (Secondary) Thumbnail Guidance for Students and Supporting Teachers

<b>Placement 1 Dates</b>	<b>27 October - 19 December 2025</b>
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## Placement 1

This document should be read in conjunction with the PGDE (Secondary) Handbook for 2025/26. A summary of Assessment Practices is also listed below in the final Section of this Guide.

### Introduction

Students will contact their School by email or telephone to introduce themselves to the Teacher Regent and the Curriculum leader prior to the first day of placement.

On arrival students should as a courtesy share this document and let the school know that all of the documents they require, the Placement Handbook and Assessment Forms and Guidance for Completion, are available for easy download on QMU's Practice Based Learning Webpage:

<https://www.qmu.ac.uk/current-students/practice-based-learning/initial-teachereducation/postgraduate-school-experience-placements/>

### Terminology

Teachers supporting students in schools are referred to as School Based Educators (SBEs).

University Lecturers supporting students on Placement are referred to as University Based Educators (UBEs).

## PLACEMENT 1 OVERVIEW

**Placement 1 is formative. The expectation is that students will be supported to achieve at least 6 out of 8 of the GTCS, SPR criteria as recorded on the Final Report Form. The Assessment process is a shared responsibility between the University (UBE) and the School (SBE).**

The First week in School should be an opportunity for the student to settle in and to observe the classes they will be teaching.

Where possible students may engage in some co-teaching with the various members of the Department to allow them to build up confidence, their relationships with pupils and knowledge of the curriculum stage they will be teaching.

Between Weeks 2 and 3 - the student should gradually build up to teaching a solo **timetable of up to 14 hours per week. This should be achieved by the end of week 3.** The following is a guide for both the Student and the School.

The key focus for the student on this Placement is Planning for Inclusive Practice.

## Placement 1 – The First Week is Observation Week

### Reminder for Students

When you arrive in a new school you should:

- Meet the Teacher Regent, the Curriculum leader and your School Based Educator (SBE).
- Confirm your timetable
- Find out who will write your final report.
- Use the Check List below to guide you throughout the week.
- Find out about your access to the school IT network and wi-fi. Decide how you will complete your Professional Development Portfolio (PDP) whilst on placement. There is still a wide variation of connectivity in schools so you may need to work offline.

	Student Actions	SBE Actions
Observation Week	<p>Complete any School Risk-Assessment re Covid procedures.</p> <p>Complete the Emergency Contact Form – leave a copy with the School Office or Teacher Regent.</p> <p>Become familiar with the school’s child protection procedures and behaviour management policies.</p> <p>Discuss timetable with supporting teacher. and observe teaching by experienced staff.</p> <p>If you have a disability discuss any necessary adjustments you may require with the Teacher Regent.</p> <p>Confirm your teaching timetable and planning required for your classes for the remainder of Placement 1.</p> <p>Once you have received your timetable agree a regular day/time with your SBE to review and set your weekly SPR targets for Placement 1 (The Weekly Review Form)</p> <p>Complete a review of Week 1 in your Pebble-pad e-portfolio.</p> <p>Arrange a meeting with the Guidance and Support for Learning Departments to find out how they can support pupils.</p> <p>Complete School-based study tasks 1-4</p>	<p>Ensure that the student has an induction day and is informed about any necessary risk assessment procedures.</p> <p>Arrange for the student to observe a range of classes and different teaching styles (student may support classteachers).</p> <p>Share Child Protection Procedures and behaviour management policies with your student.</p> <p>Confirm the student-teacher timetable – discuss expectations for Teaching in Placement 1 – noting that <b>all lesson plans must be submitted at least 2 days prior to teaching to allow teacher feedback and support with planning.</b></p> <p>Discuss the planned programme of work for each class that the student will be teaching and support/develop their ideas for planning appropriate lessons.</p> <p>Agree a regular date and time ie a Friday morning to discuss the student’s weekly target and to sign their weekly review form.</p> <p>Support the student in undertaking their school-based study tasks.</p>

## School Based Study Tasks for Observation Week

## Task ONE: The School Context

Your first task is to familiarise yourself with the local school context. During your first week in school for Placement 1a create a 'School Profile' to add to your e-Portfolio – under the Tab Placement 1.

Include:

Whole School		For the department or curricular area in which you are based:	
Timings of the school day		The subject provision in each BGE year – ie what topics are taught?	
School demographic (socio-economic range of catchment)			
Size of school (number of pupils)			
Pastoral structure in the school		Courses offered at senior phase?	
Department/curriculum areas and structure			
School handbook – policies, procedures, protocol on all aspects of the running of the school			
Clubs and other extra-curricular activities		Find out what aspects of the curriculum pupils enjoy most in S1, S2, S3, S4, S5/6	
Behaviour Management Policy			
Child Protection Policy			
Health and Safety procedures including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Emergency procedures</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> First Aid arrangements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fire procedures</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Accident reporting and location of accident book</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Health and Safety policy/file</li> </ul>			

*Copy and paste the above checklist into your Pebble-pad Portfolio once it is completed. Then complete the following tasks.*

## Task TWO: The School Context

Using the information gathered in Task One write a short description in Pebblepad of the school context, with a focus on your subject department. Note which subjects and topics are on the S1-S3 curriculum. Note any observations you have on how teachers seek to include all children in activities as part of inclusive practice.

### Task THREE: School Policies

Familiarise yourself with the *Child Protection* and *Behaviour Management* policies. Write a short reflection in your **Pebble-pad Reflective Blog** noting **how you see these policies relating to Social Justice and Inclusive Practice theories**.

### Task FOUR: Reflective Learning

Visit the Guidance Department and/or Support for Learning base and find out about the different approaches to addressing Social Justice issues and Inclusive Practice. Write a short Reflective blog about how you think you might address these in your classroom.

## Expectations for Classroom Experience

The following sets out the expectations for observing, team teaching and solo teaching.

### Observing Lessons

Students should have an opportunity to observe colleagues' teaching prior to being expected to take a class. They should discuss teaching strategies for managing behaviour and for including all children. On return to University, students will be writing an assignment on how they will implement inclusive practice through their planning for lessons with a critical review of their teaching practices. For each observed class, students should note in their e-Portfolio (Pebble Pad) the:

- Year Group, Subject and Curriculum Level, any structural arrangements
- Support arrangements for pupils including the classroom assistant's role
- Structure of lessons noting 'starter' activities, any active learning phases during the lesson and 'plenary' (round-up).
- Timings of the above and pupil activities
- How the Support Assistants support pupils
- How lessons are assessed.

Beginning to teach is a progression from observing to taking on a gradual increased responsibility through co-teaching which initially scaffolds students towards solo teaching. At this stage during observation week, students are expected to teach only parts of a planned lesson, as appropriate for the subject and context. Following the lesson students should reflect on their learning experience in their PDP.

### Solo Teaching

When taking responsibility for whole-class teaching, students are expected to plan, organise, teach and evaluate each lesson. They have a Lesson Plan Template to complete for each lesson, however this can be adapted where the same topic spans a sequence of lessons.

**Lesson Plans** should be shared with class teachers **at least 2 days in advance** for their review and approval. The lesson plan, and a post-lesson evaluation detailing: (a) next steps for pupil learning and (b) the student's own next steps for professional learning should be recorded on end of the lesson plan proforma, which in turn should be uploaded to their Pebble-pad Workbook at the end of the teaching day. Evaluation and Reflections should inform the student's discussion of Weekly SPR Targets with the SBE. These discussions should be recorded on the PGDE Weekly Review Form and a new target set each week as appropriate.

The Weekly Review Form once completed should be signed by both parties and then uploaded to the e-Portfolio as evidence of progress. Students have a GTCS SPR Tracker (My SPR Focus) in their e-Portfolio to support their own self-evaluation of their professional development. Please note that this is required under Section 1.3 of the GTCS Standard for Provisional Registration and counts as evidence towards meeting the criteria of Professional Values and Professional Commitment. University tutors (UBEs) have access to the student's work in the Digital Portfolio (Pebble-pad) and the visiting UBE will monitor the e-portfolio as it forms part of a holistic assessment process of the student's professional commitment to becoming a teacher.

## School-based Study Tasks for Teaching Weeks 2-8

### Task ONE: Assessment Practices – Critically Reflective Practice

Reflect in your Pebble-pad Journal (a short paragraph only) on the types of assessment practices you will use to evaluate pupil learning in the classroom. In what ways do you think assessment information can support inclusive practice? Include reference to relevant SPR categories and any course reading of policies such as GIRFEC.

### Task TWO : Promoting Positive Relationships – Critically Reflective Practice

Write a short reflective paragraph discussing how you have managed positive relationships in your classes and have endeavoured to include all children in your lessons. Note how you have supported individual pupil needs. Include some references to your reading on inclusive practice. Use your lesson plan evaluations as evidence of your reflecting on what worked well in a class and what you might change.

### Task THREE: Inclusive Practice Case Studies - Critically Reflective Practice

Throughout the placement reflect on your teaching and lesson planning and gather evidence of how you are addressing issues of inclusive practice. Consider the barriers you have faced as well as the successes. Keep copies of your lesson evaluations to support your reflections. When you return to campus you will be drawing on three case studies to reflect on, and to write about in your Second Assignment. **Please note that when we discuss classroom case studies that all names of Schools, teachers and pupils are anonymous.**

### Task FOUR: My SPR Focus

Throughout your Placement regularly review your Professional progress as a beginning teacher against the SPR targets. Use the 'My SPR Focus' Tab in Pebble-pad regularly as a self-evaluation tool.

Note in particular, how you are addressing any SPR criteria that relates to inclusive practice(s) and try to evidence your progress using the traffic light system in Pebble-pad.

## TEACHING OVERVIEW:

	Student-teacher	School Based Educator (SBE)
<b>Week One of Teaching</b>	<p>If ready begin to take on solo teaching (between 3-5 lessons).</p> <p>Share Lesson Plans with Class Teachers at least 2 days in advance of teaching.</p> <p>Post at least one lesson Plan for each year group you teach in Placement Folder 1b under Week 1 Tab.</p> <p>Meet with your teacher/SBE and discuss Weekly Review, SPR targets for next week and upload to Pebblepad.</p> <p>Continue to complete Placement Tasks.</p> <p>Post a copy of your timetable into our Placement Teams File and email a copy to your UBE – Please make sure your class times and Name/School Name is on the Timetable.</p>	<p>Confirm student timetable</p> <p>Confirm who will write final report.</p> <p>Meet with student and discuss lesson plan ideas, the Weekly Review and targets for next week.</p> <p>Set a regular meeting time to discuss Weekly Review of targets.</p> <p><b>Meet with UBE (University supporting staff) via Microsoft Teams to discuss requirements for Placement and student expectations.</b></p> <p>Suggested introduction to teaching:  Mon-Wed – student should co-teach with class teacher to settle in  Thurs-Friday – student should solo teach a few classes with support</p>
<b>Week Two of Teaching</b>	<p>Provide Class Teachers with your Lesson Plans for the week, at least 2 days in advance of the lesson.</p>	<p>Student should begin to take on a increased teaching responsibilities – ie of more than 5 hours to build up towards 14 next week.</p>

	<p>Take on responsibility for whole class teaching</p> <p>Class teacher(s) to observe and provide informal feedback.</p> <p>Meet with teacher/SBE and discuss Weekly Review, targets for next week upload to Pebblepad.</p> <p>Continue to complete Placement Tasks.</p> <p>Post lesson Plans in Placement Folder Placement 1, under Weekly Tab.</p> <p><b>Attend weekly Teams discussion with your University Mentoring Group.</b></p>	<p>Informal lesson observation and evaluative discussion by class teacher/SBE</p> <p>Meet with student and discuss Weekly Review, and SPR targets for next week.</p>
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<p><b>Week Three of Teaching</b></p>	<p>You should now be teaching your full timetable of up to 14 hours and gaining in confidence by the end of this week.</p> <p>Provide Class Teachers with your Lesson Plans for the week, at least 2 days in advance of the lesson.</p> <p>SBE to observe one whole lesson to inform the Mid-Way Review for next week.</p> <p><i><b>Mid-way Review due next week – agree progress and development targets for the remainder of the placement.</b></i></p> <p>Upload Weekly Review of SPR targets for next week to Pebblepad.</p> <p>Post lesson Plans in Pebble-pad Placement Folder under Weekly Tab.</p> <p>Continue to complete Placement Tasks.</p>	<p>Arrange one formative lesson observation for next week to inform completion of Mid-Way Review.</p> <p><i><b>Mid-way Review Form to be completed and discussed with student next week.</b></i></p> <p>Arrange Teams discussion with UBE if required to discuss student progress.</p> <p>Arrange Joint Observation Visit for Week 6 or Week 7 with the UBE.</p>
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<p><b>Week 4 of Teaching</b></p>	<p>Provide Class Teachers with your Lesson Plans for the week, at least 2 days in advance of the lesson.</p> <p>Check with your UBE re arrangements for your Lesson Observation this week.</p> <p>Arrange for informal observation and feedback from class teacher if your Lesson Observation visit is next week.</p> <p><b>Make time to complete and agree targets for your Mid-Way Review. Upload this to Pebblepad</b></p> <p>Meet with Teacher/SBE and discuss Weekly Review and SPR targets for the remainder of the placement.</p> <p>Post your latest lesson Plans into Pebblepad under weekly tab.</p> <p><b>Attend weekly Teams discussion with University Mentoring Group.</b></p> <p>Continue to complete Placement Tasks.</p>	<p>Meet with student and discuss Weekly Review, and SPR targets for Week 5.</p> <p>Check arrangements are in place for Joint Observation Visit by University staff.</p> <p><b>Review the Student's Progress and sign their Mid-Way Review Form – student should complete this in agreement with you</b></p> <p>Please note that if Progress is Unsatisfactory then you may Raise a Cause for Concern with the student and the UBE. This would create a threeway Action Plan. This link to this form is available in the Placement Handbook.</p>
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<p><b>Week 5 of Teaching</b></p>	<p>Provide Class Teachers with your Lesson Plans for the week, at least 2 days in advance of the lesson.</p> <p>Send your lesson plan for the Joint Observed lesson to your UBE and make sure that they have the correct time for your lesson observation and a copy of your timetable.</p> <p>Post lesson Plans into Pebble-pad Placement Folder 1b under Weekly Tab.</p> <p>Continue to gather evidence for your School Based Study Task 4.</p> <p>Your UBE may have confirmed when they are visiting you.</p> <p>Please ensure your e-Portfolio is up to date.</p>	<p>Meet with student and discuss Weekly Review, and SPR targets for Week 6.</p> <p>Check arrangements are in place for Joint Observation Visit by University staff next week.</p> <p>Joint Observation and Assessment procedures are in the Placement Handbook. Evidence should take into account:</p> <p>The stage the student is at on their learning journey as well as the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Lesson Observed</li> <li>• The student's testimony to their planning for the lesson and their reflection and evaluation of the lesson.</li> <li>• The Student's wider school experiences ie other classes taught and their contribution to Wider School community.</li> <li>• The Pebblepad e-Portfolio which evidences self-evaluation and reflection of lessons taught and professional learning</li> </ul> <p>The SBE and UBE will use their joint professional judgement drawing on the above aspects, together with the SPR Benchmark statements to agree an outcome with the student.</p>
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<b>Week 6 of Teaching</b>	<p>Joint Observation Lesson with University and School may happen this week.</p> <p>Ensure that your e-Portfolio is up to date.</p>	<p>If the Joint Observation Lesson has happened then the UBE will write the Report which you will both sign.</p> <p>Thereafter, jointly observed lesson targets should inform the Final Placement Report. The Joint Observation Report can be the template for the Final Report.</p>
<b>Week 7 of Teaching – Final Week of Placement</b>	<p>Arrange meeting with SBE to discuss Final Report once final grades are agreed with your UBE.</p> <p>Upload a copy of your Final Report to the University's Drop Box on Canvas and post in your Pebblepad e-portfolio.</p> <p>Ensure all Placement tasks are complete.</p>	<p>Complete the Final Placement Report agreeing grades with UBE. Send the Report to the UBE for signature prior to sharing with student to sign. Student will upload the signed Report to the University Dropbox and to Pebblepad.</p> <p><b>Reports must be submitted by 17 December 2025</b></p>

## Reviewing Progress and Assessments

### Weekly Reviews

The Weekly Review of SPR targets is a tool for dialogue which is evidence of the student's Professional Progress. Students will complete this Weekly (Evaluation) Review, discuss it with their teacher/SBE and both participants will agree and sign off targets for the following week. This is done via the Pebble-pad App (depending on wi-fi availability) or alternatively by downloading the form from the University Web site, completing the paper copy which the student can then taking a photo of, to upload as a word document. The link to all of the Placement Forms can be found below. Regular review of targets should support the Mid-Way Review.

<https://www.qmu.ac.uk/current-students/practice-based-learning/initial-teachereducation/postgraduate-school-experience-placements/>

### Mid-way Review

This is a formative Report completed half-way through the Placement. It is a tool for discussing progress and for target setting against SPR for the remainder of the Placement. Once complete and agreed with the supporting teacher, it should be uploaded by the student to their Pebblepad.

### Formal and Informal Lesson Observations

There are some forms to support teachers who are offering informal observations. All forms can be easily downloaded from the Practice-based Learning Website (see link above). For informal observations a simplified proforma is available. Observations should be discussed with students as soon as possible following the lesson and the student should store a copy in their PDP – this can either be a word document or a photo or scan of a hand-written observation. The jointly observed

lesson with the UBE will be completed by the visiting University Lecturer and signed by both parties. In effect it is a Formative Report but given that this Joint Observation is close to the end of the Placement it is intended that this Joint Observation Report should inform the School's Final Report (which both School and University agree and sign). There are more details below.

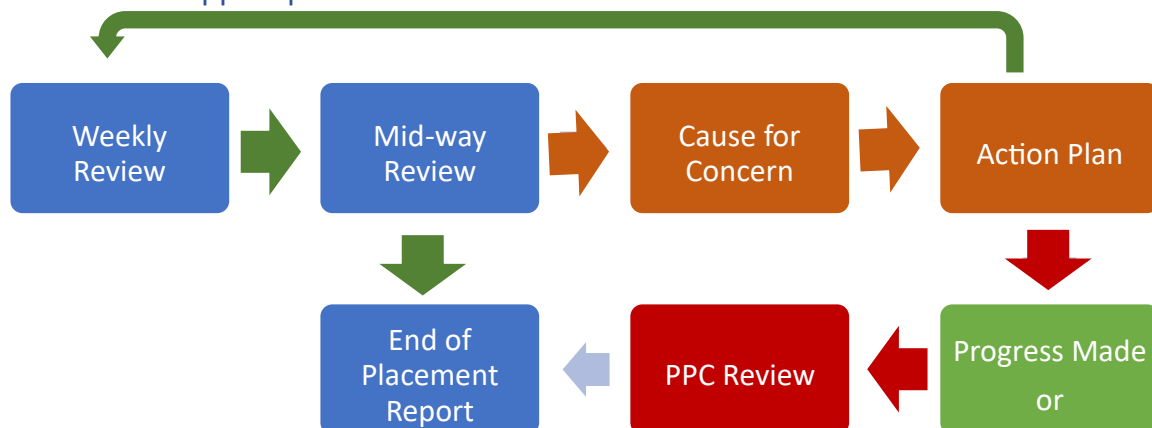
### Final Placement Report

There is Guidance on how to complete the final report and this will be provided by the UBE. However, it is also available on the Practice-based Learning Webpage for easy download – see the link above. Please note that Students need to achieve at least 6 out of 8 SPR categories to Satisfactorily pass Placement 1 and 8 out of 8 in Placement 2. The placement report grades should be completed in consultation with the UBE and both should agree on the final outcome. Joint and summative observations will adhere to the National Guidelines which states that:

“HEIs should ensure that the following is undertaken as a part of the assessment of school experience:

1. observation of a lesson;
2. scrutiny of the school experience file;
3. professional dialogue with the in-school supporter and;
4. professional learning conversation with the student teacher.

### Review and support process flow chart



If a student's progress is not satisfactory it should be discussed and recorded in the Weekly Review. Every support should be provided to enable the student to overcome their SPR targets. Progress should also be noted in the Mid-way Review. University staff should be contacted and a 'Cause for Concern' may be raised which will trigger a meeting between the school and university supporters together with the student to create a Plan of Positive Action.

A Reminder that this Guide is intended to be read with the Placement Handbook. Resources for Schools are available from this link:

<https://www.qmu.ac.uk/current-students/practice-based-learning/initial-teachereducation/postgraduate-school-experience-placements/>

We would like to thank you sincerely for hosting and supporting our student Teachers.

If you have any questions about the Placement assessment process please contact the PGDE (Secondary) Programme Leader, Dr Linda Craig at [lcraig1@qmu.ac.uk](mailto:lcraig1@qmu.ac.uk).