

Continuing ITE Students on PGCE Secondary Full-time / Part-time / School Direct

I am writing on behalf of Bishop Grosseteste University (BGU) to clarify our plans for teaching the 2021/22 academic year. We are committed to ensuring that BGU is a place of safety and stability for every member of our University community, including those starting or continuing their studies with us in September.

Expected delivery for 2021-22

Based on the UK Government's roadmap for lifting lockdown restrictions in England as a result of the successful rollout of the vaccination programme, **BGU intends to deliver its course through in-person teaching and learning from the start of September without social-distancing restrictions.**

We have made adjustments and improvements to the delivery of the programme for September 2021 to ensure that you have the highest quality learning experience during your PGCE. The changes affect the whole cohort sessions, which we call 'collective' sessions and which have previously been taught in a large lecture format. For the coming year these will be delivered in the following way:

- High quality online pre-recorded input and accompanying resources will be available to you for access from at least 9am one full working day before the session.
- The scheduled 2 ½ hour session will then be facilitated live online where you will have access to the session tutor, who will provide input and discussion and be able to answer any questions you may have. The format of these live sessions will vary and be tailored appropriately to the subject material. Full details will be provided prior to each session of how to maximise your engagement.
- One further advantage of this approach is that you will have access to all of the pre-recorded materials for the remainder of the year, which you will be able to revisit at an appropriate point in your training should you wish to do so.
- In order to provide you with increased flexibility you will have the choice of when to join these live session, allowing you to travel to campus for your 'subject seminars'.
- The 'subject' seminars which are scheduled to take place in the afternoon following the collective sessions will remain as on-campus, live, face-to-face delivery. In these sessions you will explore the curriculum from a subject specific perspective with your subject tutor and other students in your subject group.

The Government has provided [guidelines](#) to universities, as to what measures will need to be in place to be able to carry out safe in-person teaching and learning. Based on these guidelines the University is adopting a number of measures to maximise protection against transmission of the COVID virus including:

- encouraging you, when eligible, to get double vaccinated, as soon as possible;
- when you leave home to move into term time accommodation, you should reduce social contacts and take an asymptomatic ([lateral flow](#)) test prior to travelling to university;
- whilst at university, you should take twice weekly asymptomatic tests, available from the University;
- you should wear face coverings when indoor in learning and teaching spaces and corridors;
- washing and sanitising your hands frequently,
- if you were to feel unwell, for whatever reason, then you should not attend in-person classes but seek medical advice and if necessary take a COVID PCR test;

- if you have suspected COVID symptoms, you should self-isolate, book and take a PCR test, inform the University and then if the test result is positive self-isolate as directed by the NHS.

The University will

- ensure that all of its activity is risk assessed,
- maintain appropriate ventilation in its indoor teaching and learning spaces,
- clean campus teaching spaces regularly through the day

If further information is provided by the Government, we will provide clear guidance updates on our [Working Together](#) webpage.

Government restrictions on international travel look likely to continue into the 2021/22 academic year. This may mean any overseas visit opportunities might not be possible. In these circumstances the University will consult with the students concerned to provide alternative activities to deliver the intended learning outcomes or an equivalent experience where reasonably possible.

For those courses with Initial Teacher Education placement elements the University will work with schools / settings to deliver the designed programme of placements. However, the University may have to adapt and change placement plans if circumstances change.

The University understands that individual students' specific circumstances may change during the year due to self-isolating following COVID-19 testing or having to miss in-person sessions for other non-COVID-19 reasons. Academic teams will support those students to be able to access learning material and / or equivalent activities from missed sessions. Similarly, if a tutor is required to self-isolate for a short period of time, to minimise disruption to learning, the class may be delivered on-line.

Contingency plans

Whilst we plan to deliver our teaching in-person, we need to recognise that the COVID-19 situation can change and the Government has indicated that local authorities may need to reintroduce restrictions for short periods of time if required. Therefore, in this letter we have outlined the likely adjustments, based upon our experience from 2020/21, to the delivery of your programme if either:

- social distancing restrictions or bubbles have to be reintroduced; or
- the University is required to stop in-person delivery of teaching due to a lockdown situation.

If either of these scenarios were to happen BGU would follow Government and local Health Protection Team advice. The University would liaise with its students and implement contingency plans (please see Appendix 1) developed in consultation with the Students' Union representatives. If, at any stage, you have serious concerns about these plans we encourage you to contact your academic tutor or the Students' Union to discuss and resolve your concerns.

General advice

We would normally expect you to have access to your own digital / IT equipment to access the virtual learning environment, e-learning resources, credible external websites and be able to prepare and submit assessments. The University can provide [IT guidance](#) on what IT equipment is most suitable and what software packages can be [downloaded](#), including video-conferencing, for free from IT Services.

The University is aware that some of you may need financial assistance to help you to have continued access to learning. The University already provides a range of student bursaries – please see [eligibility information](#). The Student Advice team and the Students' Union can provide guidance on financial matters and the Careers, Employability and Enterprise team can help identify part-time

work opportunities. Our Learning Fund can provide some financial assistance for on-line requirements (e.g., purchasing personal IT equipment).

The safety of our students, staff and wider community will remain our priority and every decision will be made with that in mind and informed by Government and local authority guidance.

If you have any comments or queries, about what has been covered here, including any concerns about potential changes to patterns of study or, if you might wish to discuss the possibility of deferring your studies if you are new student or suspending (intercalating) your studies if you are a continuing student, then please contact our Enquiries Team: enquires@bishopg.ac.uk.

We very much looking to seeing you in-person in September.

Kind regards

Dr Robert Boast

Pro Vice-Chancellor (Students)

Appendix 1: Contingency plans for imposition of social distancing or lockdown restrictions

Based upon the experience from 2020-21 we would make the following adjustments.

Activity	Plan B: Social distancing restrictions required on campus	Plan C: no in-person delivery due to reimposition of lockdown
Scheduled classes	<p>Social distancing within classrooms and the need to ensure the safe flow of large student groups between classes restricts the capacity of our teaching rooms. This would prevent large whole-group lectures but our normal small group classes would continue.</p> <p>At least 50% of the normal scheduled learning hours would be delivered through the smaller group sessions with a tutor physically in-person in the room.</p> <p>The traditional whole group lectures will be replaced by scheduled on-line learning using a combination of live and recorded presentations, guided study tasks and live discussion sessions for the time-tabled slots.</p>	<p>The programme would be delivered wholly through on-line learning. This would consist of using a combination of live and recorded presentations, guided study tasks and live discussion sessions for the time-tabled sessions. On-line tutorials and meetings would be used to provide further study support.</p>
	<p>Regardless of the style of learning, all our students can expect the high quality of teaching for which we are renowned, as well as delivered the required learning outcomes of modules.</p>	
Timetables	<p>Timetables would need to be adjusted to deliver the scheduled on-line activity in combination with small group in-person class sessions. Most classes would happen between 9 am to 6 pm but we may need to occasionally use the early evenings for some in-person class delivery. When revising the time-table we will be mindful of the commitments and responsibilities that our students but programme classes on the revised timetable may be on different days and at different times.</p>	<p>The timetable would be adjusted to schedule live on-line sessions and to provide a structured study schedule.</p>
Placements – Initial Teacher Education (ITE)	<p>We would plan to deliver as much of the designed programme of placements as possible asking schools/settings to sign up to the usual placement pattern if possible but recognising that we may have to adapt and change as circumstances unfold.</p> <p>Whatever changes might become necessary we would do everything we can to ensure that our ITE students are able to access the full curriculum, providing them with sufficient opportunity to meet the Teachers' Standards by the end of the course and therefore be recommended for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).</p>	

	<p>Support during placements would be of the usual high quality and with every trainee having both university and school-based mentors.</p> <p>This approach reflects guidance from Department for Education (DfE) that during 2020-21 eased some of the relevant criteria to allow adjustments to the delivery of the 'designed programme'. The DfE compliance criteria has returned to full expectations for 21/22 delivery, however, the DfE demonstrated considerable flexibility around QTS trajectory judgments to ensure that entry to the profession is not impacted for those undertaking ITE courses.</p>	
Off campus trips and residential visits	<p>The delivery of these course elements would be subject to venue / site restrictions and guidance at the time from local Public Health teams and, for overseas trips, the Foreign & Commonwealth Office and international travel restriction that might apply.</p> <p>The University would consult with students through the academic year if on-going restrictions mean that planned activities might not be possible. In these circumstances we will look to provide alternative activities to deliver the intended learning outcomes and an equivalent experience where reasonably possible.</p>	
Assessments	<p>Most of the assessment practices used by BGU will remain unchanged as they are mostly coursework which can be completed and submitted remotely.</p> <p>Some practical assessments for placement activities or subject-based skills which cannot be tested due to social distancing or through on-line learning may have to be adapted e.g., performance and presentation activity can be assessed by being recorded and submitted on-line.</p> <p>For 2021-22 BGU formal examinations will be delivered by a 24 hour open book exam format that allows remote completion and submission. Exceptions to this might be required by subject regulatory bodies and you will be advised subject teams if this is the case.</p>	
The Library	<p>The majority of learning resources provided by the Library and recommended by tutors can be accessed on-line via WorldCat, the Library's A-Z Databases site, and My Reading. This allows you to search for resources and use them remotely.</p> <p>Social distancing would limit the number of users that can be in the Library at any one time and so we would put in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a click and collect service for students to order and receive physical books for loan; • a booking system to allow physical access to the Library for browsing resources and working in the study spaces. 	<p>On-line only learning would be facilitated by on-line access to Library resources via WorldCat, the Library's A-Z Databases site, and My Reading. The Library staff would provide on-line support to help students.</p>

Academic support services and wellbeing	<p>All our student support services – Centre for Enhancement in Learning and Teaching (CELT), Student Advice, Chaplaincy, our Careers, Employability and Enterprise Service (CEE), IT Services and our student administration team (SAO@bishopg.ac.uk) will be operating and providing support to all our students.</p> <p>If social distancing were to be reimposed, we would operate these services remotely on-line as well as enabling students to book an appointment if they require an in-person session.</p>	<p>All our student support services – CELT, Student Advice, Chaplaincy, our Careers, Employability and Enterprise Service, IT Services and our student administration team (SAO@bishopg.ac.uk) would provide on-line support and appointments.</p>
Accommodation	<p>As during 2020-21 our Accommodation Service if required would manage the social distancing of shared space in the University's accommodation as well as providing advice for students sharing in the private sector.</p> <p>Students living in University accommodation will be asked to socialise within their accommodation 'bubbles'.</p>	<p>BGU would support students if they needed to stay in their University accommodation during a lockdown.</p>
Students' Union and sporting activities	<p>The Students' Union would provide, a mix of on-line and in-person social, wellbeing and sporting activities in-line with any Government guidance on restrictions for bars, hospitality and catering. British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS) association would provide guidance on sporting activity and the University Sports Centre would open following social distancing guidelines.</p>	<p>Lockdown would close the SU bar and curtail sporting activity. The SU would provide well-being support and guidance to all students on-line.</p>