

# From a Geology Degree to a Career in Teaching

A teaching career in the schools of today provides the challenge and opportunity of interacting with young people. The profession provides a range of job opportunities, good promotion prospects, a reasonable salary system and clear career structures.

## Teacher Education

There are several ways in which you could use your degree in Geology, Geoscience or Earth Science, as the basis of a teaching career in schools. These involve taking a Post/Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) at a Teacher Training Institution, a School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) programme, School Direct (a school or schools working with an Initial Teacher Training provider, normally leading to a PGCE) or the 'Teach first' programme.

Geology is taught at A-level and/or GCSE at around 200 centres in England and Wales, including state schools, independent schools and sixth form colleges. A-level entries have been increasing recently. Since it is usually impossible to fill a timetable with geology teaching, most geology teachers also teach other subjects. As Earth science forms a small part of the National Science Curriculum and the National Geography Curriculum in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, most geology teachers also teach in one of those areas.

All the current Higher Education Institution (HEI)-based (PGCE), SCITT and School Direct routes below require the payment of tuition fees, but student loans are normally available for home and European Union students. The options for teaching are as follows:

- **Primary school teaching** by taking a PGCE in Primary Education, courses are provided by many Teacher Education institutions in the UK. Tuition fees are determined by individual institutions and range up to £9000 (2015). Bursaries range from £0 to £9,000 (2015/16) depending upon degree classification (1<sup>st</sup>, 2.1 or 2.2).
  - **Secondary school Geology teaching** – the OAKS SCITT (linked to Keele University) is planning to offer six PGCE places for training either as a science/geology teacher or as a geography/geology teacher from next year, with an NCTL bursary ranging from £0 to £12,000 (2015/16 programme) depending upon degree classification. Another geology teacher-training route is to train as a secondary school science or geography teacher through one of the routes described below, and then to undertake the week-long Summer School 'Teaching and Learning in Geoscience Education' module at Keele University. The course trains teachers in A-level geology teaching, runs in July and is free of charge to those in receipt of one of the industrial bursaries.
  - **Secondary school Science teaching** - by taking a PGCE (including the School Direct route) in Secondary Education, specialising in one of the main Science specialisms (Biology, Chemistry, Physics); these courses are provided at many teacher education institutions in the UK. Most require two Science subjects at 'A' level or their equivalent. All school Science courses include an element of Earth Science. Once in school, teachers can teach any subject that the school will allow them/require them to, so there may be opportunities for teaching GCSE or A-level Geology. Tuition fees are determined by individual institutions and range up to £9000 (2015). Bursaries range from £0 to £20,000 (2015/16) depending upon degree classification (1<sup>st</sup>, 2.1 or 2.2).
  - **Secondary school Science teaching, but you do not have sufficient subject knowledge to follow your chosen area** – you can apply for a Chemistry/ Physics Subject Knowledge Enhancement (SKE) course which provides academic teaching in Chemistry/ Physics in the context of the school curriculum and practice in the classroom. Successful completion of the SKE course enables progression to a 1-year PGCE, School Direct or SCITT course providing a specialism in Chemistry or Physics.
- You should contact the Department for Education (DfE)/National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) for further information (<http://www.education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching>) or providers of SKE courses.
- **Secondary school Geography teaching** - by taking an Initial Teacher Training programme in Secondary Education, specialising in Geography, provided at many Teacher Education institutions in the UK. Most courses require that at least half your degree is in Geography. Fees are as above and bursaries (2015/16 programme) range from £0 to £12,000, depending upon degree classification.
  - **Teaching through the SCITT programme** - involves training in school with most training taking place in the 'lead' school. Most programmes are validated by a Higher Education institution and programmes lead to the award of a PGCE. A number of programmes award Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) only.
  - **School Direct:** - involves applying to a lead school (which may be working with a consortium of schools) for your programme. Most School Direct providers work with Higher Education institutions and programmes normally lead to the award of a PGCE, the students studying alongside other PGCE students (with agreed modifications to the programme). Fees and bursary support are the same as for the PGCE through direct application to Higher Education institutions.
  - **School Direct Salaried** involves training in schools whilst undertaking a paid teaching role. Programmes may offer an academic award (e.g. PGCE) or be QTS only. There are no fees and no loan/grants or bursary support on this route.
  - **Secondary school teaching through the 'Teachfirst' route** - involves a two year commitment to the programme and teaching in a challenging school in one of the designated regions of England. It begins with a six-week summer school and continues in one school with additional input provided by a teacher education institution. This route gives a PGCE at the end of the course. You receive a full teacher's salary, paid by the school. To teach science, you need a 2.1 in a science subject and two science A-levels.

Further information on all these courses is available by contacting the institutions concerned.

All applications for PGCE courses in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and School Direct/School Direct Salaried (England) are made through the UCAS Teacher Training website (<http://www.ucas.com/how-it-all-works/teacher-training>) and in Scotland are through 'Teach in Scotland' (<http://www.teachinscotland.org/>).

Details of funding eligibility and levels of fees are available from the Department for Education website at: <http://www.education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching>, from Student Finance England at: <https://www.gov.uk/contact-student-finance-england> and from the DirectGov website (<http://www.direct.gov.uk/>) for students from other UK countries.