

Called to Teach

A handbook for those discerning the vocation to teach in Catholic schools in Scotland



are you being

CALLED TO TEACH

in Catholic schools?

“Teaching has an extraordinary moral depth and is one of humanity’s excellent and creative activities, for the teacher does not write on inanimate material, but on the very spirits of human beings”

The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium

Introduction

“Teaching has an extraordinary moral depth and is one of humanity’s excellent and creative activities, for the teacher does not write on inanimate material, but on the very spirits of human beings”
(The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium)

Welcome to our guide to becoming a teacher in a Catholic school. The Scottish Catholic Education Service, in partnership with Diocesan RE Advisers, have designed this guide to support and accompany you as you consider your vocation as a Catholic teacher.

The guide consists of three sections:

-  Section One: Thinking About Teaching
-  Section Two: Called to Teach
-  Section Three: Formation and Support for Applying to University

In each of the sections we have aimed to provide information, advice and useful links that we hope will support you through the discernment, application and interview processes.

Section One: *Thinking About Teaching*

This section includes advice and support for those considering a vocation in a Catholic school. In this section you will find information about what teaching entails as well as guidance on work experience placements and suggested professional reading.

Section Two: *Called to Teach*

This section includes advice and support for the application and interview process for Initial Teacher Education courses. You will also find information about the various routes to teaching and a prayer journal to accompany you as you discern your vocation.

Section Three: *Formation and Support for Applying to University*

This section offers spiritual, personal and professional accompaniment for those who have discerned their vocation to teach and are preparing to apply to university. You will also find a step by step guide to applying for courses that will support the call to teach in a Catholic school.

Accompanying this guide is our Becoming a Teacher webpage: [Scottish Catholic Education Service | SCES | Becoming a teacher](#) which we will refer you to as appropriate throughout this guide.

We would like to wish you every success in the application and interview process and hope to one day welcome you as a teacher in one of our Catholic schools.



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Section One

This section includes advice and support for those considering a vocation in a Catholic school. In this section you will find information about what teaching entails as well as guidance on work experience placements and suggested professional reading.

Teaching in a Catholic School

What is distinctive about the Catholic School?

Catholic schools offer a vision based upon the central teachings and values of the Catholic Church. They aim to help all students to develop their fullest potential, preparing them for life, informing their minds and forming their characters so that they can contribute with others to the transformation of their world – building God’s kingdom. Catholic Schools are communities which are open, welcoming and inclusive, seeking to prepare pupils to find happiness and to lead lives of goodness, built upon Christian values, personal integrity and moral courage. They promote genuine human growth, not only for Catholic pupils but for those of other faith traditions and those with stances for living which may be independent of religious belief. Catholic Schools are challenged to provide their students with structured opportunities of encounter with Jesus, opportunities to learn about His life, to understand His teaching, to develop the virtues and values which He promotes and to follow His witness in service to others.

What is School Ethos?

The dictionary defines ethos as ‘the guiding beliefs, standards or ideals that characterise or pervade a group, a community, a people... the spirit that motivates the ideas, customs and practices of a people’. This definition is helpful because it highlights first of all the pervasive nature of ethos.

In a school, ethos touches on all aspects of its operation but its very pervasiveness means that it is hard to pin down. It can be part of the ‘taken for granted’ about school life. Secondly, the definition makes it clear that ethos affects our practice. It is not an abstract idea but something which affects what we do and how we do it. So it helps us to understand why we act in particular ways and why our actions can be different in different schools.’ Munn, P (2002), p.5

What is the Catholic School ethos?

The Catholic school ethos is a lived experience and permeates every aspect of school life.

“A Catholic school’s ‘ethos’ may be understood to be the outward signs and experiences of the teachings of Christ and the Catholic Church in the totality of daily life in a Catholic school.”



What is the Charter for Catholic Schools?

[The Charter for Catholic Schools in Scotland](#) summarizes the key characteristics which all Catholic schools in Scotland strive to feature through the experiences and the service which they offer. It provides a useful set of reference points for school staff and parents to use in their school evaluation and planning.



Charter for Catholic Schools in Scotland

The mission of the Catholic school is to develop as a community of faith and learning, providing the highest quality of education, and offering formation through the promotion of Gospel values, through celebration and worship, and through service to the common good.

All Catholic schools in Scotland, in honouring Jesus Christ as the Way, the Truth and the Life, will feature the following characteristics:

- a commitment to the integrated education and formation of the whole person, in close partnership with parents as the first educators of their children;
- an inclusive ethos which aims to honour the life, dignity and voice of each person, made in the image of God;
- a commitment to the search for wisdom in life and to the pursuit of excellence, through the development of each person's unique God-given talents;
- a commitment to the spiritual formation of the school community, through the shared experience of prayer and liturgy, and in partnership with local parishes;
- the provision of religious education programmes which will enable young people to develop their understanding of Gospel values and of how to apply them to life;
- a commitment to uphold the moral teaching, faith tradition and sacramental life of the Catholic Church;
- a commitment to communicate Catholic social teaching and thereby to promote social justice and opportunity for all;
- a commitment to ecumenical action and the unity of Christians;
- the promotion of respect for different beliefs and cultures and for inter-faith dialogue;
- a commitment to support the continuing professional and spiritual development of staff.

All staff appointed to a Catholic school are expected to support and promote the aims, mission, values and ethos of the school, as illustrated in this Charter.

For more information, contact SCES. Tel: 0141 554 4727, email: mail@sces.uk or visit www.sces.uk

If you would like to find out more about the various courses and pathways to becoming a teacher, please access our PowerPoint file [Becoming a Teacher](#).



Church Approval

Church Approval

The relevant legislation on the management of denominational schools in Scotland states: "A teacher appointed to any post on the staff of any such school by the education authority. . . shall be required to be approved as regards religious belief and character by representatives of the church or denominational body in whose interest the school has been conducted. "

[Guidance for teachers seeking Approval](#)

Approval to teach in a denominational School must be obtained from the denominational body for "any post". The Roman Catholic diocese where a Catholic school is located is the denominational body in whose interest the Local Authority hold, maintain and manage Catholic schools in Scotland. Therefore, applicants for any post within a Catholic school must be approved by the Bishop of the Diocese in order to be appointed. To enable Councils to fulfil their statutory responsibilities, the Catholic Church requires to be assured that the personal "religious belief and character" of a teacher is appropriate to the duties associated with the teaching post for which he/she has applied.

When seeking approval, a teacher must demonstrate how his/her personal "religious belief and character" enables him/her to undertake the duties of the particular teaching post within the context of a Catholic school, with its particular mission, values and ethos, as outlined in [A Charter for Catholic Schools in Scotland](#).

All teachers who seek approval must provide a reference from a suitable person who can testify to the teacher's personal "religious belief and character". The reference for a Catholic teacher must be provided by the teacher's parish priest who should be able to testify to the teacher's personal "religious belief and character".

For Catholic teachers, whose teaching posts impact on the teaching of Religious Education, teachers will be expected to provide evidence of having obtained an appropriate teaching qualification in Catholic Religious Education – The Catholic Teacher Certificate, and that they meet the requirements of the [instrument for approval](#).



Catholic Teacher's Certificate

The Catholic Teacher's Certificate in Religious Education (CTC) is the qualification required for those eligible* and wishing to teach Religious Education in Catholic primary schools or in Catholic secondary schools as a 'generalist' RE teacher. Working in partnership with the Bishops' Conference of Scotland, the University of Glasgow is responsible for this award which is offered to students on the university's ITE programmes. The course is also offered to PGDE students at the University of Aberdeen, University of Dundee, University of Edinburgh, the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, the University of Strathclyde and the University of the West of Scotland

(*Please note, the course is also open to those who are not eligible to teach Religious Education in the Catholic sector but the assessment will be different and those successful will gain an 'Award in Religious Understanding'.)

This course leads to an academic qualification, not 'teacher approval'. See SCES for details of the approval process.

Qualification to Teach Religious Education

There are two additional ways in which you can gain the Catholic Teacher's Certificate in Religious Education (CTC):

- a) the Certificate in Religious Education by Distance-learning (CREDL) course
- b) the Setting Out on the Road course.

Certificate in Religious Education by Distance Learning (CREDL)

The Certificate in Religious Education by Distance Learning (CREDL) is the University of Glasgow route for qualified teachers, or students studying an ITE programme at other universities. It is an on-line distance learning course and covers aspects of Theological Education over two semesters.

More information at:

<https://www.gla.ac.uk/postgraduate/taught/religiouseducationbydistancelearning/#tab=1>



Setting Out on the Road

Is a course which leads to the award of the Catholic Teacher's Certificate (CTC) enabling the recipient to teach Religious Education in the Catholic school, if eligible to do so. It is delivered by the St Andrew's Foundation for Catholic Teacher Education at the University of Glasgow. Setting Out on the Road is for qualified teachers who have not yet obtained their CTC. It offers a blended learning model of 4 study days and distance-learning across one school year. Cost £310.

More information at:

<https://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/education/cpd/cpdforteachers/religiouseducation/settingoutontheroad/#/fees.teachingdates>

How Do I Become a Teacher?

There are various avenues and multiple universities that prepare future teaching in Scotland.

- The University of Aberdeen
- University of Dundee
- The University of Edinburgh
- University of Glasgow
- University of the Highlands and Islands
- The University of Stirling
- The University of Strathclyde
- University of the West of Scotland

You can qualify as a teacher by either:

- Completing a four year Bachelor of Education degree course in Primary Education and certain Secondary Subjects (normally Design and Technology, Music, Physical Education and Religious Education)
- Complete a three/four year degree in essentially any subject then complete Post Graduate Diploma in Education.



Catholic School Resources



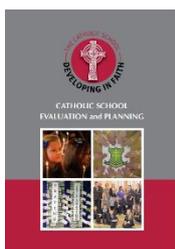
This Is Our Faith, the syllabus for Catholic religious education in Scotland, governs the teaching of religious education in Scotland's Catholic schools.



God's Loving Plan is the resource used in Scottish Catholic Schools for teaching about Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood in Primary schools.



Called to Love was developed to provide appropriate teaching materials for Relationships Sexual Health and Parenthood education in Catholic secondary schools. Called to Love materials provide a Christian vision of love and relationships, based on Church teaching, recognising each person's vocation for love.



Developing In Faith is a resource which helps school leaders incorporate into their school evaluation and planning processes an appropriate focus on the particular mission of the Catholic school.



Companions on the Journey is the resource used in Scottish Catholic Schools to help teachers plan their CLPL with a focus on their vocation as a Catholic teacher.



National Education Initiatives

Curriculum for Excellence

[Curriculum for Excellence](#) is intended to help children and young people gain the knowledge, skills and attributes needed for life in the 21st century, including skills for learning, life and work.

Its purpose is often summed up as helping children and young people to become:

- Successful learners
- Confident individuals
- Responsible citizens
- Effective contributors

These are referred to as the four capacities.

What is the curriculum and what does it include?

Curriculum for Excellence is designed to achieve a transformation in education in Scotland by providing a coherent, more flexible and enriched curriculum from 3 to 18. The term curriculum is understood to mean - everything that is planned for children and young people throughout their education, not just what happens in the classroom.

Curriculum for Excellence includes four contexts for learning:

- Curriculum areas and subjects
- Interdisciplinary learning
- Ethos and life of the school
- Opportunities for personal achievement

Curriculum Levels and Stages

The curriculum has two stages: the broad general education (from the early years to the end of S3) and the senior phase (S4 to S6).

The broad general education has five levels (early, first, second, third and fourth). The senior phase is designed to build on the experiences and outcomes of the broad general education, and to allow young people to take qualifications and courses that suit their abilities and interests.



Curriculum Areas

There are eight curriculum areas:

- Expressive arts
- Health and wellbeing
- Languages (including English, Gaidhlig, Gaelic learners and modern languages)
- Mathematics
- Religious and moral education
- Sciences
- Social studies
- Technologies

Literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing are recognised as being particularly important – these areas are seen as being the ‘responsibility of all’ staff.

Principles of Curriculum Design

There are seven broad principles that practitioners should take into consideration when planning children’s learning:

- Challenge and enjoyment
- Breadth
- Progression
- Depth
- Personalisation and choice
- Coherence
- Relevance

curriculum for excellence



Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)

[GIRFEC](#) is the national approach in Scotland to improving outcomes and supporting the wellbeing of our children and young people by offering the right help at the right time from the right people. It supports them and their parent(s) to work in partnership with the services that can help them.

It puts the rights and wellbeing of children and young people at the heart of the services that support them – such as early years services, schools, and the NHS – to ensure that everyone works together to improve outcomes for a child or young person.

Most children get all the support and help they need from their parent(s), wider family and local community, in partnership with services like health and education. Where extra support is needed, the GIRFEC approach aims to make that support easy to access and seamless, with the child at the centre.

It is for all children and young people because it is impossible to predict if or when they might need extra support.

GIRFEC means:

- You understand what is happening and why.
- You have been listened to carefully and your wishes have been heard, understood and taken into consideration.
- You feel confident about the help you are getting.
- You are appropriately involved in discussions and decisions that affect you.
- You can rely on appropriate help being available as soon as possible.
- You experience a more straightforward and co-ordinated response from the people working with you.



The National Improvement Framework

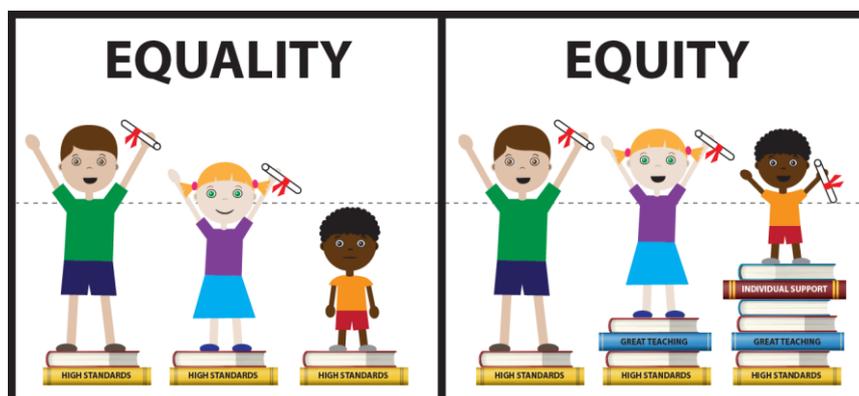
[The National Improvement Framework](#) for Scottish education is an ambitious strategy to help all children to achieve their full potential as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. The Framework sets out how evidence is gathered to information, making sure that we are all focussed on improving standards for our children, and in our schools.

The National Improvement Framework priorities are:

- To improve attainment for all, particularly in literacy and numeracy
- To improve the learning progress of every child, by reducing inequality in education
- To improve children and young people’s health and wellbeing
- To improve employability skills and sustained positive school leaver destinations for all young people

Drawn from international research, six areas for improvement have been identified. New evidence will be gathered in all of these. Children and young people’s learning, their opportunities when they leave school and their health and wellbeing will improve when:

- Children make progress in their learning, taking ownership of it and understanding their next steps
- Parents/carers are involved in their children’s learning and know how to help them
- High quality teaching and excellent classroom practice are delivered consistently and teachers know how to help all children make progress
- School leadership is strong
- Children, parents, teachers, headteachers, local and national government and partners all have a clear understanding of what successful learning and teaching looks like
- All participants in education at national, local, school and family level have the same priorities, use the same assessment at key points and share information openly



What is Meant by Assessment?

Assessment is carried out to see what children and young people know, understand and are able to do.

Assessment is very important for tracking progress, planning next steps, reporting and involving parents, children and young people in learning.

Assessment covers:

- The ways teachers support and assess children's learning and monitor progress and identify next steps in learning.
- Reporting to parents/carers, in writing and in discussions, to help them understand their child's progress and what they can do to help their child's learning.
- Formal recognition of a child or young person's achievements through profiles and qualifications.
- Recognising our children's achievements through a range of new qualifications in the senior school, which build on everything they have accomplished throughout their schooling.

Curriculum for Excellence has improved assessment in the following ways:

- A better connected assessment system with smoother links through early learning, primary, secondary school and college.
- More ways of assessing progress to support learning and more flexibility to meet learners' individual needs.
- By introducing individual profiles of children's achievements at P7 and S3. These give a clear recognition of the achievements they have made and the skills they have developed at these crucial times in their lives.

What is Being Assessed?

Assessment is a way of supporting learning. It helps teachers, learners, parents and others to understand the depth and breadth of learning undertaken so that progress and next steps can be discussed and planned.

There are eight curriculum areas containing a range of subjects(see pg.6). Each curriculum area is broken down into a set of experiences and outcomes (often referred to as Es and Os):

- The Experience describes the learning.
- The Outcome represents what the learning will achieve. This is often explained, from the pupil's perspective as an 'I can....', 'I am able to....'



Teachers will assess what children know, understand and are able to do within the experiences and outcomes. Teachers will assess each learner's progress and achievements in:

- Knowledge and understanding
- Skills
- Attributes and capabilities

There are also three key areas which are covered by all teachers/practitioners:

- Literacy across learning
- Numeracy across learning
- Health and wellbeing across learning

How are Pupils Assessed?

A pupil's progress is not only based on 'tests' but on the learning that takes place within the classroom and in different settings outwith the classroom.

Evidence of children and young people's progress and achievements will come from day to day learning and through the things they may write, say, make or do. For example, evidence may emerge as a result of children and young people taking part in a presentation, discussion, performance or practical investigation. Evidence could also be a drawing, report, or piece of art work that they have produced. Evidence may be captured as a photograph, video or audio clip as part of a particular learning experience.

Gathering Evidence

Evidence of progress and achievement can be gathered by:

- children and young people through self-assessment. They will be encouraged and supported to look at and revisit their own work, to develop a better understanding of what they have learned, and what they need to work on
- fellow pupils (peers) through peer assessment. Children and young people will be encouraged and supported to work together with others to assess what is good about their work and what needs to be worked on teachers, parents and others who can help identify and support their next steps in learning.

When does Assessment Happen?

Assessment takes place as part of ongoing learning and teaching, periodically and at key transitions.



As Part of Ongoing Learning

Children and young people's progress, strengths and needs are assessed as part of day-to-day learning and teaching. Teachers and others do this by, for example, watching and listening to learners carrying out tasks, by looking at what they write or make and by considering how they answer questions.

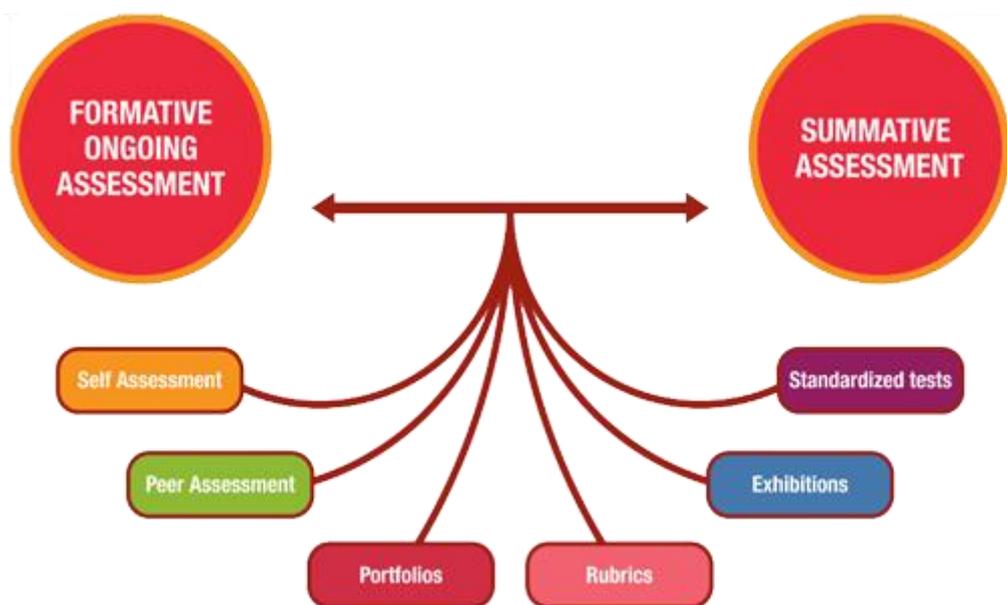
Children and young people will be involved in planning their next steps in learning.

Time to Time (periodically)

From time to time, teachers will assess children and young people's progress and achievements in order to be able to plan ahead and to record and report on progress. This will help to ensure that their progress is on track and that any necessary action is taken to support their learning.

At Key Points, Transitions

Transitions are the moves children and young people make, from home to early learning and childcare settings, from stage to stage (and through Curriculum for Excellence levels), from primary to secondary, to further or higher education and employment. Sharing of assessment information with parents is important to ensure all learners are supported and have a positive experience. Information about a learner's progress and achievements will be passed on to make sure that their broad general education and senior phase continue uninterrupted at the correct level and at an appropriate pace for them.



Work Experience

If you are interested in becoming a Catholic teacher, it is important that you find out as much as you can about the current Catholic education system prior to application and interview for Initial Teacher Education Courses. Ideally, your local Catholic primary school will be able to offer you some support as you explore this vocation. The following list may provide some guidance on seeking relevant support. More detailed advice and support for your placement can be found in our [Making Work Experience Work](#) section.

- Email your local Catholic primary head teacher (you will be able to find this email address via the school website)
- Introduce yourself as someone interested in becoming a Catholic primary teacher and ask if the school would be in a position to offer you some support in way of classroom experience and some mentoring through the application process
- If possible, ask if it would be possible to come to the school for a short visit
- If a visit is arranged, ensure you arrive promptly and bring a notepad and pen
- During your visit, the head teacher may arrange for a short tour and after discussion may offer some classroom experience opportunities
- Ask for some advice on completing your application form
- During any classroom experience, ensure you are punctual and arrive at the time as arranged as the class teacher will have organised their timetable to accommodate your visit
- When working with the children, remember to maintain a professional manner and take care not to share personal information about children out with the school
- If a mentor is allocated to you, keep in contact with them to ask for advice or to proofread your application
- If you are offered an interview for an Initial Teacher Education course, ask your mentor if they could give you advice about the prepared 'Catholic question' and perhaps ask them to do a mock interview with you
- This would also be a good time, if you haven't already done so, to introduce yourself to your parish priest as if you are accepted to do a teaching degree and you wish to complete your Catholic Teaching Certificate, you will need to ask him for a reference



Section Two

This section includes advice and support for the application and interview process for Initial Teacher Education courses. You will also find information about the various routes to teaching and a prayer journal to accompany you as you discern your vocation.

Routes to Teaching

There are lots of paths that lead to being a teacher, but all of them need to include an Initial Teacher Education qualification, or an equivalent qualification if you have trained outside Scotland. You can access further information about pathways to teaching by clicking on our



Becoming A Teacher tile:

You can get this ITE qualification through either a four-year undergraduate degree or through a postgraduate Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE).

A number of Scottish Universities offer Initial Teacher Education courses. Some of these are listed below.

- [Edinburgh Napier University](#)
- [Queen Margaret University](#)
- [Royal Conservatoire of Scotland](#)
- [University of Aberdeen](#)
- [University of Dundee](#)
- [University of Edinburgh](#)
- [University of Glasgow](#)
- [University of the Highlands and Islands](#)
- [University of Stirling](#)
- [University of Strathclyde](#)
- [University of the West of Scotland](#)

Age Range	Degree Study	Post Degree Study	Total Length of Study
Primary	4-year degree	1 - year Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programme - e.g. PGDE in Primary Education	5 years total
Primary	4-year degree including ITE (e. MA in Primary Education)		4 years total
Secondary	4-year degree	1 - year Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programme - e.g. PGDE in Secondary Education	5 years total
Secondary	4-year degree including ITE (e. MA in Physical Education)		4 years total

Minimum requirements to train as a teacher in Scotland

You'll need at least the following qualifications to train in Scotland:

- English at SCQF Level 6 and Maths Level 5.
- Two other National Qualifications at SCQF Level 6, and one other subject at SCQF Level 5 for an undergraduate degree.
- An undergraduate degree awarded by a UK higher education provider for PGDE programmes.
- Membership of the Protecting Vulnerable Groups scheme.
- Classroom experience.

Find out more on the [Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework \(SCQF\)](#).

If you initially don't have the necessary qualifications to get a place on a teacher training course at University you could undertake an access course: <https://on.abdn.ac.uk/access/>



Application and Interview – General Advice

This section includes advice and support for the application and interview process. If you are currently preparing for application/interview see our [Applying to University](#) section.

The Application Process

- There will be a deadline for applications: know when it is and plan to complete and submit your form in plenty of time.
- Your Personal Statement is very important. Make sure you include details of involvement in working with children/young people. This can be in school, parish, Guides, Brownies, or Sports Clubs etc. If you have not had experience working with children – organise some. Contact your local school or the one you attended as a pupil and explain that you wish to gain experience as you intend to apply for teaching. If they are unable to help, then get in touch with one of the contacts in this booklet.
- You may be applying to a number of universities, however, make explicit your intention is to teach in a Catholic school. This will be taken into account when you are sent on teaching experience.
- Comment on your own personal faith and it's importance in your life. As with the bullet point above, give details of any involvement with your church: Liturgy Group, HCPT, reading at Mass etc. You may also wish to mention any pilgrimages, retreats that you may have participated in.
- Once you have completed your application proof read it and then proof read it again. Ask someone else to do this too. Make sure that there are no spelling or grammatical mistakes as this gives the wrong impression of someone wishing to pursue a career in teaching.

The Interview Process

PREPARE, PREPARE, PREPARE

- Preparation is crucial.
- Understand what teaching entails. It will put you in a good position if you are aware of the role of the teacher. Having experience helping in a primary school is invaluable. Watch what the teachers in classes are doing and take notes. Ask them to tell you about aspects of their job that you do not see: planning and preparing for lessons, assessment and tracking etc.



- Find out about current issues affecting education in Scotland; practicalities of the job (what happens day-to-day in classroom/school setting – if you haven't had work experience within a school, organise this asap – local schools / previous school may be able to help).
- Faith – consider your own faith and the impact this will have on a school. Think about the teacher's role in developing faith: teaching the faith, sacramental preparation, encouraging children to pray, being a role model-treating everyone with love and respect, etc.
- Make a list of reasons why you are an ideal candidate for teaching and give examples e.g. supporting others in learning situations, working in teams, curricular strengths, clubs and groups supported, leadership roles undertaken.
- Think about your skills and personality: things like being a good communicator, patience, sense of humour, well-organised, team player etc.
- Look over your application, particularly your personal statement - this is what gets you over first hurdle to the interview.

The Interview Day

- Dress appropriately for a professional interview – first impressions can't be changed. Your best outfit may be fabulous on a night out with your friends but is it suitable for interview?
- Be punctual. Leave in plenty of time to reach the interview and allow for the possibility of delays.
- Greet interviewers confidently – make eye contact and remember to smile. The interviewers will want you to give a good account of yourself. Let your personality show, they will be thinking about how you are able to relate to people. You may be nervous but understand the interviewers will take account of this.
- Listen carefully and answer the question asked. Sometimes there is a temptation to give a prepared answer. This is fine if it answers the question asked.
- Don't be afraid to ask for clarification or for the question to be repeated
- Consider the section above on preparation for interview and use the points you have been studying in your answer.



- Use positive language and sell yourself. Be confident to say if you are a 'skilled' communicator, have 'strength' in a particular area etc.
- **During the interview you will be given a choice between a denominational and non-denominational question. If you wish to work in a Catholic school it is important that you choose the denominational question.**

The Written Task

- If you are asked to complete a written task, then take time to read the question. Be clear and concise.
- Make a quick plan to structure your writing.
- Think about time constraints and what is practical to produce in the given time
- Leave time at the end so you can proof read to correct any grammatical / spelling errors



Making Work Experience *Work*

Catholic schools have been doing great work in communities throughout Scotland for over one hundred years, committed to the idea that the best education is in its essence fully holistic: it tends to the whole person in mind, intellect, body and soul, and it fosters a love of learning that will stay with us throughout our lives.

This success is due in no small part to the committed service of teachers who, in the course of their teaching duties, serve as witnesses to the fact that the choice to live as a practising Catholic is a valid and relevant choice in 21st century Scotland. In the nature of their interactions with young people and with colleagues, in the classroom and beyond, they show the teachings of Christ put into action and show that the Catholic faith is not simply a body of knowledge that resides in our heads, but is a sense of how to live that extends to our hands, our hearts and to our knees when we meet with Christ in prayer.

It is vital then that we as a community do all that we can to help and support those who feel called to serve in the role of Catholic teacher.

One form that this support has taken over the years is allowing young people considering taking up the vocation of teaching to take part in programmes of work experience in Catholic schools. This is an invaluable source of learning for those considering a teaching career not least of all because it allows them to discern whether teaching is the career for them, by showing how the day-to-day reality of teaching matches their ideas and expectations. It is important therefore that any work experience takes the form of a comprehensive and structured programme providing a wide range of experiences and the opportunity for the person involved to ask questions and seek advice.

AIMS OF WORK EXPERIENCE

- Help students make informed career decisions by exploring their aptitudes and interests, and exploring potential career roles
- Prepare students for the demands and expectations of working in a school
- Improve students' maturity, confidence and self-reliance
- Provide students with appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes concerning work both within and out with the classroom context
- Provide a link between local community schools and parishes
- Provide students with an opportunity to relate school studies with a workplace
- Help students to see how a Catholic school operates within the Charter for Catholic Schools, and functions as a community of faith and learning
- Give students an insight into the diversity of employees in the workplace



Suggested Practice for the Placement School

- All students should have an allocated member of staff who is a point of first contact, and to whom they can feed back on their experience within the school
- Ensure that the student, and everyone they will work with, is operating in a safe way and within a safe environment, in line with school and Local Authority policies
- Ensure that the student is made aware of the relevant line management structures and is introduced to everyone they will work with
- Ensure that the student is made aware of Child Protection procedures and knows how and when to access the Child Protection Co-ordinator.
- Provide student with a structured programme including a range of school contexts, with clear expectations and a balance of observation, tasks (within and outwith classroom context), and the opportunity for liaison and discussion with different members of the school's management, teaching and ancillary staff and wider community. The programme should reflect a real attempt to mirror the day-to-day work of a teacher within the school.
- Students should not be left alone to supervise pupils
- Students should be encouraged to share their own particular gifts and talents in their interactions with pupils
- Students should be allowed and indeed encouraged to evaluate both the programme and their own performance
- Schools should encourage and support students in the keeping of a journal of their placement, which will promote professional reflection and self-evaluation.

Responsibility of the Student

- Prior to attending, it is recommended that students familiarise themselves with the website of the placement school to gain an understanding of the vision, value and aims of the school, along with practical details such as the shape of the school day, etc.
- While in the school, students should have a care to conduct themselves in a way that reflects the vision, values and aims of the school community
- Students should attend as planned; if for any reason they cannot attend, they should inform the placement school (and/or their own school, as appropriate)
- Students should be aware that they will be asked to undertake a programme that, in reflecting the day-to-day working of a busy school, covers a range of different experiences and contexts, and should be willing to co-operate with that
- If a student has any concerns, they should share these at the first opportunity with their allocated member of staff or Child Protection coordinator



- In keeping with the nature of working in a busy school, students should be prepared to be flexible and enthusiastic in their contributions to school life.
- Students are expected to keep a record of the work they undertake and to make time for personal reflection and self-evaluation. Students should do this through the keeping of a journal throughout the time of their placement.
- The journal is a place for the student to reflect upon their own practice and on what they have learned. While it is intended for the student's own use, it is important to remember that there can be issues of confidentiality, and so students should avoid naming or otherwise identifying particular pupils or staff when recording reflections.



WORK EXPERIENCE STUDENT PLACEMENT STUDENT JOURNAL

Name of Student	
Name of Placement School	
Dates of Placement	
Placement School Contact	



Work Experience Placement Student Journal

Student Name:	
Date:	

Staff I worked with
Classes/pupils I worked with
Focus/aims for today (say why)

My reflections on today



Making Work Experience Work - School

Before the Student arrives . . .

- Allocate a member of staff to be student's first point of contact
- Allocate a member of staff to have responsibility for helping student to keep their Journal
- Prepare a copy of school handbook to give to the student
- Ensure staff know that the student is coming
- Ask staff if anyone is working on units/projects/events where the student could be involved
- Draw up a programme that includes (where practical):
 - Classroom observation
 - Interactions with pupils within and outwith the classroom
 - Experiencing assemblies
 - Time for discussion with non-teaching and support staff working in different contexts within the school
 - Meetings for discussion with management/teaching/ pupil support staff in different areas of responsibility

At your first meeting, ask the student if they have anything they see as a particular strength/ talent that they can contribute, perhaps within a certain subject or activity. Try to find ways in which this can be incorporated into the programme.

Make sure the student has a copy of the school's Vision, Values and Aims Statement and a copy of the Charter for Catholic Schools.

Support the student in arranging a time for the student to meet with the chaplain and/or any chaplaincy team/liturgy group/etc.

If your student's placement happens over a number of weeks, set a weekly focus from the handbook and ask them to read what is in the handbook on that topic. This can also be the focus in discussions with staff that week.



If your student's placement happens in a one week/two week block, take one (or more) of the priorities from your School Improvement Plan and ask them to watch for and be aware of ways in which the school is addressing that priority.

Support the student in ensuring opportunities to meet and talk with office staff, kitchen staff, janitorial staff, etc. to help ensure a rounded picture of life and roles in a school.

Try to ensure progression in the level of task set for the student throughout the length of the placement.

Allow the student to help with the planning, development and delivery of whole school events such as a mass, assembly, etc.

Making Work Experience Work – Student Block Placement

This advice is intended for students who are on a full-time placement for one week or more.

Before you begin your placement . . .

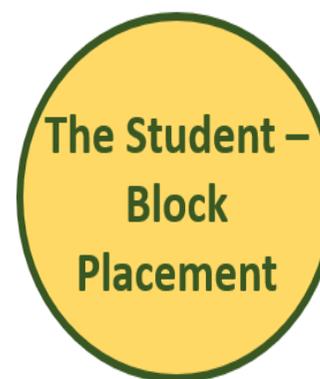
- Ensure that you are absolutely clear on the arrangements regarding dates, times, etc . . .
- Is there a dress code for you as a student?
- Have you visited the school's website? Go on to see the school's statements on its vision, values and aims, and look at the Handbook to get a fuller picture of the school's priorities.
- It will be very useful for you to keep a detailed journal of your time on placement. In this you can keep a record of what you do; the different roles within the school and how they work;
- Make sure you are familiar with the **Charter for Catholic Schools**. This is available from the Scottish Catholic Education Service website at <https://sces.org.uk/charter-for-catholic-schools/>

During your interactions with pupils in the classroom, pay attention to the different teaching approaches and methods used by the teacher. Discuss the reasons for these with the teacher.

Take the opportunity to be part of playground/dining hall duty where practical to do so. Do you notice any differences in the teacher/pupil dynamic? Record your thoughts in your journal.

Try to arrange with your school contact some time to meet and talk with non-teaching staff in the school, and to discuss with them not only their direct responsibilities but also their wider role within the school community.

As you observe/participate in the classroom, where do you see literacy/numeracy/HWB/ICT elements included in learning and teaching?



Take full advantage of any opportunity to become involved with any whole-school activities happening during your placement.

Ask if you can arrange a time to meet with the chaplain and/or any chaplaincy team/liturgy group/etc. How important is the Catholic identity and religious life of the school? Record your findings in your journal.

Having looked at the school's Improvement Plan, discuss with staff how this informs what they do on a day-to-day basis in learning and teaching, including planning and monitoring progress.

On completing your placement, what do you feel have been your strengths and where do you feel you would like further development? What will be your next steps in your journey towards a teaching career? Record your thoughts in your journal.

Making Work Experience Work – Student Serial Placement

This advice is intended for students who are on a long-term placement for a day or so per week.

Before you begin your placement . . .

- Ensure that you are absolutely clear on the arrangements regarding dates, times, etc . . .
- Is there a dress code for you as a student?
- Have you visited the school's website? Go on to see the school's statements on its vision, values and aims, and look at the Handbook to get a fuller picture of the school's priorities.
- It will be very useful for you to keep a detailed journal of your time on placement. In this you can keep a record of what you do; the different roles within the school and how they work;
- Make sure you are familiar with the **Charter for Catholic Schools**. This is available from the Scottish Catholic Education Service website at <https://sces.org.uk/charter-for-catholic-schools/>

During your interactions with pupils in the classroom, pay attention to the different teaching approaches and methods used by the teacher in different curricular areas. Does this change in the course of the placement?

Take the opportunity to be part of playground/dining hall duty where practical to do so. Do you notice any differences in the teacher/pupil dynamic, and does it change as you progress in your placement? Record your thoughts in your journal.

Try to arrange with your school contact some time to meet and talk with non-teaching staff in the school, and to discuss with them not only their direct responsibilities but also their wider role within the school community.

As you observe/participate in the classroom, where do you see literacy/numeracy/HWB/ICT elements included in learning and teaching?



Having looked at the school's Improvement Plan, discuss with staff how this informs what they do on a day-to-day basis in learning and teaching, including planning and monitoring progress.

Ask if you can arrange a time to meet with the chaplain and/or any chaplaincy team/liturgy group/etc. How important is the Catholic identity and religious life of the school? Record your findings in your journal as the school moves through the liturgical year.

Take full advantage of any opportunity to become involved with whole-school activities. As you move through the year, gather feedback from pupils about the importance of these events for their experience.

On completing your placement, what do you feel have been your strengths and where do you feel you would like further development? What will be your next steps in your journey towards a teaching career? Record your thoughts in your journal.

Prayer Journal

Prayer Journal for those considering a vocation as a Catholic teacher

Introduction

This journal has been designed to accompany you as you discern your vocation and consider your application to Initial Teacher Education programmes. As a teacher in a Catholic school, it will be important to invest time and effort in your personal spiritual development; an integral part of your professional development. Developing the habit of prayer can be challenging when our lives are so busy but even just taking a few moments each day to spend time in prayer can make a real difference.

This journal will provide a selection of short prayers and reflections to guide you through the school year. These include a combination of the traditional prayers of the Church as well as short reflections relating to the vocation of the Catholic teacher.

“Remember that you are never alone, Christ is with you on your journey every day of your lives! He has called you and chosen you to live in the freedom of the children of God. Turn to him in prayer and in love. Ask him to grant you the courage and strength to live in this freedom always. Walk with him who is “the Way, the Truth and the Life.” (Pope Saint John Paul II, 23 August 1997)”

Discernment

As Catholics, an important aspect of any decision-making process is discernment. Read the article below by Joe Paprocki, D.Min, on discernment and then take some time this month to use the *Prayer to Know Ones Vocation*.

What is Discernment?

“Just do it.”

Sounds easy? On the one hand, there's something to be said for spontaneity. On the other hand, some of our choices in life require deep thought, prayer, and consideration, lest we find ourselves facing the consequences of a poor decision. That's where the art of discernment comes in.

Discernment is a time-honoured practice in the Christian tradition. In essence, discernment is a decision-making process that honours the place of God's will in our lives. It is an interior search that seeks to align our own will with the will of God in order to learn what God is calling us to. Every choice we make, no matter how small, is an opportunity to align ourselves with God's will. Here are some tried-and-true pointers that can help you discern God's will.



- **Talk to Someone You Respect:** God often speaks to us through the wisdom of others. Seek out the wisdom of at least one and perhaps several people who you feel have the gift of wisdom and ask for their advice.
- **Find Some Solitude:** It's good to talk to other people when making important decisions, but at some point, it is crucial to make some time to be alone with your thoughts and with God. Invite God into your decision-making process.
- **Start with What You Know:** Lay out all of the facts in front of yourself so that you can deal with the known before you delve into the unknown!
- **Tell God What It Is That You Desire and What You Fear:** Be honest and tell God what your deepest desires and fears are in this situation. Before you can say the words, “thy will be done,” be sure you are truly in touch with your own will; otherwise it will come back to bite you anyway!
- **Let God Speak to You:** Most of us don't actually hear a voice when God speaks to us. However, pay attention closely to the ways that God is speaking to you. What kinds of thoughts, feelings (especially love, joy, and peace, or a lack thereof), and memories might God be stirring within you to help you make your decision? What Scripture story or saint's life comes to mind that might enlighten your decision? Find the passage or story and prayerfully read it.
- **Know That God Has a Plan for You:** Remind yourself that you are not on your own and that you don't have to yell and scream to get God's attention to help you in this matter. On the contrary, remind yourself that God has a plan for you and that his plan is driven purely by love.
- **Pray to Do God's Will:** As difficult as it may be, pray the words, “thy will be done,” asking God to give you the strength you need to continue to discern his will and to follow it.
- **Wait:** If circumstances allow, wait before making your decision. Continue to pay attention to your feelings to see which direction you are being drawn to.
- **Prayerfully Commit:** At some point, you need to act. Knowing that you have sought God's will, set forth to do the loving thing.
- **Check Out the Fruits:** Discernment is ongoing. After you make a decision, prayerfully evaluate it. If the fruits (outcomes) of your decision—your words, actions, and behaviours—are good, then it is a good indication that the decision you made is good. If the fruits are “rotten,” then that is a good indication that you may need to alter your course. True discernment results in good fruit (even if it's something we wouldn't normally pick out for ourselves).

Discernment can help you when you face decisions. Even though making good decisions can be difficult at times, trust that the Holy Spirit is with you to guide you and help you choose what is good and true.

Article by Joe Paprocki, D.Min. <https://www.loyolapress.com/our-catholic-faith/ignatian-spirituality/discernment/discernment-making-inspired-choices>



Prayer to Know One's Vocation

Lord, my God and my loving Father, you have made me to know you, to love you, to serve you, and thereby to find and to fulfil my deepest longings. I know that you are in all things, and that every path can lead me to you.

But of them all, there is one especially by which you want me to come to you. Since I will do what you want of me, I pray you, send your Holy Spirit to me: into my mind, to show me what you want of me; into my heart, to give me the determination to do it, and to do it with all my love, with all my mind, and with all of my strength right to the end. Jesus, I trust in you. Amen

Term One

August/September

As the new school year begins it is important for Catholic teachers to try and establish a routine of prayer. Over the next few weeks find some time to stop and reflect on what becoming a Catholic teacher means to you. There may be things that you are anxious about as well as those that you are looking forward to. Think of those now as you read the reflection below. Perhaps you could visit your local parish and spend some time reflecting on your vocation before the Blessed Sacrament.

“No Catholic school can be effective without dedicated Catholic teachers, convinced of the great ideal of Catholic education. The Church needs men and women who are intent on teaching by word and example – intent on helping to permeate the whole educational milieu with the spirit of Christ. This is a great vocation, and the Lord himself will reward all who serve in it as educators in the cause of the word of God.”

Pope St. John Paul II - Message of John Paul II to the National Catholic Educational Association of the United States

What does becoming a Catholic teacher mean to you?

In what way is it a great vocation?

Catholic educators need «a “formation of the heart”: they need to be led to that encounter with God in Christ which awakens their love and opens their spirits to others», so that their educational commitment becomes «a consequence deriving from their faith, a faith which becomes active through love (cf. Gal 5:6)»[26]. [...] It is only in this way that they can make their teaching a school of faith, that is to say, a transmission of the Gospel, as required by the educational project of the Catholic school.

Educating Together in Catholic Schools, Congregation for Catholic Education

As you prepare to embark on your ITE programme, how will you ensure that your professional formation is accompanied with vocational formation?

How do you care for your own spiritual wellbeing?



Conduct is always much more important than speech; this fact becomes especially important in the formation period of students. The more completely an educator can give concrete witness to the model of the ideal person that is being presented to the students, the more this ideal will be believed and imitated. For it will then be seen as something reasonable and worthy of being lived, something concrete and realisable. It is in this context that the faith witness of the lay teacher becomes especially important. Students should see in their teachers the Christian attitude and behaviour that is often so conspicuously absent from the secular atmosphere in which they live. Without this witness, living in such an atmosphere, they may begin to regard Christian behaviour as an impossible ideal.

Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith, The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education

Take some time to reflect on the above paragraph. How can you model the Christian attitude and behaviour mentioned?

Bring your reflections to a close with the prayer for teachers below.

Prayer for Teachers

Lord God, your spirit of wisdom fills the earth and teaches us in your ways.

Look upon us in our vocation as teachers. During this school year, let us strive to share our knowledge with gentle patience and endeavour always to bring the truth to eager minds.

Grant that we may follow Jesus Christ, the way, the truth and the life, forever and ever.
Amen.

October - The Month of the Holy Rosary

The Rosary, though clearly Marian in character, is at heart a Christocentric prayer. In the sobriety of its elements, it has all the depth of the Gospel message in its entirety, of which it can be said to be a compendium. [...] With the Rosary, the Christian people sits at the school of Mary and is led to contemplate the beauty on the face of Christ and to experience the depths of his love. Through the Rosary the faithful receive abundant grace, as though from the very hands of the Mother of the Redeemer.

Rosarium Virginis Mariae, John Paul II

As a teacher in a Catholic school there will be many opportunities for your school community to join in praying the rosary. During this month why not access the 'Pray as You Go' rosary reflections: [Pray as you go \(pray-as-you-go.org\)](http://pray-as-you-go.org)



Term Two

December

The season of Advent is a time of spiritual preparation. The main focus in our liturgies during the Season of Advent is the coming of Christ through the Incarnation, the grace and presence of Christ in the Sacraments and looking forward to the second coming of Christ. In the following video, Bishop Barron reflects on the second chapter of the prophet Isaiah and his great image of God's holy mountain as a spiritual challenge and point of meditation during the Season of Advent.

Watch Bishop Barron's video [Advent: God's Holy Mountain - YouTube](#)

February

The month of February is traditionally dedicated to the Holy family. As a Catholic teacher, you will support many families through times of difficulty as well as nurturing and caring for pupils who have challenging home lives. During this month, find some time to remember those families and pupils in prayer.

Prayer to the Holy Family

Jesus, Mary and Joseph,
in you we contemplate
the splendour of true love;
to you we turn with trust.

Holy Family of Nazareth,
grant that our families too
may be places of communion and prayer,
authentic schools of the Gospel
and small domestic churches.

Holy Family of Nazareth,
make us once more mindful
of the sacredness and inviolability of the family,
and its beauty in God's plan.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph,
Graciously hear our prayer.
Amen.

Given in Rome, at Saint Peter's, during the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, on 19 March, the Solemnity of Saint Joseph, in the year 2016, the fourth of my Pontificate.



Lent

The Season of Lent is a time of repentance and conversion. Lent provides us with an opportunity to reflect on our lives and on our call to holiness. The examen is a prayer of review. A short reflection back over the day, recalling events and acknowledging the ways in which God was present in your day.

This Lent, use the *Pray as You Go* weekly Examen to assist you in your Lenten prayer and reflection: [Pray as you go \(pray-as-you-go.org\)](http://pray-as-you-go.org) Set aside some time, in a quiet place, perhaps using headphones to listen and reflect on your day.

Further versions of the examen can be found here: [Pray as you go \(pray-as-you-go.org\)](http://pray-as-you-go.org)

Term 3

The Road to Emmaus

Extract from *Companions on the Journey*, Scottish Catholic Education Service

That very same day, two of them were on their way to a village called Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking about all that had happened. Now as they talked this over, Jesus himself came up and walked by their side but something prevented them from recognising him. . . . When they drew near to the village to which they were going, he made as if to go on; but they pressed him to stay with them. . . . He took the bread and said the blessing; then he broke it and handed it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognised him. . . . They they said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road . . ." (Luke 24: 13-35)

The Gospel of Luke tells of two disciples who, after the Resurrection of Jesus, are travelling on the road to Emmaus, moving away from Jerusalem. They are disheartened at the turn of events which saw their friend crucified, destroying their hopes that he was the Messiah, "the one to set Israel free".

Jesus accompanies them, listening as they tell of their disappointment and fears. He patiently teaches them about the true significance of these events and helps them to make sense of what they have experienced in the light of what they already knew from the Scriptures.

They fail to recognise Jesus until he breaks bread with them. Renewed by this encounter with their companion on the journey, they set out on the road back to Jerusalem to proclaim their new understanding and their faith in Jesus as Saviour.

For some, this story says much about how people can be supported in life and helped towards mature faith by companions who are able to meet them where they are in life, prepared to accompany them as they explore the true significance of the Good News which can transform their lives.



As Catholic teachers we are called to be wise and faithful companions to young people as they learn and grow in faith. This is a great responsibility but also a great privilege and one that requires that we too are continually developing and growing in our own faith journey.

Take some time now to prayerfully read [Luke 24: 13-35](#) in full. Afterwards, return to the questions that you reflected on at the beginning of this year (copied below). Have your answers changed in any way?

What does becoming a Catholic teacher mean to you?

In what way is it a great vocation?

As you prepare to embark on your ITE programme, how will you ensure that your professional formation is accompanied with vocational formation?

How do you care for your own spiritual wellbeing?



Reading and Reflection Materials for Aspiring Teachers



Charter for Catholic Schools in Scotland



The mission of the Catholic school is to develop as a community of faith and learning, providing the highest quality of education, and offering formation through the promotion of Gospel values, through celebration and worship, and through service to the common good.

All Catholic schools in Scotland, in honouring Jesus Christ as the Way, the Truth and the Life, will feature the following characteristics:

- a commitment to the integrated education and formation of the whole person, in close partnership with parents as the first educators of their children;
- an inclusive ethos which aims to honour the life, dignity and voice of each person, made in the image of God;
- a commitment to the search for wisdom in life and to the pursuit of excellence, through the development of each person's unique God-given talents;
- a commitment to the spiritual formation of the school community, through the shared experience of prayer and liturgy, and in partnership with local parishes;
- the provision of religious education programmes which will enable young people to develop their understanding of Gospel values and of how to apply them to life;
- a commitment to uphold the moral teaching, faith tradition and sacramental life of the Catholic Church;
- a commitment to communicate Catholic social teaching and thereby to promote social justice and opportunity for all;
- a commitment to ecumenical action and the unity of Christians;
- the promotion of respect for different beliefs and cultures and for inter-faith dialogue;
- a commitment to support the continuing professional and spiritual development of staff.

All staff appointed to a Catholic school are expected to support and promote the aims, mission, values and ethos of the school, as illustrated in this Charter.



Selection 1 – Church Documents

“Lay Catholics in School: Witnesses to Faith”

The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, October 1982

https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19821015_lay-catholics_en.html

“Lay Catholics, both men and women, who devote their lives to teaching in primary and secondary schools, have become more and more vitally important in recent years. Whether we look at schools in general, or Catholic schools in particular, the importance is deserved.

For it is the lay teachers, and indeed all lay persons, believers or not, who will substantially determine whether or not a school realises its aims and accomplishes its objectives. In the Second Vatican Council, and specifically in the Declaration on Christian Education, the Church recognised the role and the responsibility that this situation confers on all those lay Catholics who work in any type of elementary and secondary schools, whether as teachers, directors, administrators, or auxiliary staff. The Declaration invites us to expand on its contents and deepen them; in doing this, it is not our intention to ignore or minimise the significant accomplishments of Christians who belong to other Churches, or of non-Christians, in the field of education.” (1)

“The cultural level has progressively risen; because this is closely tied to advances in science and technology, every profession requires a more extensive preparation. To this must be added a more general awareness of the fact that every person has a right to an integral education, an education which responds to all of the needs of the human person. . . The Church believes that, for an integral education of children and young people, both Religious and lay Catholics are needed in the schools.” (3)

“The evangelisation of the world involves an encounter with such a wide variety and complexity of different situations that very frequently, in concrete circumstances and for most people, only the laity can be effective witnesses of the Gospel. Therefore, “the laity are called in a special way to make the Church present and operative in those places and circumstances where only through them can she become the salt of the earth “. In order to achieve this presence of the whole Church, and of the Saviour whom she proclaims, lay people must be ready to proclaim the message through their words, and witness to it in what they do.

Because of the experiences that lay people acquire in their lives, and through their presence in all of the various spheres of human activity, they will be especially capable of recognising and clarifying the signs of the times that characterise the present historical period of the People of God. Therefore, as a proper part of their vocation, they should



contribute their initiative, their creativity, and their competent, conscious, and enthusiastic labour to this task. In this way, the whole People of God will be able to distinguish more precisely those elements of the signs that are Gospel values, or values contrary to the Gospel.” (9 & 10)

“The function exercised by the school in society has no substitute; it is the most important institution that society has so far developed to respond to the right of each individual to an education and, therefore, to full personal development; it is one of the decisive elements in the structuring and the life of society itself. In today's world, social interchange and mass media grow in importance (and their influence is sometimes harmful or counter-productive); the cultural milieu continues to expand; preparation for professional life is becoming ever more complex, more varied, and more specialized. The family, on its own, is less and less able to confront all of these serious problems; the presence of the school, then, becomes more and more necessary.” (13)

“The teacher under discussion here is not simply a professional person who systematically transmits a body of knowledge in the context of a school; "teacher" is to be understood as "educator" - one who helps to form human persons. The task of a teacher goes well beyond transmission of knowledge, although that is not excluded. Therefore, if adequate professional preparation is required in order to transmit knowledge, then adequate professional preparation is even more necessary in order to fulfil the role of a genuine teacher. It is an indispensable human formation, and without it, it would be foolish to undertake any educational work.

One specific characteristic of the educational profession assumes its most profound significance in the Catholic educator: the communication of truth. For the Catholic educator, whatever is true is a participation in Him who is the Truth; the communication of truth, therefore, as a professional activity, is thus fundamentally transformed into a unique participation in the prophetic mission of Christ, carried on through one's teaching.

The integral formation of the human person, which is the purpose of education, includes the development of all the human faculties of the students, together with preparation for professional life, formation of ethical and social awareness, becoming aware of the transcendental, and religious education. Every school, and every educator in the school, ought to be striving " to form strong and responsible individuals, who are capable of making free and correct choices ", thus preparing young people " to open themselves more and more to reality, and to form in themselves a clear idea of the meaning of life ".” (16 & 17)

“Conduct is always much more important than speech; this fact becomes especially important in the formation period of students. The more completely an educator can give concrete witness to the model of the ideal person that is being presented to the students, the more this ideal will be believed and imitated. For it will then be seen as something reasonable and worthy of being lived, something concrete and realisable. It is in this context that the faith witness of the lay teacher becomes especially important. Students should see in their teachers the Christian attitude and behaviour that is often so



conspicuously absent from the secular atmosphere in which they live. Without this witness, living in such an atmosphere, they may begin to regard Christian behaviour as an impossible ideal. It must never be forgotten that, in the crises " which have their greatest effect on the younger generations ", the most important element in the educational endeavour is " always the individual person: the person, and the moral dignity of that person which is the result of his or her principles, and the conformity of actions with those principles ". " (32)

“In this context, what was said above about direct and personal contact between teachers and students becomes especially significant: it is a privileged opportunity for giving witness. A personal relationship is always a dialogue rather than a monologue, and the teacher must be convinced that the enrichment in the relationship is mutual. But the mission must never be lost sight of: the educator can never forget that students need a companion and guide during their period of growth; they need help from others in order to overcome doubts and disorientation. Also, rapport with the students ought to be a prudent combination of familiarity and distance; and this must be adapted to the need of each individual student. Familiarity will make a personal relationship easier, but a certain distance is also needed: students need to learn how to express their own personality without being pre-conditioned; they need to be freed from inhibitions in the responsible exercise of their freedom.” (33)

“The family is " the first and fundamental school of social living” therefore, there is a special duty to accept willingly and even to encourage opportunities for contact with the parents of students. These contacts are very necessary, because the educational task of the family and that of the school complement one another in many concrete areas; and they will facilitate the " serious duty " that parents have " to commit themselves totally to a cordial and active relationship with the teachers and the school authorities ". Finally, such contacts will offer to many families the assistance they need in order to educate their own children properly; and thus fulfil the " irreplaceable and inalienable " function that is theirs.” (34)

“As a visible manifestation of the faith they profess and the life witness they are supposed to manifest, it is important that lay Catholics who work in a Catholic school participate simply and actively in the liturgical and sacramental life of the school. Students will share in this life more readily when they have concrete examples: when they see the importance that this life has for believers. In today's secularised world, students will see many lay people who call themselves Catholics, but who never take part in liturgy or sacraments. It is very important that they also have the example of lay adults who take such things seriously, who find in them a source and nourishment for Christian living.” (40)

“ . . .while Catholic educators will teach doctrine in conformity with their own religious convictions and in accord with the identity of the school, they must at the same time have the greatest respect for those students who are not Catholics. They should be open at all times to authentic dialogue, convinced that in these circumstances the best testimony that they can give of their own faith is a warm and sincere appreciation for anyone who is honestly seeking God according to his or her own conscience.” (42)



THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL ON THE THRESHOLD OF THE THIRD MILLENNIUM

The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, December 1997

https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_27041998_school2000_en.html

“... it is opportune to devote careful attention to certain fundamental characteristics of the Catholic school, which are of great importance if its educational activity is to be effectual in the Church and in society. Such are: *the Catholic school as a place of integral education of the human person through a clear educational project of which Christ is the foundation; its ecclesial and cultural identity; its mission of education as a work of love; its service to society; the traits which should characterise the educating community.*” (4)

“Thus the Catholic school should be able to offer young people the means to acquire the knowledge they need in order to find a place in a society which is strongly characterized by technical and scientific skill. But at the same time, it should be able, above all, to impart a solid Christian formation.” (8)

“Attention is rightly given to the importance of the relations existing between all those who make up the educating community. During childhood and adolescence a student needs to experience personal relations with outstanding educators, and what is taught has greater influence on the student's formation when placed in a context of personal involvement, genuine reciprocity, coherence of attitudes, life-styles and day to day behaviour. While respecting individual roles, the community dimension should be fostered, since it is one of the most enriching developments for the contemporary school.” (18)

“In the Catholic school, "prime responsibility for creating this unique Christian school climate rests with the teachers, as individuals and as a community".(24) Teaching has an extraordinary moral depth and is one of man's most excellent and creative activities, for the teacher does not write on inanimate material, but on the very spirits of human beings. The personal relations between the teacher and the students, therefore, assume an enormous importance and are not limited simply to giving and taking. Moreover, we must remember that teachers and educators fulfil a specific Christian vocation and share an equally specific participation in the mission of the Church, to the extent that "it depends chiefly on them whether the Catholic school achieves its purpose".” (19)



THE RELIGIOUS DIMENSION OF EDUCATION IN A CATHOLIC SCHOOL

GUIDELINES FOR REFLECTION AND RENEWAL

The Congregation for Catholic Education, April 1988

https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19880407_catholic-school_en.html

“Not all students in Catholic schools are members of the Catholic Church; not all are Christians. There are, in fact, countries in which the vast majority of the students are not Catholics - a reality which the Council called attention to. The religious freedom and the personal conscience of individual students and their families must be respected, and this freedom is explicitly recognised by the Church. On the other hand, a Catholic school cannot relinquish its own freedom to proclaim the Gospel and to offer a formation based on the values to be found in a Christian education; this is its right and its duty.” (6)

“Everyone directly involved in the school is a part of the school community: teachers, directors, administrative and auxiliary staff. Parents are central figures, since they are the natural and irreplaceable agents in the education of their children. And the community also includes the students, since they must be active agents in their own education.” (32)

“Students spend a large share of each day and the greater part of their youth either at school or doing activities that are related to school. "School" is often identified with "teaching"; actually, classes and lessons are only a small part of school life. Along with the lessons that a teacher gives, there is the active participation of the students individually or as a group: study, research, exercises, para-curricular activities, examinations, relationships with teachers and with one another, group activities, class meetings, school assemblies. While the Catholic school is like any other school in this complex variety of events that make up the life of the school, there is one essential difference: it draws its inspiration and its strength from the Gospel in which it is rooted.” (47)



EVANGELII NUNTIANDI: ON EVANGELISATION IN THE MODERN WORLD

Pope Paul VI, December 8, 1975

“Above all the Gospel must be proclaimed by witness. Take a Christian or a handful of Christians who, in the midst of their own community, show their capacity for understanding and acceptance, their sharing of life and destiny with other people, their solidarity with the efforts of all for whatever is noble and good. Let us suppose that, in addition, they radiate in an altogether simple and unaffected way their faith in values that go beyond current values, and their hope in something that is not seen and that one would not dare to imagine. Through this wordless witness these Christians stir up irresistible questions in the hearts of those who see how they live: Why are they like this? Why do they live in this way? What or who is it that inspires them? Why are they in our midst? Such a witness is already a silent proclamation of the Good News and a very powerful and effective one.” (21)

“Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.” (41)



SELECTION 2: PAPAL ADDRESSES

“In your school you take part in various activities that habituate you not to shut yourselves in on yourselves or in your small world, but to be open to others, especially to the poorest and neediest, to work to improve the world in which we live. Be men and women with others and for others, real champions in the service of others. To be magnanimous with interior liberty and a spirit of service, spiritual formation is necessary. Dear children, dear youths, love Jesus Christ ever more!” (**Pope Francis**, *meeting with Students of Jesuit Schools*, 2013)

“Education cannot be neutral. It is either positive or negative; either it enriches, or it impoverishes; either it enables a person to grow or it lessens, even corrupts him. The mission of schools is to develop a sense of truth, of what is good and beautiful. And this occurs through a rich path made up of many ingredients. This is why there are so many subjects - because development is the results of different elements that act together and stimulate intelligence, knowledge, the emotions, the body, and so on.” (**Pope Francis**, *Address with Italian school teachers, parents, educators, pupils and other workers*, May 10, 2014)

“I know that there are many non-Catholics studying in the Catholic schools in Great Britain, and I wish to include all of you in my words today. I pray that you too will feel encouraged to practise virtue and to grow in knowledge and friendship with God alongside your Catholic classmates. You are a reminder to them of the bigger picture that exists outside the school, and indeed, it is only right that respect and friendship for members of other religious traditions should be among the virtues learned in a Catholic school. I hope too that you will want to share with everyone you meet the values and insights you have learned through the Christian education you have received.”

(**Pope Benedict XVI**, *Address to Teachers and Religious*, Twickenham, 2010)

“The task of a teacher is not simply to impart information or to provide training in skills intended to deliver some economic benefit to society;



education is not and must never be considered as purely utilitarian. It is about forming the human person, equipping him or her to live life to the full, in short it is about imparting wisdom. And true wisdom is inseparable from knowledge of the Creator, for “both we and our words are in his hand, as are all understanding and skill in crafts (Wis 7:16).” (**Pope Benedict XVI**, *Address to Teachers and Religious, Twickenham, 2010*)

“A good school provides a rounded education for the whole person. And a good Catholic school, over and above this, should help all its students to become saints.” (**Pope Benedict XVI**, *Address to Teachers and Religious, Twickenham, 2010*)

“Educating, from the Latin *educere*, means leading young people to move beyond themselves and introducing them to reality, towards a fullness that leads to growth. This process is fostered by the encounter of two freedoms, that of adults and that of the young. It calls for responsibility on the part of the learners, who must be open to being led to the knowledge of reality, and on the part of educators, who must be ready to give of themselves. For this reason, today more than ever we need authentic witnesses, and not simply people who parcel out rules and facts; we need witnesses capable of seeing farther than others because their life is so much broader. A witness is someone who first lives the life that he proposes to others.” ([Pope Benedict XVI, World Day Of Peace Message, 2012](#))

“... no Catholic school can be effective without dedicated Catholic teachers, convinced of the great ideal of Catholic education. The Church needs men and women who are intent on teaching by word and example – intent on helping to permeate the whole educational milieu with the spirit of Christ.” (*Message of Pope John Paul II to the National Catholic Educational Association of the United States, 1979*)

“Catholic education is above all a question of communicating Christ, of helping to form Christ in the lives of others.” (*Message of Pope John Paul II to the National Catholic Educational Association of the United States, 1979*)



“The life of a teacher, as I know from personal experience, is very challenging and demanding, but it is also profoundly satisfying. It is more than a job, for it is rooted in our deepest convictions and values. To be intimately concerned in the development of a young person, of hundreds of young people, is a highly responsible task. As teachers, you kindle in your students a thirst for truth and wisdom. You spark off in them a desire for beauty. You introduce them to their cultural heritage. You help them to discover the treasures of other cultures and peoples. What an awesome responsibility and privilege is yours in the teaching profession.” (Address of **John Paul II** to the Council, Staff, and Students of the Institute of Catholic Education, Melbourne, 1986)

“Catholic education aims not only to communicate facts, but also to transmit a coherent, comprehensive vision of life, in the conviction that the truths contained in that vision liberate students in the most profound meaning of human freedom.” (Address of **Pope John Paul II** to the Bishops of the Ecclesiastical Regions of Chicago, Indianapolis, and Milwaukee, 1998)

“Perhaps we could reflect on the *philosophy behind education*: education as the completing of the person. To be educated is to be more fitted *for life*; to have a greater capacity for appreciating what life is, what it has to offer, and what the person has to offer in return to the wider society of man. Thus, if we would apply our modern educational skills and resources to this philosophy, we might succeed in offering something of lasting value to our pupils and students, an antidote to often immediate prospects of frustration and boredom, not to mention the uncertainty of the long-term future.” (Address of **Pope John Paul II** to the Staff and Students of St. Andrew’s College, Glasgow, June 1982)



SELECTION 3 – CATHOLIC EDUCATION

“All Catholic teachers are called to model themselves on Jesus the supreme teacher . . . As those who model themselves on Christ, teachers should first and foremost take time to reflect on their own faith journey, seeking strength in the Holy Spirit to inspire their own faith commitment and to develop their own understanding of the person and teachings of Christ. There is humility in this, recognising that although teachers have much to teach the next generation and, more specifically, Jesus' young disciples today, they themselves remain disciples of the one Teacher, who leads all deeper into truth.” (*This is our Faith*, Scottish Catholic Education Service (on behalf of the Bishops' Conference of Scotland), p.58)

“Catholic schools welcome all their students as members of the school community. This is evident in the way that all are valued, treated with respect and encouraged to participate fully in the life of the school. This includes appropriate participation in both religious observance and religious education as well as in other activities which stem from the faith mission of the school, e.g., charitable fund-raising, service to the community and other faith witness activities. Teachers are expected to bear witness to this attitude of respect for, and appreciation of, all people including those of other Christian denominations, other faiths, and stances for living which may be independent of religious belief.” (*This is our Faith*, Scottish Catholic Education Service (on behalf of the Bishops' Conference of Scotland), p.9)

“In summary, a Catholic school is expected by the Church to be a community of faith and learning which helps young people to come to know Jesus Christ as the Son of God, to become familiar with His teaching and to use their own talents in order to give personal witness to Him in their daily lives.” (*The Catholic School: Developing in Faith*, Scottish Catholic education Service, p.3)



“Teaching in Catholic schools offers opportunities for catechesis and requires teachers to be confident communicators of the beliefs and values of Catholic Christianity. Very often, teachers are regarded by children, young people and parents as witnesses to faith, expected to offer guidance on moral and social issues, and also to offer support and counsel to their students. Teachers are also regarded as people of integrity who try to reflect in their personal lives the virtues, values and beliefs which they espouse.” (*“Companions on the Journey”, Scottish Catholic Education Service, p.4*)

“In Catholic schools it is critical that the professional dialogue which is at the centre of the PRD process includes consideration of the impact of each teacher’s professional development on the Catholic school community, and on the delivery of its vision, aims, values and ethos.” (*“The Catholic School: Developing in Faith”, Scottish Catholic education Service, p.3*)

“Scotland in the 21st century is an increasingly multi-cultural and diverse nation. The great majority of Scottish denominational schools are Roman Catholic, while a small number serve other faith communities. The curriculum in a denominational school will reflect its particular faith perspective. In Roman Catholic schools, it will build on the openness of Catholic schools to other young people regardless of denominations and faiths.” (*Religious Education in Roman Catholic Schools: Principles and Practice, Education Scotland, p.1*)

“As many schools and teachers recognise, the curriculum is more than curriculum areas and subjects: it is the totality of experiences which are planned for children and young people through their education – a canvas upon which their learning experiences are formed. Learning through religious education in Roman Catholic schools is no exception, contributing to the four aspects of the curriculum from Progress and Proposals: the ethos and life of the school, interdisciplinary studies, curriculum areas and subjects, and opportunities for personal achievement.” (*Religious Education in Roman Catholic Schools: Principles and Practice, Education Scotland, p.1*)



“The process of learning in religious education in the Catholic school can be seen as a journey of faith, a quest for personal growth and response within the community of faith. To ensure that the young person is able to participate fully and actively in this journey, it is essential that they are accompanied by adults who can engage, question and explain in such a way that the young person is enabled to reflect, understand deeply and respond appropriately.” (*Religious Education in Roman Catholic Schools: Principles and Practice, Education Scotland, p.2*)

“An excellent Catholic teacher is nourished by a personal relationship with Jesus Christ which inspires living a life of integrity, fidelity and holiness. A teacher gives authentic witness to this relationship through faithful participation in the sacramental life of the Church and joyful Christian living. The role of an excellent Catholic teachers is to witness by: testifying to a relationship with Jesus Christ through words and actions ; modelling fidelity to truth and virtuous behaviour; sharing authentically his or her journey of faith; living a life of joy and hope.” (*“The Excellent Catholic Teacher”, Council of Catholic School Superintendents of Alberta*)



A CATHOLIC TEACHER'S SPIRITUAL COMMITMENTS

| AN EXCELLENT CATHOLIC TEACHER:

1. Testifies to a relationship with Jesus Christ by his or her life
2. Participates fully as a member of the Church and its evangelizing mission
3. Nurtures a meaningful personal prayer life
4. Employs reflective practices in both personal and professional life
5. Seeks to develop a deeper understanding of the Gospel through personal learning and faith formation opportunities
6. Endorses Catholic education in words and actions
7. Shares authentically his or her journey of faith
8. Lives a passionate and joyful life nourished by hope
9. Works collegially in a spirit of respect and cooperation
10. Seeks reconciliation and responds to situations with charity
11. Employs personal strengths and talents for the good of others and the community
12. Commits to creating a more just society through works of charity and social justice

A CATHOLIC TEACHER'S PEDAGOGICAL STYLE

| AN EXCELLENT CATHOLIC TEACHER:

1. Engages students in deep learning and critical thinking
2. Listens, values conversation, and is present to students
3. Asks questions
4. Treats students with respect, integrity and justice
5. Invites students into a relationship with Jesus Christ
6. Invests time in the building of positive relationships with students and between students
7. Embraces all students within an inclusive environment
8. Seeks ways to showcase and involve the talents of all students
9. Ensures understanding and participation in social justice projects
10. Seeks the lost
11. Transforms the school from institution to community
12. Promotes the role of parents as the primary faith educators of their children

Taken from ("The Excellent Catholic Teacher", Council of Catholic School Superintendents of Alberta)



Section Three

This section offers spiritual, personal and professional accompaniment for those who have discerned their vocation to teach and are preparing to apply to university. You will also find a step by step guide to applying for courses that will support the call to teach in a Catholic school.

Applying to University

Whether you are looking for undergraduate or postgraduate teacher training programmes in Scotland, you must apply through the UCAS Undergraduate scheme.

One part of the application phase is the "personal statement". Below are some tips for writing a personal statement, and some examples that may help you to structure yours. Each of the examples have been annotated to give a description of why the content is considered a strong application, or one that requires some further development.

The personal statement is an important part of your teaching application. It's your chance to describe your passion and commitment for teaching, as well as any relevant experience, to support your application.

Here are some things to consider when writing your personal statement:

Why do you want to become a teacher?

What skills do you have that will make you a good teacher?

What experience do you have in working with children and young people of all ages? And what appeals to you about working with them?

Admissions will be looking for your ability to communicate well, so we recommend taking your time on this section. Don't forget to clearly demonstrate what you have to offer and how you would make a great candidate for the course, as well as an excellent teacher.

Find out more about applying to teach in Scotland on the [UCAS website](#).



Personal Statement Pointers

Whilst a personal statement should of course be personal to you, a number of key points should be included:

- Talk about what has drawn you to the profession of teaching
- Talk about the influence your own school experience has played
- Explain how your academic subject choices are relevant to a teaching degree
- Outline any work experience you have which is relevant to teaching
- Talk about any personal attributes which you have which are important to find in a good teacher
- Include any interests or hobbies you have which are relevant
- Make sure you refer to teaching as your prime choice- the university will be looking for people who want to teach, not as a second or third choice

When you are writing your personal statement, it is important you categorically say you want to be a Catholic teacher.

- Talk about having a vocation to be a Catholic teacher
- Talk about your parish involvement
- Include information about your Caritas Award if relevant

On the next two pages you will read two examples of real personal statements. Visit the SCES website to see annotated versions of these statements, read comments about what aspects are helpful and gain an insight into how to construct your own personal statement.



Personal Statement Example One

This is an example of a personal statement from a 6th Year who gained an unconditional offer for Masters of Education (MEDuc)

The teaching profession is one that has been very familiar to me throughout all of my life due to the high number of teachers within my close family circle. I have witnessed first-hand the high level of job satisfaction that the vocation of teaching brings, and so it has long been an ambition of mine to become a Catholic primary teacher. An education degree particularly appeals to me as it has a balance between the theory of education and the practical hands-on experience of working in a classroom.

I think I am suitable for the course as I am a very literate person who has always been an avid reader, and a good communicator on paper, electronically and most importantly, verbally. For instance, I employ vocal skills when carrying out readings before parishioners at Sunday Mass. I am also a diligent individual who always fully commits to the work I am issued with. This is proven by the fact that I have attained awards of excellence year on year throughout my secondary career, most recently gaining the highest marks in my year for both higher art and design and higher history. This shows I am willing to apply myself and have personal discipline to achieve my goals- an invaluable mindset needed to partake in the course and university as a whole.

All of the subjects I have studied over the past year have proved relevant and advantageous to the course I wish to take part in. In particular, Higher English allowed me to employ thinking, talking and listening skills, qualities all vital to possess when working in a classroom environment. I was also able to hone my abilities in essay-writing, which I will serve me well in my chosen course. Higher Art and Design has allowed me to gain more experience creatively and to gain research skills which will prove invaluable for various assignments at university. It has also allowed me to be a reflective thinker when comparing my work to others, which is what part of my chosen course is all about. I am also part of a leadership course, through which I have learned to work as part of a team and listen to other's opinions. I have also had to use my intuition and problem-solving skills for organising events and have had to be able to effectively communicate to an audience as a leader, which would prove hugely useful when working with children. I have also chosen to be part of the Caritas Award. This involves using my skills and talents to help improve the lives of others in school, the church and the wider community, which is what teaching is all about. As I want to be a Catholic teacher, I feel that this award has helped me to be confident in talking about and living my faith.

In terms of hobbies and social activities, I regularly attend a fitness club, which is useful as it focuses on one of the key areas of the course: the health and well-being of young people. This club also provides an opportunity for me to interact and communicate with people of varying ages, a useful experience to have for a career in education. I also enjoy creative writing and creating personal artwork. I believe that the course would allow me to continue to pursue these areas, for my own enjoyment as well as academic progression.

I have gained work experience that is relevant to the primary education course. For example, I volunteer on a weekly basis to work alongside a very experienced teacher in a local primary school. This allows me to work closely with young learners and helps me gain a better insight of the job through professional dialogue with school staff. I also do volunteer work at a local soup kitchen as part of my Caritas award. This means I have worked in potentially difficult situations and have had to employ good communication, sensitivity and empathy- all valuable skills a teacher needs when working with children.

In conclusion, I am applying for the course of education with primary teaching qualification as I believe it is perfectly suited to my skills, achievements and attributes as a person.

[*\(visit SCES Website for an annotated version with comments\)*](#)



Personal Statement Example Two

This is an example of a personal statement from a 6th Year who did not gain an offer for Masters of Education (MEduc)

I would like to apply for the MEduc degree course as I think the requirements are quite similar to being a psychologist which is my first choice. I have always been interested in psychology and I feel that there is some overlap in teaching. The MEduc may also be useful if I decided to persue a career as an Educational Psychologist. Teaching appeals to me as it would seem to fit in with some of my personal attributes. I have attended both a Catholic Primary school and a Catholic Secondary school and this would mean I could teach in either a Catholic or a non-denominational school.

I think I am suitable for the course as I like children and I consider myself to be very sociable. I can speak to young people at their own level and enjoy working with them.

The subjects I have studied at Higher would be helpful for an education degree, particularly Maths, Biology, Chemistry and Psychology. I am currently studying Higher English and Advanced Higher Psychology and Biology.

In terms of hobbies and social activities, I enjoy many sports such as swimming, badminton and netball and I have played netball at a county level. I am also part of a local Gaelic choir who have sung at a number of national Feis.

I currently work part-time in a supermarket and I feel that some of the interpersonal skills I have developed as part of this role are transferrable to the school setting. I intend to continue this job whilst I am at university and so these skills will be further developed.

In conclusion, I feel that my qualifications and personal qualities would stand me in good stead if I were to be offered a place on the MEduc course.

[\(visit SCES Website for an annotated version with comments\)](#)



Preparing for Interview PGDE (Primary and Secondary)

As part of the interview process for Initial Teacher Education Courses at the University of Glasgow you will be asked a specific question regarding Religious Education.

It is helpful to consider these questions in advance and prepare your answer. You should plan to talk to your mentor, or a Catholic teacher in the school where you are undertaking work experience, as part of your preparations for this answer. It is also important to rehearse answering questions aloud, or with another person in advance of your interview. You may also wish to access our [videos](#) on the role of the Catholic teacher which have been recorded by some of our school leaders.

University Set Question: Religious education and faith development are important aspects of Roman Catholic schools in Scotland. How do you think you can contribute to the religious education and faith development of the children in your care?

Take time to read this question, think about the component parts and consider how you would respond. It is a very complex question and when read understood correctly gives you component parts that will help structure your answer.

Read the question again, below in blue and red, and look at the parts that are emphasised in red and bold lettering. We will break down the question and then consider how best to answer it.

How do you think you can contribute to the **religious education and faith development** of the **children in your care**?

Note how the question asks for a personal response. It does not ask what is important about RE, or how RE is linked to the curriculum.

The first thing to think about is:

How can you contribute to the RE of the children in your care?

The question continues by linking RE and faith development, and again asks how you will contribute to the faith development of the children in your care.

The second part to consider is:

How can you contribute to the faith development of the children in your care?



The question is framed using the language “children in your care”. Think about this phrase and what that means in terms of a teacher’s role. It is almost as important to think about what it does NOT say, as what it does.

It does not say the “children in your class” or “children in your level” or even “children in your school”.

It also does not say “pupils who you teach” or “young people you have responsibility for” or “children you will assess”.

The words **children** and **care** are carefully chosen.

Why do you think that is?

By using the phrase “children in your care” the question is emphasising that first and foremost the young people in our schools are children from families. They are not simply pupils or citizens, but someone’s child. In Catholic education we understand that parents are the first educators of their children and that they entrust their children to us, so that we can continue the teaching that they have started in the home. In choosing a Catholic school, parents have chosen a school with a distinctive character and culture and, while their children are part of the school community, the parents have an expectation that all staff will care for their child. This care includes the physical, mental, religious, spiritual, sacramental and faith development of children.

How can you contribute to the children in your care?

Finally, it is helpful to consider what is meant by Religious Education and Faith Development, and to think about what that will ‘look like’ in a Catholic school.

Use the following questions to help you to think about this:

- How do pupils normally experience RE?
- In what way could the following be RE: Assemblies, school Masses, charity events, ecological education, retreats?
- Can you name any other ways RE is delivered?
- What is the difference between RE and faith development? (do all children receive RE, is it always faith development for them? Is there a difference between learning about religion and learning through religion – if so, what might that look like in a school?)
- Can you contribute to the faith development of a child without it being RE?



Having thought about the question that the university is asking, now prepare and rehearse an answer.

In preparing your own personal answer to the question set by the university, you may find following thematic responses helpful

Thematic Responses:

I can contribute to the religious education and faith development of the children in my care by:

- Witnessing to my faith and belief in Jesus
- Putting the RE and faith development that I will teach into action in the way I act and treat others.
- Recognising that I contribute to RE and faith development at all times as a teacher, not just during formal RE lessons
- Supporting and assisting pupils in their faith journey, including their Sacramental journey
- Helping pupils develop habits of faith, including an informed conscience, morals, prayer and sacramental life and awareness of the spiritual life, Tradition and teaching of the Church.
- Promoting knowledge, understanding tolerance and respect for others, including those of other religious and nonreligious beliefs.
- Being committed to social justice, action and charity.



Preparing for Interview MEduc

As part of the interview process for Initial Teacher Education Courses at the University of Glasgow you will be asked a specific question regarding the role of the Catholic teacher in the Catholic school.

It is helpful to consider this question in advance and it is vital you prepare your answer.

You should plan to talk to your mentor, or a Catholic teacher in the school where you are undertaking work experience, as part of your preparations for this answer. You may also wish to access our [videos](#) on the role of the Catholic teacher which have been recorded by some of our school leaders.

It is also important to rehearse answering questions aloud, or with another person in advance of your interview.

University Set Question: What do you consider to be the role of the Catholic teacher in the Catholic school?

Take time to read this question, think about the component parts and consider how you would respond. It is a very complex question, but when read and understood correctly gives you component parts that will help structure your answer.

Read the question again, below in blue and red, and look at the parts that are emphasised in red and bold lettering. We will break down the question and then consider how best to answer it.

What do **you** consider to be the role of the Catholic teacher in the Catholic school?

Note how the question asks for a personal response. It does not ask you to why Catholic schools are important or what others have said about Catholic teachers.

What do you consider to be the role of the Catholic teacher?

The first thing to think about is therefore that word 'role'. What does role mean? Is it simply what a person does for their job? In part it does, but just listing what a Catholic teacher does won't fully express their role. In thinking of your answer try to link what they do, how they do it, why they do it, why it is expected of them and not others, and what impact they have.

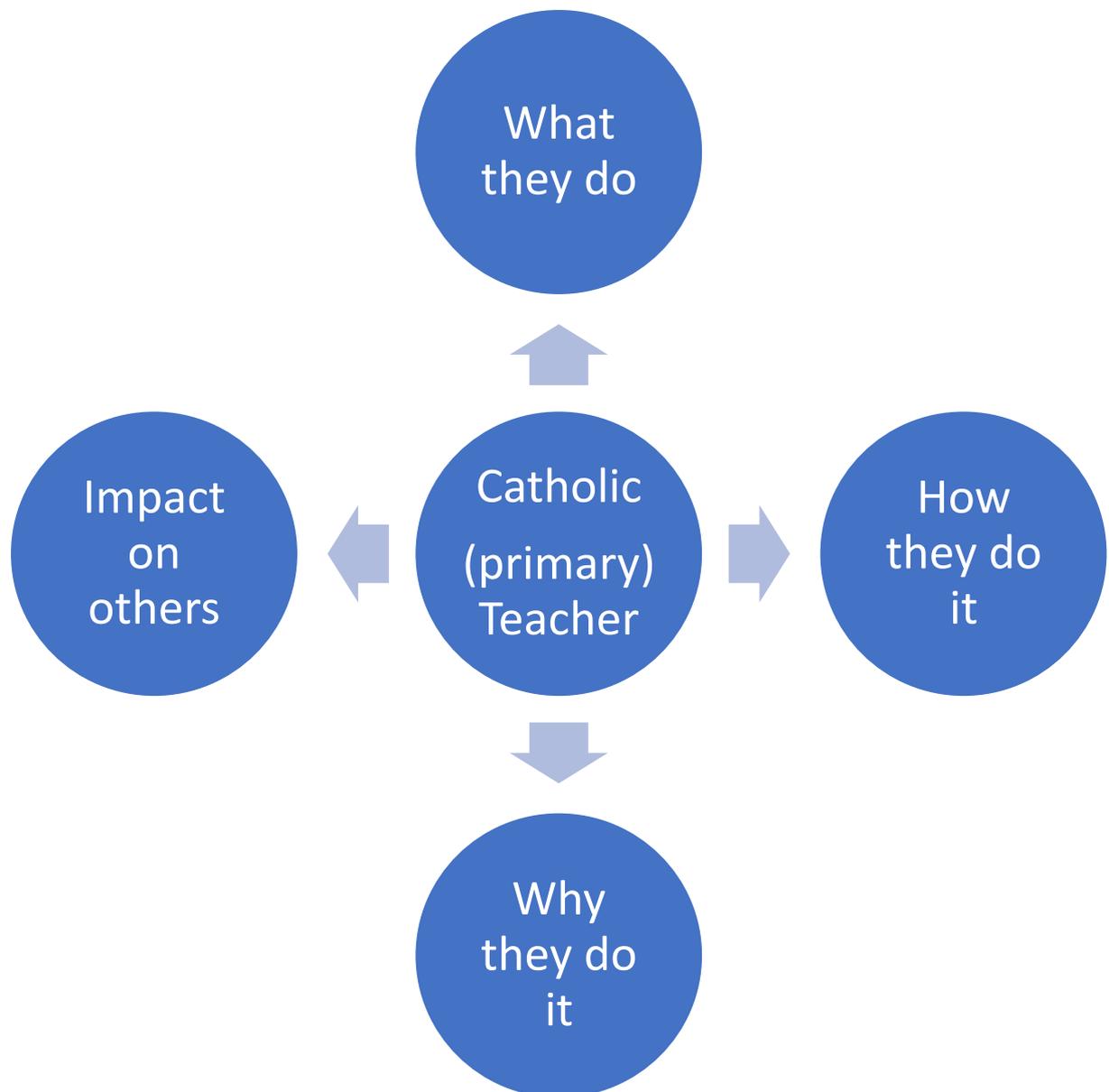
Take time to think of one Catholic teacher in your school, perhaps someone you would call a 'role model' for Catholic teachers. Don't just think about RE teachers. Think about someone



who witnesses to their faith, or someone who you consider to be fair & just in how they treat people, perhaps someone who goes beyond what is expected in order to help others.

Now cast your mind back to primary school. You are applying to University to become a primary school teacher, and therefore you need to think about how this question applies to that particular role. Bring to mind a Catholic primary school teacher who you would use as a role model for your vocation in teaching?

Use the diagram below to note your answers. Just brainstorm an note your answers in the space around each circle. You don't have to form a full answer yet, you are simply thinking about what the role of a Catholic (primary) teacher is.



What do you consider to be the role of the Catholic teacher **in the Catholic school?**

The second part of the question brings in the context of the role – the Catholic school. For this part of the question start by thinking about whether there is a difference between being a Catholic teacher in a Catholic school to being a Catholic teacher in a non-denominational school.

There are things that should remain the same: professionalism, treatment of others, values and faith for example, but are there things that should be easier, happen more often, are expected in a Catholic school?

Make a list here:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
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Additional Notes:



Having thought about the question that the university is asking, now prepare and rehearse an answer.

In preparing your own personal answer to the question set by the university, you may find following thematic responses helpful.

Thematic Responses:

“I consider the role of the Catholic teacher in the Catholic school”...

- to be a faith role model to pupils, parents, colleagues and the wider school community
- to teach Catholic children through their faith – not just about their faith, putting it into practice...
 - regular prayer with pupils, parents and colleagues
 - planned times to organise and participate in Mass
 - care for all of God’s creation
 - love of others, including through charity work
- to help prepare children to receive the Sacraments
- to help pupils develop their own beliefs, values and practices – including their spirituality and prayer life
- to accompany pupils as they learn more about the life of the Church, encouraging them to be part of their parish
- to show respect, tolerance and love for people of all faiths and none.



Useful Links

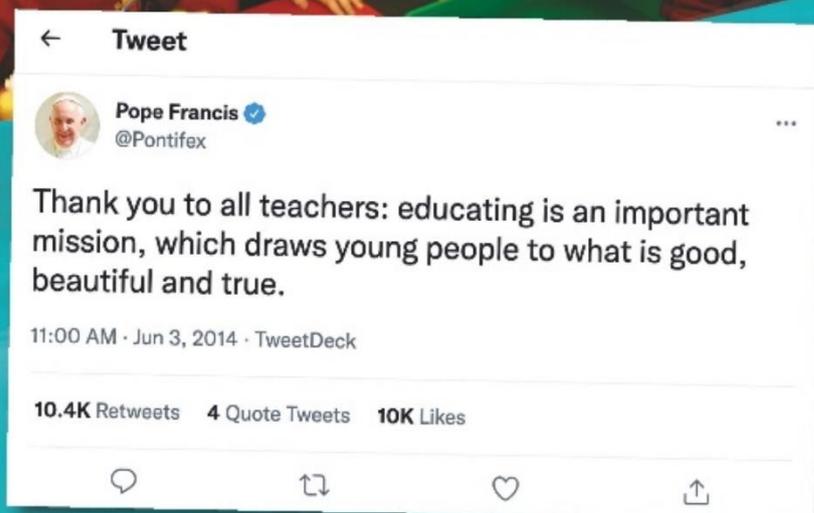
- GTCS Standards for Registration: <http://www.gtcs.org.uk/professional-standards/standards.aspx>
- SCES: <http://sces.org.uk/becoming-a-teacher/>
- Charter for Catholic Schools: <http://sces.org.uk/charter-for-catholic-schools/>
- University of Glasgow School of Education: <http://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/education/>
- The St Andrew's Foundation: <http://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/education/standrewsfoundation/>
- Education Scotland: <https://education.gov.scot/>
- Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework www.scqf.org.uk
- Student Awards Agency for Scotland www.saas.gov.uk
- Teach in Scotland T. 0845 345 4745 E. teachinscotland@gtcs.org.uk
www.teachinscotland.scot
- UCAS www.ucas.com
- Council of Catholic School Superintendents of Alberta
<https://www.ccssa.ca/>
- The Excellent Catholic Teacher:
<https://www.ccssa.ca/public/download/documents/47427>



Are you thinking of a career in teaching?



Teach in Catholic Schools



There has never been a better time to consider a career in teaching, and Catholic schools all over Scotland are looking for committed and ambitious new teachers. You can be a vital part of a community of faith and learning, making a real difference and helping future generations to believe and achieve.

If you would like to teach in a Catholic school, talk to your guidance teacher, contact your Diocesan Office or visit the Scottish Catholic Education website at www.sces.org.uk or scan this QR code.



The Scottish Catholic Education Service
75 Craigpark, Glasgow G31 2HD
Tel.: 0141 556 4727
Email: mail@sces.org.uk

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