

Physical Education Teacher

Introduction

Physical education (PE) teachers teach a wide range of indoor and outdoor sports, athletics and other activities to young people of mixed abilities. They organise and supervise groups and encourage young people to take part in activities. They might also teach another subject.

Also known as

- PE Teacher
- Sports Teacher - Schools
- Teacher, Physical Education



Work Activities

As a Physical Education (PE) Teacher, you will teach young people how to take part in physical activities and sport. You'll organise and supervise groups, coach in various skills and motivate young people to improve their performance. You will also teach the rules and techniques of different sports.

Most schools offer a number of sporting activities, including team sports such as rugby, football, basketball, netball and cricket. Physical education might also include athletics, gymnastics, and outdoor pursuits such as sailing and canoeing.

At GCSE and AS/A level [Standard Grades and Highers in Scotland], PE teachers cover sports and exercise science topics, including:

- diet and nutrition for exercise
- anatomy and physiology
- performance analysis
- the factors that affect whether people take part in exercise
- preventing and treating sports injuries.

Other activities include refereeing matches, travelling with school teams to away games and taking groups to outdoor activity centres.

PE teachers plan and prepare lessons, assess students' progress and write reports.

They manage the school's stock of sports equipment. This might involve doing some minor repairs, or arranging to buy replacements.

Some schools expect PE teachers to teach another subject.

PE teachers might supervise the work of one or more teaching assistants.

Personal Qualities and Skills

As a PE teacher, you'll need:

- The ability to encourage and motivate students.
- Sensitivity to differing abilities and rates of progress.
- Communication skills.
- The ability to maintain discipline and deal with challenging behaviour.
- Planning and organisational skills.
- Willingness to keep up to date with any advances in fitness methods or sporting equipment.

Pay and Opportunities

Pay

Teachers in the state education sector are paid on a scale according to their qualifications, experience and responsibilities. The highest salaries are available in inner London schools.

The pay rates (per year) below are approximate.

- Unqualified teachers [who haven't yet received Qualified Teacher Status] earn in the range of £16,000 - £25,000.
- Qualified teachers earn in the range of £21,500 - £31,500.
- 'Advanced skills teachers' earn in the range of £37,500 - £57,000.
- 'Excellent teachers' earn in the range of £39,500 - £52,000.

In the private sector, salaries are generally higher, though they are sometimes linked to state sector pay scales.

Hours of work

Teachers normally work from 8:30 am or 9 am to 3:30 pm or 4 pm, Monday to Friday. However, most teachers work extra hours - marking work, preparing lessons and going to meetings. They often have to work in the evenings and at weekends to prepare lessons and mark work.

Where could I work?

Employers are state and private schools.

There are also opportunities to teach in other countries.

Some teachers supplement their income by teaching privately, marking national exams or writing textbooks.

In Wales there is demand for Welsh-medium education, so if you plan to teach in Wales, and are a first or second language Welsh speaker, you could improve your prospects of obtaining a teaching post by training to teach through the medium of Welsh.

You could also get financial support through a Welsh-medium incentive scheme. Check with your course provider.

Where are vacancies advertised?

Vacancies are advertised by local authorities and in the local and national press, including The Guardian and The Times Educational Supplement (TES). There are also job boards, such as eTeach.

Entry Routes and Training

Entry routes

To become a physical education (PE) teacher, you usually need to gain qualified teacher status (QTS) through initial teacher training (ITT).

Most people follow a relevant degree with a PGCE in secondary physical education. You'd apply through UCAS Teacher Training.

There is also the employment-based School Direct scheme: you'll train while working in a school. The expectation is that you'd go on to work in the school or group of schools where you trained, although there's no guarantee of employment at the end of your training.

In England, you can also train in a school after your degree through school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT). These programmes are delivered by groups of neighbouring schools and colleges and often aim to meet local teaching needs.

In Wales, you can train whilst employed at a maintained school through the Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP) but places are limited.

Teach First is a charity that recruits and supports graduates to teach in schools in low-income communities in a number of UK regions. The programme takes two years to complete.

To achieve QTS, student teachers need to pass tests in English and maths.

Welsh medium applicants will also complete a literacy test in Welsh.

Training

Once employed, newly qualified teachers (NQTs) must complete a three-term induction period, usually within a single school year.

Progression

There are opportunities for teachers to move into teacher training, advisory work, educational research or schools inspection.

Teachers can become heads of department, heads of year, or co-ordinators of special educational needs or careers guidance.

Rehabilitation of Offenders

This career is an exception to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. This means that you must supply information to an employer about any spent or unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands or warnings, if they ask you to.

This is different from other careers, where you only have to reveal information on unspent convictions if you are asked to.

Qualifications

In Wales, all candidates for teacher training need to have Grade B in English Language and Maths. Students training to teach through the medium of Welsh may also need a GCSE grade C or above in Welsh (first language).

All candidates for teacher training need GCSEs (or recognised equivalent qualifications) at grade C or above in English Language and Mathematics.

In England, if you want to teach at Key Stage 3 (ages 11-14), you must also have a GCSE (or recognised equivalent qualification) at grade C or above in a science subject.

If you don't have the GCSEs that are usually needed, you might be able to sit a pre-entry equivalency test; you should contact individual course providers to discuss your situation before making your application.

For entry to postgraduate teacher training, you'll usually need a degree in a relevant subject such as physical education or sports and exercise science.

For entry to a relevant degree, the usual requirements are:

- 2/3 A levels. You might need either Physical Education or Biology.
- GCSEs at grades C and above in your A level subjects.
- A further 2/3 GCSEs at grades C and above. You might need English and Maths.

Alternatives to A levels include:

- Edexcel (BTEC) level 3 Nationals
- The International Baccalaureate Diploma.

However, course requirements vary, so please check prospectuses carefully.

Some universities accept the Welsh Baccalaureate as equivalent to 1 A-level.

Adult Opportunities

Skills/experience

To enter teacher training courses, you'll usually need to have at least observed some classes in a mainstream secondary school. For some courses, you'll need paid or voluntary work experience in a secondary classroom, or other relevant experience with young people.

Courses

If you don't have the qualifications you need to enter a degree course, you might be able to start one after completing a college or university Access course, such as Access to Physical Education and Sports Science. You don't usually need any qualifications to start an Access course, although you should check this with the course provider.

Distance learning

Some PGCE courses are available on a flexible learning basis. For example, you might be able to train by distance learning in combination with classroom-based teaching practice and campus study.

Employment-based training

Instead of going to university to do a PGCE, graduates can follow an employment-based route. This is where you train in a school. Employment-based routes include School Direct, school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) and the scheme offered by Teach First. For more information, please see 'Entry Routes and Training'.

Funding

For funding information, take a look at the GOV.UK website, or Student Finance Wales if living in Wales.

Further Information

Contacts

- **UCAS Teacher Training**
Website: www.ucas.com/how-it-all-works/teacher-training
- **Teach First**
Website: www.teachfirst.org.uk
- **Department of Education Northern Ireland**
Northern Ireland Enquiries
Email: DE.DEWebMail@education-ni.gov.uk
Website: www.deni.gov.uk
- **General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTC Scotland)**
Scottish enquiries
Email: gtcs@gtcs.org.uk
Website: www.gtcs.org.uk
- **GOV.UK**
UK government services and information
Website: www.gov.uk
- **Teach in Scotland**
Scottish enquiries
Email: teaching@infoscotland.com
Website: www.teachinginscotland.com
- **Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol**
Information on Higher Education courses and scholarships through the medium of Welsh
Email: gwybodaeth@colegcymraeg.ac.uk
Website: www.colegcymraeg.ac.uk

- **Welsh Government Education and Skills Department**
Email: customerhelp@gov.wales
Website: www.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/?lang=en
- **Student Finance Wales**
Welsh enquiries
Tel: 0845 6028845
Website: www.studentfinancewales.co.uk

Related Careers

- Nursery Nurse
- NVQ Assessor
- School Lunchtime Supervisor
- History Teacher
- Geography Teacher
- Modern Foreign Languages Teacher
- Teaching Assistant
- Music Teacher
- English Teacher
- Maths Teacher
- Science Teacher
- Education Welfare Officer
- Playworker
- Special Educational Needs Teacher
- Art and Design Teacher
- Design and Technology Teacher
- Early Years Teacher
- Primary Teacher
- Secondary Teacher
- Training Manager
- Higher Education (HE) Lecturer
- School Business Manager
- Teacher of English as a Foreign Language
- Lecturer
- Teacher
- Welsh Teacher
- Nursery Assistant
- Headteacher