

Becoming an Educational Psychologist in the UK: Frequently Asked Questions

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1. What does an Educational Psychologist (EP) do?

- Educational psychologists (EPs) work to improve the learning and wellbeing of all children. This includes working directly with children, as well as with parents, teachers and other professionals.
- Edpsy.org.uk has an excellent [explanation of the work of EPs](#), including the contexts in which this work happens.

2. How do I train as an EP in the UK?

- To become a Chartered Member of the British Psychological Society (BPS) through the educational psychology training route, you will need:
 - **Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (GBC)** – achieved by completing a BPS accredited degree or conversion course (both the Psychology in Education BSc and the Psychology of Education MSc at the University of Bristol count).
 - **A BPS accredited Doctorate in Educational Psychology** (slightly [different requirements apply in Scotland](#)).
- The Educational Psychology Funded Training (EPFT) scheme provides funding for around 200 trainee educational psychologists each year.
- The scheme is a five-year commitment, including a three-year doctorate degree course followed by working as an educational psychologist within a local authority (or alternative setting) within England for at least two years.
- Find out more on the [AEP EPFT information page](#). The British Psychological Society (BPS) also has a useful [Educational Psychologist job profile](#) – see the 'How' section for a summary of training information.

3. What academic qualifications do I need to apply for an Educational Psychology doctorate?

Do I need an undergraduate and / or master's degree in Psychology?

- To be considered for a place on a doctorate training course you must either have:
 - a first degree (i.e. a BA or BSc or equivalent qualification) in psychology which has been accredited, or is recognised, by the British Psychological Society (BPS) as eligible for the GBC; or
 - (if your first degree is not in psychology) completed an approved 'conversion course' that will give you eligibility for GBC or a psychology-based Master's degree.
- You can find accredited courses on the [BPS accredited course search function](#).

Do I need a first-class degree?

- You should ideally aim for an upper 2:1 or higher in your undergraduate degree to have a reasonable chance of being considered for a place on the doctorate.
- Some universities may accept an application if you hold a 2:2 degree, provided you have both extensive experience and completed further professional development. Check with your chosen universities before applying if you hold a 2:2.

4. What qualifying work experience do I need to apply for an Educational Psychology doctorate?

- As well as academic qualifications, you must also show at least one year full-time-equivalent work experience (i.e. 37 hours a week for 52 weeks, or part-time equivalent) of

working with children and young people (i.e. 0-25 years old) in an education, health, social care, youth justice, childcare or community setting.

- This work experience can be made up of all paid employment or at least nine months full-time equivalent paid employment and the equivalent of three months sustained relevant voluntary experience.
- Essentially, universities will be looking for knowledge and understanding of the UK education system and application of psychological theories.
- Think creatively about ways to get this work experience, either in a paid job or volunteering. Examples of the type of roles to give you this experience are teachers, social workers, assistant psychologists, classroom assistants, teaching assistants, learning mentors, residential care workers, and early years workers.
- Work experience gained overseas does count.
- The following resources give ideas on where to find work experience, both paid and voluntary:
 - Prospects advice on [Volunteering in schools](#)
 - Prospects [Opportunities for volunteering with children](#)
 - Careers Service information on [Finding work experience](#), including part-time work alongside your studies

5. Other than work experience, what can I do to increase my chances of getting onto an Educational Psychology doctorate?

- You may want to sign up for [student membership of the British Psychological Society](#) to access professional development, networking events [and more](#).
- Network – take opportunities to meet people working in this area. LinkedIn is a great place to find people working as Educational Psychologists and, through their profiles, get a sense of their own career journey and how they have got to this point. Use [the Careers Service LinkedIn resources](#) for help with how to network on LinkedIn.
- Increase your understanding of how the profession works:
 - The [AEP's information for those interested in a career as an educational psychologist](#) is a great starting point.
 - Read the [British Journal of Educational Psychology](#), available through the University library.
- Keep up to date on the latest developments in policy and ethics of the profession:
 - The [edpsy.org.uk blog](#) is a brilliant source of up-to-date research and thinking in the area.
 - Refer to the [edpsy.org.uk list of interest groups](#) for where to find information on other specific areas within educational psychology.
 - Follow large Educational Psychology accounts on Twitter – professional bodies like the BPS Educational Psychology Division, individual educational psychologists, and hashtags related to the profession.

6. Applying for the doctorate

When do I apply?

- Applications open the autumn before you would start the doctorate – i.e. for a 2023 start date, the applications open on 14 September 2022 and close on 16 November. Offers for EPFT places will be made by 22 March 2023. Find out more on the [AEP website](#).
- The School of Education has a special Exam Board for BPS students so that you will get your degree result in time for the application deadline, assuming you have not had an extension on your dissertation.

What universities offer training places?

- 10 universities are offering places under the EPFT scheme starting in September 2023. See the number of training places available at each institution on the [AEP website](#).

How many universities can I apply to?

- Up to three courses.

How do I apply?

- Online through the AEP website for most institutions, although the [University of Cardiff](#) and [Queens University Belfast](#) operate their own admissions process (contact them directly for more information).
- Applications for the 2023 intake are not yet open through AEP but you can register for updates on the [AEP website](#) (bottom of the page).
- Once your application is completed, it can be viewed by your chosen universities. They will not know which other institutions you have applied to.

What happens after I apply?

- The institutions you have applied to will review your application.
- If you are shortlisted (i.e. get through to the next round), you will be invited to interview directly by the university/ies. If you are unsuccessful, the status of your application will be updated online.

Find out more on [AEP's information on the EPFT scheme](#), including their helpful Frequently Asked Questions.

7. Funding the doctorate

How does funding for the doctorate work?

- The Department for Education (DfE) works with participating universities to manage the funding of the EPFT scheme.
- If you do not complete the training course or the two years employment, in England you may have to repay some or all of the funding associated with your training place.
- Find the breakdown of the EPFT funding provided on the [AEP website](#).

Are there any other funding schemes for the doctorate?

- The EPFT scheme is currently the only funded Educational Psychology training scheme in England.

Can I apply for a self-funded place?

- Individual universities determine whether to offer places for self-funding students and, if so, how many. If you are interested in applying for a self-funded place, you must contact the relevant university directly.
- You must apply for a self-funded place directly to the university offering such places, not through the EPFT online application system. You can apply for both EPFT scheme and self-funded places.

8. Other career options with a Psychology of Education degree

What jobs can you do with a Psychology of Education related degree, other than becoming an EP?

- Many! The skills you have learnt through your Psychology in Education BSc or Psychology of Education MSc will put you in a very strong position for going into a wide range of career paths.
- The following resources may help give you some ideas:
 - University of Bristol [What can I do with my Psychology degree?](#), including examples of alumni working both within and outside of psychology
 - Target Jobs [What can I do with a Psychology degree?](#)
 - Prospects [What can I do with an Education degree?](#)
- If you're interested in exploring other areas of Psychology, the [BPS 'Find your career in psychology' page](#) is a good starting point.
- See what other Psychology of Education alumni have gone on to do via the University of Bristol LinkedIn group – you can filter by area of study. Use [the Careers Service LinkedIn resources](#) for advice on how to use LinkedIn.
- The Careers Service are here to help you work through your career options, including through 1:1 advice appointments. Get in touch with them via the [Careers Service website](#) to arrange.

9. International students

Am I eligible to apply for the EPFT scheme?

- To be eligible for the EPFT scheme (see answer to question 2 above), you must (a) have permission to work in England for the duration of the course and for at least two years after completing the course, and (b) satisfy the nationality/residency requirements (the same as [student finance residency criteria](#)).
- If you obtained some or all of your required qualifications overseas you will need to obtain confirmation that you are eligible for the [Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership](#) (GBC), usually through the process of applying successfully to the BPS for Graduate Membership. Further details on the [BPS website](#).
- If your first language is not English, you must also have an overall grade of at least 7.0 in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS).

- Find more information on the [AEP EPFT information page](#), under 'Candidate Specifications'.

Will I get funding for the doctorate?

- For international students interested in funding eligibility for the doctorate, the terms are the same as for [UG Student Finance](#).

10. After the doctorate

Do I have to do continued professional development (CPD)?

- CPD is the professional, work-related aspect of lifelong learning.
- It is a professional expectation for all qualified psychologists, and mandatory for some professions.
- Find out more on the [BPS professional development page](#).

Can I move into a different area of psychology?

- The Educational Psychology doctorate is a big commitment, and a very competitive process to get onto, so we would recommend only applying if you are committed (at this stage!) to going on to work as an EP.
- Having said this, there are many different types of EP, so a good deal of variety within this career path after the doctorate.
- To find out more about how to get into different areas of psychology, visit the [BPS 'Find your career in psychology' page](#).

For help with your future career, including access to 1:1 appointments with professional careers advisers, head to the Careers Service website: www.bristol.ac.uk/careers.

Please note that this FAQs document provides advice on becoming an Educational Psychologist in the UK context only. It was created in collaboration between the Careers Service and the School of Education in summer 2022.