



## The Northern College

# FAQ

### Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS)

#### **How long does the course last and what does it cost?**

Usually the course runs for six days – one residential<sup>1</sup> block, followed by another block of four days around 2-4 weeks later. We are experimenting this year with different models of delivery; the course will be 30 hours class time until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011 (3 day blocks), after which it will be 48 hours class time (4 day blocks).

The fee is £250 for 2011/12, and includes accommodation (non-residential places are available at the same price).

#### **What do I do about paying?**

If you are paying for yourself, you can either send a cheque in advance or pay by cheque, cash or card on your first day.

If your employer is paying, you will need to send or bring a letter from them saying that they will pay your fees. We can then invoice them. *Please note that you may not be able to enrol or continue on the course if we do not receive this authorisation.*

#### **Do I have to pay?**

If you are on certain benefits you may qualify for fee remission. The situation is complex and changing and the range of eligible benefits is much more limited than it used to be. Please contact Lisa Purcell on 01226 776000 or [l.purcell@northern.ac.uk](mailto:l.purcell@northern.ac.uk) to discuss your individual situation.

You will need to provide proof of your benefits. Please bring this with you on the first day of the course. *Please note that you may not be able to enrol or continue on the course if we do not receive proof of your entitlement.*

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<sup>1</sup> Non-residential places are available.

### **Does this course lead to a qualification?**

Yes, if you successfully complete the course you will be awarded the City and Guilds 7303 Award Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector at Level 3 or Level 4.

### **What's different about the Northern College PTLLS?**

Our PTLLS is designed to appeal to people who might identify themselves as teaching – or wanting to teach – for a social purpose. What that means is that you have a desire to use your skills to help people change their world, in some way. So you will be studying alongside a whole group of people who have some shared values and experiences.

### **What do the different 'Levels' mean?**

Level 2 is the same level of study as an O-level or GCSE. You have to understand and describe the key concepts and elements of the subject.

For Level 3, you need to be applying what you learn to your own practice and offering some critical reflection or analysis of the concepts.

At Level 4, you need to read about the theories underpinning the subject and show evidence of this by referencing books and journals in the work you submit for assessment. We give you loads of support with this and at all levels!

Part of the learning on the course is about these 'levels of assessment' – you'd be amazed how often people understand for the first time how their previous qualifications relate to each other!

### **Do I have to stay residential?**

No but we recommend that you do! The College is a beautiful learning environment and by staying residentially you can take full advantage of the learning resources here, including our gorgeous Library.

We understand that this is not possible for everyone, and we do offer a limited number of non-residential places on each course. We have to have a slight bias towards residential applications, because we need to ensure that more than 50% of students on every course are residential. This is the basis on which we are funded. Please be aware of this if you are applying for a non-residential place.

### **What is there to do in an evening?**

At any time of year, we wouldn't be surprised if you wanted to spend all your time outdoors in our glorious gardens. However, there are things to do inside too!

The Home Farm complex hosts a café bar and a games room, and our Student Activities Co-ordinator likes to know who is coming in, so that she can organise entertainment for you – quizzes, karaoke, treasure hunts, folk nights are some of the many activities on offer at different times.

The Library is generally open until 8pm and the ICT Study Rooms until 10pm. There are TV rooms in all the accommodation areas. All study bedrooms are single occupancy (unless you want to share) and have internet access – please check with Reception whether you need to bring an Ethernet cable (we also have them on sale) or get the Wifi key.

And – of course – you can get your homework done!

### **What sort of homework will I have?**

At Level 3 or higher, we expect that you will continue to work on your portfolio when you are not at College. We ask you to complete a reflective journal every evening, in addition to the theory and practical assignments set by City and Guilds. You will be given a deadline some weeks after the end of the course to complete your portfolio and hand it in.

The reflective journal is a significant element of the teacher training courses and we will also expect to come and observe you teach – you will need to fix this opportunity up for yourself.

### **How much work will I have to do at home?**

You will probably have to make a commitment to doing some work 'back at the ranch' but if you are staying residentially you will be able to get the bulk of your work done whilst you are in College.

If you are not residential, you will have to make time at home in the evenings during the course to catch up with your journal – or stay for an hour or so after class and miss the rush hour.

Most people who do the course have paid or unpaid work in the voluntary, community and public sectors and we used to come out and observe you in your work setting. We **are no longer able to offer this**, so you will complete your 30 minute teaching practice in Week 2 of the course, with your colleagues from the course as your students.

### **Do I have to do the assessment? Can't I just come to class and find out what I need to know?**

You must do the assessment. First and foremost, if you drop out you won't be able to find funding to do the qualification (which costs in real terms much more than the £250 fee) anywhere else, as you will be registered to us.

There are consequences for Northern College too. At the end of every course, our success rates are noted, and if there are people who have not completed the course and handed in their work, our success rates go down

(and we don't get paid for your attendance either, even if you've studied, stayed and eaten with us for the whole eight days – as a Registered Charity, we have to be very careful financially). We are also funded for next year on the basis of those success rates so, as you can see, it is in all our interests for you to complete your assessment.

If anything is worrying you, we will support you. We understand that life gets in the way sometimes (it does for us too!) and we usually have a Plan B, C or even D up our sleeves. We want to help you get the best out of yourself and to make sure you feel great when you have completed the course.

### **I have a disability and I am worried about how I'll cope.**

We understand this and that's why we have an Additional Learning Support Team to help you if you have a physical, mental or learning disability. There is a space on your application form for you to tell us if you have a disability. You will then be contacted by John Rowley, our Additional Learning Support Co-ordinator, and together you'll come up with the best plan of support for you. Remember, we can only help you if you let us know how things are for you. If you want to talk with John before applying, you can email him on [j.rowley@northern.ac.uk](mailto:j.rowley@northern.ac.uk)

### **Can I bring my children to Northern College?**

Yes, if you book them into the Children's Centre well in advance (availability sometimes depends on the age of the child). Tell us on your application form about your children and we will make sure there is a place for them – we'll ring you if there is anything we are unsure about or if we are full. Contact Lynn at the Children's Centre if you want to come up and visit beforehand (01226 776000) or [l.powell@northern.ac.uk](mailto:l.powell@northern.ac.uk). There is a charge for childcare, please ask Lynn for details.

### **What will the course qualify me for?**

The course will qualify you to teach adults in a non-College, non-SFA (national adult education) funded setting. PTLLS at Level 4 is also the first module of the full teacher training qualification, Cert Ed (if you don't have a degree) and PGCE (if you do). We run this at Northern College too for people who are teaching adults for a social purpose, i.e. in the community, voluntary and trade union sectors.

The PTLLS qualification is the first step towards QTLS, which is qualified teacher status for the Lifelong Learning (post-compulsory) sector. Once you have got your PTLLS, you will be able to register with the professional organisation, Institute for Learning (check out their website [www.ifl.ac.uk](http://www.ifl.ac.uk))

### **What will I do next?**

Let's talk about this when you are coming to the end of your course; we do a guidance session as part of Week 2 and we are always happy to talk with you individually about next steps.

## **I've heard that you can't go to Northern College if you've got a degree.**

Certain courses at Northern College are especially designed for people with few or no formal qualifications but PTLLS does not come into this category, nor do any other courses in the Workforce Development Programme. We understand that people change direction in their lives. Your previous qualifications are and achievement, not a problem.

Equally, you do not have to have any qualifications to be accepted for PTLLS, just a desire to explore how to teach.

## **Where is Northern College?**

We are located just outside Barnsley in South Yorkshire, near the village of Dodworth, a few miles from both Junctions 36 and 37 of the M1.

Look [here](#) for directions (if you are viewing this electronically), look us up on our website [www.northern.ac.uk](http://www.northern.ac.uk) or ring the College on 01226 776000 and we'll send you a map.

Please be careful to look for the signs to Northern College once you get very close, rather than 'Wentworth Castle' – especially if you are using Sat Nav – you may end up in the wrong car park and it's a long walk round!

## **What do I need to do next?**

If you have any more questions, please email Louise Mycroft on [l.mycroft@northern.ac.uk](mailto:l.mycroft@northern.ac.uk) or ring her on 01226 776000 (email is best as Louise's job keeps her away from her desk most of the time). You may have already had contact with Lisa Purcell, who will also do her very best to help you. Lisa is available on the same number as above or email her [l.purcell@northern.ac.uk](mailto:l.purcell@northern.ac.uk)

If you're happy and you want to go for it, complete an application form and send back to us by post or fax (01226 776025). It's worth checking to see that we've received your application – contact Lisa also about this on [l.purcell@northern.ac.uk](mailto:l.purcell@northern.ac.uk) or 01226 776000. It is also possible to apply online via [www.northern.ac.uk](http://www.northern.ac.uk)

We will contact you a few weeks before the start of the course to offer you a place. If we can't offer you a place, we will tell you why.

# **We look forward to meeting you!**

## **The Northern College PTLLS Team**