The placement:

As part of the Access to Education Professions and Primary Teaching Diploma you will complete a placement in a school for your Practical Applications – Planning and Delivery unit. **This can be no less than 35 hours.**

During most of your placement you will be acting as a Teaching Assistant (TA) by supporting the class teacher and the learners. Towards the end of your placement you will teach a lesson. **This unit is mandatory and without completing it you will not be able to achieve your Diploma.**

It may be part of your prospective university’s entry requirements that you complete a placement that is longer than 35 hours. You should check this before you begin your placement and inform the school as appropriate.

Even though it may sound daunting and nerve-wracking, the placement and the Practical Applications – Planning and Delivery unit is often Education students’ favourite bit of the Diploma. It allows you to put what you have learnt into practice, to know what it’s like in a classroom, and to teach your first lesson. It gives you a taste of education, teaching and working with young people, and gives you real-life experiences to discuss in your university applications and interviews.

Preparing for the placement:

You will need an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check to volunteer in a school. The school at which you complete your placement will arrange this, but they may ask you to pay for the DBS.

You can complete your placement in two ways: either as a block placement, or stretched over a number of weeks. For example, a block placement of a week may be best if you work full-time. Or if you were able to dedicate a day a week to your placement, you would be able to stretch it over (at least) 5 weeks. If you have the choice, a placement that is stretched over a number of weeks is ideal, because it gives you the best chance to build up relationships with pupils. Whichever option you choose, discuss it with your tutor and make sure it is reflected in your ILP.

Students don’t normally have a problem getting a placement, but if you do, try the following:

• if you have children in a school, that’s a good place to start
• any school where you have friends or relations working there
• your local schools
• send letters or emails to the schools that you can physically get to
• ask your tutor to write you a letter of recommendation that you can send to schools with your covering letter or email.

In your correspondence you should be really clear about what you want to do. Make it clear to the school that this is the step towards you becoming a student teacher, that you are excited and eager to learn, and how open you are to any challenges. Express that you’re there to volunteer and support, and to learn through observing excellent practice.
On the placement:

For the majority of the placement you will be working as a TA. This means that you will be supporting the class teacher and probably working with specific groups of pupils (e.g. SEN, GT&A, working with boys to raise attainment etc.).

When you start your placement, you should begin filling in your reflective diary and keeping evidence of what you have done. **With the school’s permission**, this may include taking photographs of pupil’s work, of pupils during an activity you are facilitating, or photocopies of projects that you have helped with.

At the end of your placement, or when the class teacher feels that you are ready, you will be expected to **teach at least one full lesson**. If you are in a Primary School with younger children (and therefore short lessons), you may want to teach more than one lesson so you can cover everything you want to.

At this point, you should also request your Practical Applications - Planning and Delivery assessment from your tutor. You should not teach your lesson until you have at least completed:

- Introduction to Education Theory and Practice learning materials
- (and had marked) Introduction to Education Theory and Practice assessment
- Practical Applications – Planning and Delivery learning materials.

Before you teach your lesson, you should discuss your plans and ideas with the class teacher. Provide them with a lesson plan and take on board their advice and guidance. Your tutor will do this too if you arrange it.

Applying for degrees with QTS:

**Please note:**
1. This information only applies to you if you are applying for a degree with QTS.
2. You can achieve an Access to Education Professions / Primary Teaching Diploma without passing the QTS Skills Tests.

In 2013 the government changed the admissions process for degrees with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). Applicants must now pass the Skills Tests in English and Maths before they can begin a degree with QTS. You cannot sit your Skills Tests until you have applied to university, and unless you pass your Skills Tests, you cannot take up your place at university.

To prepare for your Skills Tests, use the government’s website. There you will find practice tests online, and further information you will need to know. You should utilise everything the government provides to help you prepare for your Skills Tests. This can all be found at: [http://www.education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching/apply-for-teacher-training/skills-tests.aspx](http://www.education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching/apply-for-teacher-training/skills-tests.aspx).

If you have not completed English and Maths level 2 as refreshers on your Diploma, you can request the learning materials from your tutor and use them for your revision for the Skills Tests. If you need to brush up on your Maths skills, the Khan Academy is an outstanding resource. It can be found here: [https://www.khanacademy.org/](https://www.khanacademy.org/).