



# *Beacon School Programme 2026-27*

GUIDANCE INFORMATION



**Centre for  
Holocaust Education**

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# UCL Centre for Holocaust Education Beacon Schools Programme 2026-27

## Guidance information

Thank you for your interest in the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education's Beacon School Programme. We are delighted that you are considering applying for this programme, and we look forward to receiving your application.

This document contains key details about the programme and will support you in completing your application. Everything you need to know about the Beacon Schools Programme is contained within this document, but should you have any questions or queries please do get in touch – we would be only too pleased to help.

In the pages that follow, you will find further information on:

- The value of the Beacon School Programme for you and your school
- The programme's aims and objectives
- How you will be supported
- The core content of the programme and what is expected of you
- How long the programme lasts
- How much the programme costs
- Eligibility criteria
- The structure of the programme

We hope that you find this guidance useful, and we look forward to receiving your application.

## What is the value of the Beacon Schools Programme?

The Beacon School Programme is the flagship initiative of the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education. Now in its fourteenth year, the programme provides a cohort of schools with sustained research-informed professional development in Holocaust education. Through this process, schools become dynamic hubs and local leaders in teaching and learning about the Holocaust, and Lead Teachers become highly developed classroom practitioners and educational leaders.

The key figures in bringing about these changes are the Lead Teacher and the SLT Lead. The Lead Teacher participates in a programme of professional development provided by UCL and is guided throughout by a mentor from the Centre. In undertaking this journey, the Lead Teacher is expected to produce several key outputs – including a new or refined Scheme of Learning on the Holocaust within their specialist subject area. The SLT Lead will attend their own programme of professional development, take part in the review process and support the Lead Teacher in working across departments and implementing curriculum change within the school.

The Beacon School programme provides Lead Teachers with a unique opportunity to deepen their subject knowledge and understanding; become more confident in their teaching of this challenging subject; learn new ways to teach the Holocaust which directly respond to students' needs and to implement curriculum development in how the Holocaust is taught in their schools.

In this way, Beacon School Lead Teachers acquire not only expertise in teaching and learning about the Holocaust; they also develop as reflexive practitioners who are able to raise standards in their schools and lead curriculum development. Many Beacon School alumni have used their experience on the programme to enhance their leadership skills and credentials, and in turn draw on the programme for promotion purposes and in the day-to-day exercise of school leadership. You can find out more about the career paths of alumni [here](#).

The programme helps schools to improve teaching standards in Holocaust education and to raise pupil achievement – crucial steps towards achieving excellence in teaching and learning about the Holocaust. But the benefits for schools of Lead Teachers embarking on this professional development journey, goes beyond improvements in a school's delivery of Holocaust education. Across the years we have also seen Beacon Schools pursue research-informed approaches to other aspects of the curriculum and employ teaching strategies that encourage student's independent thinking and criticality across their teaching practice. Additionally, Beacon Schools often report changes in the development of school culture, with a strong investment in developing staff and accessing expertise.

Through the programme, schools have enhanced their SMSC provision and created opportunities for young people to engage with contemporary issues and challenges in informed ways.

## What are the aims and objectives of the programme?

The Beacon School programme aims to help teachers in the following ways:

- a) Deepen their historical knowledge and understanding
- b) Develop Holocaust education within their discipline or subject specialism
- c) Increase their confidence in teaching about the Holocaust
- d) Provide opportunities to actively engage with pioneering educational research into Holocaust education
- e) Refine their pedagogical approaches to ensure they are responsive to the needs of students and challenges of the classroom
- f) Shape and affect curriculum change in their schools

The programme also has the following objectives in terms of school improvement:

- a) Improve the quality of teaching and learning about the Holocaust through the refinement or creation of a research-informed Scheme of Learning
- b) Ensure that teaching approaches to the Holocaust are informed by empirical research
- c) Calibrate teaching about the Holocaust to address students' misunderstandings and misconceptions
- d) Make certain that where the Holocaust appears in more than one subject in the school curriculum, it does so in a coherent and cohesive way
- e) Guarantee that all teachers involved in teaching about the Holocaust have had CPD opportunities to improve their practice

Schools which successfully complete the requirements of the programme will be awarded Beacon School Status at the end of the programme.

## How will I be supported?

A centrepiece of the Beacon School Programme is the relationship between Lead Teachers and designated mentors. Mentors are expert members of staff from the Centre who work closely with Lead Teachers throughout the programme. This takes a variety of forms – from individual online meetings and phone-calls, mentor visits to your school, and mentor group meetings (see below for more details).

In addition to your mentor the Lead Teacher will also be supported by an identified SLT lead within your school. This senior member of staff will provide you with day-to-day support, acting both as a sounding board and as a critical friend in your Beacon School journey. The SLT lead will be expected to meet with you periodically each term, and to provide you with practical guidance and support as you need it.

In addition, the Centre will provide bespoke online sessions to support the named SLT lead across the programme in understanding the potential for Holocaust T&L and the Beacon School programme to address whole school priorities and contribute to improvement.

The aim of these sessions is to ensure the programme is as impactful to the whole school community as possible, and helps secure key messaging, build institutional memory and capacity within school. SLT lead will also connect the impact of the programme to the School Improvement Programme, tying this to existing objectives.

## What does the programme consist of and what will I be expected to do?

### Requirements

The Beacon School Programme is a sustained and immersive CPD experience. As such, it is in line with key aspects of the Department for Education's Standards for Professional Development. To ensure the programme is rigorous and robust, there are a number of key expectations and associated outputs for schools to complete. A full calendar can be found at the end of this guidance.

In overview, Lead Teachers will be required to:

- Attend an in-person CPD UK residential
- Attend an in-person CPD study visit to Berlin
- Attend a programme of online mentor meetings
- Attend termly review meetings
- Conduct a curriculum mapping exercise to identify what teaching related to the Holocaust is currently taking place in their school
- Produce a Scheme of Learning informed by the programme
- Complete a Reflective Personal Learning Record which captures their progress
- Initiate moves to embed excellent practice in their school
- Host a school visit and CPD session within their school
- Develop working links with other schools

SLT leads will be required to:

- Attend 3 online CPD sessions across the year
- Attend termly review meetings
- Facilitate a school visit and CPD session within their school
- Acknowledge the programme aims in the School Improvement Plan
- Support the Lead Teacher in implementing whole school change
- Work with Lead Teacher to help facilitate a school visit and CPD session within their school
- Ensure the school's engagement with the Beacon School programme is sustainable and sustained

Further detail on each of these expectations can be found below. In addition to the above requirements, we will expect that you are a highly motivated, committed and organised individual who has a passion for teaching and learning about the Holocaust and developing as a practitioner. Each term, the school's progress will be discussed in a formative discussion with your mentor during the termly meeting. Whilst we will make every effort to support a school in meeting these requirements, if a school fails to meet that standard, the Centre will not accredit the school with Beacon School Status.

## Residential

The Lead Teacher will be expected to attend two in-person residential. One of these will be held in/around London in the October half term (2026), the other will be a study visit to Berlin at the end of May (2027). The purpose of these residential will be to provide the Lead Teacher with an opportunity to experience high-quality professional development, empowering the teacher with developed subject knowledge and a deep understanding of best practice in Holocaust education. This will be achieved through hands-on workshops, lectures delivered by guest speakers, visits to museums and Holocaust sites and interactive sessions delivered by Centre staff. The Centre will cover all costs associated with these residential, except for travel to and from the venue/airport (please see 'How much does the programme cost?' below for more details). In previous feedback, 100% of participants have judged their residential CPD to be "excellent" or "good" and 99% have said they would recommend it to a colleague.

## Welcome event and mentor meetings

Mentor groups will come together each term for calendarized meetings. At these meetings, the group will discuss key issues in Holocaust education, reflect on their own practice and develop innovative approaches to Holocaust education in their school context. In this way the mentor groups will provide you with mutual support and a forum for exchanging ideas.

## Curriculum mapping

Transforming teaching and learning about the Holocaust in your school requires both enhancing teaching provision and effecting curriculum change. But before embarking on curriculum development, it is prudent to establish what

is currently taking place in your school. To this end, you will be expected to undertake a curriculum mapping exercise at the start of the Beacon School Programme. In our experience, Lead Teachers often find this an illuminating exercise which can surface instances of teaching related to the Holocaust that were hitherto unknown or shed light on potential opportunities for cross-curricular collaboration. This will form part of your overall preparation for the programme and the development of your Scheme of Learning.

## Personal Learning Record

Across the programme, you will reflect on your CPD experiences and museum visits in a Personal Learning Record which will capture your engagement with the programme. This will inform your formative review conversations and produce a record of evidence you can use to discuss your progress with external stakeholders. This will also support you in capturing your experiences across the programme and having them feed into your Scheme of Learning.

## Schemes of Learning

A key goal of the Beacon School programme is for our Centre to work in collaborative partnership with schools to improve teaching and learning about the Holocaust. Many schools find that one of the most effective ways of doing this is through developing research-informed Schemes of Learning within the main subject area(s) that the Holocaust is taught. By doing so, Lead Teachers are able to implement enduring curriculum change within their schools.

It is for these reasons that a key expectation of the Beacon School programme is that Lead Teachers will work in partnership with UCL staff to either develop and refine their existing Scheme of Learning or to create a new one. Critically, it will also be expected that you will have the opportunity to implement this new Scheme by the end of your time on the Beacon School Programme.

## Embedding practice

Schemes of Learning are key vehicles for curriculum development. However, embedding excellence in Holocaust education within a school also involves developing connections and links where appropriate, to ensure coherence in student's learning.

To this end, Lead Teachers will be encouraged to develop their relationships with other colleagues in school - both those directly involved in teaching about the Holocaust, as well as others who may be able to contribute to it - pastorally or by other means.

The curriculum mapping exercise will serve as a positive first step, but Lead Teachers will also be expected to stage, with the help of their SLT lead and mentor, a CPD session within their school as part of the school visit. This will be a bespoke session delivered by a member of UCL staff in discussion with the school. The Lead Teacher should look to recruit colleagues to this event who are directly involved in teaching about the Holocaust, or who may be curriculum leaders or who may have pastoral responsibilities within the school.

## Research-informed practice

The Centre's research-informed approach is an important element of the Beacon School Programme. The sessions you will participate in are informed by the Centre's ongoing research with teachers and students. This ensures the programme and associated teaching materials continue to be responsive to the shifting contexts and challenges that teachers and students can encounter when teaching and learning about the Holocaust. There will be opportunities for you to meet with the Centre's research team and participate in discussions about our latest research findings (this can include research not yet publicly available). Beacon Schools are among the first to hear about our new studies, with many exciting opportunities for lead teachers, their colleagues and students to contribute to the research if interested. You will also be supported to draw on research evidence to inform your scheme of learning and lesson content. It is hoped that the support we provide to enable you to access, interpret

and incorporate research in your teaching will not only benefit your work in Holocaust education, but equip you with knowledge and skills you can apply to other topics you teach.

## Working with other schools

A fundamental principle of the Beacon Schools Programme is that participating schools become 'Beacon' institutions to teachers in other schools. This helps to build networks between schools and establish a community of practice in local areas. Equally, this undertaking has multiple benefits for Beacon Schools themselves, including enhancing their local reputation, burnishing their leadership credentials, and furthering the extent to which they are regarded as collegiate and collaborative institutions.

Every Beacon School - with our support - will be expected to reach out to teachers in other schools and networks. Working with other schools can, of course, take multiple forms. It could include setting-up an online discussion forum, staging termly meetings, or inviting colleagues into your school to showcase your work. Historically many Beacon Schools have benefited from inviting colleagues from their local area and existing networks to attend CPD events.

## How long does the programme last?

The programme lasts from June 2026 to September 2027. At the end of the programme, provided all requirements are satisfied, your school will receive Beacon School status.

## How much does the programme cost?

We are funded by the Pears Foundation, the Department for Education and the Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR) to deliver this transformative programme. As a result, the programme is provided to schools completely free of charge, including the consultancy of our world-leading experts and places on our residential CPD programmes, including hotel stays and meals. UCL do not cover travel costs for teachers travelling to/from venue/airport. However, please contact us directly if your school is having difficulties covering your travel costs, as we may be able to support you - particularly those coming from further afield.

## Who can apply?

You do not have to already have an exemplary standard of Holocaust education in your school in order to apply. The Beacon School Programme is very much a process rather than an end point, and as such we do not expect you already be 'beacons' in Holocaust education.

To be eligible to apply for the Beacon School Programme, you do need to:

- Have responsibility for teaching the Holocaust in your department
- Be based in a secondary school in England including SEND, specialist and alternative provision institutions (colleagues in independent schools are welcome to apply, but the terms of our funding mean priority will be given to teachers in state-maintained schools)
- Be committed to the principle of research-informed teaching and learning
- Have the opportunity and ability to either: a) develop the department's existing Scheme of Learning; or b) create a new Scheme of Learning for the department that will be adopted after the course of the Beacon School programme
- Have completed the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education's [6 things your students should know about the Holocaust](#) course.
- Have completed the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education's [Understanding the Holocaust: How and why did it happen?](#) course.
- Have secured the support of the Senior Leadership Team who recognise the opportunities of the Beacon School Programme to support key priorities and agendas
- To be able to attend two CPD residentials, including international travel to Berlin.

## How will my application be judged?














Places on the Beacon School programme, are, unfortunately, limited, and the programme is oversubscribed. As a result, we cannot offer every applicant school a place on the programme. In deciding which schools to offer a place, we consider the following factors:












- Quality of the application, for example demonstrating a commitment to Holocaust education and to engaging with CPD more widely and demonstrating a proven track record of delivering projects in your school context.
- A strong school ethos committed to diversity, equality and inclusion, which includes a vision for how Holocaust education will be included in this ethos.
- The diversity of the cohort, including schools from a variety of regions in England, particularly regions of lower socio-economic development and in the diversity of school with specific attributes, for example faith schools, or schools specialising in special educational needs education.

We do not consider a school's GCSE exam results, Progress 8 performance or the results of Ofsted inspections in deciding whether to offer a place on the Beacon School programme.

## Calendar and structure

 = in person |  = online |  = email

When?	How?	What?
w/c 13 April – 24 May 2026		Applications are open for schools to apply for the 26-7 cohort of the Beacon School programme. Applicants will be able to complete their online application form <a href="#">on our website</a> .
w/c 8 June 2026		Places are offered to successful applicants.
1 July 2026		<b>Online Welcome event (SLT Lead and Lead Teachers)</b>
June – July 2026		<p><b>Getting to know you:</b> Your mentor will arrange a meeting with both SLT Lead and Lead Teacher, to discuss school context, narratives and goals for the year, and to introduce you to the procedures of the programme. At this stage, Lead Teachers will be expected to complete the ‘Getting to know you’ documents, curriculum map and SWOT analysis, in preparation for the next academic year. A date will also be set for the <b>school visit</b>.</p> <p>As with all Mentor meetings, each mentor will individually arrange a workable one-hour timeslot with their mentees.</p>
Summer 2026		<b>Preparatory reading and tasks on Reflective Learning Record</b>
Autumn Term 2026		<p><b>School Visit</b> Your mentor will visit your school in-person to learn more about your context and school. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Observation of teaching in the Lead Teacher’s subject area</li> <li>- A CPD engagement with staff</li> <li>- Meeting key colleagues</li> </ul>
September 2026		<b>Mentor Meeting: Reflecting on the Centre’s research (Lead Teacher)</b>
15 September 2026		<b>SLT Session: Leading Change through the Beacon School Programme (SLT Lead)</b>
23-26 October 2026		<p><b>Residential 1: UK (Lead Teacher)</b> A four-day CPD residential focussing on fundamental subject knowledge and the development of the scheme of learning</p>
04 November 2026		<b>SLT Session: Preparing for Holocaust Memorial Day as a Beacon School (SLT Lead)</b>
Nov 2026		<b>Mentor Meeting: Issues in Holocaust Education: Inclusive teaching of the Holocaust (Lead Teacher)</b>
December 2026		<b>Review Meeting 1</b>
January 2027		<b>Mentor Meeting: Issues in Holocaust Education: Denial, Diminution and Distortion (Lead Teacher)</b>

14 January 2027		<b>SLT Session: Whole School Approaches, Building Culture and Capacity (SLT Lead)</b>
February 2027		<b>Mentor Meeting: Assessment and the Holocaust (Lead Teacher)</b>
March 2027		<b>Review Meeting 2</b>
26 March 2027		<b>Submission of First Draft of Scheme of Learning (Lead Teacher)</b>
April 2027		<b>Mentors arrange meetings to feedback on draft Schemes of Learning</b>
May 2027		<b>Mentor Meeting: Issues in Holocaust Education: Atrocity Images and Emotional Literacy (Lead Teacher)</b>
May half term (Dates TBC)		<b>Residential 2: Berlin (Lead Teacher)</b> A four-day CPD residential focussing on perpetration and collaboration, the Jewish community and the pedagogy of site visits.
June 2027		<b>Mentor Meeting: Reflecting on Berlin – how will it inform your scheme of learning? (Lead Teacher)</b>
July 2027		<b>Review Meeting 3</b>
17 September 2027		<b>Final submission of Scheme of Learning</b>
September 2027		<b>Accreditation of school as Beacon School</b>