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1. General Enquiry - for more information

An overview of the 2-year PGCE programme can be found in the Prospectus. To request a copy please click here.

More information about the PGCE Programme can be found here.
Application Form can be found here.
Detailed guidance notes can be found here.

2. How to apply

What is the application process?

Detailed guidance notes on how to apply can be found here.

What is the deadline for applications?

The deadline for submissions each year will be published on our website and can be found here.

3. GCSE Qualifications

What GCSE grades do I need?

- GCSE Grade B in English or Welsh Language
- GCSE Grade B in Maths.
- GCSE Grade C in a Science subject for teaching Primary

If you hold an equivalent to a Grade B (GCSE or equivalent) in either English Literature or Welsh Literature, a minimum of a Grade C (GCSE or equivalent) must be achieved in the corresponding GCSE examination in English or Welsh Language.

You may already hold a qualification of equivalency to GCSEs. See here for accepted equivalency to GCSE Grade B. If you are re-sitting your GCSEs please indicate this on the application form.

It should still be noted that the application process is competitive, and that GCSE grades are one component of how we consider your application.

How do I sit equivalency exams?

You can take the equivalency tests via our agreed partner company: www.equivalencytesting.com. There are no prerequisites for starting the course. Please ensure that you select Maths and English Higher (not Foundation) to obtain the equivalent B grade.
We will also accept equivalency tests managed through other Higher Education institutions. However, you will need to ask the HEI to email the results of the equivalency tests to us directly at Wales-PGCE@open.ac.uk.

I didn’t complete all/part of my education in the UK, how do my qualifications compare?

The National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) provides guidance on whether an overseas qualification is comparable in standard to a given UK qualification. They can supply a Statement of Comparability to show whether your qualifications meet the requirements for admission. Please obtain a NARIC certificate to ensure you meet the requirements before applying. See the link for NARIC here: https://www.naric.org.uk/naric/

4. Undergraduate Degrees

Do I need to have a full honours degree?

All applicants who wish to undertake a PGCE must have a full Honours Undergraduate Degree e.g. a BA (Hons) or a BSc (Hons) or equivalent with classification e.g. 1st, 2:1, 2:2, 3rd.

I want to teach Secondary, is my degree relevant?

For Secondary applicants, it is expected that the content of your degree will contain a significant proportion of the subject in which you wish to train to teach or be closely related to the subject. There is flexibility in some subjects, whilst other degrees may require very relevant subject knowledge. Where your degree title does NOT directly match the curriculum subject you want to teach, the table in the application form must be completed in full. Detailed guidance notes can be found here

Do I need to have a degree in Welsh to teach Welsh at Secondary?

No, you can have any degree, but you must be a fluent Welsh speaker to teach Welsh as a second language in an English medium secondary school. To teach Welsh as a first language in a Welsh medium secondary school a degree in Welsh is desirable, however a related degree may be considered.

If you wish to complete any aspect of your course in the medium of Welsh, you must as a minimum complete your supporting statement in Welsh, or ideally use the Welsh application form to complete the whole application in Welsh. All candidates for PGCE Secondary Welsh must complete their application in Welsh and be taught through the medium of Welsh.

5. Fees and funding

How much does the course cost?
The course fee is £2,625 per year, which is payable on an annual basis. The total cost for the PGCE will be £5,250*. If you are on the Part-time route, you will pay the fees yourself directly to the OU. If you are on the Salaried route, your fees are paid by the Welsh Government.

* 2020/21 prices; fees normally increase annually in line with inflation and the University’s strategic approach to fees.

**How much will I get paid on the Salaried route?**

The salary received by students will ordinarily be set at the minimum of the unqualified teacher pay scale (£17,682 for the 2019/2020 academic year). This is a full-time salary, paid to you by your Employer School.

**Is there funding available for the Part-time route?**

Please see our Fees and Funding website for more information on funding available on the Part-time route: http://www.open.ac.uk/courses/fees-and-funding

If you are on the Part-time PGCE route you can apply for a student loan. Visit Finance Wales for more information https://www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/postgraduate-students/postgraduate-initial-teacher-education.aspx

You can also apply for up to £3,000 in funding to help with living costs while you’re studying. https://www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/undergraduate-students/new-students/what-financial-support-is-available/help-with-living-costs.aspx

Additionally, you may be entitled to bursaries from the Welsh government. These are dependent upon your degree classification, the PGCE level and (for secondary students) the subject you choose. https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-06/teacher-training-incentives-2020-to-2021-academic-year.pdf

There are additional funds available – please see the Prospectus for more information.

**Is there funding available for the Salaried Route?**

On the Salaried Route, you will be employed by your school and will ordinarily receive a salary of the minimum of the unqualified teacher pay scale (£17,682 for the 2019/2020 academic year). You will not be able to access a student loan as the fees are already paid for by the Welsh Government. The maintenance grant and the bursaries from the Welsh Government are not available to students on the salaried route.

For other funding please see  http://www.open.ac.uk/courses/fees-and-funding

**What teacher training incentives are there?**

Graduates with certain degrees may be eligible for incentives of up to £20,000, if they want to train to be a teacher in Wales. These are only available for the part time route.

6. Course Outline

*How is the PGCE taught?*

You can follow one of two routes: the salaried route or the part-time route. Both include a mix of online and face-to-face sessions with mentors and practice tutors. You’ll also have practical experience in two schools.

Across the two years of study, you’ll have 120 days of school placements; 60 school days per year. In the first year you would expect to spend approximately 50% of your time in a support role and 50% of your time studying or undertaking practical activities such as planning and delivering lessons. You’ll move from classroom support and planning and teaching of single lessons in PGCE 1; to planning and teaching of a sequence of lessons in PGCE 2; to responsibility for planning, resourcing and solo teaching a range of lessons in PGCE 3.

For your academic study, you’ll use our virtual learning environment to access compulsory live tutorials, module content such as textbooks, video and audio, and recorded tutorials. It’s also where you’ll interact with tutors and other students in online forums.

*What is the Part-time route?*

The part time route offers you the opportunity to get the qualifications you need to become a teacher while balancing your other responsibilities. You can apply for a student loan and part-time maintenance grants to help with the costs of this self-funded route.

This route offers some flexibility as you can gain part-time practical teaching experience in a school alongside other commitments. Across the two years, you’ll have 120 days of school placements; 60 days per year. In the second year, 30 days of your school placements must be completed in a continuous block.

*What is the Salaried route?*

If you already work in a state school as a teaching assistant or in a non-teaching role, you can apply for your school to endorse you. You’ll work in school full time and study around your existing duties. Your application must be endorsed by your school as they will pay your salary. Your course fees will be fully funded by the Welsh government.

If you don’t currently work in a state school, you can still apply for the salaried route. You’ll need a state school willing to endorse you. Depending on factors such as level of demand for your chosen course and the needs of local schools, we may be able to help you find a school.
to sponsor you. Applicants should be aware that places for students without an endorsing school are extremely competitive.

7. Course Commitment

How much time will I need to spend studying?

Each PGCE module involves academic study through online seminars led by your curriculum tutor; a period of school experience; and the submission of a portfolio of evidence that includes responses to academic tasks and reports from your school experience. In each module, you’ll be assessed through a range of tasks, including written essays.

If you’re on the salaried route, we work with your school to create a combined timetable of activities. This includes your normal work, protected study time and dedicated PGCE practice learning periods. If you’re on the part-time route, you’ll study 2–3 days a week, either in academic study or on your school experience.

How much time will I need to spend teaching?

In the first year you would expect to spend approx. 50% of your time in a support role and 50% of your time studying or undertaking practical activities such as planning and delivering lessons. You’ll move from classroom support, and planning and teaching of single lessons in PGCE 1; to planning and teaching of a sequence of lessons in PGCE 2; to responsibility for planning, resourcing and solo teaching a range of lessons in PGCE 3. In the second year, subject to successful progression through the course, you can be teaching for up to 70% of the school week.

The actual teaching time will vary as the student progresses through the course, and they will be supported in their development to ensure they are ready for an increased timetable as they move into year 2. On PGCE 3 you must commit to 30 full days of teaching (five days a week over six consecutive school weeks).

Students’ timetables will be decided at the outset of the placement through discussion between the employer school, the regional consortia and the student and will be reviewed periodically.

How much time will I have for my normal job?

If you’re on the part-time route, you’ll study 2–3 days a week, either in academic study or on your school experience. You would need to fit this around your paid employment in agreement with your placement school. The advantage of the part-time route is the flexibility this affords to those already in paid part-time employment (or with other responsibilities such as parenting or caring).

For students on the part-time route, you’ll have 120 days of school placements; 60 days per year. However, students should note that on the Part Time route there has to be a 30-day continuous block of school experience in Year 2. Students must commit to 30 full days of
teaching (five days a week over six consecutive school weeks). The time away from your usual job, to allow you to do this, would need to be arranged directly with your employer.

8. School Placements

How do the placements work?

Salaried students will undertake practical experience at the same time as studying.

Part-time students will undertake their practical experience in their placement schools after completing their academic study in each module.

All students are expected to attend placements in two different schools in order to gain QTS.

You’ll work with your mentor, and school staff members to take on increasing teaching responsibility. You’ll move from classroom support, and planning and teaching of single lessons in PGCE 1; to planning and teaching of a sequence of lessons in PGCE 2; to responsibility for planning, resourcing and solo teaching a range of lessons in PGCE 3. Whether you’re on the salaried or part-time route, you’ll undertake an individual classroom research project in PGCE 3.

For students on the part-time route, you’ll have 120 days of school placements; 60 days per year. However, students should note that on the Part Time route there has to be a 30-day continuous block of school experience in Year 2. Students must commit to 30 full days of teaching (five days a week over six consecutive school weeks).

Mentors will support you throughout your school experience. They’ll mediate and facilitate regular school-based tasks, which feed into your studies.

When do the placements take place?

Salaried students will undertake practical experience at the same time as studying. On the salaried route you would be working full time from September. All students are expected to attend placements in two schools. On the Salaried route, the majority of your time will be spent at your employer school, but in June and July of year one you would be expected to undertake a second placement in a lead partner school.

Part-time students will undertake their practical experience in our Partner Schools after completing their academic study in each module. Over the 2-year course you will spend 120 days on placement. This amounts to 60 days per year of placement time (30 days across the first half of the year, 30 in the second half) and will include one period during your second year of 30 days which must be worked in a continuous 6-week block.

Can I do my placements in my current school?

Yes. If you are employed by a school and they are not able to offer you sponsorship for the salaried route, it may be possible for you to choose the part time route in your current
school. In order to do this your school has to apply to become one of our Associate Partner Schools with the understanding that you have to complete a second placement in a different school. More information can be found here.

Students must also commit to 30 full days of teaching (five days a week over six consecutive school weeks) in year 2. This would need to be agreed directly with your current school. The second school will be one of our partner schools, who have to meet strict criteria to enter into partnership. They will be selected by the partnership and that decision will be based on whether they complement the original placement, geographical location as well as other factors.

*What is a Partner School?*

A partner school is one that has applied to join the programme and has meet the strict criteria to enter into the partnership.

There are 3 types of Partners:

**Lead Partner School** – members of the Partnership Committee with key strategic and decision-making responsibilities, leading associate and employer schools within their cluster and playing a central part in all aspects of the programme.

**Associate Partner School** - support the development of students on the Part Time PGCE programme, providing placement opportunities of up to 120 days per year.

**Employer Partner School** - those who wish to support the development of an employed student enrolled on the Salaried PGCE route.

Schools can have more than one status e.g. an Employer School can also be an Associate School if they are sponsoring their own employee on the Salaried route and offering placements to students on the Part-time route.

For more information – please see our Schools pages.

9. Already working in a school?

*My current school have agreed to sponsor me, how does that work?*

If you already work in a state school as a teaching assistant or in a non-teaching role, you can apply for your school to sponsor you to do the PCGE. You’ll work full time and study around your existing duties. You will be on the Salaried route and will be employed by your school and will ordinarily receive a salary of the minimum of the unqualified teacher pay scale.
(£17,682 for the 2019/2020 academic year). Please see our prospectus and website for more information.

Please ask your headteacher to apply to become an Employer Partner School with our programme before you apply. Click here for more information.

*My current school are unable to sponsor me, can you help find me another sponsor school?*

Students who are offered a place and have expressed an interest in the Salaried route, but do not have a school to sponsor them, might be introduced to partner schools who have expressed an interest in employing a student teacher. The School will then interview candidates we have put forward using their own employment procedures and decide whether to offer the student a contract of employment. Employment would be expected to start in September.

It is for this reason we say we may be able to help match you with a sponsor school. We cannot guarantee you employment. If it was not possible to match you with an employer school, we would support you on the Part-Time route and try to match you with a suitable placement school.

*My current school are unable to sponsor me, can I do the part-time route?*

If your current school is unable to sponsor you and you wish to remain employed in this school, rather than find another school to sponsor you, you could apply for the Part-time route.

This route offers some flexibility as you can gain part-time practical teaching experience in a school alongside your existing commitments. Across the two years, you’ll have 120 days of school placements; 60 days per year. In the second year, 30 days of your school placements must be completed in a continuous block. If your school has been accepted as one of our Associate Partner schools, then you will be able to do most of your school placements in your school. You’ll study 2–3 days a week, either in academic study or on your school experience. You would need to fit this around your paid employment in agreement with your placement schools.

*How does my school apply to become a Partner school?*

Please see our School facing website for information on how your school can apply to become a partner school. Please ask your Headteacher to send us an Endorsement letter using the provided template.