



Criteria for the Inclusion of Schools in the Partnership

Engaging with an evidence informed programme of reform and through its National Mission, Wales is seeking to improve the educational outcomes and experiences of all learners. A key part of achieving this vision is a new form of teacher education, founded on the tenets of collaborative approaches to developing the student teacher (Welsh Government, 2018). Schools and universities need to work together to provide “systematic and structured learning opportunities” (WG, 2018, p.10) in a school environment and to make available a wide range of professional knowledge, growing a culture of ITE as a shared environment, rooted in scholarly culture (WG, 2018).

During the development phase of the programme, the OU Partnership was formed by representation from the OU, Regional Consortia and eleven Lead Partner Schools across Wales. As the programme moves towards gaining accreditation and commencing delivery of two new PGCE programmes, the Partnership seeks to welcome further school engagement. Schools are invited to join the partnership as Lead Partner Schools, or to support the programme by becoming a site of learning for OU Student Teachers, either as an Associate School (supporting part time students) or as an Employer School (supporting salaried students).

Becoming a Partnership School

A strong partnership between the Open University, Regional Consortia and the Lead Partner Schools is the principal component of the programme. Student teachers will identify closely with their school experience placements as that is their site of learning for experiential and practice-based forms of knowledge. High quality Lead Partner Schools are essential to do this successfully.

The OU Partnership also recognises that schools across Wales are likely to find themselves initially at different places in the journey towards the vision of a reformed programme of ITE, as outlined above. Lead Partner Schools will play a key role in supporting the growth and development of a whole-school approach to ITE within their cluster of Associate and Employer Schools. It is intended that Associate and Employer schools will benefit from the support of Practice Tutors from their cluster Lead Partner Schools. The OU Partnership believes that this provides a valuable professional learning opportunity for all school staff involved through mutual professional dialogue and the sharing of best practice.

It is important that a school applying to become a partner school should reflect on their preparedness and capacity to engage with the programme and to meet the accreditation requirements for the roles and responsibilities of a partner school and should discuss this with their regional consortia ITE Lead. Schools should then



consider to which status they wish to apply and is best suited to their school's strengths and development needs:

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 (for a full list of roles and responsibilities see Appendix A).

Associate Schools – Associate schools take the lead in enabling students to link their studies to a supportive professional context by providing school-based opportunities for student teachers to develop their practice. Associate schools support the development of students on the Part Time PGCE programme, providing placement opportunities of up to 120 days per year (for a full list of roles and responsibilities see Appendix B).

Employer Schools – Employer schools are those who wish to support the development of a student enrolled on the Salaried PGCE within a shortage subject area. Employer schools should commit to employing the student teacher on at least point 1 of the unqualified teacher pay scale for the duration of the two years. Secondary schools may receive a salary contribution from Welsh Government. Student teachers will be employed on a full-time basis (for full list of roles and responsibilities see Appendix C). **Based on Point 1 of the unqualified teacher pay scale.*

It is possible for a school to have more than one status. Examples include: a Lead Partner School who chooses to support part-time students; a school who supports both part-time students and employs salaried students or a lead partner school that employs salaried students.

Partnership Status Review Process

A school's initial partnership status is reviewed every two years (in line with the programme length). The criteria by which schools are selected will also be reviewed by the Partnership (and led by the Chair of the Recruitment, Admissions and Retention (RAR) Sub-Committee) every two years. Schools should notify the Partnership of any changes to their ability to meet their status criteria as soon as possible. Partnership staff may also raise any changes to a school's ability to meet the criteria at any point during that period with the Director of the PGCE. Examples of changes to a school's circumstances which may affect their ability to meet the criteria may include (but is not limited to):

- Significant changes to staffing or leadership
- Industrial action
- Challenge Advisor advice
- Significant changes to school categorisation
- Feedback from Estyn
- Issues raised via the Student Support or Issues Resolutions frameworks

Changes to a school's ability to meet the criteria for their Partnership Status may be raised by any member of the Partnership:

- By the school (e.g. Headteacher or ITE Lead)
- Regional Consortia ITE Leads
- Practice Tutors
- Mentors / School Coordinators
- Student teachers
- Curriculum Tutors

In the event that the Partnership is notified of changes to a school's ability to meet the criteria, this will trigger a Partnership Status Review through the Issues Resolution Framework. Outcomes of such a review may include:

- A change to the school's Partnership status (e.g. a Lead Partner School may reduce their strategic commitments to Associate School Level).
- Additional mitigating actions to provide further support to the school and/or student to address areas impacted by changes.
- No further placement of students within the school on a short or long term basis.
- The de-selection of a school from the Partnership.

De-Selection of Schools from the Partnership

Lead Partner schools are invited to play a full role in the strategic design and delivery of the programme. In the event that the Lead Partner school does not engage with the work of the Partnership Committee (e.g. repeated absence at committee and sub-committee meetings; does not support student teacher placements for the duration of their status period), a Partnership Review Meeting should be held.

The de-selection of a school from the Partnership is a significant and serious decision. The Partnership would endeavour, through the use of the Issues Resolution Framework, to work closely with the school to provide support and mitigation where possible to resolve issues in the first instance, based on the principles of maturity, honesty and transparency. The decision to de-select a school should be made in close consultation with the school headteacher and where possible, mutual agreement should be reached.

In the event that changes to any school's circumstances are such that mitigation is limited in effect, or the school receives notification from Estyn that they are unsatisfactory and need urgent improvement, the Partnership must review the placement of any part-time or salaried student teachers in the school.

Where possible, part time students may be placed in an alternative school. In the event that a school is hosting a salaried student, careful consideration must be given to the quality of the student teacher's experience within the school as a site of practice-based learning. Student teachers should always receive their minimum entitlement. Members of the Issues Resolution Panel will need to determine whether:

- Strong mitigations can be made to support the salaried student to remain within the school. Examples of mitigation may include:
 - Additional Practice tutor visits to the school (to support the student teacher and/or mentor)
 - Additional online tutorials with the Curriculum Tutor
 - Additional support from a Lead Partner School (e.g. teaching a minimum of 50% in a Lead Partner School)
- The salaried student should be offered an alternative placement within another school. Whilst all efforts will be made to support the student in finding another Salaried placement, it may be necessary for the student to transfer to the part time route in order to complete the PGCE qualification in another setting.

Criteria for the Inclusion of Schools

Lead Partner Schools

Lead Partner Schools should be effective schools recognised within their region for high quality provision (WG, 2018). In determining high quality provision, the OU Partnership will give due attention to Estyn reports, school categorisation and Regional Consortia knowledge (e.g. through consulting with the school's appointed challenge advisor). Lead Partners Schools are selected and appointed by the Partnership Committee as part of a collaborative decision-making process, which gives due regard to selecting a varied and diverse range of Primary and Secondary schools, Welsh and English medium, and with a range of denominations, backgrounds and locations.

In order to join the OU Partnership as a Lead Partner School, a school will need to demonstrate their ability to meet the following criteria:

CRITERION 1

Your school has the capacity and capability to engage with the Partnership Committee, the development of the programme, the recruitment of students and other roles and responsibilities (as outlined in Appendix A), including the supporting of student-teachers from associate and employer schools to undertake a second school experience.

CRITERION 2

Your school understands the Welsh Education Reform agenda, has begun to make provision for Curriculum for Wales 2022 and is committed to the development of a language continuum for Welsh, working towards Cymraeg 2050.

CRITERION 3

Your school has a proven track record of successfully developing the curriculum, teaching and learning, assessment and coaching at school and practitioner level. There is a clear strategy in place for the identification, selection and support of school coordinators and mentors as well as a proven capacity for mentoring and supervision to enable constructive feedback to and assessment of student teachers.

CRITERION 4

Your school has a passion for sharing expertise in ITE throughout the school, including a whole-school approach to supporting student teachers. Your school will be committed to working in partnership with other schools and the wider OU Partnership. This will include supporting the particular needs of student teachers studying towards a PGCE via distance-learning and work-based practice, plus engaging with the materials and teaching of the programme.

CRITERION 5

Your school is committed to becoming a learning organisation with research informed professional learning at all levels, both in school and via relevant partnerships/networks.

OECD (2016)¹. "What Makes a School a Learning Organisation? A Guide for Policy Makers, School Leadership and Teachers"

CRITERION 6:

Your school has the capacity and capability to support experienced practitioners as practice tutors to support the programme and the Associate/Employer Schools, especially at key named points in the year.

Associate Schools

An Associate School should also demonstrate they are an effective school as recognised within their region for high quality provision (WG, 2018). In determining high quality provision, the OU Partnership will give due attention to Estyn reports, school categorisation and Regional Consortia knowledge (e.g. through consulting with the school's appointed challenge advisor).

Associate Schools will work closely with their Lead Partner School within their cluster to support the development of student teachers on the part time programme.

Associate schools may be asked by the Regional Consortia to accept the placement of part-time students (who must complete 120 days school experience over the two years of the programme and must experience two different schools during this period). Associate schools are not members of the Partnership Committee, but may be invited to attend Partnership Committee meetings and sub-groups as appropriate.

School Experience (part time):

Module 1: 25 days

Module 2: 35 days

Module 3: 60 days (of which 30 days must be taken in a consecutive block)

¹ OECD (2016), What Makes a School a Learning Organisation? A Guide for Policy Makers, School Leadership and Teachers, Paris

CRITERION 1

Your school has the capacity and capability to engage with the Partnership Committee and to participate within associated development activities, including the supporting of student-teachers within a high-quality context.

CRITERION 2

Your school understands the Welsh Education Reform agenda, has begun to make provision for Curriculum for Wales 2022 and is committed to the development of a language continuum for Welsh, working towards Cymraeg 2050.

CRITERION 3

Your school has a proven track record of successfully developing the curriculum, teaching and learning, assessment and coaching at school and practitioner level. There is a clear strategy in place for the identification, selection and support of school coordinators and mentors as well as a proven capacity for mentoring and supervision to enable constructive feedback to and assessment of student teachers.

CRITERION 4

Your school has a passion for sharing expertise in ITE throughout the school and is making good progress towards establishing a whole-school approach to supporting student teachers. Your school will be committed to working in partnership with other schools and the wider OU Partnership. This will include supporting the particular needs of student teachers studying towards a PGCE via distance-learning and work-based practice, plus engaging with the materials and teaching of the programme.

CRITERION 5

Your school is committed to becoming a learning organisation with research informed professional learning at all levels, both in school and via relevant partnerships/networks.

OECD (2016)². "What Makes a School a Learning Organisation? A Guide for Policy Makers, School Leadership and Teachers"

² OECD (2016), What Makes a School a Learning Organisation? A Guide for Policy Makers, School Leadership and Teachers, Paris



Employer Schools

Employer schools are those who support student teachers on the Salaried PGCE programme. Employer schools undertake to support the development of a suitably qualified individual who is an employee of the school and enrolled on the OU PGCE in either Primary or a Secondary shortage subject area. All employee student-teachers PGCE fees are paid via a Welsh Government training grant. Secondary schools (only) can receive a 50% contribution towards the student's salary each year (55% for Welsh medium schools). Employer schools work closely with their Regional Consortia ITE lead to design a combined full-time learning experience for the student-teacher which comprises of learning support work, dedicated PGCE practice learning periods and protected study time. Year 1 takes a carefully scaffolded and graduating approach to teaching, enabling the student teacher to become more independent in Year 2.

CRITERION 1

Able to provide the student teacher with access to effective learning and teaching experiences that enable the student teacher to achieve QTS (supported by school improvement/Estyn evidence).

CRITERION 2

Committed to working with Lead Partner schools and the Partnership to meet the terms and conditions of the dedicated practice learning periods. This will include working with the practice tutor to support the work of the school based mentor/school coordinator and the development of a whole school approach to ITE.

CRITERION 3

Committed to making provision for the new curriculum for Wales, teaching and learning. This will include supporting students through distance learning and work-based practice in an alternative setting, as well as supporting enhancement and enrichment opportunities for the student teacher to be able to demonstrate all descriptors of QTS.

CRITERION 4

Able to identify, select, support and provide an experienced mentor and school co-ordinator to support the student teacher through their dedicated practice learning periods.

CRITERION 5

Committed to providing a collaborative environment to enable the student teacher to work with others. This includes working with the Regional Consortia ITE lead to arrange a meaningful (mandatory) second school placement for the salaried placement in line with the current requirements.

Applying to be part of the OU ITE Partnership

In the first instance, schools should contact their designated Regional Consortia ITE Lead to register their interest and to discuss programme requirements in further detail. The Partnership Committee will advertise (via the Regional Consortia) when opportunities to join the OU Partnership become available.

Lead Partner and Associate Schools

Please submit a [written expression of interest](#) (no more than 500 words across all criteria) which demonstrates how your school meets the relevant criteria set. Please submit this to your Regional Consortia ITE Lead.

Employer Schools

Supporting an existing employee:

- Please submit a [written expression of interest](#) (no more than 500 words across all criteria) which demonstrates how your school meets the relevant criteria set.
- Please provide your employee with a letter of endorsement (to be included in the student teacher's application)
- The school employee should complete the [OU PGCE application form](#) (available on the OU website).

Supporting a placement via a matching system:

Schools who wish to support a Salaried student but do not already employ an appropriate existing member of staff may request (via the Regional Consortia) to be matched to suitable applicants to the Salaried PGCE programme (where factors such as geographical location and subject choice make this possible). Eligible students will be invited to a selection day at their regional Lead Partner Schools. Employer schools may request to join the selection panel for prospective employed student-teachers. In the first instance, please discuss your school's interest with your Regional Consortia ITE Lead.

- Please submit a written expression of interest (no more than 500 words across all criteria) which demonstrates how your school meets the relevant criteria set and outlines whether your school's interest is in Primary or specific Secondary shortage subject areas.

Partnership Application Form

Expressions of interest should be submitted by completing [the online form \(here\)](#).

Frequently Asked Questions

We are a special school – can we support OU partnership students?

- The OU Partnership welcomes the involvement and expertise of special schools and we have appointed Lead Partner Special Schools to support us in the design and delivery of the programme. Special schools may support part time students during a second school experience for a limited number of days. Salaried students cannot be placed full time in a special school at present.

We are a Pupil Referral Unit – can we support OU partnership students?

- OU Partnership students (part time and salaried) cannot be placed in PRUs at present. We encourage our students to consider a wide range of educational settings in which to undertake periods of enhancement and enrichment in year 2 of the programme. Student teachers may attend a PRU as part of their enrichment activities.

Can we support both part time and salaried students?

- Yes. It is possible to hold more than one 'status' at any given time. Your school may be a lead partner school which employs both salaried students and supports part time students, for example.

We are an independent school. Can we support OU Partnership student teachers?

- OU Partnership students (part time and salaried) cannot be placed in independent schools at present. We encourage our students to consider a wide range of educational settings in which to undertake periods of enhancement and enrichment in year 2 of the programme. Student teachers may attend an independent setting as part of their enrichment activities.

APPENDIX A

Role and Responsibilities of Lead Partner Schools (LPS)

1. Be members of the PGCE Partnership Committee

- Collaboratively leading on the development and strategic decision making of the programme
- Provide training opportunities for colleagues within the HEI and Regional Consortia areas of the partnership

2.1 Provide high quality learning environments and experiences for student-teachers

- Support students from other lead partner or associate schools to undertake a second teaching experience within the high-quality environment of a LPS
- Provide school staff with relevant expertise within the LPS, the opportunity and release time to undertake the role of the practice tutor

2.2 Where the LPS also supports the ITE teaching experience of part time and/or salaried student(s) in their school:

- To identify suitable departments/classes with high quality learning, including designing an appropriate timetable for each student which meets the required criteria
- Have a clear strategy for the identification, support and development of effective mentors and school coordinators with suitable experience (including those who can support with literacy, numeracy, digital competence and Welsh language development)
- Provide protected time for mentors to undertake the relevant requirements of the programme, including timetabled mentor meetings, formal and informal lesson observations, completion of student progress reports and taking part in mentor development sessions
- Provide additional support and intervention for students in line with the Student Support Framework

3. Jointly with the OUiW Academic team, support the inter-relation of theory and practice throughout all aspects of the programme:

- Through engaging with development workshops for the online module materials
- Support students to complete school experience activities
- Support students in undertaking small scale study in year 2



4. Contribute to the assessment of students in relation to the Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership relevant to student teachers:

- Through providing regular formative and summative lesson observation feedback
- Through regular assessment of student progress

5. Contribute significantly to the recruitment and selection process:

- To provide information to support the Regional Consortia identification of areas of teaching need for recruitment purposes
- Provide a suitable area in the school in which to conduct interviews;
- Take part in the interviewing of applicants

APPENDIX B

Roles and Responsibilities of an Associate School

1. To support the ITE Teaching Experience of Part Time students:

- To identify suitable departments/classes with high quality learning, including designing an appropriate timetable for each student which meets the required criteria.
- Have a clear strategy for the identification, support and development of effective mentors and school coordinators with suitable experience (including those who can support with literacy, numeracy, digital competence and Welsh language development).
- Provide protected time for mentors to undertake the relevant requirements of the programme, including timetabled mentor meetings, formal and informal lesson observations, completion of student progress reports and taking part in mentor development sessions.
- Provide additional support and intervention for students in line with the Student Support Framework.

2. Jointly with the OUiW Academic team, support the inter-relation of theory and practice throughout all aspects of the programme:

- Support students to complete school experience activities
- Support students in undertaking small scale study in year 2

3. Contribute to the assessment of students in relation to the Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership relevant to student teachers:

- Through providing regular formative and summative lesson observation feedback
- Through regular assessment of student progress

APPENDIX C

Roles and Responsibilities of an Employer School

1. To support the ITE Teaching Experience of Salaried students:

- To identify suitable departments/classes with high quality learning, including designing an appropriate timetable for each student which meets the required criteria of a graduated and scaffolded introduction to teaching.
- Have a clear strategy for the identification, support and development of effective mentors and school coordinators with suitable experience (including those who can support with literacy, numeracy, digital competence and Welsh language development).
- Provide protected time for mentors to undertake the relevant requirements of the programme, including timetabled mentor meetings, formal and informal lesson observations, completion of student progress reports and taking part in mentor development sessions.
- Work closely with the Practice Tutor from the cluster Lead Partner School to support the development of both student teachers and mentors.
- Provide additional support and intervention for students in line with the Student Support Framework.
- Agree to and support the student teacher to undertake the mandatory second school experience and other enhancement and enrichment opportunities.

2. Jointly with the OUiW Academic team, support the inter-relation of theory and practice throughout all aspects of the programme:

- Support students to complete school experience activities
- Support students in undertaking small scale study in year 2

3. Contribute to the assessment of students in relation to the Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership relevant to student teachers:

- Through providing regular formative and summative lesson observation feedback
- Through regular assessment of student progress