Introduction
These notes introduce the application process and provide general guidance on how to apply, how applications are considered and what documents you will need to provide. Before you start to complete an application form, please read these notes fully.

The application form can be completed either in English or in Welsh. Please complete all details fully.

If you have further questions on how to apply/how to complete the application form, please contact Wales-PGCE@open.ac.uk

How to apply
The main PGCE programme starts in October each year and for 2021 entry application open in November 2020.

The first step is to check the entry criteria and ensure you are eligible to apply. This means that as you submit your application you will either fully meet the criteria for a degree and relevant GCSE qualifications. or you will be in the process of undertaking equivalency tests to meet the GCSE criteria.

If you do not currently meet the UK degree requirement (or equivalent) you will need to cease your application. You can apply to study towards an undergraduate degree with the Open University or another provider. For further information see www.open.ac.uk and our guide to teaching as a career:  https://help.open.ac.uk/becoming-a-teacher  . Further advice and guidance on the route into teaching is available from the OU.

You must present clear reasons in your supporting statement for wishing to enter the teaching profession and outline the personal qualities you think you’ll bring to teaching.

In addition to ensuring that your application form meets the entry requirements and personal qualities expected, you are also required to demonstrate the ability to communicate clearly and accurately in written standard English or Welsh.

There are two routes available in this PGCE programme, the Salaried route and the Part time route. Please ensure you have read the relevant guidance to understand the differences between the two routes. If you are still unsure, please contact the PGCE Wales team for advice at Wales-PGCE@open.ac.uk

There will be a limited number of places available on both the Salaried and part time routes, therefore the earlier you apply will be to your advantage.
The programme is a continuous two-year commitment (22 months), with a summer break between year 1 and year 2 of study. Please ensure you are clear on your availability for the full period before you apply.

SECTION 1 – Application Type

Use of the Welsh Language and teaching experience in a Welsh medium school

It is an aim of the programme to encourage more teachers in Wales to train and to teach in the Welsh medium and within Welsh medium schools. If you have any interest and capability in this area, please let us know in your application form and we can explore with you further. This is not a required commitment at this stage of application and your interests can be discussed further at interview, if you are offered one. **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.**

To enable us to plan placements, you should also indicate whether you wish to complete your practice learning placements in a Welsh medium school.

Salaried Route – supporting Employer School

To be eligible for the Salaried Route, you must be employed in an Employer School by the time you start to study the PGCE. It is not a requirement to apply already with the support of an Employer School but it will support your application if you can. The Headteacher should write a supporting statement and this should be submitted with your completed Application Form. If you are already employed working in a School you will need to ensure your school will support your PGCE application or be prepared to move employment to another supporting school. Whilst we will endeavour to find students Salaried placements, it is important to note that this is not always possible as this is dependent upon demand from schools. You may be offered an alternative place on the part time programme.

Part-time Route – Associate School

For applications to the Part time route, the OU Partnership will find you the Associate Schools where you will complete your school placements.

Placement schools – both routes

In all cases where the OU Partnership finds the schools, will endeavour to place you as closely as possible to your chosen location or your home, however this cannot be guaranteed. Please be as specific as you an in your application form about areas you would be able to travel to and if you don’t have access to a car, please specify this in your personal statement.
SECTION 2 – Personal details

Address- we can only hold one address for you for all correspondence, so please make clear which address we should use.

For salaried students: You may be living outside of Wales as long as you can train in two schools within Wales and you can demonstrate commitment to achieving your PGCE in the Welsh context.

For part-time students: You must hold a permanent residency in Wales to undertake the programme.

SECTION 3 – Qualifications

You must meet the requisite qualification entry requirements; in summary,

- A degree from a UK University (or equivalent). 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.
- GCSE Grade B in English or Welsh Language and in Maths.
- GCSE Grade C in Science for teaching Primary

GCSEs

You may alternatively already hold a qualification of equivalency to GCSEs. See here for accepted equivalency to GCSE Grade B: www.discoverteaching.wales/media/2740/guidelines-for-equivalents-to-gcse-english-and-mathematics-b-grade.pdf

Degree

If your undergraduate degree was awarded overseas, you will need to contact the National Recognition Information Centre (UK NARIC) www.naric.org.uk to obtain evidence that your overseas qualification is equivalent to a UK first degree and enclose this evidence with your application form. Please also send a copy of your certificate with a certified English/Welsh translation. If you do not provide this evidence, your application will be returned to you.

Degree details

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, you must answer the question “Secondary candidates only - If your degree title does not match the subject you are applying to teach, please provide details of how your degree, prior work experience and previous learning is significantly relevant to the subject (for example list specific degree modules)”. If you are applying for the PGCE Secondary Welsh, then you do not have to hold a degree in Welsh as a subject. Strong Welsh skills (i.e. fluency in speaking, reading and writing) alongside a degree in a different subject will be considered.
Alternatively, if you do not possess the relevant subject knowledge, you may consider taking a subject knowledge enhancement (SKE) course via the OU or another provider.


SECTION 4 - Employment history and references

Your experience of working in educational contexts

Where applicable, you can set out your experience of working in educational contexts (ages 3-19). This may be in either a voluntary or a paid capacity. It could be in a formal school/college setting or an informal setting such as a volunteer group, youth group, scouts, other.

Give as much detail as possible to explain your role and responsibilities and be clear on the length of time your experience(s) lasted. Start with the most recent.

For applicants wishing to undertake the salaried route who are not currently employees of a school, and who wish to be matched to an employer school (where the Regional Consortia are able to identify an appropriate school who is also willing to employ the student teacher as an unqualified teacher), experience of working with children and young people is highly desirable and applicants with no previous experience in this area should demonstrate a commitment to working with children and young people by endeavouring to achieve at least fifty hours (where possible) of relevant experience prior to commencing the programme. This will be a careful consideration during a competitive recruitment process.

Your experience of working in other contexts

Here outline any other work experience you have had, either paid or unpaid in any other sector. Start with the most recent.

References

Your first referee should be someone who knows you in a professional capacity.

Your second referee should also ideally be someone who knows you in a professional capacity but could be a personal referee if required.

We would normally contact these referees prior to interview, unless you specifically request us not to.

SECTION 4 – Additional information and supporting statement

Personal Statement

In your personal statement, aim to write approximately 600-900 words, but no more than 1,000. Give as much relevant and specific detail to support your application as possible. Within your personal statement, you should also make reference the subject you wish to teach, and why you wish to teach it.
Section 6 - Equal Opportunities Monitoring

Health conditions, Disability and Ethnicity

Here outline as much information as relevant regarding health and disability. To ensure you are able to complete the demands of a 2-year PGCE programme and of the teaching profession itself, we may need to ask you to complete a further health questionnaire. Not disclosing relevant information would be contrary to the requirements of the EWC Code of Professional Conduct and Practice.

Ethnicity information is given voluntarily and is requested in order that we can ensure our programme attracts a wide diversity of applicants and that we can monitor fair procedures throughout.

SECTION 7 - Declaration

You must be able to answer Yes to all the declarations in order for your application to be considered.

What documents do you need to provide at application?

When you have completed your application form you will also need to send photographs/scanned copies of the following documents to wales-pgce@open.ac.uk:

- A letter of endorsement from your school (if you are applying for the salaried endorsed route). This is required in order for your application to be considered, applications for the salaried endorsed route will not be assessed until a valid letter of endorsement has been received.
- Proof of Identity – passport (plus visa if required) or driving license (full or provisional)
- Proof of name change (if required)
- GCSE certificates
- A-level certificates (secondary only)
- Degree certificate
- Degree transcript (secondary only)
- NARIC (if required)
- IELTS confirmation (if required)

How applications are considered

The application process will take some time to complete. It involves assessing your qualifications, your health and your personal qualities and arranging an interview if appropriate. It may also involve finding suitable placement schools if you don’t already have an employer school. We also need to check references, DBS and any other requirements. Delays may occur if we need to check further details with you so please respond promptly should we contact you. Not doing so could jeopardise the progress of your application in time.

Places will be awarded according to how well applicants meet the following criteria:
- Class of degree (with preference given to applicants with at least an upper second degree (2.1) with level 3 degree study in the subject specialism (Secondary)
- Relevance of degree content to chosen subject specialism (Secondary) above the minimum level
- Evidence of knowledge and experience of schools
- English/Welsh language and Maths Above the minimum required GCSE or equivalent qualification.
- For salaried students, a signed letter of endorsement from your employer school

The decision of the academic staff who consider applications is final. In the case where high volumes of applications are received to the programme of your choice, a competitive selection process will be employed.

All applications will be treated in confidence and any personal information you provide will be treated as confidential. Only those individuals required to see this information will do so. However, please be aware that the OU will need to share your application form with the Regional Consortia and with Partner schools.

**Applying for DBS**
Once you have secured a successful interview outcome, you will need to apply for DBS to undertake this PGCE at two schools. This will be managed through the DBS service via an application company. You will pay for this application.
Appendix: PGCE Wales Entry Requirements

You must have the following:

- A UK degree (or equivalent). 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.
- GCSE Mathematics or Mathematics-numeracy at Grade B or above (or equivalent).
- GCSE English Language or Welsh Language at Grade B or above (or equivalent). Or, GCSE English Literature or Welsh Literature at Grade B or above (or equivalent), plus GCSE English Language or Welsh Language at Grade C or above (or equivalent).
- GCSE Science at Grade C or above (or equivalent) if you want to become a primary school teacher.
- Experience working in a school environment/with young people if you want to study the salaried route. Be prepared to complete a voluntary week in school before starting the course if you want to study the part-time route.

In addition to the above, you’ll need to demonstrate the following:

- Aptitude, capability, and resilience to meet the required QTS outcomes by the end of your PGCE programme
- Personal and intellectual qualities to become an excellent practitioner
- You can read effectively and communicate clearly and accurately in spoken and written English and/or Welsh
- Personal functional skills in literacy, numeracy and digital competency applicable in a professional teaching and learning context. This will be evaluated through an assessment.

During the application process you’ll need to do the following:

- Apply for a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check to show that you are not or previously been barred or excluded from teaching or working with learners or have a criminal background that might prevent you working with children or vulnerable people. Safeguarding is a legal requirement.
- Confirm you understand that you will need to complete an extended period of time in a second school.