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WALES CYMRU

CRITERIA FOR THE INCLUSION OF SCHOOLS IN THE PARTNERSHIP

OU ITE PARTNERSHIP

The OU ITE Partnership

Over fifty years, the Open University has helped 2 million students from a wide range of backgrounds to access higher education, gain quality qualifications and help launch them into their future careers. We have pioneered distance learning so that students can fit in study around their busy lives. In 2020, we launched a new, unique all-Wales PGCE qualification with two routes of study: an employment-based option known as the Salaried route and a separate Part Time route.

The OU ITE Partnership has an important social justice mission. We use our expertise in teacher education and distance learning to attract aspiring teachers from all communities across Wales. Combining online teaching with in-school school experience over two years helps remove barriers for people to become teachers. This offers an opportunity to qualify alongside existing work or caring responsibilities, making it more accessible for people, including career changers or mature students.

Our Vision

Initial teacher education in Wales is based on a close collaboration between schools and a university. It is founded on a culture of joint ownership and accountability. At its heart, Partnership culture is about a shared vision for the growth of new beginner teachers, where each partner's expert and unique contribution to the student teacher's learning is recognised and celebrated.

Our vision is that together the OU and schools work in partnership to remove barriers to participation in order to provide a flexible route to developing excellent teachers who may find access to traditional routes more difficult. In doing so, we seek to make a positive impact on the lives of children and communities across Wales. Our mission is to widen access to and diversify teaching and support recruitment to shortage subjects. We are the only employment-based route and part time route in Wales. Distance learning and innovative technology (such as remote lesson observation) is central to our teaching model. We invite schools who share a strong affinity with our vision and our mission to join us as a Partner school.

Becoming a Partner School

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. We work closely with all Regional Consortia and relevant Local Authority ITE leads and they play an important part in the approval of partner status applications. Any school wishing to apply for partner status should discuss this with their regional consortia ITE Lead prior to making an application (please contact Wales-PGCE@open.ac.uk for ITE lead contact details if required).

Schools can then consider to which status they wish to apply and is best suited to their school's strengths and development needs. These roles and responsibilities have been set as per our accredited model in response to [the Criteria for the accreditation of initial teacher education programmes in Wales](#) (Welsh Government, 2018). You may find it particularly helpful to review Section A Part 3 which sets out the vision for school and university collaboration within reformed models of ITE.

We have three types of Partner School status and a full description can be found on our [Partnership Website](#).

Lead Partner School

Lead Schools play a key role in the governance and development of all aspects of the OU ITE Partnership's provision. They are members of the Partnership Committee with a wide range of strategic and operational responsibilities relating to supporting the OU Partnership provision and developing student teacher progress. Further information is set out in the Lead School Information pack.

Associate School

Associate schools play a key part in widening access to teaching through supporting the learning of part time student teachers across three practice learning placements in a year. To become an Associate school, you'll place high value on a part time route and share our strong social mission centred on promoting diversity and inclusion. You'll need to be a state school who can showcase high quality teaching and learning and progress towards Curriculum for Wales to meet our entry criteria. In return, we'll offer a range of professional development opportunities for your staff and actively

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support your mentors towards the Leadership Standards. We'll also make a financial contribution for the support of usually between two and four student teachers, the equivalent to one to two full time students. This ensures a good peer-network, critical for distance learners, and enables schools to embed initial teacher education approaches strategically.

- ✓ Read more about the Roles and Responsibilities of an Associate School [here](#).
- ✓ [Learn more about the Part Time PGCE route here](#).

Employer Schools

If you wish to endorse an existing staff member or be matched to a Salaried student, you will need to become an Employer school. This means that your school can take a 'grow your own' approach or make an investment in your longer-term workforce needs by being matched to a new employee. You will need to commit to supporting your staff member at point 1 of the unqualified teacher scale for the duration of the programme on a full-time basis and provide significant release time (50% in year 1) to enable a combined timetable of employment duties and PGCE study.

- ✓ Read more about the Roles and Responsibilities of a [Primary](#) and [Secondary](#) Employer School.
- ✓ [Learn more about the Salaried route here](#).

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. It is however important to consider whether your school has capacity to meet the requirements of more than one route of study, as route requirements are structured differently within the school experience.

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 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

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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)

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- 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 ITE 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 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:

<p>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, including the supporting of student-teachers from associate and employer schools to undertake a second school experience.</p>
<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>

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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 senior practice tutors.

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 support the development of student teachers on the part time programme. They may also have staff who are engaged in wider partnership activities (such as the [Practice Tutor role](#)) and are also invited to become members of the Partnership Sub-Committees which provide strategic and operational oversight of key areas of programme provision.

CRITERION 1

Your school has the capacity and capability to engage with the Partnership Committee via the work of the Sub-Committees 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.

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

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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"

Employer Schools

Employer schools are those who support student teachers on the Salaried route. They must demonstrate that they can provide a suitable and effective learning environment for their Salaried student teacher. Schools who are in review or special measures cannot ordinarily be accepted into the Salaried scheme.

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.

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

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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 when opportunities to join the OU Partnership become available and detailed information can be found on our [Partnership Website](#).

If you have any questions or require advice about this process, contact Wales-PGCE@open.ac.uk

Lead Partner Schools

Please submit a written expression of interest via our [Lead School online application](#) form (no more than 500 words across all criteria) which demonstrates how your school meets the relevant criteria set.

Associate Schools

Please submit a written expression of interest via our Associate School [online application form](#) (no more than 500 words across all criteria) which demonstrates how your school meets the relevant criteria set.

Employer Schools

Supporting an existing employee:

- Please submit a written expression of interest via our Employer school [online application form](#) (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 to be matched to suitable applicants to the Salaried route (where factors such as geographical location and subject choice make this possible). In the first instance, please discuss your school's interest with your Regional Consortia ITE Lead or contact Wales-PGCE@open.ac.uk

Thank you for your interest in the OU ITE Partnership.

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 as Lead and Associate schools. Student teacher provision within Special school settings is currently under review.

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

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undertake brief 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.