


In **February 2023**, 147 students were studying on the first year of The Open University Partnership in Wales PGCE Programme. Students were invited to complete an online survey and volunteer to be interviewed about their experiences of studying either the part-time or salaried PGCE. The following is a summary of the full report's findings.

39 PGCE students responded to the online survey 

21 Training on the salaried route 

18 Training on the part-time route 


29 Training to teach primary 


10 Training to teach secondary 

7 PGCE students interviewed 


Household circumstances

Immediately before starting the PGCE

 **24 out of 34** survey respondents (71%) reported earning a household income **below £31,200***.

 **17 out of 39** survey respondents (44%) have **children in their household**.

Employment and work experience

 35 out of 39 (90%) were employed immediately before the PGCE


 34 out of 35 (97%) were working 16-38 hours/week

 33 out of 35 (94%) were employed in education

*I've looked into applying to do the full-time PGCE course for a few years but **couldn't afford it**. When I found The Open University course it was ideal.
(Primary, salaried student)*

The Open University Partnership in Wales PGCE Programme as a route into teaching

The main reason for applying to the OU Partnership PGCE instead of a one year full-time PGCE;

 **Need to earn an income**
(21 out of 26, 81%)

Seven out of 39 respondents (18%) had previously applied to a full-time PGCE course.

*the median household disposable income in the UK - £32,300 (2022)

Other reasons for selecting The OU Partnership PGCE include:

- Childcare, family and other commitments
- Desire for a less stressful option
- Part-time route offers better work/ life balance
- Prefer work-based learning



Many student teachers (37 out of 39, 95%) have work experience from non-educational settings:

Administration
Pharmacy
Recruitment
Accountancy
Private tutor
Lecturing
Project management
Retail
Catering and hospitality
Hairstressing
Sports coaching
Customer service
Social work
Agriculture
Play work

The Open University Partnership in Wales PGCE Programme

I simply could not have **balanced family** life alongside that level of commitment. Plus I could **not have afforded** to change career and take time out to study until now.
(Primary, part-time student)

The **live seminars** were the best part [...] they have good ideas for the classroom.
(Secondary, salaried student)

Having the support from the **tutors** and **online seminars** has helped as it has given opportunities to hear other people's questions which has also supported me.
(Primary, part-time student)

I am able to succeed as the PGCE programme gives me the **flexibility** to continue to **work and study** at the same time.
(Primary, salaried student)

The features of the PGCE Programme helping student teachers to succeed

Some students reported more than one feature, the main features mentioned were:

 **Support of curriculum tutor**
(9 out of 28 respondents)

 **VLE and online lectures/seminars**
(6 out of 28 respondents for both)

Other key features reported as providing support:

Online forums Placement Ease of accessing support Practice Learning Activities Weekly round-up information



The student teachers interviewed commented on some of the difficulties they encountered. For example, **balancing study** with other commitments; becoming familiar with **educational terminology** if no previous education work experience.

Widening access into the teaching profession

Why do you want to teach?



22 out of 34 survey respondents (65%) want to **make a difference** and inspire children.



12 out of 34 respondents (35%) want to progress their career in education/ fulfil an **ambition** in education by completing the PGCE.



12 out of 34 respondents (35%) are motivated by their **passion** for teaching in general and/or for their subject.

Emphasising the **flexibility** of the PGCE and offering **incentives** to attract under-represented groups were viewed as important; and ensure that headteachers are knowledgeable about the PGCE.

Student teachers on The Open University Partnership in Wales PGCE Programme continue to be drawn from diverse backgrounds. More student teachers on the programme are from the older age groups and bring a broad range of valuable life skills to their role.

I want to **make a difference** to young people's lives, and after having my own children and supporting them I decided I wanted to do this. **Being employed** is helping as I can draw on experiences and **see the links to the theory** side of things.
(Primary, salaried student)