OU Initial Teacher Education

Partner School Handbook

Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) Wales

This document is also available in Welsh. Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

The Open University
Y Brifysgol Agored
Wales Cymru

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1. Foreword



Dr Sarah Stewart, Director of PGCE



Mr Richard Hatwood, Headteacher and Chair of Partnership Committee

We are pleased to introduce this revised Partner Handbook for the OU Initial Teacher Education (ITE) partnership.

Over recent years, the partnership has evolved rapidly in response to stakeholder feedback, regulatory expectations, and the changing needs of the education system in Wales. While this has supported innovation and responsiveness, we recognise that guidance has become too detailed and, at times, difficult to navigate within busy school contexts.

We have listened to partner feedback, which has highlighted the need for clearer, more accessible guidance and reduced duplication, enabling more time focused on supporting student teachers.

This handbook responds to that feedback by providing a streamlined, practical reference guide, supported by live briefings, training, and weekly drop-in sessions. It is designed to support clarity and consistency while reducing unnecessary administrative burden.

A key development this year is the introduction of the progression framework, which provides a shared structure for understanding how student teachers develop over time, replacing our previous practice learning assessment framework. It strengthens consistency across the partnership and supports more focused, evidence-informed professional dialogue about progress and development, reflecting the revised model of Professional Standards in Wales.

This approach reflects a shared commitment to improving quality, strengthening mentoring and school-based support, and ensuring expectations are clear, proportionate, and consistently applied across the partnership.

We will continue to refine this model in collaboration with partners to ensure it remains responsive, sustainable, and focused on high-quality teacher development.

S Stewart

R Hatwood

2. Welcome to the OU ITE Partnership



This guide helps Partner Schools support salaried and part-time student teachers, outlining key roles, responsibilities, and programme requirements.

The OU ITE Partnership delivers the only all-Wales PGCE programme. Combining online learning with either an employment-based salaried route or a self-funded part-time route, we are making teaching more accessible across Wales.

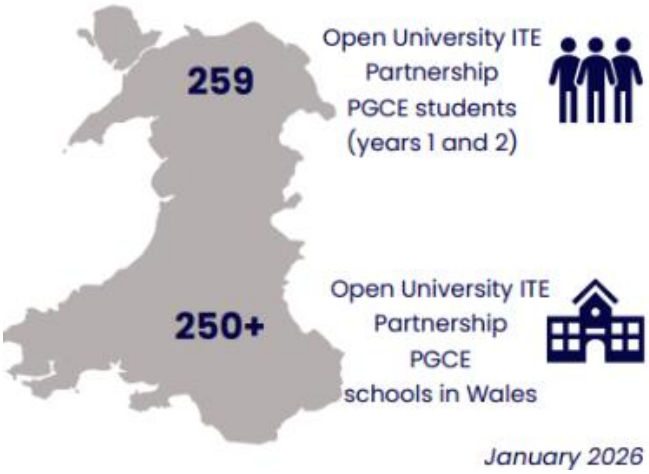


Figure 1: Partnership data

A Strong Collaborative Partnership

Our success relies on close collaboration with six Lead Partner schools, who help shape the programme, and a wider network of around 250 Partner schools providing high-quality school-based learning.

Our schools range from large city-centre and small rural schools to special and faith schools, reflecting the diversity of our communities and our student teachers.

3. A Partnership Approach to Developing Future Teachers
A Simpler Way of Working Together

We know supporting student teachers involves balancing key programme requirements alongside your day-to-day role. To make this easier, we've streamlined our guidance and shifted towards live, responsive support through briefings and weekly drop-ins.

While this handbook outlines key expectations, many questions are best addressed through dialogue - helping you respond to the needs of students across our flexible part-time and salaried routes.

As an online provider, we may not always be physically present, but distance does not mean being distant.



1. Briefings & Key Information
- Attend your online annual briefing (offered twice)
- Complete introductory training for your role(s) (every 2 years)
- Use your role-based planner for key dates and activities



2. Weekly Drop-ins
Every Monday, 3.30pm (Teams)
- Link available on the Partnership website
- Can't attend? Arrange another time with a member of our team
  - Angela.Thomas@open.ac.uk or Catharine.Bleasdale@open.ac.uk
- Some sessions include focused themes (see newsletter)

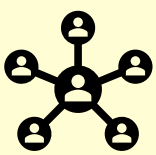


3. Student-Specific Support
- Contact your student's **Curriculum Tutor**
- They will introduce themselves at the start of term by email



4. Operational Queries
- Placements, MoU, finance:
- **Wales-PGCE@open.ac.uk**

Working Together



Using this pathway helps ensure consistent guidance, reduced workload, and stronger connection across the partnership.

Supporting Students Who Need Extra Help

There may be times when student teachers require additional support, either for wellbeing or for professional and practice-related concerns.

For wellbeing support, please signpost student teachers to the **OU Mental Health and Wellbeing services.**

For concerns about progress, contact the **Curriculum Tutor**, who will work with you to implement the **Student Support Framework** and ensure appropriate support is in place.

4. Our Vision: Shaping the Future of Teaching in Wales

Through our **innovative pathways**, we are committed to:

✓ Widening access to teaching
✓ Diversifying the workforce
✓ Recruiting in priority subjects

At the heart of our vision is social inclusion, justice, and equity. We aim to develop high-quality professionals ready for lifelong learning, educational innovation, and lasting impact on schools, communities, and pupils—building a stronger, more inclusive teaching workforce for Wales. Hear directly from our Partners here.

"Our vision is to work in partnership to remove barriers to participation and 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"



Why be a partner school?

Partner Schools play a key role in shaping the next generation of teachers. By welcoming student teachers, your school can:

✅ **Develop skilled teachers** – Mentor students ready to make a lasting impact.

✅ **Enhance staff development** – Access CPD and professional learning opportunities.

✅ **Support recruitment** – Connect with potential future hires.

✅ **Receive financial support** – Funding helps host student clusters, improving the experience for both students and schools.

JOIN US!

- **Express Interest –** Contact Wales-PGCE@open.ac.uk to discuss
- **Submit Application –** Meet the criteria and complete the form: APPLY NOW

Get Started

📌 **Confirm Commitments** – Headteacher signs the Memorandum of Understanding formally acknowledging the school's role, responsibilities, and obligations.

📌 **Appoint a School Coordinator –** Your main contact, responsible for leading ITE and establishing highly effective mentoring in your school.

📌 **Complete Welcome Pack Actions –** Ensure staff have vital access to systems, information and undertake mandatory training.

*"Being a Partner School is more than just a status—it's a commitment to **inspiring, mentoring, and developing new teachers**."*

By signing a formal Memorandum of Understanding* (MoU), Partner Schools confirm they will provide student teachers with:

- Opportunity for peer-support and learning by accepting a **minimum of two students per placement**
- Structured, timetabled **weekly mentoring**
- **Mainstream classroom experience** for the majority of their time
- Teaching across **two consecutive curriculum age ranges** (relevant to the student's pathway of study)
- Opportunities to **observe and experience a wide range of teaching**, developing knowledge of their Primary phase or Secondary subject
- A **graduated introduction** to teaching (30% → 50% → 75% responsibility)
- Support from school staff for **Practice Learning Activities, lesson study**, and Masters-level **Professional Enquiry**
- Opportunities to develop **Welsh language** skills
- Time and support to **critically reflect** on their own teaching practice
- Engagement in non-teaching activities, including work with parents, carers, governors, and colleagues
- ***For salaried student teachers***:
    - 25 days release time in June of Year 1 to attend a **mandatory second school experience**
    - **Protected** online study time

**A headteacher signature confirming statutory, contractual, and financial commitments is required before placements begin. Full details of financial incentives and OU mentoring contributions are set out in the MoU.*



5. Different Routes… Same Destination



The OU ITE Partnership offers two innovative routes into teaching in Wales: the **Part-Time route** and the **Salaried (employment-based) route**. Both lead to the award of a **PGCE and Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)** and combine school-based practice, structured mentoring, online learning, and Masters-level study.

The key difference between the routes is **how student teachers combine their learning with school experience or employment**. The table below summarises the main features of each route to help schools understand how they differ in places.

Feature	Part-Time Route	Salaried Route (Employment-Based)
Who is it for?	Individuals training alongside other commitments	Existing school staff or new employees training while working
Employment status	Not employed by school during practice learning time	Employed by the school as part of the programme
Time in school	Typically **3- 5 days per week**	Integrated into the school timetable
Balance of activities	School experience, online study and independent learning (16-20 hours per week)	Approx. 50% employment duties / 50% PGCE study and practice learning in Yr 1
Teaching responsibility	Supervised and gradually increases through scaffolded teaching experience across placements (30% -50%-75%)	Gradually increases through structured teaching and up to 70% independent teaching in Yr 2
Mentoring	Structured mentoring provided by Partner School	Structured mentoring provided by Partner School
Practice learning placements	120 days in school (25, 35 and 60 days), typically split as 60 days in School A and 60 days in School B. Up to 25 days may be completed in a special school.	Practice learning primarily in employing school. Up to 30% of overall practice learning time can be spent outside of mainstream provision.
Second School Experience	Undertakes placements in at least two schools	**Mandatory 25-day placement** in another school (cannot be waived)
Contractual arrangements	No employment contract required	**Full-time contract** at minimum **Point 1 of the Unqualified Teacher Pay Scale**
Financial arrangements	OU pays financial contribution towards mentoring costs	Receive 50-100% Welsh Government **salary grant** (excludes on-costs and dependent on eligibility)
Programme duration	Mid-September (Year 1) – June (Year 2)	Mid-September (Year 1) – June (Year 2)
Outcome	PGCE with Qualified Teacher Status	PGCE with Qualified Teacher Status

6. OU PGCE Programme Structure
Two Years of Professional Learning

Year 1: PGCE1 & PGCE2 (60-credit Level 6 module)
Building Foundations

- ✓ **Focus**: Observation, planning, co-teaching, and short sequences of lessons.
- ✓ Practice Learning gradually increases from **30–50% (PGCE1)** to **40–60% (PGCE2)** of practice learning time.
- ✓ Part-time students combine online study or placements with other commitments; Salaried students integrate study and teaching within weekly timetable.
- ✓ Introduces **Lesson Study**

Year 2: PGCE3 (60-credit Masters-level module)
Developing Autonomy

- ✓ **Focus**: Growing autonomy in teaching across full timetabled weeks (**70–75% teaching intensity**).
- ✓ **Professional Enquiry** (small-scale research) links theory to classroom practice.
- ✓ Students take responsibility for planning, assessment, and leading learning experiences.

Module Components (all phases)

📘 **6 Themed Online Study Units** – explore theory and professional knowledge
💻 **Fortnightly Online Seminars** – discuss, reflect, and connect with tutors & peers
🖍️ **Tutor-Marked Assignment (TMA)** – apply learning in structured tasks
🏫 **Practice Learning in School** – gradual, scaffolded classroom experience, practice learning activities (PLAs), and two online visits by the Practice Tutor
🏁 **End of Module Assessment (EMA)** – demonstrate knowledge and professional skills

Route	Structure	Practice Learning	Study Time	Notes
Part-time	2-5 days per week in school	60 days per year (inc. 30 block days in year 2)	Independent online study	Travel may be required; slower build to autonomy
Salaried	Weekly blend	Gradual increase from 1.5 days supervised to 3.5 days independent teaching	Protected time in school timetable	Balances employment duties with PGCE learning; includes 25 day **Second School Experience**





Part-Time Route

On the Part-Time route, candidates apply directly to the PGCE programme, while schools apply separately to become Partner Schools within the OU ITE Partnership.

Once accepted onto the programme, student teachers complete a series of school placements as part of their practice learning.

Partner Schools support student teacher development during 25-, 35-, or 60-day placements, providing mentoring and opportunities to observe, practise, and develop their teaching. Most student teachers combine their 25- and 35-day placements in Year 1, completing 60 days in one school, before moving to another Partner School in Year 2 to complete the remaining 60 days, including a 30-day full-time placement block.

The OU ITE Partnership coordinates placement arrangements and works with School Coordinators to match student teachers with suitable Partner Schools.

Schools receive a financial contribution towards the cost of mentoring and supporting student teachers during placement periods.

Student teachers follow a structured programme of mentoring, teaching experience, and Practice Learning Activities, ensuring their time in school is purposeful and well supported.

Existing School Staff

The Salaried route is the optimal pathway for those employed in a school, with 50- 100% salary grant funding available to support costs. Only where this is not viable should schools consider the Part-Time route, which also requires Partner School status, and consider below:

Key Considerations

- During practice learning, the individual attends **in the capacity of a student teacher only**. They must be supervised and **cannot** undertake normal employment duties. Schools should consider the **contractual implications** with their employee.
- Students must follow the Part-Time programme structure and complete all required activities.
- Two school settings is a statutory requirement, so at least **one placement** must be completed in another school.
- Student teachers should **not work full-time alongside the PGCE**, as the programme requires approximately 16–20 hours of study each week to support healthy workload and wellbeing.
- If **conflicts of interest or quality assurance issues** arise, the student teacher may be placed in an alternative Partner School.

Supporting a Member of Staff (Salaried Route)

Did you know? We can help you recruit new secondary staff

The OU ITE Partnership can support your **workforce planning and recruitment** through the Salaried route.

- **Advertising strategy** to help you recruit new staff to train as teachers in your school
- **Matching service** connecting eligible applicants with schools in shortage subject areas (secondary only)
- **Headteachers participate in the interview process** and confirm successful applicants alongside the OU selection process

Contact: Wales-PGCE@open.ac.uk

✓ Schools may endorse a current employee by completing an **endorsement form**.

✓ The employee must complete the **online recruitment process** and meet **ITE entry requirements** (GCSEs, degree; Secondary applicants must demonstrate strong subject knowledge, usually through a degree).

✓ Places are **limited and competitive**.

Access the endorsement form.

Signpost your employee to the application process.

Once a Salaried student teacher has been confirmed, the school must:

- **Agree duties** and timetable – Year 1, balance employment duties (~50%) with PGCE study (~50%). Year 2, 70% unqualified teacher timetable.

  Typical timetable in Year 1:
  - *Employment assisting teaching and learning (~2.5 days/week)*
  - *Scaffolded teaching experience & Practice Learning Activities (~1.5 days per week gradually increasing to 2 days)*
  - *Online learning (~1 day per week gradually reducing to ½ day)*
  - ***Second School Experience:** 25-day mandatory placement (June–July in Yr 1 arranged by the OU ITE Partnership)*

- **Establish contractual terms** – Full-time contract at **minimum point 1 of the Unqualified Teacher's pay scale** (higher points optional at Headteacher discretion) for the programme duration.

Notes

- The Welsh Government salary grant **does not** include on-costs.
- Programme duration: mid-September (Year 1) – June (Year 2)
- Contractual details are agreed between Headteacher and employee; signing the MoU confirms that the financial terms are met.
- Plan contingencies if the Salaried student withdraws; we recommend seeking local authority advice.
- The Second School Experience is **mandatory** and cannot be waived.

7. Shaping Tomorrow's Teachers
Our Student Teacher Vision

Our aim is for OU students to become confident, caring, and creative teachers who think, reflect, and act to make a real difference in every classroom.



Confident and Independent – Able to plan, teach, and adapt lessons across ages, skills and needs with growing autonomy.

Reflective and Analytical – Skilled at using evidence, feedback, and research to improve their practice.





Inclusive and Grounded in the Values of Social Justice and Equity – Committed to pupil wellbeing, rights, and removing barriers to learning for all.

Knowledgeable and Research-Informed – Rooted in child development theory, pedagogy and subject expertise, they integrate theory and practice to inform professional judgement and guide pupils' learning.





Collaborative and Community-Minded – Working effectively with Mentors, colleagues, and the school community to enhance learning.

Creative and Adaptive – Innovative in teaching approaches, problem-solving, and engaging learners in meaningful ways, drawing on their own online and blended learning to use technology to enhance learning





Champion Welsh culture, language, and national priorities - supporting pupils to develop key skills across literacy, numeracy, digital competence, and the Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLEs).

What does this mean for Partner Schools?

To bring this vision to life, schools act as **professional learning communities** where students are guided, challenged, and inspired through:

- **Structured Mentoring:** Provide regular, protected time for feedback, reflection, and planning.
- **Role Modelling:** Demonstrate creativity, adaptability, high expectations, and inclusive teaching.
- **Evidence-Informed Practice:** Encourage students to link theory to practice and engage with research.
- **Gradual Responsibility:** Support students as they progress from observation to independent teaching.
- **Welsh Curriculum and Skills:** Embed opportunities for language, literacy, numeracy, and digital skill development.
- **Wellbeing and Support:** Ensure a safe, nurturing environment that allows risk-taking and learning from experience.



Figure 2: NHS 5 ways to wellbeing

Wellbeing is central to becoming a confident, effective and sustainable teacher. During the PGCE, student teachers are supported to develop habits and strategies that help them stay well, manage workload and maintain balance across study, school-based practice and personal life.

Taking a proactive approach to wellbeing supports both learning and teaching, helping student teachers to engage fully, build resilience and develop as professionals.

Student teachers are encouraged to make use of a range of practical tools and support, including:

- The **OU Student Wellbeing App** and **Student Wellbeing Handbook**
- Regular conversations with Mentors and Tutors including 1:1 tutorials
- Student Teacher planner (aligned to the Mentor and School Coordinator planners)
- Peer-support and opportunities to shape decision-making, teaching and learning though the Senedd Fach, forums and student groups

These resources support planning, reflection and the development of positive, sustainable habits.



8. How our Students Learn

Student teachers learn through a blended partnership model where practice learning, online unit study and professional reflection are closely connected. Rather than theory first and practice later, learning develops through continuous cycles of practice and reflection.

Read more about the learning theory guiding our programme design here.

1. Learning through Practice

Student teachers learn primarily through supported classroom experience during ***Practice Learning*** time in school. A gradual approach builds resilience, confidence and professional judgement structured across three learning stages:

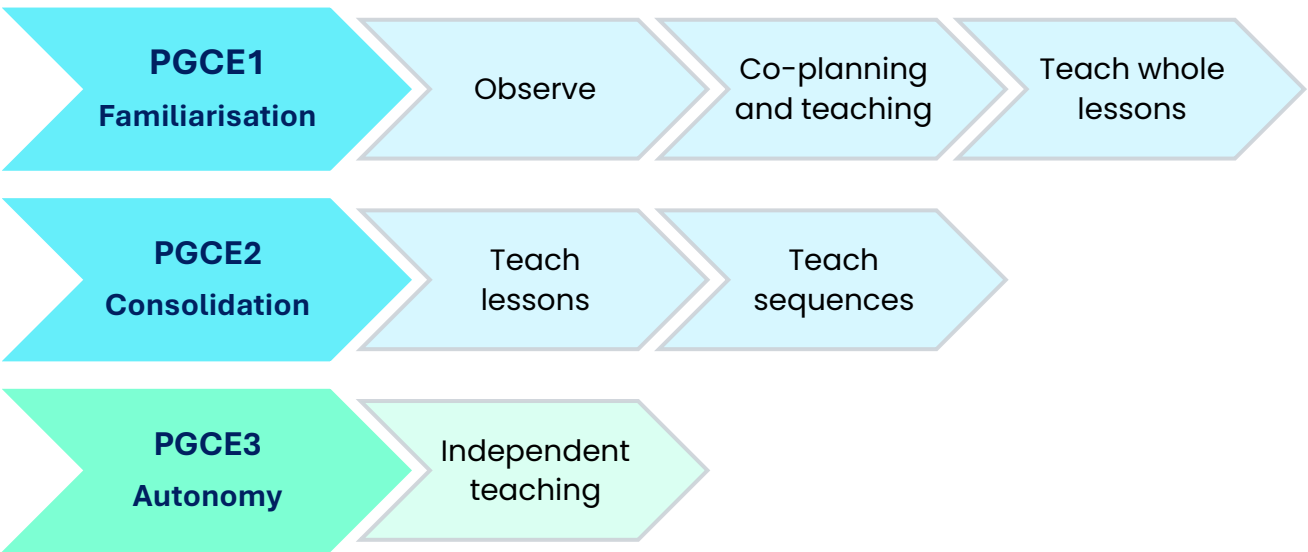


Figure 3: Teaching activity at each level

2. A Spiral Model of Learning

Student teachers revisit the same key areas several times during the programme, each time at a deeper level. There are 6 themed units of study each phase.

Learning focuses on:
- how children develop and learn
- how teaching supports learning
- how planning and assessment improve outcomes
- developing confidence through supported success

Rather than learning everything once, student teachers:
- try ideas in the classroom
- reflect on what worked
- improve their teaching
- return to the same ideas with more experience

Learning is therefore **progressive, not one-off**.

- **Curriculum**
- **Planning for Learning**
- **Pedagogy**
- **Assessment**
- **Understanding Learners**
- **Professional Practice**

Themes of six online units of study

3. Connecting Theory and Practice

The programme is based on the idea that effective teachers develop knowledge in three ways:

- **Learning from study** (curriculum, pedagogy and research)
- **Learning from practice** (teaching and classroom experience)
- **Learning through reflection** (thinking critically about teaching)

Student teachers continuously link:
Study → Practice → Reflection → Improvement

4. Learning through Practical Enquiry

Student teachers learn by **thinking about teaching, not just doing it**.

Lesson Study
- Plan lessons collaboratively
- Focus on how pupils respond
- Observe, reflect and improve together

Professional Enquiry (small-scale study)
- Ask a question about teaching or learning
- Engage in theory and research
- Try an informed approach in the classroom
- Reflect on the impact on pupils

These approaches help student teachers become **reflective and evidence-informed teachers**.

5. Learning as Part of a Professional Community

Student teachers learn through **professional relationships**, not in isolation.

They are supported by:
- Mentor (School)
- School Coordinator (School)
- Wider school staff (School)
- Curriculum Tutor (University)
- Practice Tutor (Partnership)

Learning happens through **discussion, feedback, reflection and collaboration** to develop the student teacher's professional knowledge.

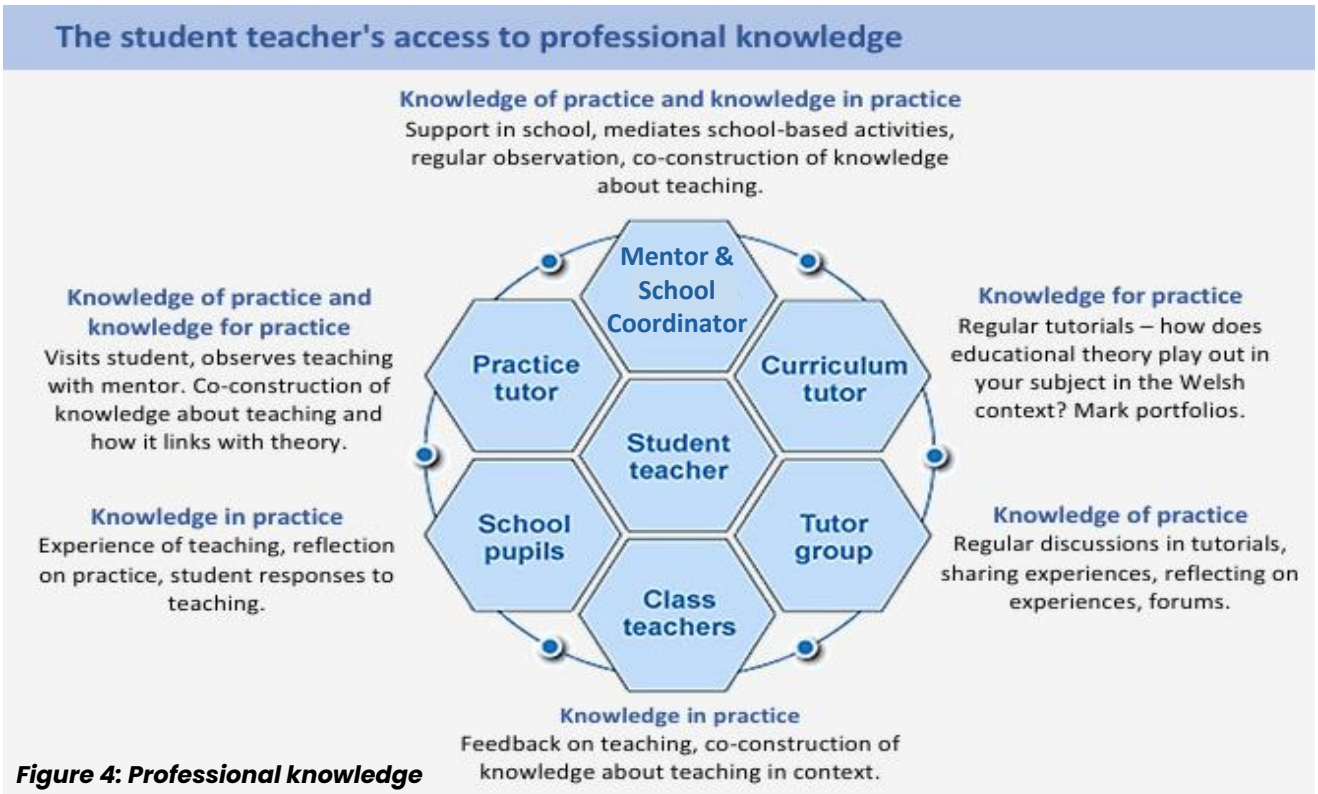


***Figure 4*: Professional knowledge**

9. Teacher Educator Roles in the Partnership

Student teachers are supported by a professional team across the partnership.

Learning is delivered through a **blended model**: much of the academic study happens online, but, in school, the **School Coordinator and Mentor provide the key face-to-face support** that helps theory and practice connect.

Each role has a clear and distinct responsibility in guiding and nurturing the student's development.





SCHOOL COORDINATOR

Leads ITE in the school

- Plans and oversees the student teacher's learning in school, including facilitating practice learning activities
- Supports and guides the Mentor team and assures high-quality mentoring provision
- Ensures timetables and opportunities meet programme requirements and support student progress
- Works with the university to monitor progress and quality of support





MENTOR

Supports the student teacher day-to-day

- Meets weekly/every 5 days to support planning, teaching and reflection through structured mentoring
- Observes teaching and provides feedback
- Helps connect theory and practice through mediating practice learning activities in school
- Guides progress towards QTS using the progression framework





CURRICULUM TUTOR

Leads academic and professional learning

- Leads online study, seminars and individual tutorials
- Provides academic guidance and feedback on assignments
- Monitors progress across the programme
- Supports wellbeing
- Leads additional support where required by the student support framework





PRACTICE TUTOR

Supports practice learning across schools

- External, experienced practitioner (usually in a partner school)
- Makes two *online visits* to observe, assess and verify student progress
- Regularly review student teachers' e-portfolio via the PLP
- Coaches and supports Mentors to strengthen mentoring quality
- Helps quality-assure practice learning and shares best practice across the partnership

School-Based Roles and Responsibilities
School Coordinator

The School Coordinator provides strategic leadership for ITE within the school. They are responsible for the overall quality and consistency of student teacher experience, ensuring mentoring, placement organisation, and school-based training are effectively coordinated. They act as the main link between the school and the partnership and are accountable for ensuring expectations are understood and met across the school setting.

Key Responsibilities:

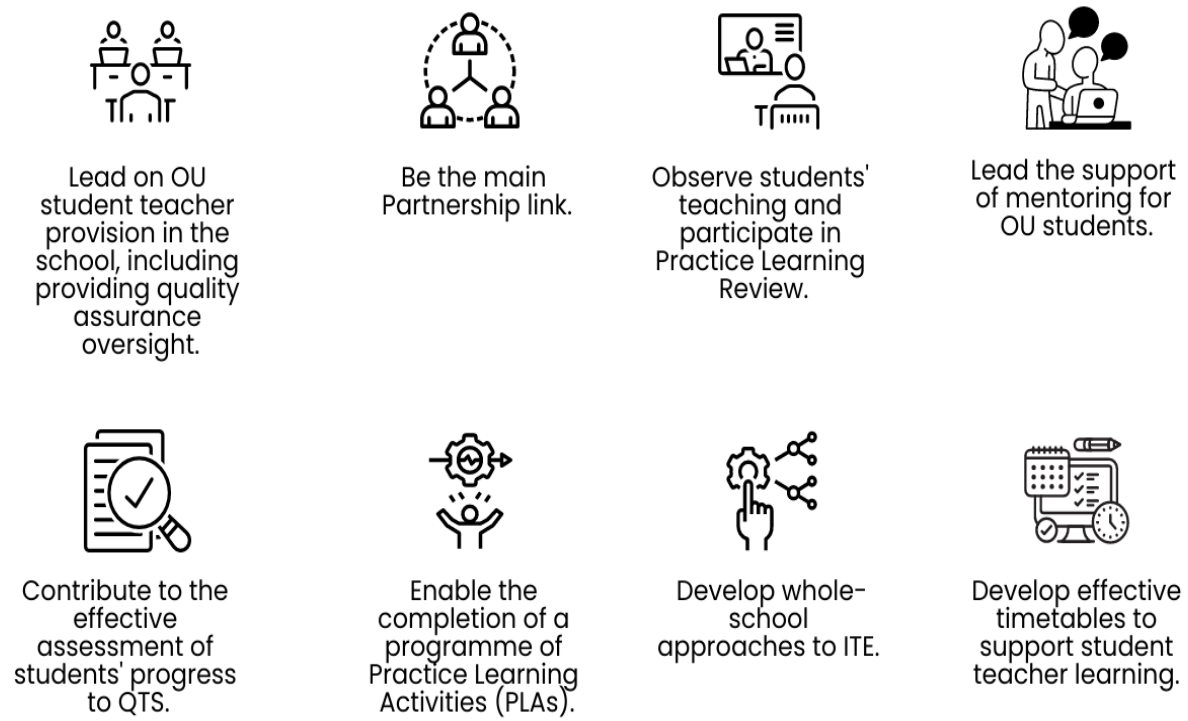


Figure 5: School Coordinator roles and responsibilities

Get started: Register your role as School Coordinator using our Partner Registration Form. Identify experienced practitioners as Mentors and ensure they complete the form. This allows us to confirm your role, share key information, and provide access to systems such as the PLP. We **cannot** set this up without completed forms.

Understand your role: If you are new to the partnership, or have not yet completed the online School Coordinator Essentials Training (required every two years), this is your starting point for understanding your role. It provides a clear operational overview of key responsibilities and expectations.

Attend the annual briefing: We run both Welsh and English-medium events. Each briefing is delivered twice at different times to support attendance and is tailored by role. We recommend those supporting salaried students attend the earlier session, and those supporting part-time students attend the later session to align with the start of practice learning periods across routes.

Stay connected: Attend regular drop-ins to check in with the Professional Learning Team and raise any questions. Read the termly newsletter and share key updates with your Mentor team.

School-Based Roles and Responsibilities
Mentor

Mentors are experienced classroom practitioners who work day-to-day with student teachers to support their development in practice. They provide structured guidance in lesson planning, teaching, assessment, and subject knowledge, alongside regular feedback and professional dialogue. Mentors play a key role in helping student teachers reflect on their practice and make progress against the expectations for QTS, working closely with School Coordinators and the wider partnership to ensure consistent, high-quality support.

Key Responsibilities:

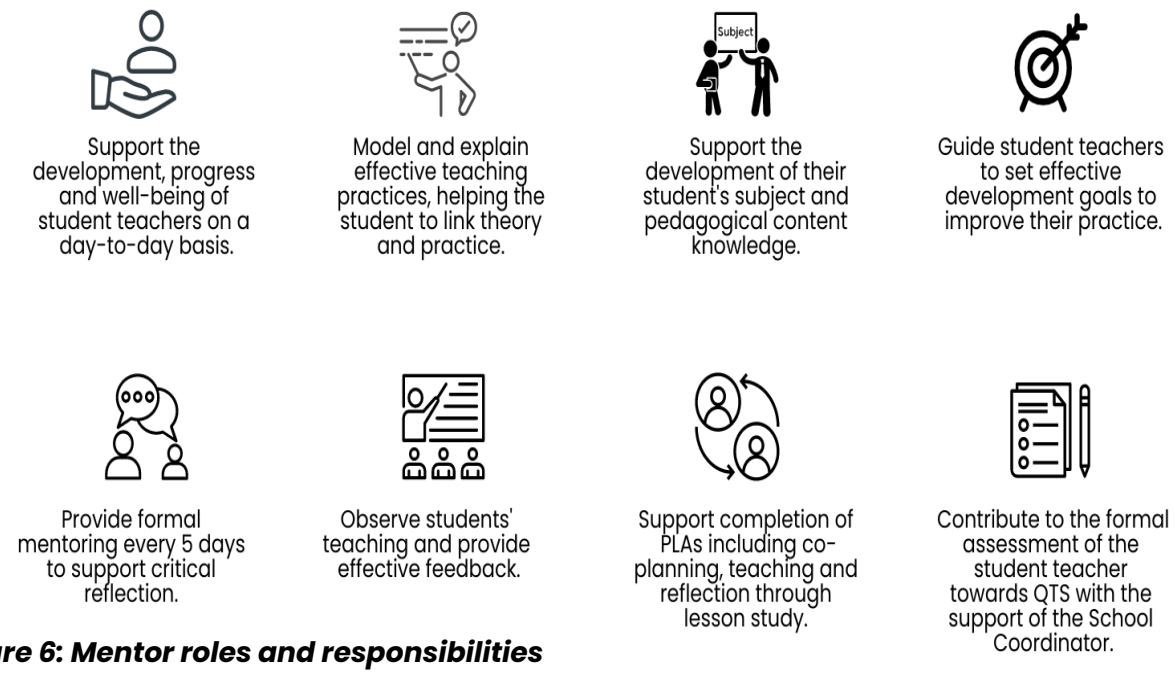


Figure 6: Mentor roles and responsibilities

Get started: Register your role as a Mentor using using our Partner Registration Form. This confirms your role, enables access to systems such as the PLP, and ensures you receive key information. We **cannot** set this up without a completed form.

Understand your role: If you are new to the OU role, or have not completed Mentor Essentials (required every two years), this is your starting point. It outlines mentoring expectations within this model and what it means to be an OU Mentor. This is developed further through A Mentoring Mindset, an online course on effective mentoring across the student journey (to be completed within 18 months).

Attend the annual briefing: We run Welsh and English-medium briefings, each delivered twice at different times to support attendance. Sessions are tailored by role.

Resources to support you: You are supported through key resources including the Mentor Planner (dates and activities), weekly drop-ins with the Professional Learning Team, and the Mentor Toolkit, a practical resource for supporting student teachers in practice. **Just a quick reminder**: if you haven't registered as a Mentor, we won't hold your details so will be unable to send you key resources.

10. School-Based Provision
How Schools Support Student Teacher Learning

Within the reformed model of ITE in Wales, Partner Schools play a central role in designing and leading student teacher learning across 120 days of school experience.

Drawing on research into effective teacher development, the programme incorporates a range of structured, school-based learning activities led by Mentors and School Coordinators to support student teachers' progression in practice.

Formal Mentoring

Mentors provide day-to-day support, helping students plan lessons, deliver teaching, and develop their subject knowledge through ongoing guidance and feedback. Structured weekly meetings ensure progress is reviewed and next steps are clearly planned, supporting students to actively build skills, confidence, and links between theory and classroom practice.

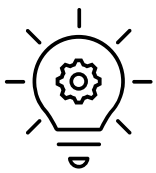




A Mentoring Mindset is our professional learning resource to support Mentors' understanding of theories of effective mentoring and supports them in developing students' skills at each stage of the course.

Practice Learning Activities (PLAs)

PLAs are structured, formative school-based tasks designed to integrate theory and practice and are supported and mediated by Mentors and School Coordinators. By completing them, students receive ongoing feedback and develop progressively deeper thinking about teaching, building experience and understanding incrementally across the course. Together, the PLAs build the knowledge, skills, and reflection needed for the final EMA.





*Partner schools receive a **role-based planner (by e-mail)** that outlines when and how to support student teachers with their PLAs.*

Professional Dialogue

Professional dialogue is a structured, ongoing process that supports deep discussion about teaching and learning. It takes place between student teachers, Mentors, School Coordinators, and Practice Tutors, and is strengthened through tools such as **IRIS Connect**, **Practice Tutor online visits**, and Mentor meetings. These interactions move beyond routine updates to focus on analysing practice, exploring impact on pupils, and identifying targeted next steps for improvement.





*The **Mentor Toolkit** provides practical, ready-to-use materials that help Mentors and student teachers engage in focused, reflective professional dialogue.*

School-Based Provision
School Support in Developing an Enquiry Mindset

Lesson Study (Year 1)

Lesson study is a collaborative process where Mentors and student teachers plan, observe, and reflect on lessons together to improve teaching practice, build subject knowledge, and deepen understanding of how pupils learn.





*Mentors use the **Lesson Study Mat** as a quick-start guide to this approach to support student teacher learning.*

Structured Reflection and Action Planning Cycles

Schools support structured reflection through regular review of lesson planning, lesson evaluations, and weekly reflections. Mentors use these check-ins to provide feedback, prompt deeper thinking, and help students link practice to the OU reflection model and progression framework, ensuring reflection is focused and improvement-driven.





*Effective reflection helps student teachers identify SMART targets, captured in the **Target Tracker** section of their PLP e-portfolio, giving all relevant colleagues a clear, shared view of development needs.*

Professional Enquiry (Year 2)

Professional enquiry is a small-scale, practice-based investigation where student teachers explore an aspect of teaching and learning in depth, using classroom evidence and research to improve practice. School Coordinators support by approving the enquiry focus within the school context and acting as gatekeepers for ethical approval. Mentors may contribute by offering subject and pedagogical expertise. With further support by Curriculum Tutors, the enquiry helps students link theory and practice and develop evidence-informed professional judgement.



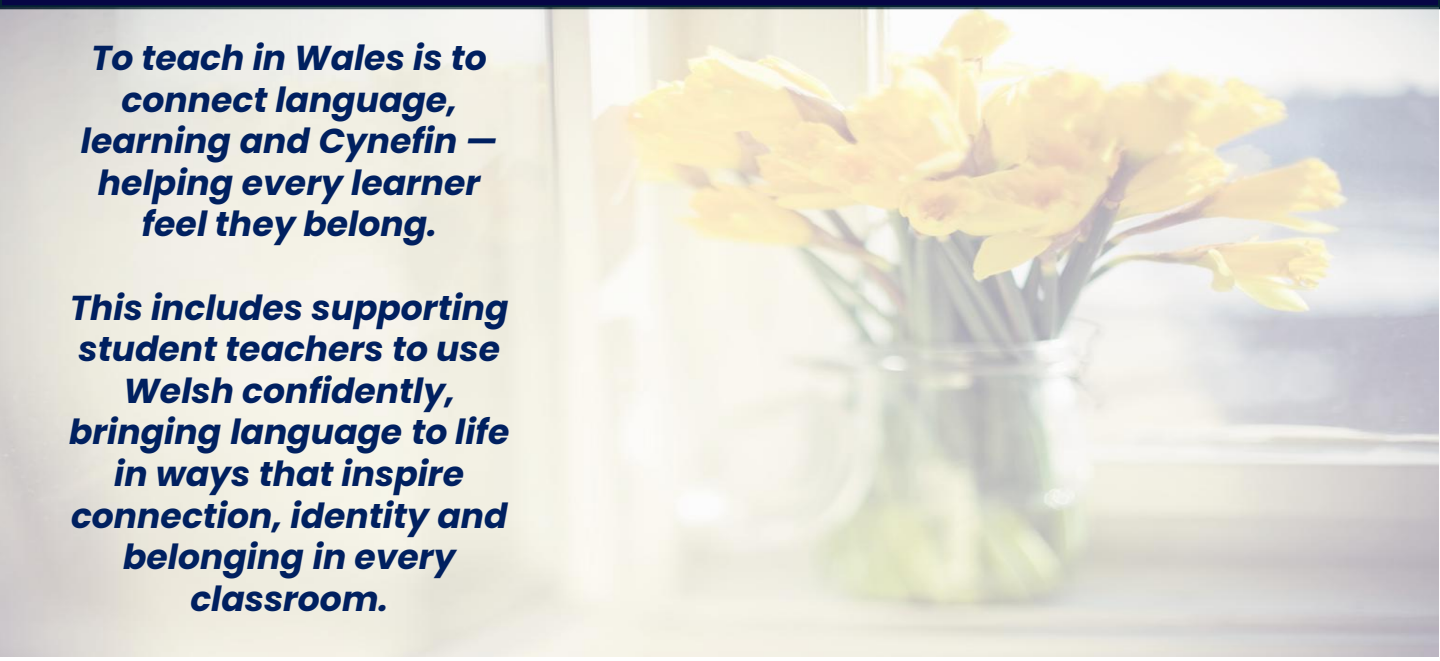


*The **Professional Enquiry Handbook** provides guidance for planning and carrying out the student's small-scale enquiry. It outlines key stages, ethical considerations, and school-based processes, and supports Mentors, School Coordinators, and student teachers to ensure enquiries are feasible, rigorous, and focused on improving practice.*

Through adopting these key approaches, Partner Schools play a central role in ensuring student teacher learning is consistently supported and of high quality.

Mentors and School Coordinators ensure these elements are implemented effectively and focused on improving classroom practice, building the student teacher's confidence, competence, and professional judgement over time.

11. Anogwr y Gymraeg
Championing the Welsh language



To teach in Wales is to connect language, learning and Cynefin — helping every learner feel they belong.

This includes supporting student teachers to use Welsh confidently, bringing language to life in ways that inspire connection, identity and belonging in every classroom.

Welsh language development is an important part of becoming a teacher in Wales. Student teachers are supported to develop their own Welsh language skills and to use Welsh confidently and appropriately in classroom and professional contexts.

This also includes developing the ability to support pupils' Welsh language learning through everyday teaching, and understanding how language, identity and learning are shaped by Cynefin and Welsh culture.

Each student teacher should have access to a Welsh language and pedagogy champion in their school – the Anogwr y Gymraeg. This is a go-to person for advice, modelling and support. This role may be the Mentor where appropriate expertise exists, or another member of staff who is confident in supporting Welsh language use and bilingual pedagogy for language teaching and learning.

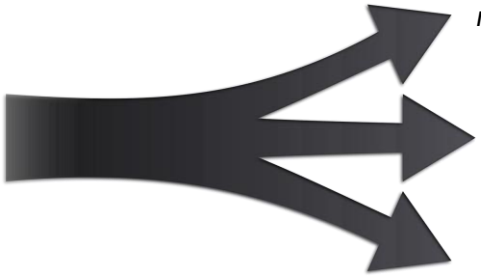
Student teachers are required to build a portfolio of evidence linked to the Welsh Government Language Competency Framework for Education Practitioners.

What schools can do to support development

- Introduce students to Welsh development leads within the school community to share resources
- Encourage students to take part in and promote Welsh language activities in school
- Help arrange observations of Welsh language lessons at an appropriate level to develop understanding of language pedagogy
- Share information about Welsh language activities in the local community e.g. Menter Iaith, Aelwyd yr Urdd, cultural events and organisations
- Meet formally once a term to discuss targets and next steps (see students' Developing my Welsh skills plan)
- Encourage discussion of Cynefin and local context within curriculum planning and pupil engagement
- Help students gather evidence for their Welsh Language Competency portfolio through everyday practice

12. Student Support Framework

The Student Support Framework (SSF) is a structured partnership-wide approach designed to ensure that student teachers receive the right support, at the right time, through three graduated pathways of support and early intervention.



Shared Needs *- to support those with additional learning needs or who may require reasonable adjustments.*

Action for Progress *– used when targeted support and intervention are needed to help a student meet academic or practice-based progress requirements.*

Enhanced Provision *– used when additional support is needed to promote health and wellbeing, or to help a student meet their full potential.*

Figure 7: SSF pathways

Through a collaborative and targeted approach to action planning, the SSF provides a clear process for identifying when additional support or adjustments may be needed and for putting in place tailored provision to help student teachers manage wellbeing, sustain progress, and meet programme expectations. Support may be short term or more structured, depending on individual needs, and is reviewed regularly.

The SSF can be initiated either by the student teacher or by those supporting them and is designed to promote early, consistent, and collaborative support between the school and university.

If you have concerns about a student teacher's wellbeing, or feel that additional support may be needed (for example, reasonable adjustments or support to secure progress), please contact the student's Curriculum Tutor in the first instance. **Early intervention is key to ensuring timely and effective support**.

Where appropriate, the SSF may also operate alongside the OU's Fitness to Study or Fitness to Practise processes. For salaried students, it may additionally be necessary to follow relevant school staff policies and procedures.

13. Design for Learning in the School Setting

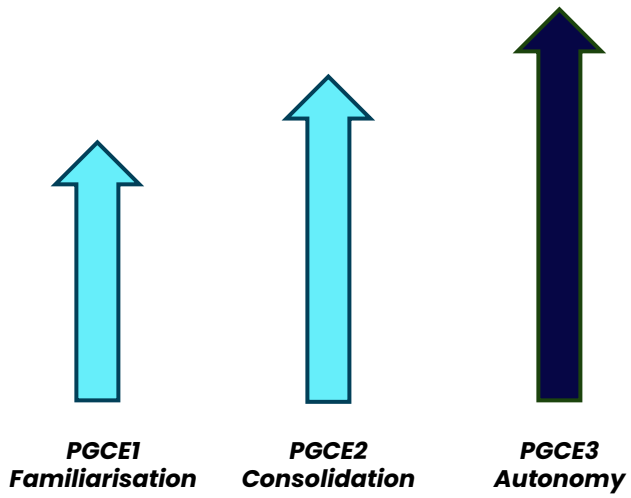
Students on the salaried and part-time routes follow the same programme and must meet the same Professional Standards, but their contexts and starting points may differ, shaping how they engage with learning and the support they need.

Part-time students may need structured opportunities to practise and consolidate, while salaried students often bring prior school experience that requires critical reflection and alignment with programme expectations. All bring diverse, often rich lived experiences that can be a valuable resource in developing their practice. Practice learning is structured differently depending on the route the student is following. This shapes how they balance online study with school-based experience.

In PGCE1, the focus is on establishing foundations of professional knowledge; guided teaching; emerging impact; focus on habits, collaboration, and reflection.

In PGCE2, student teachers develop confidence and reliability; coherent planning, teaching, and assessment; purposeful collaboration; engagement with research and innovation; growing secure professional judgement.

By PGCE3, the focus shifts to demonstrating autonomous, reliable, and accountable practice across all standards and sustained impact on learner outcomes.



As students progress, they may build on earlier learning or encounter new experiences that deepen their knowledge and skills. Development is not strictly linear and may vary across contexts. This means that during their school experience student teachers need to increasingly expand the breadth of their experiences in the school setting. **Practically, this means making changes to their timetable to support this three-stage model of development.**



School Coordinator as Learning Designer

Timetabling guidelines are intended as principles to inform professional judgement. School Coordinators, as trusted partners, are responsible for using them to design effective timetables that support student teacher learning **in line with the accredited model** set out in this guide.

Timetabling should be used purposefully to meet programme requirements and enable high-quality learning within the school context, ensuring a balance between progression, workload and wellbeing, with student development and wellbeing remaining central throughout.

14. School Experience: Practice Learning

The time student teachers spend in school dedicated to PGCE teaching development is called **practice learning**. It includes a range of activities, structured through **Practice Learning Activities (PLAs)** and a **graduated approach to teaching**. A student's timetable needs to consider their prior experiences, their development needs, level of study, route of study and programme requirements.

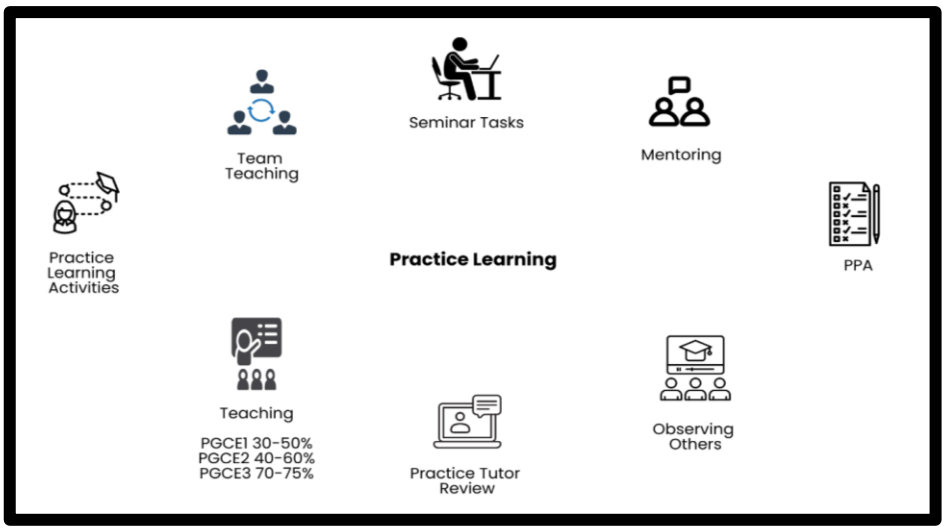


Figure 8: Components of Practice Learning

Throughout the PGCE, <u>all student teachers</u> must:

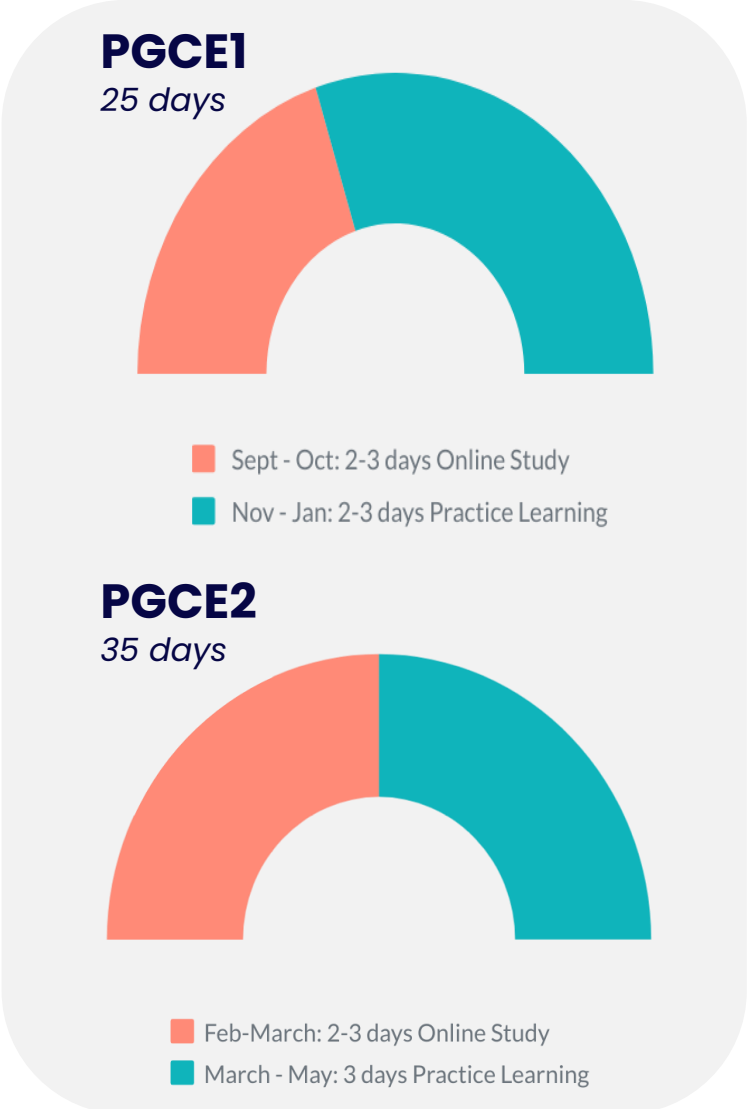
- Gain experience in two schools over 120 days
- Teach across two consecutive progression phases (in primary, across ages 3–7 and 7–11: in secondary: ages 11–14 and 14–16), with evidence confirmed through School Coordinator sign-off
- *Primary*: demonstrate engagement across all AoLEs over time, with progression in curriculum coverage and coherence of learning sequences
- *Secondary*: teach across a range of groups, attainment levels and curriculum topics within their subject, including adaptation for learner need and context

Part Time Route Only

Student teachers complete 60 days of placement in a Partner School in Year 1 (25 + 35 days) and a further 60 days, typically in another Partner School, in Year 2 including a mandatory 30-day full-time block. Online study is self-managed; however, all in-school practice time must be used for the structured activities outlined in Figure 8. **All practice learning must be fully supervised across both years.** Students complete full school days in line with directed time for teachers and must teach a minimum of two days per week during the practice learning windows.

Salaried Route Only

This route requires a structured timetable balancing employment, practice learning and protected online study across two years. In Year 1, employment starts in September, with timetables agreed by October; **all practice learning must be fully supervised**. In Year 2, arrangements are confirmed in advance, and students may teach more independently with close support up to 70% of the time. Schools must ensure dedicated time for all components, adjusting where additional support is needed.



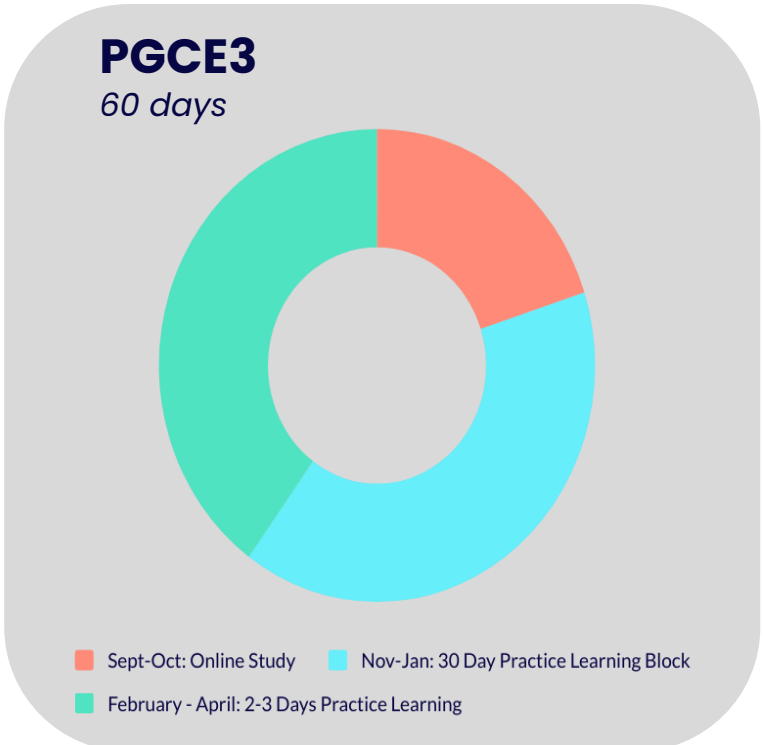


Figure 9: Part Time practice learning structure

Year 1 - PGCE1&2

- **PGCE1**: 25 days (approx. 2-3 days per week or 5 week block)
- Mentoring every 5 days
- Teaching intensity 30-50%, supervised by Mentor/class teacher, remainder to PLAs, mentoring and PPA
- Part lessons moving to full lessons using OU lesson plan

- **PGCE2**: 35 days (approx. 3 days per week or 7 week block)
- Mentoring every 5 days
- Teaching intensity 40-60%, supervised by Mentor/class teacher, remainder to PLAs, mentoring and PPA
- Full lessons moving to sequences of lessons using OU sequence lesson plan

Where PGCE1 and PGCE2 occur in the same school, 25- and 35-day placements may be completed consecutively, with clear progression in responsibility evident over time.

Where PGCE1 is completed in a special school or employed (non-salaried) setting, PGCE2 or 3 is undertaken in a new school to ensure breadth of experience.

Year 2 – PGCE3

- Student teachers complete 60 days of school-based practice
- 30 days must be completed in a full-time block (5 days per week over 6 weeks)
- The full-time block must be completed before February half-term
- Teaching intensity 75% supervised by Mentor/class teacher, remainder to PLAs, mentoring and PPA
- Small-scale professional enquiry
- Mentoring every 5 days

In Year 1, the salaried timetable reflects a balance of employment duties, protected online study, and practice learning time across PGCE1 and PGCE2. In Year 2, PGCE3, student teachers step fully into their role as unqualified teachers alongside continued dedicated time for learning to teach.

Students are based in school from the beginning of September. Online study and induction begin from mid-September, and we ask that the PGCE1 timetable is in place by October. This allows an important induction period for school-based teacher educators and any newly matched student teachers, ensuring expectations, routines and support structures are well established.



Employment Duties

In Year 1, salaried students undertake employment duties related to assisting teaching and learning for up to 50% of their time in school. The remainder of the time is dedicated to PGCE study (see below). By Year 2, they step fully in to their contractual role as an unqualified teacher and can begin to teach independently up to 70% of their time.

Protected Study Time

Online unit study supports student teachers to revisit established practice through a critical, theory- and policy-informed lens. Protected online study time is separate from PPA. It should be provided in blocks of at least half a day. Unit study is complemented by fortnightly evening seminars with the OU Curriculum Tutor.





Practice Learning Time

Practice learning is the designated teaching development time within the PGCE, focused on learning to teach. The figure below illustrates a typical weekly structure, including the organisation of practice learning into a set of specified learning activities.

In Year 1, practice learning **must be supervised** by a Mentor and/or class teacher and take place primarily in mainstream settings, with a maximum of 30% in non-mainstream contexts. Working in familiar settings, student teachers may need support to distinguish PGCE expectations from their usual role and to develop their teacher identity, including adapting existing mentor–mentee relationships.

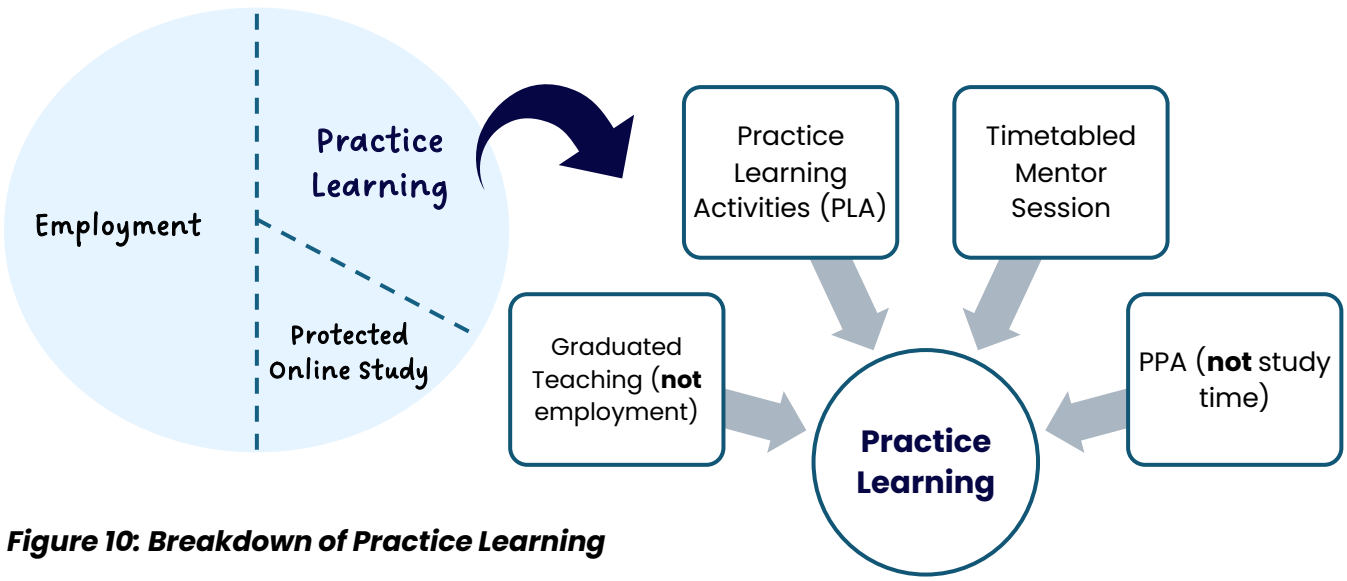
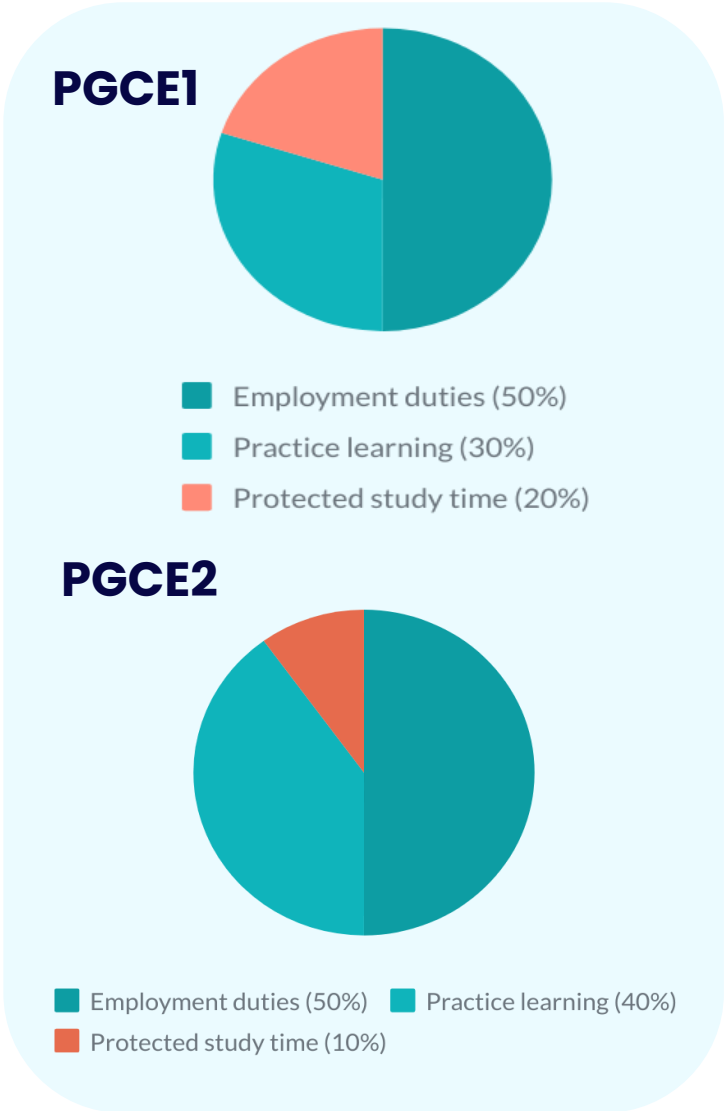


Figure 10: Breakdown of Practice Learning



Year 1 – PGCE1 (Sept – Jan)

- 2.5 days employment duties, 1.5 days practice learning, 1 day protected online study
- Teaching intensity of **practice learning** 30-50%, supervised by Mentor/class teacher, remainder to PLAs, mentoring and PPA
- Part to full lessons using OU lesson plan
- Weekly mentoring

Year 1 – PGCE2 (Feb – June)

- 2.5 days employment duties, 2 days practice learning, ½ day protected online study
- Teaching intensity of **practice learning** 40-60%, supervised by Mentor/class teacher, remainder to PLAs, mentoring and PPA
- Full lessons moving to sequences of lessons using OU sequence lesson plan
- Weekly mentoring
- Mandatory **second school experience** (25 days) from beginning of June (OU will arrange)
- *Optional:* From Easter, decrease employment duties to 2 days and increase practice learning to 2.5 days

Year 2 – PGCE3 (Sept – June)

- 3.5 days independent teaching
- 1.5 days protected study time (1/2 day) and practice learning (1 day)
- Weekly mentoring, supporting structured reflection and progression
- In primary, student teachers should experience all curriculum areas; in secondary, a broad range of subject-specific teaching opportunities
- By the end of the programme, all student teachers must have taught across two consecutive progression steps within both lower and upper school age phases

Figure 11: Salaried practice learning structure

15. PGCE 1 – Familiarisation
Mid September to January

This is the start of the programme where student teachers begin to connect theory and practice, develop confidence in the classroom, and build core teaching skills through supported experience in school and online study.

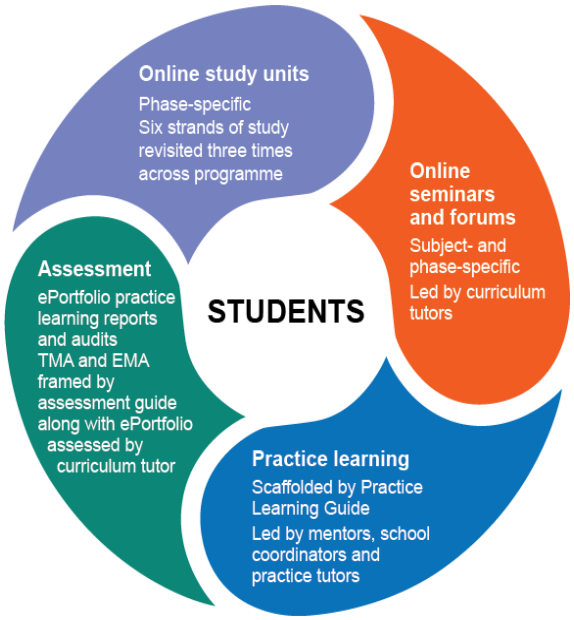


Figure 12: Course components

Supporting an Online/Blended Learner

Online learners succeed when they are **self-directed**, **organised**, and **proactive**—managing time effectively, engaging with feedback, and linking theory to practice, while staying motivated and contributing to professional dialogue. Find out more about learning online.

Early support should help students establish routines, balance commitments, and engage with online learning. Clear expectations, regular check-ins, and encouragement builds confidence from the outset. **Getting Started** is a vital online induction unit to orientate students to the virtual learning environment (VLE).

Focus of Academic Components:
- Values-led, inclusive and reflective foundations for teaching within the Curriculum for Wales framework

Unit Study:
- Getting started, 1A – 1F

Learning Events:
- Module-wide & lead school sessions, tutor group seminars, 1:1 tutorials

Assessment
- Tutor Marked Assignment (TMA) 1 – 2000 words

Student Teacher Knowledge and Understanding

During this phase, the PGCE programme establishes a shared, values-led foundation for teaching within the vision of the Curriculum for Wales, positioning practice as ethical, reflective, and evidence-informed in support of the four purposes as drivers for learning.

Students develop understanding of how learners learn and develop (1A), the importance of inclusion, equity and wellbeing (1B), and how to plan coherent learning that supports progression across the curriculum (1C). Pedagogy (1D) focuses on creating safe, engaging environments through effective relationships, dialogue, high expectations and behaviour for learning, while assessment (1E) is integral to teaching, using formative approaches and feedback to support learner progress and agency. Professional practice (1F) integrates these strands through a focus on teacher identity, collaboration, safeguarding and ongoing reflection.

While common across phases, primary teaching is more holistic, whereas secondary emphasises subject-specialist pedagogy. In both, Units 1A–1F establish teaching as learner-centred and aligned with the Welsh educational mission.

PGCE 1 – Familiarisation
Mid September to January

Focus of Practice Learning:
A gradual, supported approach to planning, teaching and evaluating learning through observation, reflection, team teaching and shorter learning episodes, linking theory to practice.

Practice Learning Structure:

Part time route:
- 25 days in school - supervised
- Teaching intensity 30-50%
- Mentoring every 5 days

Salaried route:
- 2.5 days employment duties
- 1.5 days practice learning - supervised
- 1 day protected online study
- Weekly mentoring

Key Activities
- Safeguarding and Prevent training
- PLAs 1 – 5
- Lesson observations 1&2
- Practice review 1&2
- Practice Tutor visit 1

Professional Practice

The aim of PGCE1 is to develop student teachers as emerging practitioners who, with support, begin to draw on theory to inform practice. Teaching is scaffolded, with increasing independence and intentionality in decision-making, and developing impact reflected in their ability to translate planning into meaningful learning opportunities.

At this stage, **students are not expected to teach without supervision** during practice learning teaching time. Instead, they build understanding of school systems, professional expectations, classroom routines, curriculum progression, and the relationship between theory and practice. They move from observation to supported teaching, developing confidence in planning, classroom management, subject knowledge and professional responsibilities.

For student teachers, this looks like...



Developing consistency in lesson planning, teaching, and assessment



Awareness of the Curriculum for Wales, AoLEs, cross-curricular skills and the four purposes as drivers of learning



Respectful, professional interactions with university staff, school colleagues and pupils



Ability to reflect on practice, link observations to theory and respond to feedback



Understanding of professional duties including safeguarding, health and safety, and statutory training requirements



Impact on pupil learning looks like...
- Pupils can articulate what they are learning and attempt tasks with increasing clarity.
- Pupils recall previous content and make links with support.
- Most pupils remain engaged and complete tasks appropriately.
- Pupils attempt new learning with support; misconceptions begin to surface and can be addressed.
- The student adapts explanations or pace in response to pupil understanding, with guidance if needed.
- Pupils feel safe to participate; behaviour supports rather than hinders learning.
- The student can explain what pupils understood, where they struggled, and what might be adjusted next time.

PGCE 1 – Who Does What?
Mentors



Mentors support student teachers' lesson planning, teaching and evaluation; provide weekly structured mentoring; give developmental feedback; support PLAs and reflection; and engage in professional dialogue to support progression.

Key tasks in PGCE1

- Regularly review planning and evaluations via the student teacher's personal teaching folder (shared via OneDrive)
- Plan and facilitate weekly (salaried) or every 5 days (part-time) mentoring sessions
- Support completion of Practice Learning Activity 3, 4 and 5 (this includes lesson study) - see Planner
- Complete formal Lesson Observation 1 via PLP
- Complete Practice Review 1 via PLP
- Where possible, join your student teacher's tutorial with Curriculum Tutor

Mentor focus also includes

- Establishing clear expectations and routines at the start of placement including agreeing ways of working and Mentor meeting structure (see toolkit)
- Supporting progress against PGCE/QTS expectations through structured professional dialogue, using the Progression Framework to help you
- Supporting the student teacher to use the PLP as an ongoing reflective record of development
- Ensuring feedback from regular review, dialogue and observation is translated into clear next steps for practice, making effective use of the PLP Target Tracker page
- Raising any concerns about progress or wellbeing with the School Coordinator or Curriculum Tutor where appropriate

Top Tips to Get Started

- ❑ **Register** for access to your student's PLP
- ❑ Ask your student to share their **personal teaching folder** and save the link for easy access
- ❑ Use your **Mentor Planner** to find key dates, session prompts, reflective dialogue guidance, and PLA support
- ❑ Watch the short **PLP guidance video** to build confidence in using the system effectively
- ❑ Print a copy of the **Mentor Mat** as an aide-memoire to guide mentoring
- ❑ Find ready-to-use resources in the **Mentor Toolkit** to lead mentoring conversations and link unit study to classroom practice
- ❑ Access the **Lesson Study Mat** to support and guide your approach to **PLA5**

PGCE 1 – Who Does What?
School Coordinators

School Coordinators provide strategic oversight of student teacher learning within the school. They ensure mentoring is in place and effective, coordinate placement organisation and timetabling, and act as the key point of contact for the partnership. They also help ensure expectations are understood and applied consistently across the school setting.

Key tasks in PGCE1

- Identify and prepare suitable Mentors, ensure training and provide ongoing support and leadership.
- Identify 'Angowr y Gymraeg' to support and champion Welsh language development for student teachers.
- Ensure all staff supporting OU students have registered via the Partner Form and can access students' PLPs.
- Confirm any reasonable adjustments for students with ALN.
- Design your students' learning experience through creating their timetable. Facilitate Practice Learning Activities 1 & 2 as part of the induction phase.
- Arrange a safeguarding induction session for students with your designated Safeguarding Officer.
- Make relevant access and permission arrangements, including for the use of IRIS Connect.
- Complete formal Lesson Observation 2 via PLP.

School Coordinator focus also includes

- Establishing and maintaining consistent expectations for student teacher experience across the school.
- Ensuring mentoring is structured, consistent and aligned to programme expectations and the Progression Framework.
- Supporting mentors to use PLP effectively as part of ongoing professional dialogue and evidence of development.
- Ensuring clear systems are in place for review of planning, feedback, and progression discussions.
- Acting as the first point of escalation for concerns relating to progress, wellbeing, or placement issues, liaising with the Curriculum Tutor where appropriate.

Top Tips to Get Started

- ❑ **Register** for access to your student's PLP
- ❑ Use your **School Coordinator Planner** to find key dates, session prompts, reflective dialogue guidance, and PLA support
- ❑ Watch the short **PLP guidance video** to build confidence in using the system effectively
- ❑ Print a copy of the **School Coordinator mat** as an aide-memoire to guide support
- ❑ Get further advice on **IRIS Connect** and handy **templates**

PGCE 2 – Consolidation
February – July

PGCE2 focuses on consolidation and increasing consistency of practice. Student teachers are expected to move beyond supported practice towards more sustained, independent teaching, with a stronger focus on impact on pupil progress and adapting teaching in response.

Focus of Academic Components:
Consolidating professional practice through planning, teaching and evaluating learning sequences, inclusive pedagogy, assessment for learning and professional judgement

Unit Study:
- 2A – 2E: Feb-May
- 2F: June/July

Learning Events:
- Module-wide & lead school sessions, tutor group seminars, 1:1 tutorials, research conference

Assessment
- End of Module Assignment – Part 1
- Students critically engage with educational research and demonstrate how it informs their teaching by reviewing an academic paper, presenting its relevance to practice, and analysing the planning, teaching and evaluation of a lesson sequence taught during placement.



Student Teacher Knowledge and Understanding

Across Units 2A–2F, PGCE2 focuses on consolidating practice and developing students' confidence, coherence and impact across sequences of learning.

Units 2A and 2B deepen understanding of pupils' learning, development and wellbeing, with stronger emphasis on inclusion and responding to diverse needs in everyday practice. Unit 2C develops students' ability to plan and adapt coherent sequences that support progression, using evidence of learning to inform next steps. Pedagogy (2D) strengthens teacher credibility, behaviour for learning and the effective use of subject-appropriate strategies, including dialogue, differentiation and digital approaches. Assessment (2E) supports the use of formative assessment and feedback to evaluate learning over time and inform teaching decisions, while Professional Practice (2F) brings these strands together through reflection, professionalism, safeguarding and effective engagement with school systems.

While core concepts are shared across phases, primary units emphasise holistic curriculum coherence, integrated assessment and sustained responsibility for one class, whereas secondary content apply these principles through subject-specialist teaching, departmental structures and subject-specific assessment frameworks across multiple classes.

PGCE 2– Consolidation
February – July

Focus of Practice Learning: developing increasingly independent, consistent and impactful teaching across sequences of learning

Practice Learning Structure:

Part time route:
- 35 days in school - supervised
- Teaching intensity 40-60%
- Mentoring every 5 days

Salaried route:
- 2.5 days employment duties 2 days practice learning – supervised
- ½ day protected online study
- Weekly mentoring
- Mandatory second school experience (25 days)
- Optional: From Easter, decrease employment duties to 2 days and increase practice learning to 2.5 days

Key Activities
- Welsh language evidence 1
- Formal lesson observation 3&4
- PLAs 6 – 8
- Practice Tutor visit 2
- Practice Learning Report
- Second school experience (salaried only) practice review
- Partnership Research Conference

Professional Practice

During PGCE2, expectations in professional practice shift towards greater independence, consistency and impact. Student teachers are expected to take increasing responsibility for planning and teaching sequences of learning, using assessment to inform adaptations and demonstrate pupil progress over time. Practice should move beyond individual lessons to coherent, responsive teaching across classes, with growing confidence in managing behaviour, routines and learning environments.

Mentoring supports a more evaluative and reflective approach, with students increasingly able to justify decisions in relation to theory, curriculum expectations and pupil need. Across this phase, the focus is on embedding effective practice so that teaching is more consistent, purposeful and demonstrably impactful.

For student teachers, this looks like…



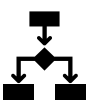
Planning and teaching coherent sequences of lessons that build on prior learning and support clear progression



Using formative assessment and feedback to adapt teaching and demonstrate pupil progress over time



Managing behaviour, routines and learning environments with increasing confidence and consistency



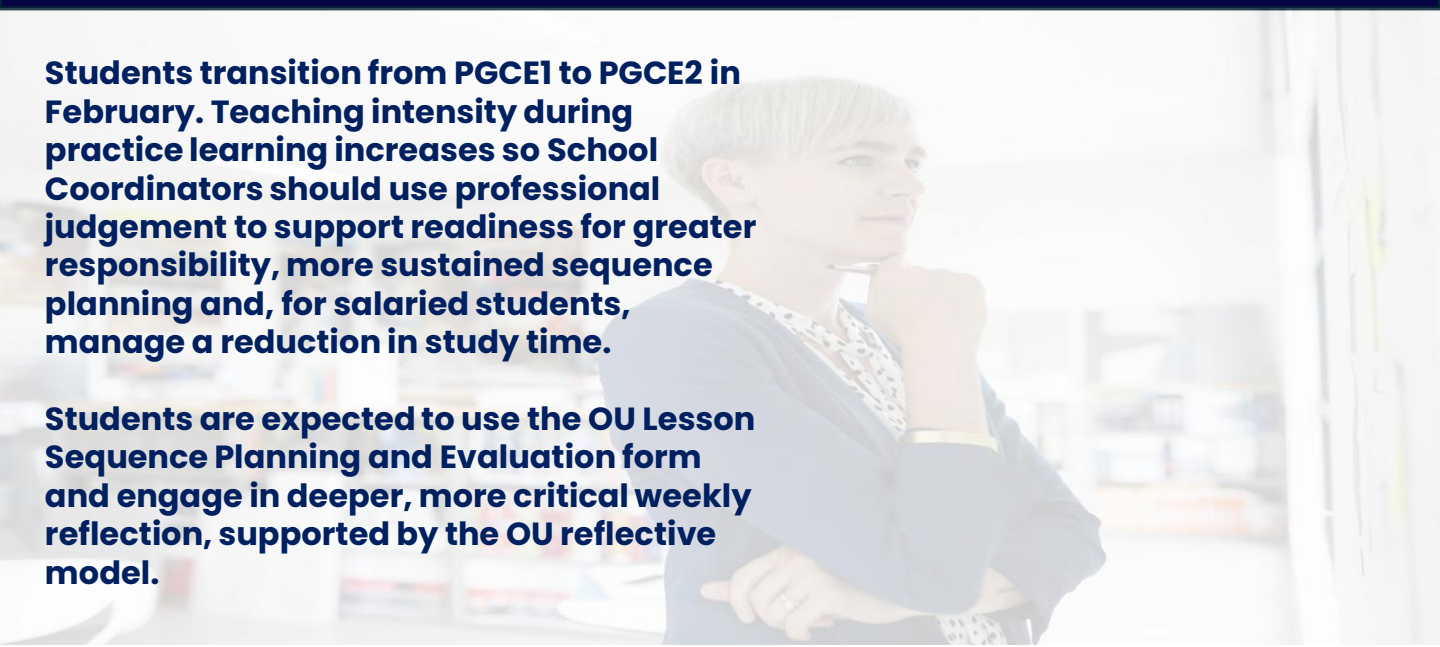
Selecting and applying appropriate pedagogical and subject-specific strategies with growing independence



Reflecting on and justifying teaching decisions using evidence from practice, theory and pupil need

Impact on pupil learning looks like…
- Pupils show secure recall of prior learning and increasing independent application across progression steps
- Pupils are consistently engaged and sustaining focus, supporting progress in learning
- Pupils are applying new learning with less support, with misconceptions addressed more effectively in line with progression expectations
- Pupils demonstrate established learning routines, with behaviour increasingly supporting independence and progress towards the four purposes over time

PGCE 2– Consolidation
Who Does What? Key Tasks



Students transition from PGCE1 to PGCE2 in February. Teaching intensity during practice learning increases so School Coordinators should use professional judgement to support readiness for greater responsibility, more sustained sequence planning and, for salaried students, manage a reduction in study time.

Students are expected to use the OU Lesson Sequence Planning and Evaluation form and engage in deeper, more critical weekly reflection, supported by the OU reflective model.

Mentor

- Regularly review student planning and evaluations via the OneDrive teaching folder, with increasing focus on sequence planning and pupil progress over time
- Plan and facilitate weekly (salaried) or every 5 days (part-time) mentoring sessions
- Support completion of Practice Learning Activity 8
- Complete formal Lesson Observation 3 via PLP
- Complete Section A of Practice Learning Report
- ***For SSE students only***: Complete Practice Review 3
- Where possible, we invite you to attend the Partnership Research Conference
- **Anogwr y Gymraeg**: Provide support to ensure student has evidence for Welsh language submission 1

Mentor focus also includes:

- Developing student teachers' ability to plan and evaluate coherent sequences of learning using assessment evidence to inform next steps
- Supporting increasing independence in teaching, with a focus on consistency, adapting practice and identifying impact on pupil progress over time
- Strengthening professional dialogue that helps students critically reflect on and refine their practice in line with the progression framework

School Coordinator

- Oversee placement structure changes and ensure PGCE2 timetable aligns with programme requirements and teaching intensity (40–60%)
- Facilitate Practice Learning Activities 6 and 7
- Complete formal Lesson Observation 4 via PLP
- Complete Section B of the Practice Learning Report (PLR)
- Moderate Mentor judgements in Section A to ensure consistency across the school, alignment with PLP evidence and PGCE2 expectations, including discussion with Practice Tutors where required
- ***For salaried students only*:** make release arrangements for the second school experience and agree key area of focus
- ***For new students***: PLA1&2 and arrange safeguarding training in school

School Coordinator focus also includes:

- Ensuring the placement enables increasing independence in teaching and sustained sequence planning across the phase/subject
- Monitoring student progress in relation to PGCE2 expectations, including consistency of teaching and impact on pupil learning over time
- Supporting coherence and quality of assessment and mentoring processes

All operational dates are set out in your role-based planner

Salaried Route Only
Second School Experience (SSE)



The second school experience extends student teachers' development by applying and adapting their practice within a contrasting context. It plays a key role in developing adaptable, reflective practitioners who can transfer learning across settings as they progress towards greater independence and autonomy.

Building on the familiarisation phase, it supports the consolidation of teaching skills through exposure to different learners, settings and approaches. This experience enables student teachers to test and refine their practice, deepen their understanding of curriculum and pedagogy, and strengthen their ability to make informed, context-sensitive decisions.

Why this matters

- Helps student teachers grow faster through experience in a different school
- Brings useful ideas and approaches back into your own school
- Builds independence and confidence ahead of final placement and QTS
- Supports strong, consistent teacher development across the partnership

How long?
25-day block (5 weeks)

Where?
At another OU Partner School (placement arranged by the partnership)

When?
June–July (PGCE2)

Can it be changed?
No – this is a statutory requirement and cannot be amended or waived

Can schools arrange swaps?
No – placements cannot be arranged as reciprocal "swaps" due to logistical and programme requirements

What about costs and travel?
Release costs sit with the employer school. The salaried grant is intended to help with these costs. Student teachers may be required to travel up to 90 minutes in line with policy.

Is there a structure?
Yes – the experience follows a defined structure to ensure it meets programme expectations and supports individual development.

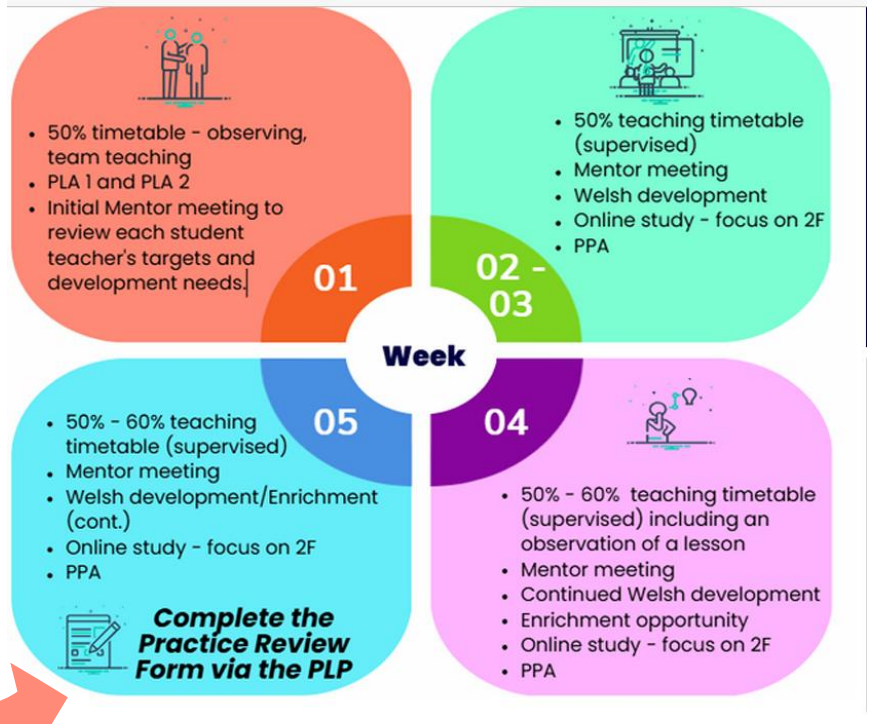


Figure 13: Second school experience structure

PGCE 3– Autonomy
September – June (Year 2 of Study)

PGCE3 is the final stage of the programme, supporting student teachers to move towards independence and readiness for QTS. Building on earlier experience, they take increasing responsibility for planning, teaching and assessment, applying their knowledge and skills consistently across sustained teaching. This phase also marks the shift to Master's-level study, enabling deeper engagement with research, policy and professional practice.

Focus of Academic Components:
Master's-level enquiry, evidence-informed practice, professional judgement and critical engagement with research, policy and inclusive pedagogy.

Unit Study:
- Getting started
- 3A – 3F

Learning Events:
- Module-wide & lead school sessions, tutor group seminars, 1:1 tutorials, research conference

Assessment
- TMA1 –2500 words Professional enquiry proposal and literature review
- EMA – Part 1
- Two school-based tasks: a professional enquiry into your own teaching and an inclusive practice case study of two pupils. Both require critical reflection, engagement with research, and anonymised evidence from practice.

Student Teacher Knowledge and Understanding

During this phase, student teachers complete a year-long 60-credit Master's-level module, strengthening evidence-informed decision-making, professional judgement, and the ability to evaluate and improve practice. Alongside substantial in-school experience, PGCE3 develops confident, reflective practitioners who can make informed decisions, adapt to context, and demonstrate secure impact on learner progress as they prepare for qualification.

Units 3A–3F develop professional practice across curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and professional learning.
- **3A–3B** focus on theoretical and pedagogical foundations, with emphasis on creativity, pupil agency, metacognition and critical curriculum thinking.
- **3C** develops coherent curriculum planning over time, including progression and collaboration with colleagues.
- **3D** (Pedagogy) focuses on inclusive, confident classroom practice using effective subject-specific strategies, dialogue, independent learning and digital tools.
- **3E** (Assessment) deepens understanding of assessment for learning, including feedback, pupil involvement, equity, and engagement with summative processes.
- **3F** (Professional Practice) focuses on wellbeing, professional identity, collaboration, research-informed practice and ongoing professional learning.

While the core expectations are shared, PGCE3 focuses on how student teachers apply increasing professional judgement and autonomy within their phase context. Primary student teachers typically demonstrate this through integrated curriculum leadership and sustained understanding of learner progression across areas of learning, while secondary student teachers demonstrate it through secure subject expertise, curriculum sequencing, and departmental alignment within qualifications and assessment frameworks.

In both phases, the emphasis is on consistent, independent practice and the ability to make informed decisions that have sustained impact on learner progress.

PGCE 3– Autonomy
September – June (Year 2 of Study)

Focus of Practice Learning:
Progression towards autonomy, QTS readiness

Practice Learning Structure:

Part time route:
- 60 days in school - supervised
- Teaching intensity 70-75%
- Mentoring every 5 days

Salaried route:
- 3.5 days unqualified teacher duties (70% independent teaching and PPA)
- ½ day protected online study
- Weekly mentoring, PLAs, Professional Enquiry

Key Activities
- PLAs 1-7
- Professional enquiry
- Welsh language evidence
- Lesson Observations 1-4
- Practice Review 1 & 2
- Practice Learning Report
- PLP submission (EMA Part 2)
- Research conference

Professional Practice

In PGCE3, practice learning focuses on preparing student teachers for independent teaching and successful completion of the programme. At this stage, they are expected to demonstrate increasing professional judgement, consistency and accountability, drawing together their learning across curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and research-informed practice. The emphasis is on moving from supported practice towards confident, autonomous teaching that has sustained impact on learner progress, in line with the Progression Framework. Mentoring in PGCE3 focuses on supporting increasingly independent practice through reflective professional dialogue.

Part time students increase their teaching intensity to 75% and continue to plan and evaluate lessons using the OU Lesson Sequence Planning and Evaluation Form.

For Salaried students, intensity increases to 70% across the weekly timetable. The planning form should be used for formal observations, and the student may adopt the school's planning format for teachers alongside weekly reflections.

For student teachers, this looks like...


Planning and teaching sequences of lessons with increasing independence and clear progression


Using assessment to inform teaching, including feedback, pupil input and adaptation


Demonstrating consistent classroom management and inclusive practice for all learners


Engaging with research, policy and school systems to inform reflection and decision-making


Taking full professional responsibility for own conduct, communication and collaboration across the school

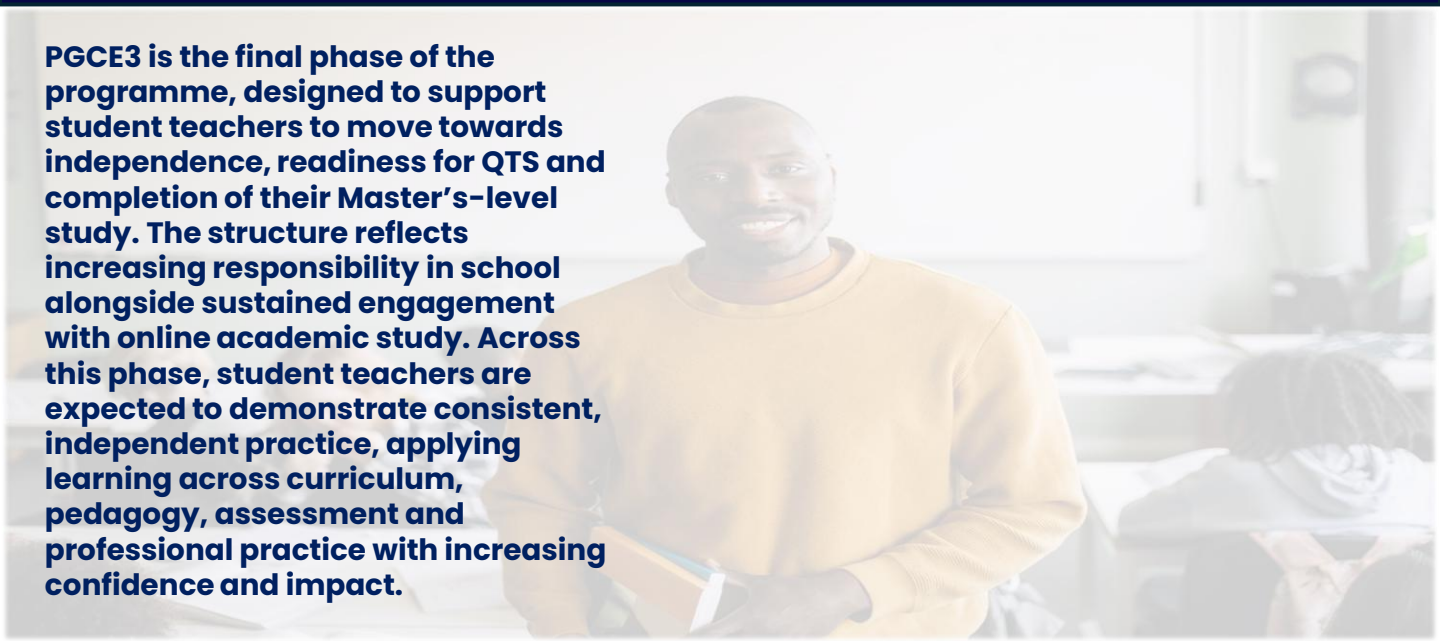


Impact on pupil learning looks like...

- Pupils can make clearer and more sustained progress across sequences of lessons
- Pupils show increased independence in their learning with reduced reliance on adult support
- Pupils engage more actively in lessons, contributing to discussion and responding to feedback
- Pupils produce work that shows increasing depth, accuracy and understanding over time

Important! While practice should be increasingly secure and impactful by PGCE3, this remains within **initial** teacher education. Professional growth continues into induction and beyond.

PGCE 3 – Autonomy
Who Does What? Key Tasks



PGCE3 is the final phase of the programme, designed to support student teachers to move towards independence, readiness for QTS and completion of their Master's-level study. The structure reflects increasing responsibility in school alongside sustained engagement with online academic study. Across this phase, student teachers are expected to demonstrate consistent, independent practice, applying learning across curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and professional practice with increasing confidence and impact.

Mentor

- Regularly review student planning and evaluations via the OneDrive teaching folder, with increasing focus on sequence planning and pupil progress over time
- Plan and facilitate weekly (salaried) or every 5 days (part-time) mentoring sessions
- Support completion of Practice Learning Activity 1, 5, 6, 7, 8
- Complete formal Lesson Observations 1 & 3 via PLP
- Complete Practice Review 1
- Complete Section A of Practice Learning Report
- **Anogwr y Gymraeg**: Provide support to ensure student has evidence for Welsh language submission

Mentor focus also includes:

- Supporting student teachers to move from supported practice towards increasing independence and professional confidence
- Developing professional judgement through structured dialogue, linking theory, practice and pupil outcomes
- Ensuring feedback leads to clear, actionable next steps aligned with the PGCE3 Progression Framework (independent, consistent and impactful practice)

Top Tip! Don't forget to use the Mentor Mat for an at-a-glance guide to your Mentoring.

School Coordinator

- Oversee placement structure changes and ensure PGCE3 timetable aligns with programme requirements and teaching intensity (70%)
- Facilitate Practice Learning Activity 2, 3, 4 & 6
- Complete formal Lesson Observations 2 & 4 via PLP
- Complete Section B of the Practice Learning Report (PLR)
- Moderate Mentor judgements in Section A to ensure consistency across the school, alignment with PLP evidence and PGCE3 expectations, including discussion with Practice Tutors where required
- ***For new students***: PLA1&2 and arrange safeguarding training in school

School Coordinator focus also includes:

- Ensuring the overall placement supports progression towards independent, sustained and reflective teaching practice
- Supporting coherence across mentors to ensure consistent application of the Progression Framework
- Acting as a key link between school systems and university expectations to support high-quality practice learning experiences

Top Tip! Don't forget to use the School Coordinator Mat for an at-a-glance guide to coordination.

All operational dates are set out in your role-based planner

16. Progression Framework
Three Interconnected Areas

The Practice Learning Assessment Framework (PLAF) has been refreshed as our new Progression Framework. It's designed to provide a shared guide to how professional practice develops towards Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) across PGCE1, PGCE2 and PGCE3. It supports student teachers, Mentors, School Coordinators, Practice and Curriculum Tutors to develop a common understanding of progression and expectations at each stage, and to better integrate school-based practice, programme learning and the skills required for successful online and blended study across both salaried and part-time routes.

To achieve Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), student teachers' professional practice must be **secure, consistent, and demonstrably impactful**. Practice should be grounded in professional knowledge, applied reliably across contexts, and produce clear benefits for learners' engagement, progress, and outcomes. This includes:

- planning and teaching effectively
- using assessment to support learning
- collaborating with colleagues and learners
- communicating professionally
- contributing to school life
- practising ethically and inclusively
- engaging in ongoing professional learning.

Student teachers also complete the PGCE, an accredited qualification. This framework supports holistic assessment, addressing both the Professional Standards for Teaching and academic development within a post-graduate context. To do this, student progress is considered across three interconnected areas:

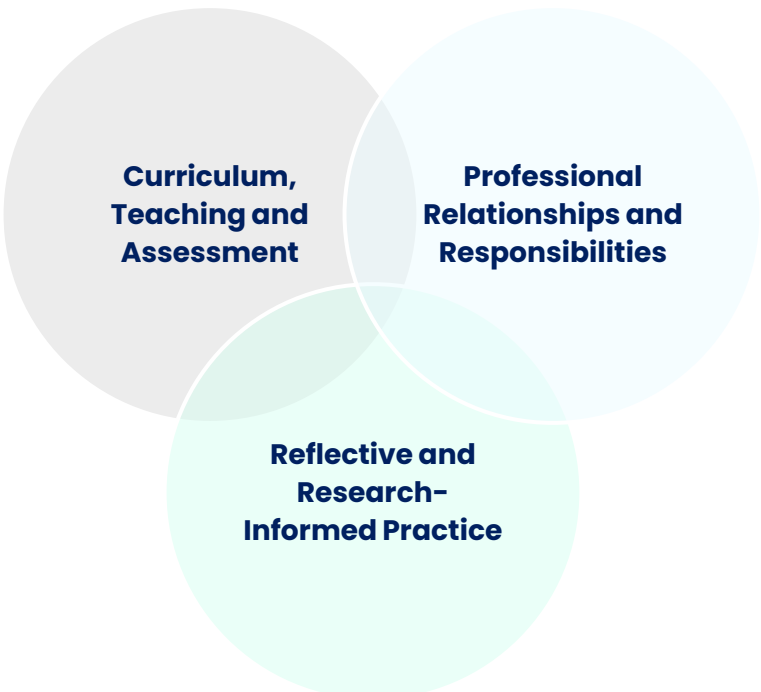


Figure 14: Three interconnected areas of practice

Student teachers' progress is tracked and supported throughout the programme using both formative (ongoing) and summative (formal) methods which should be underpinned by the framework. Each module follows the same pattern.

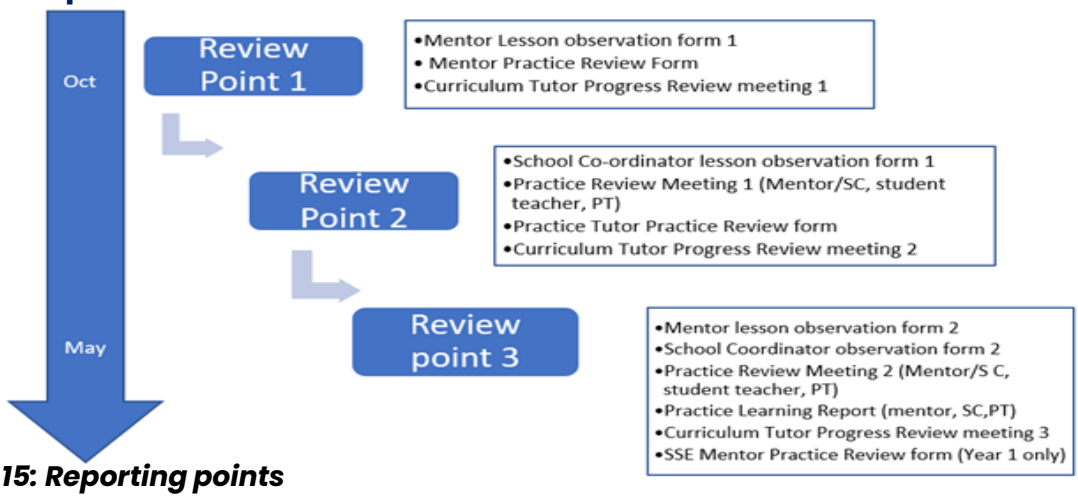


Figure 15: Reporting points

Formative assessment – used to support learning and reflection:

Mentor meetings – a structured, timetabled session to provide guidance, feedback, and support reflection on teaching.

Practice Reviews – short written report completed once by the Mentor and separately by the Practice Tutor after the first visit. The review is completed via the PLP and is informed by lesson observations, professional dialogue and regular engagement with students' planning and evaluation.

Progress Reviews – undertaken termly by the Curriculum Tutor with the module team to inform tuition and individual tutorials.

Summative assessment – provides a formal record of achievement and forms the basis of the End of Module Assessment (EMA)

Academic tasks – assignments that develop research-informed, reflective practice. These are guided by the university Curriculum Tutor but school-based educators can help students access school evidence and connect theory to classroom practice.

Practice Learning Report– professional judgements made by Mentors, School Coordinators, and Practice Tutors, based on classroom teaching, engagement with colleagues and learners, reflection, and impact on pupil learning. This is reported formally in the end of module Practice Learning Report.

Professional Learning Passport (PLP) – a central online record via the EWC PebblePad platform where students curate evidence of their teaching, including lesson plans, observations, evaluations, and reflections demonstrating their professional practice. At the end of PGCE3, this must illustrate secure, consistent and impactful practice in line with all areas of the Professional Standards.



At the end of each module, you will complete a **Practice Learning Report (PLR)** summarising the student teacher's progress. This contributes to **Part B of the End of Module Assessment (EMA).**

The **Mentor, School Coordinator, and Practice Tutor**, all contribute to a holistic and moderated judgement.

Section A – Mentor
The Mentor provides narrative feedback across three key areas:
- Curriculum, Teaching and Assessment
- Professional Relationships and Responsibilities
- Reflective and Research-Informed Practice

This feedback is guided by prompts aligned to the Progression Framework and should reflect the student teacher's stage of development.

Section B – School Coordinator
The School Coordinator confirms:
- That statutory requirements (e.g. attendance and mandatory training) have been met.
- Moderation to ensure consistency across students in the school and in ITE.

This moderation is informed by the School Coordinator's own observation of the student teacher, which is also reviewed asynchronously by the Practice Tutor via IRIS Connect.

Section C – Practice Tutor
The Practice Tutor provides:
- Feedback across the same three areas
- An independent assessment of the student teacher's progress

Where there are differences between school-based and Practice Tutor judgements, the School Coordinator and Practice Tutor should work together to reach a moderated position. Where this is not possible, the Practice Tutor may record their own professional judgement and a Curriculum Tutor will undertake a 'third marking' process.



To pass Part B, the student must:
- Be **On Track** in their classroom practice (based on your PLR judgement)
- Maintain a **strong PLP (e-portfolio)** with clear evidence and critical reflection

Your report focuses on the quality and impact of classroom practice. The PLP shows how well the student reflects on and evidences their development.

Note:
⚠️ A student cannot pass Part B without being On Track in practice.
⚠️ A weak or incomplete PLP may also prevent a pass.

PLP Access

To complete the report, you will need to access your student's PLP file. We work with the EWC to arrange your access.

Each student teacher's PLP must be linked to their assigned Mentor, School Coordinator, and Practice Tutor. This is done annually.

Take Action!

- Ensure you've registered for PLP Access.
- Watch our quick video guide to get started.
- Log in here: EWC E-Services

Using the framework to guide judgements:
You are asked to make a professional assessment of the student teacher's progress to QTS relative to each stage of the programme. The PLR acts as a summative assessment point at the end of the module.

Stage	Progress Descriptor	Practice Judgement
PGCE1 (Year 1) Familiarisation	Emerging	On Track / Not on Track Recorded via the Practice Review form (this is formative only and enables early identification of concerns or need for further intervention to support progression).
PGCE2 (Year 1) Consolidation	Developing	• Not on Track* • On Track • On Track with Strengths • Exceeding Expectations Summative - recorded via the Practice Learning Report and informs end of module assessment. *Student teachers not on track at PGCE2 **cannot** progress to PGCE3.
PGCE3 (Year 2) Autonomy	Secure	• Not on Track** • On Track • On Track with Strengths • Exceeding Expectations Summative - recorded via the Practice Learning Report and informs end of module assessment. **Student teachers not on track at PGCE3 **cannot** be recommended for QTS.

Before completing the report:

- Review the student teacher's **observable practice.** You can draw on a range of sources to do this. For example, informal and formal lesson observation feedback, lesson planning and evaluations, your structured Mentor meetings. Regular review of the student teacher's PLP and/or Personal Teaching Folder (their day-to-day file) as part of mentoring helps ensure a holistic view of progress over time.
- Consider progress across **all relevant areas**: planning, teaching, assessment, professional relationships, and reflective practice.

There are four categories to describe progress in practice learning.

Not on Track*	The student teacher is not consistently demonstrating the framework outcomes for their stage. Practice may be under-developed or insufficiently evidenced, with areas showing limited impact on learner progress. For PGCE2 or PGCE3 - They are **not** recommended for continuation at this stage. **In PGCE1, this is a formative indicator of potential need for early intervention. In PGCE2 and PGCE3, it is summative and indicates that progression criteria are not met.*
On Track	The student teacher is developing secure practice across most stage-specific outcomes, with some areas needing targeted support.
On Track with Strengths	The student teacher demonstrates most stage-specific outcomes with several areas of emerging strengths and growing consistency in practice.
Exceeding Expectations	The student teacher consistently demonstrates most or all of the outcomes for their current stage, with clear impact on learners.

17. Getting Help and Support
Quick Links to Key Resources and Tools

Contact Us

Register
Let us know your role and get system access

Annual requirement for returning & new staff

Join now

Drop in Q&A
Every Monday from 3.30pm

Contact Us

Get in touch by email

Training, Guides and Resources

Discover

Guides and Resources

Mandatory Training

Update your Records with Us

Online Tools for Student Teacher Assessment

Using the PLP
Video Guide

Log In
Access your student teacher's PLP

IRIS Connect
See Documents to Support your Role

Partnership Learning and Development

Learn

Take your mentoring skills to the next level

Research

Develop evidence-informed practice

Go Further

Learning Courses



High-quality Initial Teacher Education depends on strong partnerships between schools and the university — and your contribution is central to this.

By working together, we support student teachers to develop the knowledge, skills and professional judgement needed to become confident, reflective practitioners who can make a positive difference to learners across Wales.

Developing a whole-school approach to ITE
ITE is most effective when it is a shared, whole-school endeavour. When student teacher development is part of the school's professional learning culture, it strengthens outcomes for pupils, staff and the wider partnership. A whole-school approach ensures that responsibility for supporting student teachers is embedded across teams, routines and professional dialogue.

Mutually beneficial
Supporting student teachers can be a valuable professional learning opportunity for staff, supporting coaching, reflection and leadership development. It also encourages collaboration and the sharing of practice across the school.

Why this matters
- ✓ Strengthens the quality and consistency of mentoring and support
- ✓ Supports better outcomes for student teachers and pupils
- ✓ Builds professional learning within and across schools
- ✓ Contributes to a strong, sustainable teacher workforce across Wales

This handbook is part of a wider suite of support designed to make your role clearer, more manageable and better connected. We encourage you to attend briefings, join regular drop-ins, and engage with the wider professional community supporting student teachers.

Thank you for your role in supporting student teachers.
Together, we are shaping the future teaching workforce.


The Open University
Y Brifysgol Agored
Wales Cymru