


# The Open University ITE Partnership in Wales PGCE

## Summary of the report on diversifying routes into the teaching profession

March 2024

In **February 2024**, 161 student teachers were studying on the first year of The Open University ITE Partnership in Wales PGCE Programme. Student teachers 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.

**44** PGCE students completed the online survey 

**26** Training on the salaried route 

**18** Training on the part-time route 


**27** Training to teach primary 


**17** Training to teach secondary 

**12** PGCE students interviewed 


### Household circumstances

Immediately before starting the PGCE


 **19 out of 39** student teachers (49%) reported earning a household income **below £31,200\***.

 **35 out of 44** student teachers (80%) have **children in their household**.

### Employment and work experience

 42 out of 44 (96%) were employed immediately before the PGCE


 38 out of 42 (91%) were working 16–38 hours/week

 33 out of 42 (79%) were employed in education

*I did not want to resign from my **current position** as I am very happy in my current school and would like to stay there. Also, as a **busy mum**, travelling to other schools for placement did not appeal to me. (Secondary, salaried student)*

### The Open University ITE 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**  
(19 out of 32, 59%)

Nine out of 44 student teachers (21%) had previously applied to a full-time PGCE course.

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

Other reasons for applying to The OU ITE Partnership PGCE include:

- Family commitments
- Happy in current school role
- Completed undergraduate degree with The OU



**Many student teachers** (37 out of 44, 84%) had worked in non-educational settings:

Charities Social care Recruitment Sports coaching  
Hospitality Fashion Physiotherapy  
Marketing Insurance Forestry Retail Manufacturing  
Finance Public sector Media Events  
Forensic science

## The Open University ITE Partnership in Wales

The **flexible learning structure** of the PGCE programme enables me to study at my own speed and manage my education.  
(Secondary, part-time student)

The **seminars** are helpful and having them recorded to refer back to has been very valuable. The **curriculum tutor** is easy to talk to and replies to emails promptly.  
(Primary, part-time 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**  
(11 out of 35 student teachers)



**Online seminars/ forums**  
(9 out of 35 student teachers for both)

## Other features helping with success:

Weekly  
check-ins

Module  
materials

Flexibility

Mentor /  
Practice  
Tutor

VLE (Virtual  
Learning  
Environment)

The **bi-weekly seminars** are helpful as it is nice to actually listen to someone as opposed to just reading/working through the units. And although the **breakout rooms** are a bit uncomfortable to start with, they are getting easier and are a good way to **share experiences and ideas** with fellow students.  
(Secondary, salaried student)



The student teachers interviewed commented further; valuing the **contribution of schools** to their seminars in supporting their theoretical learning. However, a couple of student teachers felt that some of the module activities **took longer** to complete than the time suggested.

## Widening access into the teaching profession

Why do you want to teach?



**19 out of 41** student teachers (46%) want to **make a difference, inspire** children and be a **role model**.



**16 out of 41** student teachers (39%) want to **progress their career** / fulfil an **ambition** in education.



**16 out of 41** student teachers (39%) are motivated by their **passion** for teaching in general and/or for their subject.

**Specific PGCE adverts** were viewed as being important to attract people into teaching. Along with highlighting the **part-time element**, and the minority ethnic and Welsh-medium **grants available**.

**The Open University ITE Partnership in Wales PGCE Programme continues to attract student teachers from diverse backgrounds.**

Student teachers bring an extensive range of life skills to their role, and they are also successful in balancing a range of commitments alongside their teaching practice and academic study.

The PGCE course offers a unique route that is **affordable** and realistic for someone of my age with a family. [...] And **personal security** is important when making such a leap. I am making a difference already. I now have other **career opportunities** ahead. (Secondary, salaried student)