

The Open University ITE Partnership in Wales PGCE

Summary of the report on diversifying routes into the teaching profession


March 2026


In **January 2026**, 153 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 the salaried or part-time PGCE. The following is a summary of the full report.



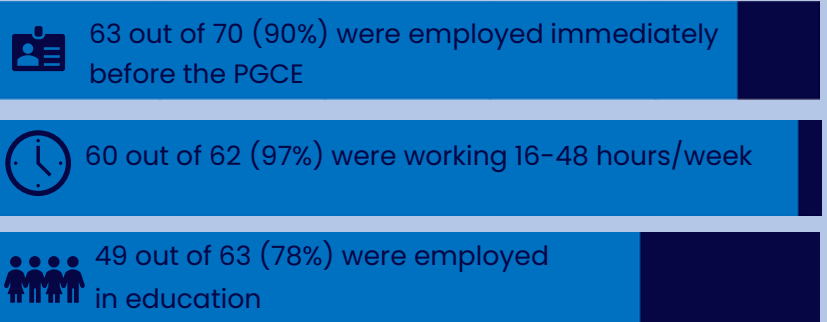
Household circumstances

Immediately before starting the PGCE

 **38 out of 60** student teachers (63%) reported earning a household income **below £31,200***.

 **39 out of 68** student teachers (57%) have **children in their household**.


Employment and work experience



*My decision not to apply to the full-time PGCE programme was that I wanted the experience of **being in a school** setting over a period of time as the [salaried] PGCE course offers. In doing so, I feel that I am **gaining many more experiences** than the full-time PGCE would offer.*
(Salaried secondary student teacher)

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;

 **Financial implications**
(28 out of 50, 56%)

Ten out of 69 student teachers (14%) had previously applied to a full-time PGCE course.

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

- Childcare / family responsibilities
- Wanted to remain in current school
- OU offered flexibility



Many student teachers (59 out of 67, 88%) had worked in non-educational settings:



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


The Open University ITE Partnership in Wales


The **OU tutor system**. Curriculum tutor has been fabulous! The forums as a one stop shop for questions and answers. **The VLE**, once mastered is well organised.
(Salaried primary student teacher)

The forums are a great way of keeping up to date with others and taking inspiration from other students' responses
(Part-time primary student teacher)

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**
(17 out of 55 student teachers)

 **Forum posts**
(14 out of 55 student teachers)

Other features helping with success:

The VLE
(Virtual Learning Environment)

Mentor
and
school
staff

Online
planner

Regular
seminars
Practice
Learning
Activities

The **flexibility** of being able to access the modules when needed is great. Also the **student planner** is useful as a guideline on how to arrange your time and studies.
(Part-time primary student teacher)



Interviewed student teachers discussed **the challenge** of moving between the different online platforms (the VLE, Pebblepad, and One Drive). Commenting that in the world of work there is 'just one e.g. in school – Google'.

Widening access into the teaching profession

Why do you want to teach?



30 out of 62 student teachers (48%) want to **progress their career** / fulfil an **ambition** in education



23 out of 62 student teachers (37%) want to **inspire** children and **make a difference**.



21 out of 62 student teachers (34%) are motivated by their **passion** for teaching in general and/or for their subject.

Using social media to increase awareness of the PGCE, particularly for sharing career changers' stories and information about the salaried route, was proposed.

The Open University ITE Partnership in Wales PGCE Programme attracts student teachers from a range of backgrounds. Student teachers bring varied life skills and experiences to their academic studies and placement schools. Yet, there is a necessity for many to continue to earn an income and manage childcare and other family responsibilities at the same time.

Honestly, I **could not afford to go to university** to complete a PGCE, which had long been my dream. I then heard about the salaried route, which was the perfect solution. I am able to **continue working** as a TA (Teaching Assistant). (Salaried primary student teacher)