

The Open University in Wales / Y Brifysgol Agored yng Nghymru

Frequently Asked Questions

Please note that information in this document can be subject to change at short notice. Please check our website for updates.

We offer two routes of study: the salaried route or the part-time route. Both routes combine online learning and tuition with an OU tutor with school placements and face-to-face support from a dedicated School Mentor.

Salaried route – If you already work at a mainstream state school, you can apply for your school to endorse your study. Your school must apply to become a partner school and provide you with an endorsement letter, as they will pay your salary. You will study for your PGCE around your existing school duties as part of your full-time employment in a school and your costs of study are covered by a training grant from the Welsh Government. If you want to become a secondary school teacher and don't currently work in a school, you can still apply for the salaried route in secondary shortage subjects only, but you'll need to have a secondary school willing to endorse you, which we could help you find.

Part-time route – If you've always wanted to become a teacher and the salaried route isn't right for you, there is a part-time option available. If you're a career changer, or have parental or caring responsibilities, then our part-time route could help you achieve a greater work-life balance whilst you train. This route offers some flexibility as you'll study towards your PGCE, and gain part-time practical teaching experience in a school, while working around a part-time job or other life commitments. You will need to commit to two to three days practice learning and approximately 16 hours of study per week throughout the programme. This route can be self-funded or you can apply for a student loan and part-time maintenance grants to help with the costs.

Please select in which pathway you are interested:

Part-Time

Salaried

Part Time Pathway – Questions and Answers



Part Time PGCE: Key Features

Who can complete this programme?

The part time programme is likely to appeal to a broad demographic who are seeking a more flexible route into teaching which allows them the option to continue with part time employment or other commitments such as caring or parenting. It may interest those with an honours degree in a child/education focused subject and in the Secondary phase, those with a strongly related subject to that which they wish to teach. Career changers may be interested in this route. Applicants **must** meet usual [PGCE entry requirements](#).

How can my school participate in this programme?

Schools participate in a similar way to other PGCE programmes, by becoming the site of learning for parttime student teachers and supporting the practice learning component of the PGCE qualification. You'll need to be a state school to become a partner. Special schools can support students for up to 25 days on the part time programme only. You will need to hold [Associate School status](#) with the partnership by applying to demonstrate your school's ability to meet the entry criteria. See more on our website at [Partnership Opportunities](#).

Fees and Funding – Highlights

This route is self funded by student teachers who pay fees at the part time study rate each year. Students may be eligible for student loans, maintenance grants and teacher training incentives on a pro-rata basis.

The OU ITE Partnership pays £300 per student, per placement in Year 1 (25 day placement 1 and 35 day placement 2) and £600 (60 day placement) in Year 2. We ask Associate Schools, where possible, to support at least 2-3 students per placement.

Benefits of Participation

- Access CPL opportunities for staff including opportunities for close-to-practice research projects and support.
- Engage in school to school working across Wales.
- Mentoring and coaching support via Practice Tutor.

What subjects do you offer?

We currently offer Primary and Secondary - Science, Welsh, Maths or English, English with Drama, English with Media Studies, Design and Technology and Computing/ICT. Additional subjects may be offered over time – please check our [website](#) for up-to-date information.

Where can I find out more?

Read more about working with us as an Associate school at: <http://www.open.ac.uk/wales/en/our-work/pgce-school-partnership-opportunities>

Read more about the PGCE programme at: <https://www.open.ac.uk/courses/choose/wales/pgce>

Contact us at Wales-PGCE@open.ac.uk

Familiarisation

Consolidation

Autonomy

September Year 1

PGCE 1&2: Oct – Feb ½ Term
Practice Learning – 25 Days (23 days per week)

PGCE 1&2: Feb ½ Term – August
Practice Learning – 35 Days (23 days per week)

PGCE 3: Year 2 – Sept – July
Practice Learning (60 days – min. 30 in a block)

PGCE
QTS

- Student teachers access 'Getting Started' online resources and contact their placement school to arrange between-3 days' orientation and observation experience.
- **Official Start: October**

- Student teachers study their online interactive materials and attend live online seminars in the evening with their tutor between October and November.
- Mid November–end of January– Student Teacher attends school for Practice Learning 1. Bridging between school and materials is supported by lesson study and PL activities.

- Student teachers study their online interactive materials and attend live online seminars in the evening with their tutor between February and April.
- May- July– Student Teachers attend school for Practice Learning 2. This may happen in the same school as module 1, or may be in a new school.

- Student teachers study their online interactive materials and attend live online seminars in the evening. They also undertake Masters level study and complete research.
- November- April– Student Teachers attend school for Practice Learning 3. 30 days must be taken as a block. Students' scaffolded experience builds to increasing autonomy.

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I've completed modules in education/previous PGCE. Can I transfer these to the OU PGCE?

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Can I continue to work full time in my school whilst doing the programme?

Do I need to be able to speak Welsh to do this programme?

Being a Welsh speaker at the beginning of the programme is not essential. However, you will be required to improve your Welsh language skills to be able to deliver the Curriculum for Wales. We will support your development during your time on the programme.

Can I complete this course if I do not live in Wales?

You will need to have the right to remain and work in the UK. You must be resident in Wales and complete your placements in mainstream schools in Wales.

I already have a PGCE but do not hold QTS. Do you offer a QTS-only route?

Our PGCE is a 2 year programme leading to QTS on successful completion. We do not offer a fast track or QTS only option. There is no FE conversion course available in Wales at present.

I've completed modules in education/previous PGCE. Can I transfer these to the OU PGCE?

The OU PGCE programme was accredited by the Education Workforce Council following a reform to criteria for ITE programmes in Wales. Credit transfers therefore cannot be used for the PGCE programme. You must complete the full 2 years regardless of your previous qualifications.

What is the application process and deadline?

Please ensure you read the FAQs and the guidance in the application form carefully to support your completion of the form as missing information is likely to result in your form being returned to you. Please note we cannot accept applications after the deadline and reserve the right to close applications earlier than the published dates if places are no longer available.

What GCSE grades do I need?

As a minimum candidates must hold:

- a standard equivalent to GCSE Grade C or above in mathematics or Mathematics-Numeracy
- a standard equivalent to GCSE Grade C or above in either English Language or Welsh First Language
- a standard equivalent to GCSE Grade C or above in a science subject, if you want to teach in primary school (learners aged 4 – 11)

You may already hold a qualification which is equivalent to the GCSEs above. Please contact Wales-PGCE@open.ac.uk for advice on the qualifications we can accept as equivalent.

If you do not currently meet the GCSE (or equivalent) requirements, you will need to re-sit your GCSE to gain the required grade(s). You must have gained the required grade(s) before the programme commences, or your place will be withdrawn.

Please note these entry requirements are set by Welsh Government and are statutory.

It should still be noted that the application process is competitive, and that GCSE grades are one component of how we consider your application.

I didn't complete all/part of my education in the UK, how do my qualifications compare?

The UK National Information Centre for the recognition and evaluation of international qualifications and skills (UK ENIC – previously known as NARIC) provides guidance on whether an overseas qualification is comparable in standard to a given UK qualification.

They can supply a Statement of Comparability to show whether your qualifications meet the requirements for admission. Please obtain a ENIC certificate to ensure you meet the requirements before applying: <https://www.enic.org.uk>

If English is not one of your native languages and you wish to study a PGCE in the UK, you must be able to demonstrate a high level of English language ability. You will need to achieve an International English Language Testing Systems (IELTS) score of 7+ in each section of the test.

Do I need to have a full honours degree?

All applicants who wish to undertake a PGCE must have a full Honours Undergraduate Degree e.g. a BA (Hons) or a BSc (Hons) or equivalent with classification. This needs to be 360 credits, with a minimum of 120 credits having been studied at a Level 6.

We can consider some equivalencies to a degree – e.g. a Masters or ACCA qualification (these must be equivalent to a level 6 qualification and recognised). We treat these on a case-by-case basis.

There is a useful page available [here](#), which outlines other qualifications which are at an equivalent level to a full honours degree (Level 6), which we may be able to consider.

I don't have a degree, what can I do?

If you do not hold a full Bachelor's degree, then you may be able to use your existing qualifications as credits towards a degree.

There is a useful [tool](#) on this website, which you can use to check if a qualification from a previous study is eligible for transfer. For more information, please visit our [credit transfer](#) page.

What are the minimum entry requirements for Primary Part-time?

Due to high demand for places, entry to our Primary part-time programme is limited to applicants who possess a 2:2 or above at degree level.

I want to teach Secondary, is my degree relevant?

To teach Secondary, applicants must demonstrate extensive knowledge of the subject they wish to teach. You must hold a degree with at least 50% relevance to the subject* if you want to teach to become a secondary school teacher (learners aged 12 – 16). This is because as a teacher, you will need to teach your subject up to public examination level.

Please send us a transcript of your degree with your documentation.

*Welsh Government Minimum Entry Requirements as of November 2022

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Do I need to have a degree in Welsh to teach Welsh at Secondary?

To teach Welsh as a second language in an English medium secondary school you must hold an honours degree (any subject) and be a fluent Welsh speaker who can speak, write and read Welsh to a high standard.

To teach Welsh as a first language in a Welsh medium secondary school a degree in Welsh is desirable, however a related degree may be considered.

Note: If you wish to complete any aspect of your course through the medium of Welsh, you must as a minimum complete your supporting statement in Welsh, or ideally use the Welsh language application form. All candidates for PGCE Secondary Welsh must complete their application in Welsh. Taught sessions for this course are through the medium of Welsh. You can choose which language you would like to submit your assessment.

How much does the course cost?

Please visit the [PGCE Fees and Funding](#) page for more information. On the Part-time route, you will pay the fees yourself directly to the OU.

Is there funding available for the Part-time route?

Please see our [Fees and Funding](#) website for more information on funding available on the Part-time route. If you are on the Part-time PGCE route you can apply for a student loan. Visit [Finance Wales](#) for more information. You can also apply for up to £3,000 in funding to help with [living costs](#) while you're studying.

For those studying priority subjects, you may also be entitled to a teacher training incentive grant of from Welsh Government : [Initial Teacher Education priority subject incentives: guidance for students \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)

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What teacher training incentives are there?

Part time students studying a priority subject may be eligible for an incentive grant if they want to train to be a teacher in Wales. Please note these are paid at a pro-rata rate. Find out more about teacher training incentives in Wales: [Initial Teacher Education \(ITE\) Priority Subject Incentive: guidance for students 2022 to 2023 \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)

How is the Part-time route taught?

You will have access to a website of interactive online materials which you can study at your own pace and at a time which suits you. You should expect to spend up to 3 full days every week studying, including completing 6 units of study per module. You will also participate in regular live online sessions taught by OU tutors where you'll join with other student teachers across Wales.

These usually take place in the evening. You'll also have the support of the PGCE learning forums, where you will share resources and ideas with your tutors and peers.

During each module, there is a school placement experience which we arrange for you, where you'll have the opportunity to test and apply your learning as you plan for lessons and teach in the classroom. You'll be supported by your mentor and complete in-school practice learning activities. You will be assessed by a practice tutor who completes four virtual assessment visits throughout the programme. School experience placements are completed in specific 'windows' of time during each module, so that you can alternate between online study and in-school experience to help balance your studies. The number of days increase as you progress through the programme and gain proficiency in the classroom. You will complete 120 days of school experience over 2 years in a minimum of two different schools.

Can I work whilst I am completing the Part Time PGCE? How flexible is the course?

The part-time programme allows student-teachers to continue with part-time employment or commitments whilst studying the programme. We are the only part-time and distance/blended learning provider of PGCE study in Wales, offering a more flexible approach to training to become a teacher as you are not committed to full time study or school placements and you do not need to attend a university campus.

Lots of the study, such as the online materials, can be accessed when it suits you, and any live tuition takes place in the evening. For a PGCE, this makes us pretty flexible! Many students are able to successfully combine studying for a PGCE alongside their other life commitment such as work or caring responsibilities. However, this doesn't mean the course is entirely flexible as we have to meet EWC and Welsh Government criteria which means certain features of the course (such as entry requirements, the need for two schools, or the teaching block) are statutory requirements.

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You will need to think carefully about how it can fit into your life and commitments and how this might make you feel. As a professional qualification, you will probably need to make some changes to your usual lifestyle and it's important to be realistic about what a great achievement part-time study is in juggling different commitments!

We strongly discourage trying to work full-time during this programme due to the need to study for approximately 2-3 days per week all through the programme (not just placement days!). This is important for student wellbeing and workload management.

You can apply for a student loan and part-time maintenance grants to help with the costs of this self-funded route.

How much time will I need to spend studying?

Each PGCE module involves academic study through online seminars led by your curriculum tutor; a period of school experience; and the submission of a portfolio of evidence that includes responses to academic tasks and reports from your school experience. In each module, you'll be assessed through a range of tasks, including written essays.

On the part-time route, you'll study up to 3 days a week, either in academic study or on your school experience.

How much time will I need to spend teaching?

The programme offers a graduated approach to teaching and your time in school will involve not just teaching but also mentoring, practice learning activities, observing others and time for planning and preparing lessons. How much you teach will be decided with your School Coordinator and your Mentor who will agree your timetable with you, taking into consideration your development needs and progress.

How much time will I have for my other commitments such as my job?

The part-time programme can enable you to continue with part-time employment or other commitments whilst studying the programme. We are

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the only part-time and distance/blended learning provider of PGCE study in Wales, offering a more flexible approach to training to become a teacher as you are not committed to full time study and school placements and you do not need to attend a university campus. Lots of the study, such as the online materials, can be accessed when it suits you, and any live tuition takes place in the evening.

Many students are able to successfully combine studying for a PGCE alongside their other life commitment such as work or caring responsibilities. You will need to think carefully about how it can fit into your life and commitments. As a professional qualification, you will probably need to make some changes to your usual lifestyle.

We strongly discourage trying to work full-time during this programme due to the need to study for approximately 2 to 3 days per week all through the programme (not just placement days!). This is important for student wellbeing and workload management.

How do the placements work?

Part-time students will undertake their practical experience in their placement schools towards the end of their academic study in each module. Students are expected to attend placements in two different schools in order to gain QTS. You'll work with your mentor, and school staff members to take on increasing teaching responsibility:

PGCE 1 & 2: classroom support, and planning and teaching single lessons on to planning and teaching a sequence of lessons

PGCE 3: responsibility for planning, resourcing and solo teaching a range of lessons, including an individual classroom research project.

Students will have 120 days of school placements; 60 days per year. In year 2 half of the school placement (30 days) must be completed in a continuous block and students must commit to 30 full days of teaching (five days a week over six consecutive school weeks).

Mentors will support you throughout your school experience. They'll mediate and facilitate regular school-based tasks, which feed into your studies.

Teaching within the Welsh context (e.g. Curriculum for Wales) is an accredited regulatory requirement of the programme. As a result, all placements MUST be completed in a partner school in Wales.

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When do the placements take place?

Part-time students are expected to attend placements in two schools and will undertake their practical experience in our Partner Schools towards the end of their academic study in each module. Over the 2-year course you'll spend 120 days on placement. This amounts to 60 days per year of placement time (30 days across the first half of the year, 30 in the second half) and will include one period during your second year of 30 days which must be worked in a continuous 6-week block.

What is a Partner School?

A partner school is one that has applied to join the programme and has met the strict criteria to enter into the partnership. There are 3 types of Partners:

Lead Partner School – members of the Partnership Committee with key strategic and decision-making responsibilities, leading associate and employer schools within their cluster and playing a central part in all aspects of the programme.

Associate Partner School - support the development of students on the Part Time PGCE programme, providing placement opportunities of up to 120 days per year.

Employer Partner School - those who wish to support the development of an employed student enrolled on the Salaried PGCE route.

Schools can have more than one status e.g. an Employer School can also be an Associate School if they are endorsing their own employee on the Salaried route and offering placements to students on the Part-time route. For more information – please see our [Schools](#) pages

Do I need a car?

When arranging placements, various factors are considered. These include: student's personal circumstances, distance, student experience, school partnership status, capacity and more.

It is not a requirement that you need a car to join the programme. But whether you drive or use public transport, you may be expected to travel up to an hour to your placement, to ensure you have the experience required to meet QTS.

Can I do a placement in my current school?

If your current school is unable to endorse you and you wish to remain employed in this school, then the Part-Time route offers some flexibility as you can gain part-time practical teaching experience in a school alongside your existing commitments.

If your school is not an OU Associate school, they can apply to become a partner school with us. This means that they can meet our strict eligibility criteria for partnership status and agree to meet all of the programme requirements. Your school can find more information here: [OU ITE Partnership | Open University in Wales](#)

If your school has been accepted as one of our Associate Partner schools, then you will be able to do 2 out of 3 of your school placements* in your current school. You'll study 2 to 3 days a week, either in academic study or on your school experience.

*You would need to fit this around your paid employment in agreement with your placement schools.

It's important that you and your school are clear about the divide between your employment duties and your PGCE placement time with specific programme requirements needed during those times (where you will not be available for employment duties). You must follow the part-time programme requirements and you will need to be supervised by a classroom teacher during PGCE practice learning periods at all times.

Across the two years, you'll have 120 days of school placements: 60 days per year. You will need to attend another school for at least one other of your placements and commit to 30 full days of teaching (five days a week over six consecutive school weeks) in year 2. You would need to discuss with your employer any contractual implications of this.

How does my school apply to become a Partner school?

Please see our [School facing website](#) for information on how your school can apply to become a partner school. Your school will need to meet eligibility criteria and agree to meet programme requirements.

Can I continue to work full time in my school whilst doing the programme?

The part time route is designed to take 2 to 3 days per week throughout the two years of the programme - some weeks your 2-3 days will be spent studying online unit materials, and at other times, your 2 to 3 days (increasing to 3) will be spent completing placement days.

Whilst it is sometimes possible for students to complete some of their placement time in a school in which they ordinarily work, this is not guaranteed and depends on the school meeting Associate school criteria.

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Your school would need to be clear that during your 2 to 3 days per week, you would be at the school as a PGCE student with specific programme requirements needed. They would also need to agree to you completing at least one of the three placements in another school.

We advise against full time work whilst completing the programme - we are clear that you should expect to be working on the programme for the full 2 to 3 days a week on the PGCE in order to meet the programme requirements.

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END

Salaried Pathway – Questions and Answers



Salaried PGCE: Key Features

Who can complete this programme?

This programme is mostly aimed at those who currently work (or have experience) in an environment with children and young people. This may include teaching or learning support assistants who wish to progress their career, laboratory technicians, school librarians, or participation and youth officers. Applicants **must** meet usual [PGCE entry requirements](#) and will require the headteacher to formally endorse their application. It may also be possible to match you to eligible applicants if you do not already have someone in your school.

*There are a **limited** number of places on the Salaried scheme.*

How can my school participate in this programme?

You'll need to be a mainstream state school to take part in the scheme. You will need to hold at least [Employer School status](#) with the partnership by applying to demonstrate your school's ability to meet the entry criteria. See more on our website at [Partnership Opportunities](#).

Fees and Funding – Highlights

- The cost of study for all student teachers is supported by a training grant from Welsh Government.
- You will need to pay your student teacher at a minimum of Point 1 of the Unqualified Teacher scale.
- For identified Secondary priority subject areas, Welsh Government [pay a salary contribution of 50% per year](#) (at point 1 of the unqualified teachers' pay scale). Welsh medium schools and Welsh as a subject in English medium schools receive a salary contribution of 100%. This is administered through the partnership.
- The ITE Partnership provides some support with the cost of mentoring (£900 per student over the two year programme). Additional partnership financial support is also available for schools who are also Lead or Associate partner schools.

What subjects do you offer?

We currently offer Primary and Secondary Science, Welsh, English, Maths, Design and Technology, and Computing/ICT. Additional subjects may be offered over time – please check our [website](#) for up-to-date information.

Where can I find out more?

- Read more about working with us as an Employer school at: <http://www.open.ac.uk/wales/en/our-work/pgce-school-partnership-opportunities>
- Read more about the PGCE programme at: <https://www.open.ac.uk/courses/choose/wales/pgce>
- Contact us at Wales-PGCE@open.ac.uk

Familiarisation

Consolidation

Autonomy

September Year 1

PGCE 1&2: Oct – Feb ½ Term

PGCE 1&2: Feb ½ Term – May

Second School Experience
June-July

PGCE 3: Year 2 – Sept – July

PGCE
QTS

- Final timetable arrangements
- Contractual arrangements
- Induction of new staff to Learning Support role

- 2.5 days Employment
- 1.5 days supervised PGCE Practice Learning (to include 15% PPA)
- 1 day protected online study

- 2.5 days Employment. *This can decrease to 2 days from Easter.*
- 2 days supervised PGCE Practice Learning (to include 15% PPA). *This can increase to 2.5 days from Easter.*
- ½ day protected online study

- Lead/Associate Schools**
- 1 day Employment
 - 1 day online study
 - 3 days SSE
- Employer Schools**
- 1 day online study
 - 4 days SSE

- 2.5 -3.5 days Independent Teaching with Monitoring
- Enhanced PPA of 1 day. Any remaining time on employment duties.
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I've completed modules in education/previous PGCE. Can I transfer these to the OU PGCE?

How to apply

What is the application process and deadline?

I am a career changer without an endorsing school, how do I apply for the salaried route?

I do not have an endorsement, but I really want a place on the Salaried route. Can I approach schools myself?

GCSE Qualifications

What GCSE grades do I need?

I didn't complete all/part of my education in the UK, how do my qualifications compare?

Undergraduate Degrees

Do I need to have a full honours degree?

I don't have a degree, what can I do?

I want to teach Secondary, is my degree relevant?

Do I need to have a degree in Welsh to teach Welsh at Secondary?

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How much time will I have for my usual job or employment duties?

School Placements

How do the placements work?

When do the placements take place?

What is a Partner School?

Do I need a car?

Already working in a school?

My current school have agreed to endorse me, how does that work?

My current school are unable to endorse me, can you help find me another endorsing school?

How does my school apply to become a Partner school?

My school is a special school, can I still apply for the salaried route?

Do I need to be able to speak Welsh to do this programme?

Being a Welsh speaker at the beginning of the programme is not essential. However, you will be required to improve your Welsh language skills to be able to deliver the Curriculum for Wales. We will support your development during your time on the programme.

Can I complete this course if I do not live in Wales?

You will need to have the right to remain and work in the UK. You need to be resident in Wales or England and you must still complete all of your placements in schools in Wales.

I already have a PGCE but do not hold QTS. Do you offer a QTS-only route?

Our PGCE is a 2-year programme leading to QTS on successful completion. We do not offer a fast track or QTS only option. There is no FE conversion course available in Wales at present.

I've completed modules in education/previous PGCE. Can I transfer these to the OU PGCE?

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What is the application process and deadline?

Please ensure you read the FAQs and the guidance in the application form carefully to support your completion of the form as missing information is likely to result in your form being returned to you. Please note we cannot accept applications after the deadline and reserve the right to close applications earlier than the published dates if places are no longer available.

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I am a career changer without an endorsing school, how do I apply for the salaried route?

If you don't have a state school willing to endorse you, you can apply for the salaried route in secondary shortage subjects only (English, Maths, Science, Welsh, Design & Technology and Computing/ICT). You can apply to the secondary programme without an endorsement, and we will make every effort to match you to a partner Employer school. We will ask you to work with us to create a profile showcasing your skills and

talents which many employers find helpful. We especially welcome applicants who can speak Welsh, as there is a particular shortage in this area.

Please bear in mind however that endorsing a Salaried student requires a significant financial investment for a school. We cannot guarantee that there will be Salaried placements available in your area/subject and it's important that we are honest with you that demand can exceed the availability of places. If we cannot match you to a Salaried placement, it may be possible to offer you a place on the part time route, but this will depend on you meeting the entry requirements to the part time route and the availability of places on the programme.

I do not have an endorsement, but I really want a place on the Salaried route. Can I approach schools myself?

We do not encourage students to contact schools directly to apply for endorsements. Only in the event where you have a significant, professional relationship with a school (e.g. based on current or prior employment), should potential applicants consider approaching schools.

What GCSE grades do I need?

As a minimum candidates must hold:

- a standard equivalent to GCSE Grade C or above in mathematics or Mathematics-Numeracy
- a standard equivalent to GCSE Grade C or above in either English Language or Welsh First Language.
- a standard equivalent to GCSE Grade C or above in a science subject, if you want to teach in primary school (learners aged 4 – 11)

You may already hold a qualification which is equivalent to the GCSEs above. Please contact Wales-PGCE@open.ac.uk for advice on the qualifications we can accept as equivalent.

If you do not currently meet the GCSE (or equivalent) requirements, you will need to re-sit your GCSE to gain the required grade(s). You must have gained the required grade(s) before the programme commences, or your place will be withdrawn.

Please note these entry requirements are set by Welsh Government and are statutory.

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I didn't complete all/part of my education in the UK, how do my qualifications compare?

The UK National Information Centre for the recognition and evaluation of international qualifications and skills (UK ENIC – previously known as NARIC) provides guidance on whether an overseas qualification is comparable in standard to a given UK qualification.

They can supply a Statement of Comparability to show whether your qualifications meet the requirements for admission. Please obtain a ENIC certificate to ensure you meet the requirements before applying: <https://www.enic.org.uk>

If English is not one of your native languages and you wish to study a PGCE in the UK, you must be able to demonstrate a high level of English language ability. You will need to achieve an International English Language Testing Systems (IELTS) score of 7+ in each section of the test.

Do I need to have a full honours degree?

All applicants who wish to undertake a PGCE must have a full Honours Undergraduate Degree e.g. a BA (Hons) or a BSc (Hons) or equivalent with classification. This needs to be 360 credits, with a minimum of 120 credits having been studied at a Level 6.

We can consider some equivalencies to a degree – e.g. a Masters or ACCA qualification (these must be equivalent to a level 6 qualification and recognised). We treat these on a case-by-case basis.

There is a useful page available [here](#), which outlines other qualifications which are at an equivalent level to a full honours degree (Level 6), which we may be able to consider.

I don't have a degree, what can I do?

If you do not hold a full Bachelor's degree, then you may be able to use your existing qualifications as credits towards a degree.

There is a useful [tool](#) on this website, which you can use to check if a qualification from a previous study is eligible for transfer. For more information, please visit our [credit transfer](#) page.

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I want to teach Secondary, is my degree relevant?

To teach Secondary, applicants must demonstrate extensive knowledge of the subject they wish to teach. You must hold a degree with at least 50% relevance to the subject* if you want to teach to become a secondary school teacher (learners aged 12 – 16). This is because as a teacher, you will need to teach your subject up to public examination level.

Please send us a transcript of your degree with your documentation.

Do I need to have a degree in Welsh to teach Welsh at Secondary?

To teach Welsh as a second language in an English medium secondary school you must hold an honours degree (any subject) and be a fluent Welsh speaker who can speak, write and read Welsh to a high standard.

To teach Welsh as a first language in a Welsh medium secondary school a degree in Welsh is desirable, however a related degree may be considered.

Note: If you wish to complete any aspect of your course in the medium of Welsh, you must as a minimum complete your supporting statement in Welsh, or ideally use the Welsh language application form. All candidates for PGCE Secondary Welsh must complete their application in Welsh. Taught sessions for this course are through the medium of Welsh. You can choose which language you would like to submit your assessment.

How much does the course cost?

On the Salaried route, your cost of study is covered in full by a training grant from the Welsh Government.

How much will I get paid on the Salaried route?

The salary received by students will ordinarily be set at the minimum of point 1 of the unqualified teacher pay scale. This is a full-time salary (not term-time), paid to you by your Employer School.

Further information regarding teacher pay scales can be found on the NASUWT website here: [NASUWT | Wales Pay Scales](#)

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Is there funding available for the Salaried route?

On the Salaried Route, you will be employed by your school and will ordinarily receive a salary at a minimum of point 1 of the unqualified teacher pay scale. This is a full-time salary (not term-time), paid to you by your Employer School. Further information regarding teacher pay scales can be found on the NASUWT website here: [NASUWT | Wales Pay Scales](#)

Your full cost of study is supported by a training grant from Welsh Government, paid directly to the OU on your behalf.

Please note that Salaried students are not eligible for student loans, maintenance grants or bursaries from the Welsh Government. For other funding please see our [website](#).

How is the Salaried Route taught?

On this route, you'll combine PGCE study alongside employment duties in your Employer school.

You will have access to a website of interactive online materials which you can study during dedicated protected study time on your weekly timetable. You will also participate in regular live online sessions taught by OU tutors where you'll join with other student teachers across Wales. These usually take place in the evening. You'll also have the support of the PGCE learning forums, where you will share resources and ideas with your tutors and peers.

Each week, you will have allocated PGCE practice learning periods on your timetable. This is separate to your usual employment duties so you can step into your role as a 'student teacher'. You'll test and apply your learning as you plan for lessons and teach in the classroom under the supervision of a dedicated mentor who will support you to develop your practice. You'll complete in-school practice learning activities and be assessed by a practice tutor who completes four virtual assessment visits throughout the programme. You will be in school all year round for the duration of the programme, except for the first year, where you benefit from attending a six-week second school experience to learn about different school settings.

What is the Salaried route?

If you already work in a state school as a teaching assistant or in a non-teaching role, you can apply for your school to endorse you.

Endorsement means the school are willing to agree to the financial commitments and programme requirements of the Salaried route. You'll work in school full time and study around your existing duties.

Your school must apply to become a partner school and provide an endorsement letter when you apply. Your full cost of study for the PGCE is supported by a training grant from Welsh Government and this is paid directly to the OU on your behalf.

If you don't currently work in a state school or want to change careers, you can still apply for the salaried route in secondary shortage subjects and we will make every effort to match you to an Employer school.

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How much time will I need to spend studying?

Each PGCE module involves academic study through online seminars led by your curriculum tutor; a period of school experience; and the submission of a portfolio of evidence that includes responses to academic tasks and reports from your school experience. In each module, you'll be assessed through a range of tasks, including written essays.

On the **salaried** route, we work with your school to create a combined timetable of activities. This includes your normal work, protected study time and dedicated PGCE practice learning periods.

How much time will I need to spend teaching?

The programme offers a graduated approach to teaching and your time in school will involve not just teaching but also mentoring, practice learning activities, observing others and time for planning and preparing lessons. How much you teach will be decided with your School Coordinator and your Mentor who will agree your timetable with you, taking into consideration your development needs and progress.

How much time will I spend on my usual job or employment duties?

Your online module study time and practice learning element will be incorporated into an agreed timetable.

How do the placements work?

Salaried students will undertake practical experience at the same time as studying. Students are expected to attend placements in two different schools in order to gain QTS. You'll work with your mentor, and school staff members to take on increasing teaching responsibility:

PGCE 1&2: classroom support, and planning and teaching single lessons to planning and teaching a sequence of lessons

PGCE 3: responsibility for planning, resourcing and solo teaching a range of lessons, including an individual classroom research project.

Mentors will support you throughout your school experience. They'll mediate and facilitate regular school-based tasks, which feed into your studies.

Teaching within the Welsh context (e.g. Curriculum for Wales) is an accredited regulatory requirement of the programme. As a result, all placements MUST be completed in a partner school in Wales.

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When do the placements take place?

Salaried students are expected to attend placements in two schools and will undertake practical experience at the same time as studying. On the salaried route you would be working full time from September. On the Salaried route, the majority of your time will be spent at your employer school, **but in June and July of year 1 you would be expected to undertake a second placement in a partner school.**

What is a Partner School?

A partner school is one that has applied to join the programme and has met the strict criteria to enter into the partnership. There are 3 types of Partners:

Lead Partner School – members of the Partnership Committee with key strategic and decision-making responsibilities, leading associate and employer schools within their cluster and playing a central part in all aspects of the programme.

Associate Partner School - support the development of students on the Part Time PGCE programme, providing placement opportunities of up to 120 days per year.

Employer Partner School - those who wish to support the development of an employed student enrolled on the Salaried PGCE route.

Schools can have more than one status e.g. an Employer School can also be an Associate School if they are endorsing their own employee on the Salaried route and offering placements to students on the Part-time route. For more information – please see our [Schools](#) pages

Do I need a car?

When arranging placements, various factors are considered. These include: student's personal circumstances, distance, student experience, school partnership status, capacity and more.

It is not a requirement that you need a car to join the programme. But whether you drive or use public transport, you may be expected to travel up to an hour to your placement, to ensure you have the experience required to meet QTS.

My current school have agreed to endorse me, how does that work?

If you already work in a state school as a teaching assistant or in a non-teaching role, you can ask you school to consider the Salaried route and

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endorse your application. You'll work full time and study around your existing duties. You will be on the Salaried route and will be employed by your school and will ordinarily receive a salary of a minimum of point 1 of the unqualified teacher pay scale. Please see our prospectus and website for more information.

Please ask your headteacher to apply to become an Employer Partner School with our programme before you apply. There are a number of financial and contractual implications for your school to consider. Your school must be approved by the OU partnership and provide you with an endorsement letter.

Click [here](#) for more information.

My current school are unable to endorse me, can you help find me another endorsing school?

For secondary shortage subjects only

You can apply to the salaried route without an endorsing school and we can potentially match you to a state school who are seeking a secondary salaried student.

The secondary school will then interview candidates we have put forward using their own employment procedures and decide whether to offer the student a contract of employment (we cannot guarantee you employment).

Employment would be expected to start in September.

Please note that this route is not offered for Primary candidates.

How does my school apply to become a Partner school?

Please see our [School](#) facing website for information on how your school can apply to become a partner school. Your school will need to meet eligibility criteria and agree to meet programme requirements.

My school is a special school, can I still apply for the salaried route?

At present, we don't offer salaried placements within Special schools, but we are pleased to report that the inclusion of Special schools within our salaried model is currently under review with discussions taking place across the partnership whether this may change in future.

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The part-time route can support applicants to complete one placement in a special school context. This self-funded route allows you to keep other commitments throughout the duration of the course (like part time work, for example). You may be eligible for student funding to help with fees and funding.

Some Special schools may be eligible to meet our Associate partner school status and will need to demonstrate they can meet programme requirements. Information can be found on our school facing website.

If you are requesting to be placed in a Special school in which you ordinarily work, and the school hold Associate status, you may complete your first 25 day placement in your school. The remaining two placements will be in a mainstream school, which we would arrange on your behalf. You could continue to work in your current position on a part-time basis throughout the duration of the course, providing you would be able to complete your placements at other schools when required. A break-down of these placements and further information can be found online.

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