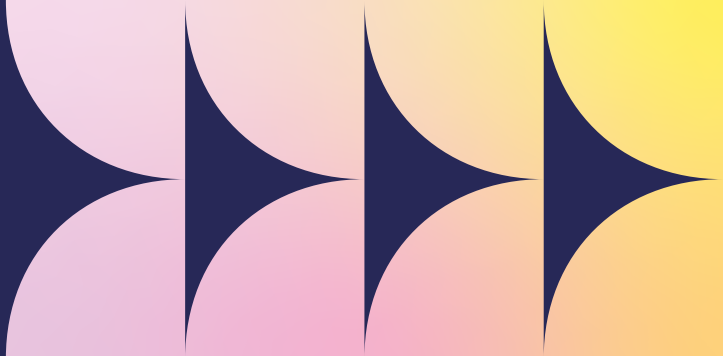




The Open University  
Y Brifysgol Agored  
Wales Cymru



# Your 2025 Postgraduate Certificate in Education in Wales Prospectus





# Open doors to teaching with The Open University Partnership

We're experts in helping people fit their studies around their life and their existing commitments.

Over the last 50 years we've helped more than 190,000 students in Wales reach their goals through flexible learning.

The Open University, in partnership with the Welsh Government, Regional Consortia and Partner Schools across Wales, are offering a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE).

If you already work in a school, as a teaching assistant or in a non-teaching role, the **salaried route** enables you to study around your current duties. In secondary subjects on the salaried route we offer the opportunity for career changers to be 'matched' with high quality schools in Wales.

If you've always wanted to be a teacher, but you have existing life or work commitments, our **part-time route** offers you the opportunity to get the qualifications you need while balancing your other responsibilities.

Whichever route you take, you'll experience top-quality education accredited by the Education Workforce Council (EWC)<sup>1</sup>. Specialist curriculum tutors, in-school mentors, and our dedicated PGCE Wales Team will support you every step of the way. You'll gain

all the skills, experience and qualifications you need to enter the teaching profession.

<sup>1</sup> The EWC is an independent, professional regulator for the education workforce in Wales, covering teachers and learning support staff in school and further education settings, qualified youth/youth support workers, and work-based learning practitioners.



# How do I become a teacher?

To become a teacher, you need to attain Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) through an accredited provider in Wales.

Our PGCE will qualify you to work at either primary or secondary school level. You can study it in either Welsh or English, anywhere in Wales.

The programme is delivered through online learning and live online seminars, and will take two years of study to complete. You'll experience teaching in two different schools, through practice learning.

The qualification is designed for teaching in Wales and for the Welsh curriculum<sup>1</sup>.

The programme is employability-focused and will prepare you to enter the teaching profession. As a vocational teaching qualification, it's accredited by EWC (Education Workforce Council) and monitored by Estyn.

The combination of academic and practice-based skills and experience is central to the programme, ensuring you're familiar with 'practice as theory and theory as practice'.

<sup>1</sup> The PGCE can be used to teach in England.



The OU enabled me to study the PGCE while working, which isn't something anyone else is offering.



**Michael Rees**  
OU PGCE graduate and qualified Science teacher

## Aims of the course

Our PGCE will equip you with all the skills and experience you need to start in the teaching profession, including the ability to:

- Demonstrate the knowledge, understanding and teaching skills needed, through the five professional standards.
- Think critically about the teaching and learning process, recognising the contribution you and others can make to pupil and whole-school success as part of a developing and coherent education culture in Wales.
- Recognise the needs and rights of all pupils and seek to develop the learning potential and achievement of all.
- Support pupils in gaining skills across all areas of learning – especially literacy, numeracy and digital competence.
- Use the full range of opportunities to promote learning, and work to overcome barriers that inhibit success.
- Share a commitment to the central importance of the promotion of Welsh culture and language.
- Engage critically with research, seek evidence to inform your judgements, and use research techniques to improve your practice.
- Demonstrate a commitment to career-long professional and personal development, and the development of the school, for the benefit of your pupils.

# How does studying with the OU work?

## Distance learning with the OU

We've designed our learning experience to combine flexibility and regular contact. We'll give you the help you need to learn in the best possible way. You'll be able to study at home, in school, or on the move.

You'll use our virtual learning environment to access compulsory live tutorials, module content such as textbooks, video and audio, and practice-learning activities. It's also where you'll interact with tutors and other students in online forums.

## How is the PGCE taught?

You can follow one of two routes: the salaried route or the part-time route. Both include a mix of online and face-to-face sessions with mentors and practice tutors. You'll also have practical experience (practice learning) across two schools.

## 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. You'll work in school and study around your existing duties. Your school must apply to become a partner school and provide an endorsement letter, as they will pay your salary. Your costs of study are covered by a training grant from the Welsh Government.

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. You'll need a secondary school willing to endorse you, which we can help you find.

## Part-time route

If you're a career changer wanting to become a teacher, or the salaried route isn't right for you, consider our part-time option. You can study towards your PGCE around a part-time job or other life commitments. You can apply for a student loan and part-time maintenance grants to help with the costs of this self-funded route.

This route offers some flexibility as you can gain part-time practical teaching experience in a school alongside your existing commitments. You'll need to commit two to three days a week on average throughout the programme to the PGCE. Across the two years, you'll have 120 days of school placements; 60 days per year. In the second year, half of your school placement (30 days) must be completed in a continuous block.

Please see the Fees and funding section for information on financial support available for part-time students in Wales.

## Will I have support?

Although we teach our PGCE through distance learning, there's lots of support available. You'll have a curriculum tutor who'll be a specialist in your chosen field, and an in-school mentor who'll provide support and practical advice.

In addition, you'll be able to speak to the PGCE Wales Team who can give you help and guidance throughout your studies. Plus, you can connect with fellow students through our module discussion groups.

## Students association

You'll automatically become a member of our active students association when you register.

Find out more at [openuniversity.co.uk/ousa](https://openuniversity.co.uk/ousa).

## Do you have additional support needs?

We're committed to supporting disabled students, or helping you with any additional needs you may have. We'll give you the tools to help overcome obstacles that could stand in the way of your studies. We'll consider what reasonable adjustments can be made when finding practice learning placements in schools.

## Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)

A DSA can help you with study costs that result directly from your disability or specific learning difficulty. For more information see page 8.



With two young children, the part-time PGCE fits perfectly with our family situation.



**Catrin Williams**  
OU PGCE graduate and newly qualified primary school teacher

# How do I achieve my PGCE?

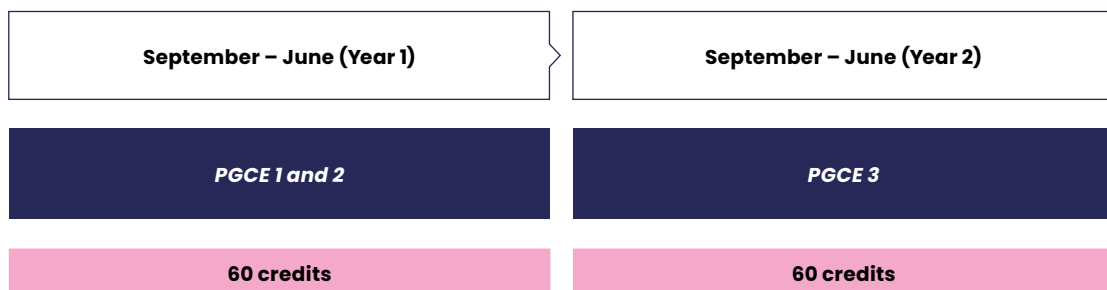
We'll award you the PGCE on successful completion of 120 credits.

In the first year, you will study *PGCE 1 and 2* at level 6 (undergraduate) and you will be awarded 60 credits on completion. In the second year, you will study *PGCE 3* at level 7 (postgraduate) and be awarded a further 60 credits.

The modules are compulsory, and you study them in the order specified.

You'll complete the qualification in two years. The first and second years of the programmes start in September and finish the

following June. Break weeks coincide with the Welsh school holidays. You'll receive your PGCE results in July. Upon passing the programme, EWC will award your QTS in August.



Each 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.

If you're 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. If you're on the part-time route, you'll study two to three days a week, either in academic study or on your school placement. The exception to this is on *PGCE 3* where you must commit to 30 full days of teaching (five days a week over six consecutive school weeks).



I was educated through the medium of Welsh, and so, I want to be able to give that back to the next generation of pupils.

**Sioned Roberts**  
OU PGCE graduate and  
qualified Welsh medium  
drama teacher



## What subjects can I study?

You can qualify at primary or secondary school level.

On the salaried programme you can choose from:

- Primary
- Secondary Welsh
- Secondary Science
- Secondary Mathematics
- Secondary English
- Secondary Design and Technology
- Secondary Computing/ICT
- Secondary Modern Foreign Languages.

On the part-time programme you can choose from:

- Primary
- Secondary Welsh
- Secondary Science
- Secondary Mathematics
- Secondary English
- Secondary English with Media Studies
- Secondary English with Drama
- Secondary Design and Technology
- Secondary Computing/ICT
- Secondary Modern Foreign Languages.

More detail about the subjects on offer, can be found on our website, visit [openuniversity.co.uk/wales-pgce](https://www.openuniversity.co.uk/wales-pgce).

Study on both routes, at either primary or secondary level, is available in both Welsh and English.

## What will the course cover?

Teaching across all of the modules will be focused on practice.

### You'll develop skills in these areas:

- Curriculum
- Children's learning
- Planning
- Teaching
- Assessment
- Professional role.

You'll move from introduction, familiarisation and consolidation of your learning in *PGCE 1 and 2*, to autonomy of teaching practice in *PGCE 3*.

As you move through the modules, your understanding of the theories and concepts will progress. Your practical experience and assessments will also prepare you for your next module.

Throughout your online studies and your school-based experiences you'll learn about the interrelation of theory and practice in order to become a critical thinker and research-informed practitioner.

### How will I be assessed?

In each module, you'll be assessed through a range of tasks, including written essays. In addition, you'll build an eportfolio of evidence demonstrating your practical progress against the professional standards including lesson observations, mentor discussion records and formal assessment of your teaching by a practice tutor.

## When are my school placements?

Academic theory will be combined with substantial, supported experience in schools. Salaried students will undertake practical experience at the same time as studying. Salaried students are required to complete a mandatory 25-day second school experience in the first year. For part-time students, practical experience is supported by prior academic study in each module.

You'll work with your mentor, and school staff members to take on increasing teaching responsibility. You'll develop your skills in classroom support, planning and teaching lessons in *PGCE 1 and 2*. You'll then have responsibility for planning, resourcing and solo teaching a range of lessons in *PGCE 3*.

Whether you're on the salaried or part-time route, you'll undertake an individual classroom research project in *PGCE 3*. For students on the part-time route, you'll need to complete 60 days of teaching experience during this module, half of which will be completed in a continuous block (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. More detail about the exact timing of placements can be found on our website.



# What are the entry requirements?

To apply for the salaried route you must have a home address in Wales or England (all school placements must take place in a state school in Wales). If you're applying for the part-time route you must have a home address in Wales.

## You must also have the following<sup>1</sup>:

- A full 360 credit UK honours degree (or equivalent). If you want to become a secondary school teacher, your degree must contain a significant proportion of the subject you want to teach. For applicants interested in studying PGCE Secondary Welsh, if you are a fluent Welsh speaker you do not need to have a degree in Welsh in order to be considered.
- GCSE Mathematics or Mathematics-numeracy at Grade C or above (or equivalent).
- GCSE English Language or Welsh First Language at Grade C or above (or equivalent).
- GCSE Science at Grade C or above (or equivalent) if you want to become a primary school teacher.
- Experience working in a school environment/with young people if you want to study the salaried route. Be prepared to complete a voluntary week in school before starting the course if you want to study the part-time route.

<sup>1</sup> For up to date information on entry requirements, visit [openuniversity.co.uk/wales-pgce](http://openuniversity.co.uk/wales-pgce).

## In addition, you'll need to demonstrate the following:

- Aptitude, capability, and resilience to meet the required Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) outcomes by the end of your PGCE programme.
- Personal and intellectual qualities to become an excellent practitioner.
- You can read effectively and communicate clearly and accurately in spoken and written English and/or Welsh.
- Personal functional skills in literacy, numeracy and digital competency applicable in a professional teaching and learning context. This will be evaluated through an assessment.

## During the application process you'll need to do the following:

- Apply for a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check to show that you are not or have not previously been barred or excluded from teaching or working with learners, or have a criminal background that might prevent you working with children or vulnerable people. Safeguarding is a legal requirement. The DBS check is undertaken by an external company and you will be charged a fee.

- Confirm you understand that you'll need to complete an extended period of time in a second school.
- You'll need access to a computer with a reliable internet connection.
- If you're applying for the salaried route, your school must be approved by the OU partnership and provide you with an endorsement letter. Visit our School Partnerships page to find out how your school can become a PGCE partner school.
- Salaried students will need to register with the Education Workforce Council as a School Support Worker before starting the programme.



# Fees and funding

The cost of studying the PGCE depends on the route you're applying for.

## How much does it cost?

- **Salaried route** – Your costs of study are covered by a training grant from the Welsh Government. The salary received by students will ordinarily be set at the minimum of the unqualified teacher pay scale (eg. £20,674 for the 2023/24 academic year).
- **Part-time route** – The course fee is £2,625 per year, which you'll pay on an annual basis. The total cost for the PGCE will be £5,250<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Based on 2024 entry fees. Fees typically increase annually. For further information about our fee policy, visit [openuniversity.co.uk/fee-rules](https://openuniversity.co.uk/fee-rules).

## Funding for part-time route

### Student loan

A student loan from Student Finance Wales might be the best way to fund your studies.

### Key facts

- Repayments start when your income exceeds the threshold (£27,295 as of April 2024).
- Repayments are deducted automatically from your salary.
- You can pay off the loan early without any penalties.
- Any balance outstanding after 30 years will be written off.

Refer to our website for the latest information at [openuniversity.co.uk/pgce-funding](https://openuniversity.co.uk/pgce-funding).

## Other payment methods

You can pay using a debit or credit card, or by bank transfer. Or spread the cost with an Open University Student Budget Account (OUSBA) (see opposite for more information).

## Other financial support

### Maintenance support

If you're on the part-time route, you can also apply for up to £3,000<sup>2</sup> in funding to help with living costs while you're studying. The maintenance grant isn't a loan, so you won't need to pay it back. The amount you receive is based on your annual household income. If you aren't eligible for the maximum amount you can also apply for a top-up loan to make up the difference.

### Teacher Training Incentives

Additionally, you may be entitled to incentives from the Welsh Government. These are dependent upon your degree classification and the phase or subject you choose.

More information can be found by visiting the [gov.wales](https://gov.wales) website.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Correct as of academic year 2024/2025. This may be subject to change for students in academic year 2025/2026.

<sup>3</sup> These incentives are published annually and therefore are subject to change.



## Study support and discretionary funds

You might be eligible for additional means-tested funding. This is only for study-related costs, such as travel, childcare and internet access.

## Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)

A DSA can help you with study costs that result directly from your disability or specific learning difficulty. They're not means-tested and can go towards specialist equipment (such as an adapted computer), non-medical study support (e.g. a dyslexia support worker) or other related expenses. You can also apply for help with study-related travel costs that result directly from your disability.

For more information, go to [openuniversity.co.uk/disability](https://openuniversity.co.uk/disability) or call us on **029 2047 1170**.

## Open University Student Budget Accounts Ltd (OUSBA)

When you enrol with us, you'll be offered the opportunity to pay your fees through a loan from OUSBA.

OUSBA will pay your fees to The Open University, and you repay OUSBA either in a single sum before your course starts – in this case there's no interest – or in monthly instalments of up to a year – in this case, interest does apply. The interest rate is fixed for the duration of the course (representative APR 5.1%).

If you're worried about affordability or a poor credit history, you can apply for a joint loan application with a third party e.g. partner, sibling, friend, etc.

Find out more about OUSBA at [openuniversity.co.uk/ousba](https://openuniversity.co.uk/ousba).

As a responsible lender, OUSBA carries out affordability checks as part of the application process.



Now as a qualified teacher, I'm so thankful that I choose the OU and for the amazing schools that helped and supported me on my journey.

**Wayne Williams**  
OU PGCE graduate  
and qualified primary  
school teacher



## More online

Find out more about fees and funding.



Visit  
[openuniversity.co.uk/pgce-funding](https://openuniversity.co.uk/pgce-funding)



# How do I apply?

As part of the selection process, and in conjunction with Partner Schools, you must do the following:

- Complete a PGCE Wales application form. This will include a personal statement and references. Applicants for the salaried route must also include an endorsement letter from their school. This is written confirmation that a school is happy to participate in the programme and pay part (or all) of your salary, dependent upon which phase or specialism. (A template for this is available on our website and **must** be used and submitted at the same time as your application.) This can be from a state school you are already employed by or one which you have approached. Only applicants for secondary shortage subjects on the salaried route can apply without an employer's endorsement. We can potentially match you to a state school who are seeking a secondary salaried student.
- Successfully complete the selection process which will involve interviews and a variety of assessment methods to ensure that any prospective student teacher meets the statutory entry requirements for student teachers in Wales.
- Achieve an International English Language Testing Systems (IELTS) score of 7 (if English is not your first language and your home country is outside the UK).
- Confirm that you meet the requirements of the Welsh Government's Education Health Standards.

## Next steps

For more information and to start the registration process:

- Visit [openuniversity.co.uk/wales-pgce](https://openuniversity.co.uk/wales-pgce).
- Or, speak to one of our friendly advisers at the OU in Wales on **029 2002 0354**. Lines are open (UK time) Monday to Friday: 08:30 – 17:00.
- You can also email us at [wales-pgce@open.ac.uk](mailto:wales-pgce@open.ac.uk).

We welcome correspondence in Welsh and in English and corresponding with us in Welsh will not lead to delay.

The Open University is incorporated by Royal Charter (RC 000391), an exempt charity in England & Wales, and a charity registered in Scotland (SC 038302).

The Open University is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority in relation to its secondary activity of credit broking.

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All information provided in this prospectus is correct at time of production (September 2024), however information is subject to change. Please visit our website for the most up-to-date information.

Mae fersiwn o'r prospectws hwn ar gael yn Gymraeg.

