

Summary of the report on the new flexible routes into teacher training

In April 2021, 124 students were studying The Open University Partnership in Wales PGCE Programme. All students 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.

48 PGCE students responded to the online survey 

29 Training on the salaried route 

19 Training on the part-time route 

34 Training to teach primary 

14 Training to teach secondary 

16 PGCE students interviewed 

Household circumstances

Immediately before starting the PGCE

 **15 out of 47** survey respondents (32%) reported earning a household income **below £26,000.**

 **33 out of 48** survey respondents (69%) have **children in their household.**

Employment and work experience



47 out of 48 (98%) were employed immediately before the PGCE



43 out of 48 (90%) were working 16-38 hours/week



40 out of 47 (85%) were employed in education

I needed my life experiences to pursue other things. I think my other experiences are a credit to my future career with children. I think it is always good to have different experiences in a school, not just straight out of uni teachers but to have some life experiences in there.
(Secondary, part-time student)

Routes into teaching

Thirteen out of 48 respondents (27%) had previously applied to a full-time PGCE course.

Reasons for **selecting the OU Partnership PGCE** instead of an alternative PGCE:

- Able to continue working in current role
- Expected workload to be more manageable
- Course fees were lower
- Part-time is more flexible
- Can continue other commitments alongside study
- Full-time study is too demanding with a young family 

Almost all (45 out of 48, 94%) have work experience in non-educational settings.

Examples of some of the sectors PGCE students have worked in



The main reasons for never applying for a one year full-time PGCE given by the rest of the student teachers;



Need to earn an income
(17 out of 31, 55%)



Childcare and family commitments
(9 out of 31, 29%)

The Open University Partnership in Wales PGCE Programme



Remaining in current role was important for 18 (62%) on the salaried route.



Earning an income while studying was important for 9 student teachers. (31 %)

*I am a mature student with a family [...]. I would not have returned to study full-time again with my commitments and this was my only opportunity to re-train.
(Primary, salaried student)*

What aspects of the PGCE Programme are helping you to succeed?

Some students reported more than one aspect, the main elements mentioned were:



The support of the Curriculum Tutor (15 out of 45 respondents)



Online materials and seminars (9 and 8 out of 45 respondents respectively)

Other key aspects reported as providing support:

Mentors

Practice Learning Activities

WhatsApp group

Flexibility

Forums

*There is a **wealth of resources** available, which are advantageous to learning. I have accessed referencing guides and library support, alongside IT services, all of which were very helpful. (Secondary, salaried student)*

*The tutor is amazing, very 'hands on' and always at the end of an email. I feel a lot more supported than I thought I was going to be and there's a lot more **structure to the support**, with the **tutor group, seminars** etc. There is always a chance to ask questions and feel you are being guided.
(Primary, part-time student)*



11 out of 16 student teachers interviewed (69%) commented on the extensive workload they felt the programme involved.

Widening access into the teaching profession

Why do you want to teach?



25 out of 45 survey respondents (56%) are motivated to teach by wanting to make a difference and inspire children.



21 out of 45 respondents (47%) are motivated by wanting to progress their career in education by completing the PGCE.

The flexibility of the PGCE programme was reported to be critical to the future success of widening access to the PGCE and the teaching profession.

The Open University Partnership in Wales PGCE Programme is having a positive impact on diversifying the future teaching workforce.

The current PGCE student cohort, is diverse, with more people in the older age groups, who bring with them many years of work experience and life skills from both educational and non-educational settings.

I have wanted to become a qualified teacher for years but hadn't had the opportunity to train/study without giving up earning. I want to teach to make a difference to the lives and futures of the children I come across. (Primary, salaried student)