



Becoming a teacher

Nation guide

Wales 2023/2024

Careers and Employability Services

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The University wishes to emphasise that, while every effort is made to ensure accuracy, changes in regulations or in policy means you should not solely rely on the information in this guide. Please make sure you check all information carefully and regularly before making any final decisions.

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1. Introduction: Considering teaching as a career

This nation guide is part of a series that includes teaching in England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Ireland, and has been produced by The Open University's Careers and Employability Services (CES) to help prospective and current students who are considering teaching as a career. The contents are subject to change, so please make sure that you check all information carefully and regularly before making any final decisions.

Making the decision to train to be a teacher is just the start of your journey. There are entry requirements to meet, different routes to becoming qualified to consider as well as the process of applying for initial teacher education (ITE). Once qualified there are then the demands of finding your first role and this is all before being in charge of a group of students for the first time.

This guide outlines some of these issues but it is important that you continue to seek advice throughout your studies.

What makes a good teacher?

There are far too many attributes to list in establishing what makes an effective teacher and probably some subjectivity as well. Enthusiasm for teaching, although important, is not enough. The work of a teacher is complex, demanding and sometimes stressful. Additionally, teachers will know that the reality of the hours they work are beyond those that are timetabled, and workload issues are well publicised.

That said, there can be tremendous job satisfaction. However, you might want to consider the following questions.

- Am I passionate about education and making a difference to those I will teach?

- Can I demonstrate the consistent high standards of personal and professional conduct required to uphold the trust of my students, colleagues, and profession?
- Am I reflective, resilient, and open minded enough to adapt, embrace change and develop my practice as education evolves during my professional career?

Just remember that your age and background are not an issue. One of the strengths of the profession is that it attracts applicants from all walks of life who do a fantastic job. Mature entrants have life experience that is welcomed and of great value to the teaching profession.

You can learn what being a teacher is really like with the free OU FutureLearn course – [Becoming a Teacher](#). This course is for anyone thinking about becoming a teacher and will help you to decide if teaching is for you, give you a sense of what teaching is really like and help you to start writing your application for initial teacher education.

Work experience will help you decide

Before you make your final decision to teach, it is wise to gain some experience of working in the age range and setting you wish to teach. You'll also develop valuable insight into the day-to-day duties of a teacher, as it is impossible to get a real flavour of the profession from research alone. Attaining relevant work experience is desirable prior to applying for the training routes into the profession, so this is something you will need to start thinking about early on. Above all, else getting classroom experience will help you decide if teaching is the right career choice for you.

If you already have some classroom experience, you may want to consider other experiences that can add value.

You'll find information about ways to build relevant experience in [Skills and experience](#).

What age range do you want to teach?

This is a really important question you'll need to answer before you apply for entry onto initial teacher training. In Wales, we have the following phases:

- Foundation phase 3–7 (includes primary: typically, 5–11 age range)
- Secondary: typically, across 11–16, 11–18 or 14–19 age range
- Further Education: typically, 16+
- Higher Education: typically, 18+

Your teaching specialism, where applicable, is also important. Both factors will also impact your degree and module choices at the OU. As a guide, in secondary schools you will normally specialise in one subject and in primary schools you will teach across the range of subjects.

Availability of teaching posts and training places

The Welsh Government sets annual targets for recruiting students onto primary and secondary school level initial teacher education (ITE) courses in Wales, which are published as part of the [intake allocations for 2022/23](#). The availability of teaching posts and the supply of qualified teachers across the age ranges to fill them is a complex picture, with factors such as location and subject both playing a part.

The [Education Workforce Council](#) (EWC) publish statistics for the education workforce in Wales.

So, you want to become a teacher?

You will need to ask yourself some questions about your experience and goals in relation to getting into teaching. Whatever your current situation, you should thoroughly research the appropriate choice of modules for your degree and check the entry requirements with each (ITE) provider you are applying to.

Question 1: Do you have experience in the age range and setting you want to teach and feel confident this is the right career for you?

If not, read [Skills and experience](#) for ideas on how to gain experience.

Question 2: Do you meet the entry requirements for teaching?

If not, read [Training to teach in Wales](#) for advice on your training options. Also read [Frequently asked questions](#).

Question 3: Do you know which training route you will take?

If not, read [Training to teach in Wales](#) for advice on your training options. Also read [Frequently asked questions](#).

Question 4: Are you happy with your study pathway and module choices?

If not, contact your Student Support Team if you are a current Open University student.

Finally, do make sure you understand the timescales of when you will need to apply for initial teacher training. If you need more support visit [Careers and Employability Services](#).

2. Where to start

Many OU students enter teaching and, in general, a degree from the Open University is very appropriate preparation. However, the choice of what you study can be critical in ensuring that you gain entry into initial teacher education (ITE) and ultimately get a job in the teaching profession. The BA/BSc Open (Honours), tailored to your own requirements (also known as the Open degree), might be a useful choice for teaching but you must ensure that the modules within the degree are appropriate for the age range and setting you wish to teach.

Many ITE providers will ask for at least 50% of your degree to cover the subject knowledge they require. A degree in the specialist subject area you wish to

teach is particularly appropriate for the secondary sector, further education and higher education sector.

Please be aware that in assessing your suitability to teach, ITE providers may have differing views on your module and degree choice. You are strongly advised to check this out with each provider you may wish to apply to before embarking on your degree (or as soon as possible if you are already studying). You also need to ensure that you keep regularly up to date with changing requirements in this area. You may need to do this **each year** that you are studying with the OU to ensure that you are still on the right track towards a teaching career.

OU students should be aware that, depending on when you take your final module, your degree may not be awarded until December. Most ITE providers will expect you to officially have your degree classification confirmed **before** you start teacher training. Please check the entry requirements, including expectations on your degree content, with any ITE providers you are considering or have applied to as requirements can change year on year.

If you have an overseas qualification, an incomplete qualification from another institution or a professional qualification and you are not sure you meet the entry requirements for initial teacher training, you should check this with your chosen teacher training provider.

If you are a current student, after reading this guide, you may want to talk in more depth to one of the OU's Career and Employability Consultants about your application for initial teacher training. You will find a range of materials and support on the [Careers and Employability Services](#) website. Information and advice on choosing qualifications and modules at the OU can be accessed from the [OU's prospectus](#).

What are the entry requirements for a career in teaching?

Here we will focus on the main academic and non-academic requirements for teaching in early years, primary and secondary. You will find requirements for

requirements for further education and higher education in [Training to teach in Wales](#).

Academic requirements

- For postgraduate teacher training programmes, you'll need to hold an undergraduate degree awarded by a UK higher education provider, or a recognised equivalent. If you want to become a secondary school teacher, your degree should have at least 50% relevance to the subject you want to teach.
- You'll need to have achieved a standard equivalent to grade B, or above, in the GCSE examinations in English and/or Welsh and mathematics before your training programme starts. It is always advisable to check entry requirements with the course provider.
- If you intend to train to teach pupils aged three to 11 (early years and primary), you must also have achieved a standard equivalent to a grade C, or above, in a GCSE science subject.

You can read more about the academic requirements on the [Welsh Government site](#).

Non-academic requirements

You will also need to consider:

- It is desirable to have classroom experience (but not a requirement) in the age range and setting you wish to teach. See [Skills and experience](#) for how to arrange this.
- Fitness to teach – Your training provider may send you a health questionnaire to find out about your medical fitness. See [Resources and support for potential teachers with a disability](#).
- Undergo an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. You'll need to disclose any criminal convictions, cautions, or bind-overs.

An option for OU students who need a GCSE in English, maths or science is to take this at the [National Extension College](#) via distance learning. It is also possible sit GCSEs via an evening class at a local further education college or adult education provider. If you don't meet this entry criteria, your training provider may ask you to sit a GCSE equivalency test or offer other evidence to demonstrate your ability. Please note, for the purposes of initial teacher training, level 2 literacy and numeracy qualifications are not considered as equivalent to GCSE Grade C or Grade 4 in English Language and Mathematics.

If you have qualifications from outside the European Economic Area (EEA), the [UK National Information Centre for the recognition and evaluation of international qualifications and skills](#) (UK ENIC) can give advice on whether qualifications are equivalent. They may also be able to provide certification.

If you are in the position of having secured the necessary GCSE grades you require but cannot find proof of your results you will need to contact the relevant exam board to get a replacement exam certificate or certified statement of results. For more details and to find out which exam board to contact if your old exam board no longer exists, visit the [gov.uk support pages](#).

PGCE providers may not accept OU modules as equivalent to GCSEs. Before you embark on study for any alternative qualifications, it is important that you check whether the institutions you wish to apply to will accept these instead of GCSEs.

3. Skills and experience

As well as the knowledge gained from OU study, students develop many transferable skills and attributes that are highly valued by employers. Being able to juggle OU study with work and family commitments involves time management, self-reliance, problem-solving, resilience and prioritising tasks effectively. You may want to do a more in-depth analysis of your skills and achievements using the resources on the [Careers and Employability Services](#) website or with [Your Career Planning Guide](#). This will help you identify and evidence your strengths.

Teachers must also meet the professional standards and competencies agreed by the Welsh Government. You should familiarise yourself with the [Hwb Learning and teaching for Wales Professional Standards](#) as they are used to assess both trainees and newly qualified teachers (NQTs) so are a useful reference when applying for initial teacher education.

Getting work experience

Why do I need work experience?

Above all else, getting classroom experience will help you decide if teaching is the right career choice for you. You'll develop valuable insight into the day-to-day duties of a teaching role. It is impossible to get a real flavour of the profession from research alone. Recent work experience in the age range and subject you want to teach in is often desirable for the training routes into the profession. You can often build your experience as you study.

What additional experience would be useful?

You aren't just limited to work experience in a formal education setting. You may wish to add to this with experience in different settings such as summer camps, after-school clubs and scouts. The list really is endless in the ways volunteering or paid work could enhance your suitability.

You could also try and get experience in more than one setting and age range. For example, if you are interested in teaching primary you could try and get experience in more than one school. You may also want to consider other experiences such as private tutoring, sport coaching, mentoring or volunteering that puts you in touch with your target age range. Some students have even completed TEFL training (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) and taught both in the UK and abroad. There are also exchange programmes such as [The Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme](#) and the British Council scheme - [Teach abroad as an English language assistant](#).

In summary, you will need to start your planning on this early, before you apply to teach, as it can often take time to sort out arrangements and find the time to

commit to these experiences. Do read through the [Prospects guide](#) for more ideas on securing teaching experience.

How much work experience do I need?

The expectations of prior school experience vary between initial teacher training providers which is why all applicants should check these expectations first. You may have heard a minimum requirement of ten days experience in schools but there is no formal guidance on the number of days. If you can, try and arrange your school-based experience in the age range and subject (if applicable) you want to teach. If possible, experience should also be “recent”. Ideally the last 12 months but providers will consider the last 2-3 years. Given the current climate, school experience has been difficult to organise over the last 18 months, so most ITE providers are sympathetic and take this into account.

How can I arrange getting school experience independently?

This is often the most effective route to getting work experience and usually requires some confidence and perseverance on your part in getting it organised. This can mean using your own contacts as well calling nearby schools. The [Targetjobs](#) website also has some hints and tips about gaining experience.

Making the most of your experience

It's useful to break down your thoughts and activity into before, during, and after your work experience. Before any placement, write down what you want to learn from the experience and what information you want to know. This might include researching the school you are going to and understanding the roles of teacher and support staff.

During your placement, make a record of any creative and innovative teaching styles you have observed and how lessons are tailored to cater for students with different abilities and backgrounds.

After your experience, decide if there are still gaps in your knowledge and whether you need more experience. Write a reflective account that can be used for a personal statement.

Getting paid experience

As well as volunteering, many OU students are already working or seeking roles in education whilst they study such as [teaching assistant](#), [special educational needs \(SEN\) teaching assistant](#), [private tutoring](#) and [learning mentor](#). Some students may decide to delay applying for initial teacher training and look to gain additional educational experience to develop their skills and confidence further.

4. Training to teach in Wales

To teach in a Welsh state-maintained school you must have a degree and gain qualified teacher status (QTS) by following a programme of Initial Teacher Education (ITE). All teachers in Wales are also required to register with the Education Workforce Council (EWC). Some independent schools may not specify QTS as an entry requirement, although in practice many will ask for it.

University led routes

[**Undergraduate Degree leading to QTS**](#). Currently some providers offer this pathway for primary teaching. This would be a three-year undergraduate degree which leads to Qualified Teacher Status.

[**Full-Time Postgraduate Certificate in Education \(PGCE\)**](#). You attend classes at the university you are based at, and you will also spend a significant period of time on placement in schools. Placements are arranged by the university at one of their partner schools.

[**Part-Time Postgraduate Certificate in Education \(PGCE\) at the Open University**](#). The part-time PGCE route into teaching is available for primary and secondary (maths, science, Welsh, English, English with drama, English with

media studies, design and technology, and computing/ICT) pathways. It combines online distance learning taught by The Open University and practical experience within two schools resulting in Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). The part-time route includes 120 days of practical school experience across the two-year course, with some flexibility in the first year, allowing you to work part-time in a school alongside your existing commitments. In the second year, 30 days of your school placements must be completed in a continuous block.

Due to the distance learning approach adopted by the OU, the programme is the only PGCE offered across all areas of Wales and is available through the medium of Welsh or English. The programme is designed to enable, amongst others, career changers or those with caring responsibilities to make the transition into teaching. Applications should be made directly to the OU.

Employment-based route

[Salaried Postgraduate Certificate in Education \(PGCE\) at the Open University.](#)

The salaried PGCE route into teaching is available for primary and secondary (maths, science, Welsh, English, design and technology, and computing/ICT) pathways. It combines online distance learning taught by The Open University and practical experience within two schools resulting in Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). The salaried route is completed over two-years. If you already work at a school as a teaching assistant or in a non-teaching role, you can apply for your school to endorse your study. You'll need to get agreement from your school to apply for this route. 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 school willing to endorse you. The OU will make every effort to match you to a partner employer school. Due to the distance learning approach adopted by the OU, the programme is the only PGCE offered across all areas of Wales and is available through the medium of Welsh or

English. The programme is designed to enable, amongst others, career changers or recent graduates to make the transition into teaching. Applications should be made directly to the OU.

Teach First offers a two-year paid teacher training programme designed to address economic disadvantage. It is not currently available in Wales, but if you live close to the border and are prepared to travel to England for work, it could be an option to consider.



Early Years and Childcare

The Early Years is defined by the Welsh Government as the period of life from pre-birth to the end of Foundation Phase or 0-7 years of age. Formal qualifications in [Early Learning and Childcare](#) vary dependent on the role.

To become an [Early Years Teacher](#) in Wales, you must gain Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), which you can do in a number of ways: a qualifying undergraduate degree, a PGCE, or the employment-based route. Routes into childcare roles vary, and [Social Care Wales](#) has information about the

qualifications needed to work in a range of roles related to early years and childcare.

The Welsh Government has an initiative called Flying Start, which is part of their Early Years Programme for families with children under four years of age living in disadvantaged areas of Wales. There are various types of early years jobs available as part of the [Flying Start programme](#).

Primary teaching

All institutions offering PGCE courses must satisfy themselves that the content of applicants' previous education provides the necessary foundation for work as a primary teacher. It is therefore very important that you check with a primary PGCE provider that your proposed degree will be appropriate. This does not mean that your degree has to cover all, or even most of, the subjects in the primary curriculum, since it is the task of a PGCE course to familiarise students with the National Curriculum requirements and to prepare them to plan and teach lessons in them.

Although not essential, it is advantageous to have a degree which is clearly and substantially relevant to at least one of the subjects in the primary curriculum.

The new curriculum for Wales should incorporate six areas of learning and experience: Expressive Arts, Health and Well-Being, Humanities, Languages, Literacy and Communication, Mathematics and Numeracy, and Science and Technology. The curriculum also covers human rights, diversity and respecting differences, experience and skills for careers and the workplace, learning about local, national and international contexts, and developmentally appropriate relationships and sexuality education. You can read more on the [curriculum for Wales](#) website.

Please note that many ITE providers accept non-curriculum-based degrees, e.g. psychology, social sciences, childhood and youth. However, you are strongly encouraged to check this with the ITE providers that you're looking to apply to. In these cases, you may have to provide evidence of strength in other areas such

as A-levels in national curriculum subjects and/or school experience or working with young people.

An honours degree (360 credits) with a 2:2 classification is usually considered the minimum requirement for entry to teacher training. Many ITE providers will stipulate a 2:1.

If you do not meet these criteria, for example if you have an ordinary degree (without honours) or a third-class honours degree, we highly recommend you contact the ITE providers you intend to apply to.

However, you should ensure that you meet all the other requirements for entry to primary teaching.

If you are in any doubt, you should seek advice from the institution you are applying to for initial teacher education. Your student support team is also available to help you, should you wish to discuss your programme of study.

Secondary teaching

For admission to a secondary PGCE course in Wales (for pupils aged 11–18) you will need to ensure that your degree contains a significant proportion of the subject you want to teach (although with mature students, relevant experience will also be taken into consideration). See the [Careers Wales](#) website for more advice on entry requirements for secondary teacher training.

The most recent regulations do not specify how many years of equivalent subject study your degree should have. However, we recommend that for an OU degree (360 credits) you take at least 50% credits' worth of modules that are appropriate to the subject you intend to teach. Furthermore, to ensure your modules give you a good grounding in the subject, especially for the requirement to be able to teach up to A-level/BTEC National/NVQ level 3, you may want to consider taking more than 180 credits in your chosen subject.

Applying for primary and secondary initial teacher training

Applicants applying for teacher training for 2024 entry will need to search and apply through the Undergraduate UCAS system. Please refer to UCAS for more information.

Information on initial teacher education programmes is released ahead of time usually by the start of each academic year. In the case of UCAS Teacher Training this is usually in early October.

The application process for UCAS Teacher Training operates in two phases; Apply 1 and Apply 2. All students can make up to five choices within Apply 1. If you do not hold any offers from the first phase you can enter Apply 2.

Apply 1 opens in early October 2023 for you to search for training courses that start the following autumn in September 2024, and you can begin making applications as soon as this window opens.

You **should apply as soon as possible** to give yourself the best chance of getting the teacher training place you want. For many OU students they will be applying for initial teacher training whilst they study their final module. Your **degree result will need to be confirmed prior to commencing teacher training**. The majority of OU students will have their classification confirmed by late July although for a minority of students, depending on when you take your final module, your degree may not be awarded until December. The [UCAS Teacher Training website](#) takes you through the application process step by step.

Applications for the new OU PGCE routes should be made directly to The Open University. For more information visit the [landing page](#), or email Wales-PGCE@open.ac.uk. See [section 4](#) of this guide for more details.

Further education teaching

Teachers in further education (FE) work mainly with post-16 and/or adult learners. They teach at all levels including basic skills, academic teaching and

vocational training. To teach vocational courses you'll be expected to be an expert and qualified in your professional field.

If you want to teach or train young people or adults you may need a recognised teaching qualification, and there are post compulsory education and training (PCET) programmes available. The routes into this include a Professional Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) PCET (offered at various universities across Wales) and a Professional Certificate of Education (PCE) PCET.

To read more about pursuing a career in a post-16 context, see the [Careers Wales](#) website as well [Educators Wales](#).

Higher education lecturing and research

To become a university lecturer, you will normally need to study for masters or PhD qualifications in the area you want to teach. Lecturers for more specialised or vocational subjects can often enter with experience in that field, and a teaching qualification, rather than a PhD.

Some research students undertake part-time teaching responsibilities while still registered as students, which is a valuable way to build up teaching experience. In the early stages of a career, it may be very difficult to gain a permanent contract as an HE lecturer and many are on sessional and fixed-term contracts.

There are a range of websites to help you understand the competitive academic job market. We recommend you visit the [Vitae](#), [Jobs.ac.uk](#) and [Prospects](#) websites.

OU Associate Lecturer

Students on OU modules organise their own study time, which can be a difficult skill to master. As an Associate Lecturer you become the 'face' of the OU for a group of students whose learning you support. They make a vital contribution to the quality of teaching and learning and support students by:

- Teaching and assessment (online and for some modules by post).

- Individual contact by email, phone or post.
- Group tutorials and day schools (face-to-face or online).

To become an Associate Lecturer with the OU you will need to have a degree or a professional or vocational qualification in the subject area you wish to teach. Your academic specialism or professional experience must be complemented by a personal commitment to the education of adults, and an appreciation of the challenges for adult learners who are studying at a distance. It is essential that Associate Lecturers understand and accept the diversity of OU students and their learning needs. In addition, many Associate Lecturers teach full or part-time at other education institutions.

Not all OU modules ask for previous teaching experience, so it is important that you read the person specification to find out if it is a requirement for the module(s) you apply to tutor. For more information see [Teaching with the OU](#).

You can register your interest in working for the OU by completing the [expression of interest form](#). Please note, however, that the expression of interest service does not form part of our formal recruitment process and that it is your responsibility to identify suitable vacancies.

You can also apply for other externally advertised [OU Jobs](#) including [residential school teaching posts](#).

5. Specialisms in teaching and other education-related careers

This section contains information on other areas of teaching such as alternative settings and broader roles in the education sector that you might want to consider. You should ensure that you carefully research how you can train for these and what the implications might be for planning your OU study.

Teaching English as a Foreign Language

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) involves teaching English, either in the UK or overseas, to students whose first or main language is not English. TEFL teachers work in commercial language schools, primary and secondary schools, in FE and in the community. There are also opportunities in development organisations, government departments, volunteer organisations, multinational companies and The British Council. Some may also teach in industry while others are self-employed. Students may be of all ages and levels, and in various class sizes, depending on where you teach. Classes are usually taught in English, even with beginners.

TEFL is increasingly a graduate role, and it is now more difficult for those with no formal qualifications to obtain posts, and almost impossible in the UK. If you have a good basic education and an excellent command of English, it is still sometimes possible to find work in the private sector abroad with no training or experience, but a degree is often required.

Many language schools in the UK and abroad offer training courses ranging from short introductions lasting a couple of days to intensive certificate courses lasting four to six weeks.

Deciding which course to take depends on whether you want a dedicated career in TEFL or if you want to use your qualification to gain experience and see the world. The two most commonly accepted courses are:

- [Trinity College London CertTESOL](#) (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages)
- [Cambridge CELTA](#) (Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults).

There are lots of courses out there so make sure you're getting something that meets the international standards of **100 course hours and 6 hours of live practice teaching**. Be very wary of online only courses that do not offer this. It is worth noting that CertTESOL and CELTA are the only two TEFL qualifications that are listed by the British Council as an acceptable introductory teaching qualification that meets their standards and requirements.

Additional Learning Needs

Additional Learning Needs (ALN) covers a wide range of additional support needs for learners. Two roles we frequently get asked to provide advice on entry requirements are Additional Learning Needs Teacher (ALN) and Additional Learning Needs Coordinator (ALNCO).

Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Teacher

To become an [Additional Learning Needs \(ALN\) Teacher](#) in a mainstream school, qualified teacher status (QTS) is required. All teachers in Wales must register with the Education Workforce Council (EWC). Many ALN teachers move into this area once they have been teaching for a few years and have gained experience.

Additional Learning Needs Coordinator (ALNCo)

All schools, except special schools, have an identified member of staff to act as Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator or ALNCo for short. An ALNCo is the individual who, at a strategic level, ensures that the needs of all learners with ALN within an education setting are met. It is a strategic role and should, therefore, either form part of the senior leadership team or have a clear line of communication to the senior leadership team.

To work in this role, an ALNCo will need extensive knowledge and direct experience of ALN and the different types of support available to learners. You may also need an appropriate SPLD/ALN-related qualification. The ALNET Act (2018) says that the prescribed qualification or experience of an ALNCo at a school must be:

- a schoolteacher (registered with the EWC); or
- a special educational needs co-ordinator within the school immediately prior to the coming into force (4th January 2021) of these regulations.



Other education-related careers

The focus of this guide has been on mainstream teaching roles across a variety of age ranges, although we recognise the education sector is diverse. For this reason, you may want to explore teaching in alternative settings to mainstream education or even explore broader roles in the education sector. Community, environmental, health and heritage education are just a sample of the settings you could explore.

Many OU students also decide to develop their experience in the classroom through support roles such as [Teaching Assistants](#), before committing to initial teacher training. The [Education Alternatives publication](#) by AGCAS is also a recommended read to understand and explore your options further.

6. Resources and support for potential teachers with a disability

It is regrettable that individuals with disabilities are under-represented in the teaching profession, but this should not stop you from considering teaching. Many disabled students and graduates are able to work without the need for specific adjustments or support, but for some students, additional support can help to enable access to work.

Your individual circumstances

We recommend that you read the appropriate guidance documents available below and make informal enquiries as part of an information gathering exercise to find out how the disability guidance relates to you.

In Wales [The Equality Act 2010](#) and [Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001](#), require teacher training providers to ensure they are not discriminating against applicants with disabilities or special educational needs (SEN). Applicants with disabilities are under no obligation to disclose these. The decision to disclose is a personal one, please refer to our downloadable guide for more advice:

- [Your Career Planning Guide \(Section 5: Equality and Diversity Issues\)](#)

You will also find some helpful information on the OU's [Disability support webpages](#) and the following recordings:

- [The Access to Work programme](#) (webinar)
- [How to explain a disability with employers](#) (podcast)

Initial teacher education providers do have a responsibility to ensure that individuals have the health and physical capacity to teach and will not put children and young people at risk of harm. This means all successful applicants are likely to be asked to complete a fitness questionnaire prior to commencing teacher training.

Additional resources

- [Supporting Dyslexic Trainees and Teachers](#)
This guide from the University of Southampton explores strategies for dyslexic teachers and useful resources.
- [Disabled Teachers Network](#)
A US-based organisation but welcome educators with disabilities from any country. Resources include discussion forums and an E-newsletter.
- [The National Education Union](#)
Represent and support disabled teachers and hold an annual disabled teachers conference. The NEU have produced guidance on good practice that should be put in place by all employers, including the [disability equality toolkit: Reasonable adjustments and case studies](#).
- [Get into Teaching](#)
More advice and support if you are training to teach and have a disability.

7. Funding for teacher training

The amount providers charge varies – you can see how much your chosen provider charges on their website.

Government training grants may be available for your PGCE. For more information about the financial incentives visit Gov.Wales for advice on [Initial Teacher Education](#) (ITE).

Postgraduate and undergraduate trainees are entitled to student finance to help cover training programme fees and living costs. Check the [Student Finance Wales](#) website to find out what you may be eligible for.

If you are interested in The Open University PGCE, the [fees and funding](#) is different depending on whether you are on the salaried or part-time route.

8. Frequently asked questions

This section provides basic advice on some of the frequently asked questions relating to teaching from OU students. However, we recognise each student's circumstances are different which is why there are times our general advice may be inaccurate and not apply so always make sure you complete your own research.

Can I still teach with an Open degree?

There are many teachers with an Open degree, but it is important you have a good knowledge of the subject you will be teaching, which also depends on the setting and age range. This means there will be different expectations between early years, primary, secondary, FE and HE. Contact your preferred initial teacher education provider for specific advice.

How much of my degree needs to relate to the national curriculum?

This will depend on whether you teach primary or secondary, and you will need to consider the views of the providers you are applying to. For primary teaching, you should show a good understanding of national curriculum subjects. As a rule, at least half your degree should be in your chosen school subject, although this can relate specifically to content and module choice rather than the title of your degree.

Is it possible to get on a teacher training course without the required GCSEs?

You will still need to demonstrate a standard equivalent to grade B, or above, in the GCSE examinations in English and/or Welsh and mathematics before your training programme starts. A grade 5 will be accepted as equivalent to grade B, from reformed GCSEs in England. All Welsh training providers offer an equivalency test. GCSE equivalencies are required regardless of any higher qualification in a related subject. If you intend to train to teach pupils aged 3 to 11 (early years and primary), you must also have achieved a standard equivalent to a grade C, or above, in a GCSE science subject examination.

Can I teach with a third class or ordinary degree?

Most initial teacher training providers will not consider applicants without at least a 2:2, so you are highly unlikely to be accepted if you have an ordinary degree (without honours) or a third-class honours degree. In exceptional cases, there may be providers who are more open and will look at what skills and school experience an applicant brings or if they are undertaking postgraduate study. In this scenario, researching and contacting them before applying is essential.

Are some teacher training routes recognised as better than others?

No training route is externally recognised as more favourable than another. There are likely to be factors within your individual circumstances that will mean you have a preference. For this reason, make sure you understand your options and research each pathway to help you decide.

Are UK teaching qualifications valid abroad?

They may well have equivalence and currency, but this answer is completely dependent on the country, institution, curriculum and regulations. For these reasons, we recommend that once qualified, if you subsequently decide to work overseas, that you independently research the requirements for the country you are interested in moving to and that you contact schools in the region. The TES Institute also has a useful article on this subject: [Which qualification do I need to teach abroad?](#)

Can I still teach with a criminal conviction?

There isn't a definitive yes or no answer to this, as it depends on what the conviction is. Teaching is exempt from the [Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974](#) and as a potential trainee teacher, you will be subject to enhanced checks by the [Disclosure and Barring Service](#) (DBS). This means you must disclose any convictions. Your first step is to get advice based on your individual

circumstances. We recommend contacting the national charity [NACRO](#) for more advice.

Is it possible to teach in primary schools if you have trained in secondary (and vice versa?)

In theory, it is possible with QTS to teach any age range (5-16) and subject, but schools are likely to make a judgement on your suitability based on your knowledge of the national curriculum and content of your academic qualifications. Additionally, if you have QTLS status from teaching in further education and membership with the Society for Education and Training, you will be eligible to work as a qualified teacher in schools/colleges in England.



Appendix 1: OU contact information

For advice about choosing OU qualifications and modules visit [The Open University website](#) or call Student Recruitment.

Student Recruitment

The Open University PO Box 197
Milton Keynes
MK7 6BJ

Phone: +44 (0) 300 303 5303

Email via www.open.ac.uk/contact

For Welsh speakers

If you would prefer to discuss your study needs in Welsh, please contact The Open University in Wales, based in Cardiff, where we will be pleased to offer personal guidance as well as information about the services available. You may contact us by letter, phone or email, or you are welcome to visit us. We recommend that you make an appointment first to make sure an appropriate adviser will be available.

Although we can offer a range of services for Welsh speakers, our study materials and teaching are normally in English.

Phone: +44 (0) 29 2047 1170

Email: wales@open.ac.uk

I siaradwyr Cymraeg

Os yw hi'n well gennych drafod eich anghenion astudio yn Gymraeg mae croeso i chi gysylltu â'r Brifysgol Agored yng Nghymru yng Nghaerdydd lle byddwn

yn falch o roi cyfarwyddyd personol i chi yn ogystal â gwybodaeth am y gwasanaethau sydd ar gael. Gallwch gysylltu â ni drwy lythyr, galwad ffôn neu neges ebost, neu, os yw hi'n well gennych, mae croeso i chi ymweld â ni. Byddem yn argymhell i chi wneud apwyntiad gyntaf i sicrhau y bydd arbenigwr priodol ar gael.

Nodwch, os gwelwch yn dda, er ein bod yn gallu cynnig ystod o wasanaethau i siaradwyr Cymraeg, bod ein deunyddiau cwrs ac addysgu fel arfer yn Saesneg.

Rhif ffon: + 44 (0) 29 2047 1170

Ebost: wales@open.ac.uk

Republic of Ireland

Enquiry and Advice Centre in Dublin

Tel: +353 (1) 678 5399 or

The Open University in Ireland

Tel: +44 (0)28 9032 3722.

Email: ireland@open.ac.uk

Appendix 2: Careers information

The Open University

For careers information and advice visit the OU's [Careers and Employability Services](#). This website also contains a number of case studies of current and former OU students who have gone into teaching. OU students can also access forums and webinars related to teaching and education. You will need your OU login details to view these.

For details of OU qualifications and modules, visit the [Open University prospectus](#).

Prospects

[Job sectors on Prospects](#) provide comprehensive guides to different career areas including teaching and education.

[Job profiles on Prospects](#) enable you to search for careers such as early years teacher, primary/secondary school teacher, further/higher education lecturer, English as a Foreign Language teacher or special educational needs teacher.

TARGETjobs

[TARGETjobs](#) provides detailed information and advice on routes to becoming a teacher, choosing and applying for a teacher training course and funding.

Gov.Wales

[Gov.Wales Education and skills](#) provides comprehensive information about teaching in Wales including funding options.

UCAS Teacher Training

[UCAS Teacher Training](#) offers information and advice on university and school-based routes into teaching as well as support around the application process.

