



School Coordinator

Job Description

PGCE-241 : Postgraduate Certificate in Education

This document is also available in Welsh. | Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn y Gymraeg.

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About the Role

This document explains the role of Partner school members of staff who are **School Coordinators** and have responsibility for the **senior mentoring** of OU student teachers on the Salaried and/or Part Time PGCE routes. The School Coordinator is often a senior member of staff who coordinates the experience of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) students and their mentoring (in other Partnerships this role may be known as 'Senior' or 'Professional' Mentor). They often have wider responsibilities for ITE within the school, lead a whole-school approach to the provision for ITE students, and may also have oversight of student teachers from other ITE Partnerships.

Within the OU model, there are two mentoring roles – that of the School Coordinator and that of the subject/phase Mentor. Within these two roles the School Coordinator provides holistic support for student teachers and their Mentors, taking a wider and whole-school view; the Mentor is responsible for the day-to-day mentoring of student teachers within their subject or phase. Some individuals will do both roles: therefore, alongside the School Coordinator role, you may also be a Mentor for an individual student teacher.

This document should be read in conjunction with the *Guide to Practice Learning* document and the *Guide to Mentoring* document, which are available on the [PGCE Partnership website](#). Together, these documents consider the principles of effective mentoring and assessment which are useful for both the Mentor and School Coordinator roles.

Key Aims

- To develop a whole-school approach to Initial Teacher Education (ITE) within the school, working within the principles of Schools as Learning Organisations.
- To have an overview of the ITE provision for all student teachers at your school, ensuring consistency of student support and assessment in relation to the *Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership*.
- To ensure that PGCE Programme requirements for Salaried and/or Part-time student teachers are in place and completed in a timely manner within the school.
- To select and coach Mentors within your school, providing support for the effective mentoring of student teachers.
- To guide the development of student teachers during their practice learning at the school in relation to the *Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership*, using lesson observations and professional conversations to inform.

Key Responsibilities

The key responsibilities of this role include:

The Open University (OU) PGCE Programme requirements

- To act as the main point of contact between the OU PGCE Partnership and your school.
- To attend the OU PGCE Programme's online briefing and development events for School Coordinators in order to understand the requirements of the programme and the implications for your school and the student teachers you have on practice learning.
- Be familiar with the OU PGCE Programme's approaches and necessary processes, as outlined in relevant documents such as the *Guide to Practice Learning*, available on the [PGCE Partnership website](#).
- To communicate effectively between your school and the OU PGCE Partnership, for example informing the Partnership of any staff contact detail changes and any student issues as soon as possible.
- To use the Professional Learning Passport (PLP), and support Mentors with navigating their student teacher's PLP, as this is where formal documents such as the Practice Learning Review and Practice Learning Report are completed.
- To signpost available support for both Mentors and Students on the OU PGCE Programme. This includes weekly online drop-in sessions for schools (on Mondays, 3.30-4pm), pastoral care for students via their OU Curriculum Tutor, and wider wellbeing support within the university (as outlined in the *Signposting Student Support* document on the [PGCE Partnership website](#)).

Whole-school mentoring arrangements

- To oversee the quality of effective mentoring within your school, ensuring student teacher provision and assessment is appropriate, consistent and fair.
- To develop a process to identify and select Mentors to support individual student teachers in their subject or phase. When identifying Mentors you should consider members of the teaching staff that are:
 - a qualified teacher recognised for highly effective practice within their phase/subject;
 - in possession of good communication and listening skills that will enable them to empathise with the student teacher and provide them with constructive feedback appropriate to their phase of development;
 - open and willing to reflect critically on their own Mentoring practice and demonstrate an appetite to continually develop their own practice as a teacher educator.
- To enable Mentors at your school to develop professionally and utilise effective mentoring practices, by ensuring they are given time to undertake their mentoring role and attend OU Mentor briefing and development events. Key Responsibilities for Mentors can be found in the *Mentor Job Description* document available on the [PGCE Partnership website](#).
- To help all school staff involved with student mentoring to develop their practice, by encouraging them to complete the '[A Mentoring Mindset](#)' Open Learn course (for which they can gain a certificate of completion) or to reflect on their practice using the Mentor skills audit via the PGCE Partnership website.

Supporting Student Teachers

- To make arrangements that enable each student teacher to teach, research, reflect and evaluate during their practice learning. These arrangements include the following:
 - Setting up and regularly reviewing student teachers' timetables, taking into consideration are they following the Salaried or Part-time route and which point are they at within Year 1 or Year 2. As part of this process School Coordinators should be aware that Salaried students undertake their Second School Experience (SSE) in a different school at the end of Year 1, as explained in the *Guide to Practice Learning*.
 - Enabling student teachers to work very closely with their Mentor (they will be expected to observe their Mentor as well as plan and teach alongside them). For Secondary students, this means that the student teacher should be attached to at least one of the Mentor's classes. For Primary students, careful consideration should be given in the early stages to where students are timetabled – it is usually best for students to work with their Mentor, rather than another classroom teacher where possible. This should be considered when identifying and selecting effective Mentors and creating the student teacher's timetable.
 - Ensuring a Mentor meeting time-slot (every 5 days per student) is in place for each student teacher within the timetable, to enable regular discussion, evaluation and reflection of the student's practice.
- Ensuring a graduated approach is taken in relation to each student's practice learning within the school. Teaching time gradually increases over the two

years of the PGCE qualification. Further details on this graduated approach can be found in the *Guide to Practice Learning*.

- To support students' completion of their **Practice Learning Activities** (PLAs). The completion of Practice Learning Activities should be considered as part of the student teacher's practice learning timetable. School Coordinators and Mentors should consider:
 - which other members of staff can support (e.g. ALNCo; AoLE leads);
 - which activities are suited to certain points in the school calendar;
 - which activities can be facilitated as a group of student teachers.

These activities are a compulsory part of each student teacher's practice learning experience at school and are one of the 'bridging' strategies used to support student teachers to link theory, policy and practice. Each student is provided with a booklet outlining their PLAs for the year.

- To provide support for Mentors and student teachers to undertake **lesson study** activities.
- To provide support for Year 2 student teachers to undertake **small-scale Masters-level research** as part of their assessment (see the *Guide to Practice Learning* for further details). Whilst supporting each student's research, School Coordinators are encouraged to:
 - ensure ethical considerations are discussed with the student teacher;
 - support student teachers to gain any necessary approvals within your school;
 - take an interest in each student teacher's research, providing support to both the student and their Mentor if and where needed.

- Supporting the student teacher's Welsh language skills development in relation to the *Welsh Language Competency Framework for Education Practitioners*. At times, staff expertise within your school may mean that you will appoint an additional Welsh language skills Mentor to support this area of development and enable students to observe effective practice.
- To ensure that any concerns about students are discussed at the earliest opportunity with the student's Open University PGCE Curriculum Tutor.
- To work with other staff members within the PGCE Partnership (such as the Mentor, the Curriculum Tutor and the Practice Tutor) to ensure any issues are resolved appropriately and in a timely manner,

Assessing Student Teachers

- To support with the assessment of student teachers in relation to the *Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership* through lesson observations (formative assessment) and completion of formal feedback reports (summative assessment). Completion dates can be found in the School Coordinator mats and the Planner, which are available on the [PGCE Partnership website](#).
- To support Mentors to make accurate and valid assessments of student progress in relation to the *Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership*.
- To check that the school follows the guidance in the OU's *Practice Learning Assessment Framework* document (available on the [PGCE Partnership website](#)) when assessing their OU PGCE student teachers, to ensure consistency of assessment within and across schools.

- To provide final approval of each student teacher's Practice Learning Reports, thus confirming that you agree with the Mentor's assessment of the student teacher, as well as endorsing the quality and contents of the report which has been written.
- In certain circumstances, to provide additional intervention/support/observation in accordance with the Student Support Framework (SSF). Any additional provision must be discussed beforehand with the student's Open University PGCE Curriculum Tutor, and any concerns should also be discussed at the earliest opportunity with the Curriculum Tutor. Further information on the SSF process can be found in the *Guide to Practice Learning*.

Skills and Experience

The following skills and experience are relevant to the School Coordinator's role:

- Be a qualified senior teacher within a Partner school with a keen professional interest in developing the school's ITE provision.
- Have demonstrable experience of being a high-quality practitioner within the school setting, with an understanding of effective pedagogy.
- Demonstrate and apply knowledge and understanding of the application of the *Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership*.
- Have experience of mentoring ITE students and a strong understanding of the principles of effective mentoring and coaching.
- Engage in and have a professional interest in teacher development and research related to it, demonstrating knowledge, and understanding of the principles of Initial Teacher Education and an understanding of how adults learn.
- Show good communication skills, able to listen and with an ability to provide effective feedback to colleagues at different stages of the professional learning continuum.
- Be able to enhance others' practice, including supporting the ongoing professional development of colleagues who act as student teacher Mentors within your school.
- Demonstrate and apply knowledge and understanding of the principles of Schools as Learning Organisations and how this links to PGCE programme

activities such as student teachers undertaking small-scale research projects or Mentors and student teachers engaging in lesson study.

- Understand that the support and undertaking of PGCE students' research activities, and the sharing of findings within the wider school community, can help student teachers and their Mentors to be part of a wider research and scholarship culture within the school.

