



School Coordinator

Job Description

PGCE-23J : 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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Introduction

Welcome to the OU Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Partnership. Our vision is that together, working in partnership, we will remove barriers to enter the profession. Our aim is to provide a flexible route to develop excellent teachers who may find access to traditional routes more difficult. In doing so, we seek to make a positive impact on the lives of children and communities across Wales.

This guide has been designed to support staff based in Partner schools (Lead, Associate or Employer) who are **School Coordinators** and have responsibility for the **senior mentoring** of OU student teachers on the salaried or part-time PGCE routes.

Within the OU model, there are two mentoring roles – that of the School Coordinator and the subject/phase Mentor. This supplementary guidance provides more information about the School Coordinator’s specific activities needed throughout the year by the **School Coordinator**. It should be read in conjunction with other guidance documents for practice learning and the Mentor Guide. Together, these documents consider the principles of effective mentoring and assessment which are useful for both Mentor and School Coordinator roles.

What does it mean to be a School Coordinator?

The **School Coordinator** is a member of senior 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 may 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 across other ITE Partnerships.

The key responsibilities of this role include:

- communicating effectively with Mentors, student teachers, Curriculum Tutors and Practice Tutors, if necessary.
- maintaining the links/partnership between their school and OU Partnership
- ensuring any issues are resolved correctly and in a timely manner.

School Coordinators have important quality assurance responsibilities. They are involved in assessing a student's practice learning along with the Mentor, making sure provision is appropriate and assessment fair. The School Coordinator should attend specific ITE training related to the OU PGCE programme and keep up to date with developments in this field.

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

- Be a qualified senior teacher within a Lead, Associate or Employer 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.

Main roles and responsibilities of the School

Coordinator

In many Partner schools, the School Coordinator often holds strategic responsibility for Initial Teacher Education (ITE) in their setting. They may be responsible for the oversight of student teachers from both the OU ITE Partnership and other ITE partnerships too. This can mean that you are responsible for the coordination of student teachers' learning experiences as well as identifying, selecting and supporting Mentors to support individual student teachers, and to oversee the quality of effective mentoring within your school.

In the OU model, it is agreed that School Coordinators undertake the following responsibilities.

1. Design student teachers' timetables in accordance with programme requirements and be responsible for changes and developments to the timetable as the PGCE programme progresses.

Year 1 students commence the programme from October, whilst Year 2 students commence the programme in September. Throughout the OU programme, you will need to review and update your student teachers' timetables. This will vary depending on whether your student teacher is following the salaried or part-time route. You can find out more about the programme's timetable requirements in Section 5, which summarises information which can be found in the Practice Learning Placement Guide shared with all schools at the start of the programme.

2. Identify and select suitably qualified staff as subject Mentors (secondary) or phase Mentors (primary). As part of this, provide coordination and support for the effective Mentoring of student teachers and ensuring there is school provision for the support of student teachers' development of Welsh Language skills.

Before your student teachers begin their PGCE journey, you will need to coordinate the identification and selection of the subject/phase Mentors. These are the members of staff who will support each student on a day-to-day basis.

Mentors play a critical role in the student teacher's learning experience and in the OU model, Mentors are viewed as joint teacher-educators (alongside the Curriculum Tutors and Practice Tutors). You can see an overview of the job description for Mentors in the Mentor Guide. When selecting Mentors, you may wish to consider the following skills and experience which are required:

- A qualified teacher recognised for highly effective practice within their phase/subject with the ability to articulate their own theory of practice.
- Knowledge and understanding of the principles of Initial Teacher Education and an understanding of how adults learn.
- Knowledge and understanding of the application of the *Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership*.
- A strong understanding of the principles of effective Mentoring and coaching.
- Able to use powerful questions which support their student teachers to become reflective practitioners capable of eventually working independently and thriving in the new model of teaching in Wales.
- Possess the skills to be empathetic to a student teacher starting their career in education and give constructive feedback appropriate to this stage in their development.
- Be 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.

- Good communication skills, able to listen and with an ability to provide effective feedback to colleagues at different stages of the professional learning continuum.

Ideally, each School Coordinator should develop a process for their school to identify, select and provide ongoing professional learning opportunities and support for their Mentors.

To support Mentors to effectively undertake their roles, they will need sufficient time to support their student teacher. Mentors often cite sufficient time as a significant enabler of successful mentoring. This includes time to:

- Hold a timetabled mentoring session (every 5 days per student)
- Undertake informal and formal lesson observations
- Complete assessment tasks such as write Practice Learning Reports
- Participate in Mentor development events such as training and moderation meetings
- Support the student teacher with planning and assessing lessons

In the OU model, it is expected that the student teacher is timetabled in such a way to enable them to work very closely with their Mentor (as they will be expected to observe their Mentor as well as plan and teach alongside their Mentor). 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 may form part of your consideration when you are identifying and selecting effective Mentors.

Student teachers are expected to develop their own and their pupils' Welsh language competence. To support students with this aspect, you may need to identify another member of staff as an additional Welsh language skills Mentor to support your student teacher(s).

3. To have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the OU Partnership vision for student teacher learning. Be familiar with key approaches, as well as necessary processes, as outlined in other relevant documents such as the Guide to Practice Learning.

As a School Coordinator, Mentors in your setting may look to you for support and guidance in undertaking their role. It is important that School Coordinators understand the OU programme well and what will be needed to support OU student teachers. This will also include providing support or coordination for a range of activities:

- Support students to complete the **Practice Learning Activities** which are a compulsory part of their school experience (see also Section 4)
- Providing support for Mentors and student teachers to undertake **Lesson Study** activities (see Guide to Practice Learning)
- Providing support for Mentors and student teachers to undertake **small-scale Masters-level research** in Year 2 (see Guide to Practice Learning)

- Understanding the **assessment requirements** of student teachers. These activities include: participating in joint observations (with the Mentor and/or Practice Tutor) and final approval of each student teacher's practice learning reports. You will support Mentors to make accurate and valid assessments of student progress in relation to the *Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership* and contribute to ensuring consistency of assessment within and across schools. The Practice Learning Assessment Framework will provide guidance for schools when assessing their student teachers (see Section 6).

4. School Coordinators will have a key role in quality assurance, including the quality assurance of effective Mentoring and the quality of student teacher's assessment of practice learning.

In each part of the programme, you are asked to observe student teachers' practice at least once as part of the assessment of progress towards the *Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership* and provide summative feedback on student teachers' progress. This can be undertaken either as a joint observation with the Mentor (to support internal QA) or alongside the Practice Tutor (to support external QA). However, it is intended that the Practice Tutor and Mentor meet to discuss the student teacher's progress more widely and for coaching of the Mentor. There is more detail in Section 6.

School Coordinators are asked to contribute to and provide final approval for end of module assessment reports (the form's main part is completed by the Mentor).

By approving the Mentor report, you are confirming that you agree with the Mentor's assessment of the student teacher, as well as endorsing the quality of the report which has been written.

On occasion, it may be necessary to provide additional observation/intervention in accordance with the Student Support Framework (SSF), where required. School Coordinators are invited to formally participate in any SSF processes from the cause for concern stage, but in practice, are often involved at a much earlier stage. More information about this support process is available in the Guide to Practice Learning.

Supporting a whole-school approach to ITE

As the School Coordinator, you will be the main point of contact between the OU and your school. School Coordinators in Lead partner schools may also be nominated to attend Partnership Committee meetings on behalf of their headteacher. In the event of inspection by Estyn or monitoring from the EWC, it is likely that you will act as a key person during those processes. It is possible that the subject/phase Mentor may change over time, but the School Coordinator usually remains the same person and is therefore a constant point of contact.

In many schools, the School Coordinator may have wider responsibilities in their setting, such as supporting ITE from other Partnerships or supporting other early career teachers. This provides an opportunity to consider how your student teachers can benefit from wider professional learning opportunities in your school, or to provide opportunities for student teachers to work in groups or

collaborate with other staff across the school. Aspects of the programme, such as Mentors and student teachers engaging in Lesson Study, or student teachers undertaking small-scale research, also provide opportunities to enhance others' practice and to share findings with the whole school community. It can contribute to how your school is developing as a Learning Organisation, or how your school grows a research and scholarship culture.

It is likely that you will have wider strategic oversight for ITE or contribute significantly to this in your school on behalf of the OU ITE Partnership. You may find the resource ['10 ways to Support ITE in your School'](#) useful in considering how to develop wider strategies for ITE in your school.

As well as coordinating the OU student teacher experience in your setting, you will also support the provision of mentoring for those school staff who are mentoring OU students.

Mentors will be invited to join development sessions with the OU ITE Partnership, will be provided with induction/training materials and regular online drop-in sessions. and the Mentor Guide are available on the VLE at all points of the year. Mentors are encouraged to complete ['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. School Coordinators are also invited to complete the online ['A Mentoring Mindset'](#) course and to undertake the skills audit available in the Mentor Guide.

Supporting Student Teachers' Practice

Learning Experience

Time spent by student teachers learning to teach in school is referred to as 'Practice Learning'. For part-time student teachers, this will mean all days which they spend with you as agreed, on a pro rata basis. For salaried student teachers, this will mean the proportion of their timetable which is designated as Practice Learning time.

The OU model is designed to support student teachers to develop incrementally, gradually increasing their time teaching as the programme progresses. Student teachers on both the **Year 1** part-time and salaried route focus on **familiarisation** and **consolidation** of knowledge, skills and understanding, whilst **year 2 students on both routes become increasingly autonomous**. In year 1, student teachers on the salaried route are supervised during their Practice Learning time but can teach independently in Year 2. **On the part-time route, student teachers must be supervised at all times.**

Time spent teaching increases gradually over the course of the programme and so Practice Learning time overall should include a number of elements:

- Graduating the time spent teaching across the three modules starting at 30% in year 1 and building to 70%-75% in year 2. Students will begin by observing, building gradually to team teaching and teaching segments of lessons, before moving on to teaching whole lessons and then sequences of lessons.

- Time to plan, prepare and assess on the timetable.
- Time to undertake Practice Learning Activities. This will also include Lesson Study in PGCE1 and PGCE2 and small-scale research in PGCE3.
- Time to participate in a timetabled Mentor session.

Practice Learning Activities

Student teacher's Practice Learning time is scaffolded by a series of Practice Learning Activities. Practice Learning Activities (PLAs) are also one of the 'bridging' strategies used to support student teachers to integrate their knowledge of theory and practice. Mentors and School Coordinators support the facilitation of activities, agreeing with the student when and in what order they should complete activities. It should be considered as part of the student teacher's practice learning timetable. By completing all activities, it ensures they will have had the full range of learning experiences needed to complete the end of module assessment.

Review the Practice Learning Activities at the outset of each module and 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.

Lesson Study

Lesson study is a specific form of classroom action research in which student teachers focus on the development of teacher practice knowledge. The OU Curriculum Tutor introduces the nature of lesson study in an online seminar. This

begins a process which then commences in school between the Mentor and student teacher. This involves joint planning, joint observation and analysis that focuses on pupil learning within a cycle of research lessons.

In the initial stages, student teachers plan in depth with their Mentor. This can help to improve teaching techniques and allows focus on broader pedagogic approaches, for example, focusing on AfL, through developing the student teachers pedagogic content knowledge (Cerbin and Kopp, 2006 in Coenders and Verhoef, 2018). The Mentor, along with the Curriculum Tutor, represent more knowledgeable others who through the process of collaboration with their beginner teacher, form a learning community. The focus on the next stage is for the Mentor and student teacher to teach the lesson together, but the observation focus is on the pupils' learning. This is important because it helps create a non-threatening experience for beginner teachers (Coenders and Verhoef, 2018) as well as supporting the student teachers to compare what they thought pupils would learn during the planning stages with what others observed them learning. The findings of the lesson study conducted with the Mentor's support, is then further evaluated and discussed in the online seminars with the Curriculum Tutor.

In a traditional lesson study cycle, the findings of the lesson study are often shared. Schools who have adopted lesson study as a form of professional learning may choose to consider how this can support whole school approaches to the improvement of teaching and learning, and is a good example of how a whole-school approach to supporting ITE can benefit a school.

You can read more about lesson study in the Mentor Guide.

Small-Scale Research

In the second year of the programme, student teachers progress to working at Masters level. They are asked to undertake a small-scale research study in their school context. You will wish to consider how you might support your student teacher with this process. This will include:

- Ensuring you discuss ethical considerations with the student teacher and supporting them to gain any necessary approvals within your school
- Taking an interest in your student teacher's research and providing support to the student and their Mentor where needed

Considering how your school could benefit from your student teacher's research. Is there a way this could be celebrated and shared with others in your school?

Programme Timetable Requirements (including Second School Experience)

The School Coordinator also has responsibility for coordinating student teacher timetables. How this is done will depend on whether the student teacher is following the salaried or part time route. This section and the following diagram will give you an overview, for more detail please refer to the:

- Guide to Practice Learning
- Practice Learning Placement Guide (Salaried)
- Practice Learning Placement Guide (Part Time)

Part-Time Student Teacher Timetable

Over the two years, part-time student teachers must attend two schools and must undertake 120 days of practice learning in total. Most part-time students will complete their practice learning days over 2-3 days per week within each practice learning period. Some may choose to complete it in a block. Year 2 students **must** complete a minimum of 30 of their 60 days in a block. A day is considered as the usual number of school hours + directed time in your school.

Once a part-time student is placed in your school, they will be asked to contact the School Coordinator directly to agree when the student will attend. Whilst many student teachers will be juggling other commitments, it remains to be the expectation that they are available for **full days in line with expectations for teaching staff**. The days of attendance agreed should be consistent and mutually convenient to the student and school and over time needs to ensure that students experience the full breadth and depth of experience in their phase or subject required to meet the QTS standards. Any absence or break-weeks should be agreed in advance and in accordance with the OU PGCE absence policy. It is a statutory requirement for students to complete 120 days over two years and therefore any missed days must be completed. Student teachers on the secondary route will need to be timetabled to teach the subject in which they are seeking to qualify. All student teachers will need to demonstrate over time the ability to plan, teach and assess sequences of lessons.

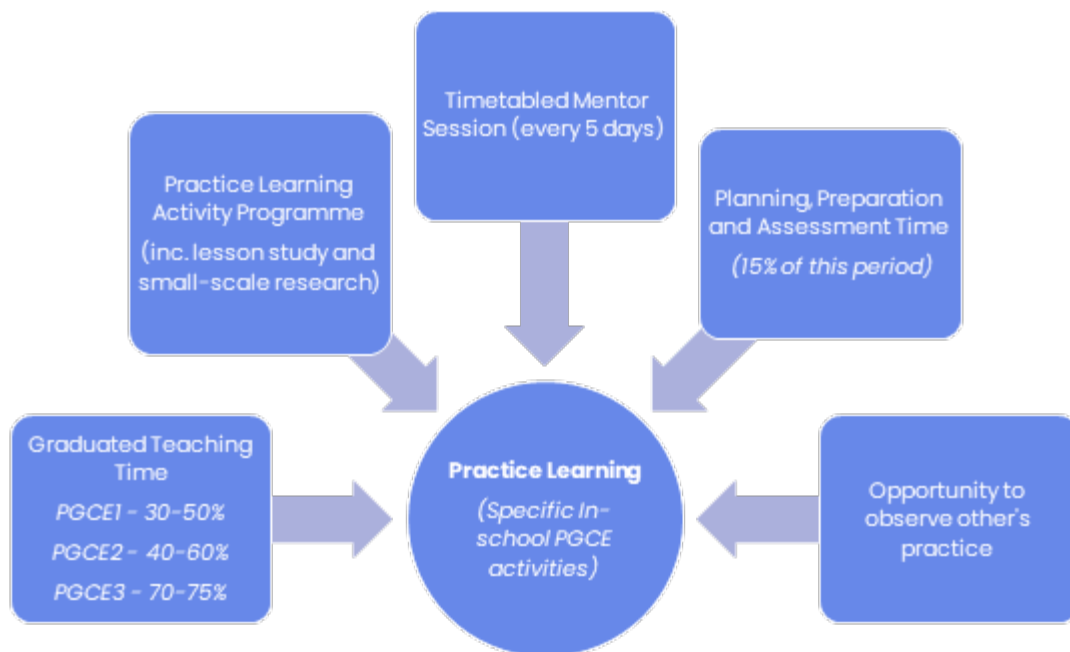


Figure 1: Overview of the part-time PGCE programme

Student teachers should not be required to teach for the entire duration of their days in school. They will need time to:

- Complete Practice Learning Activities
- Plan, prepare and assess
- Participate in a timetabled Mentor session (every 5 days)

Salaried Student Teacher Timetable

This is an overview of the salaried PGCE programme:

Familiarisation	Year 1 - EE306: 60 Credits, Level 6
<hr/>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• October - Feb 1/2 Term• 2.5 days employment• 1.5 days supervised Practice Learning• 1 day protected online study	
Consolidation	Year 1 - EE306
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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• March - May• 2.5 days employment. Can decrease to 2 days from Easter• 2 days supervised Practice Learning• 0.5 days protected online study	
Consolidation (continued)	Year 1 - EE306: Second School Experience
<hr/>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• June - July• 1 day Employment (dependent on school status)• 1 day online study• 3/4 days SSE	
Autonomy	Year 2 - EE806
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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Up to 3.5 days per week independent teaching with monitoring• Enhanced PPA of 1 day• 0.5 day online study• Optional enrichment opportunities	

Figure 2: Overview of the Salaried PGCE Programme

PGCE 2 Second School Experience (SSE)

It is a national statutory requirement for all PGCE qualifications in Wales that students experience teaching in two school settings. The second school experience is therefore **mandatory**. Please note we will **not** be able to accommodate requests which ask that student teachers do not undertake SSE nor requests that they undertake a reduced experience or complete their experience at a different time. The programme has been designed to accommodate the Second School Experience **within the last half of the Summer term** (June and July). This will be arranged by the OU.

A student's week should be timetabled as follows (note that it differs according to you as the employer school's status):

If you hold **Employer** Status:

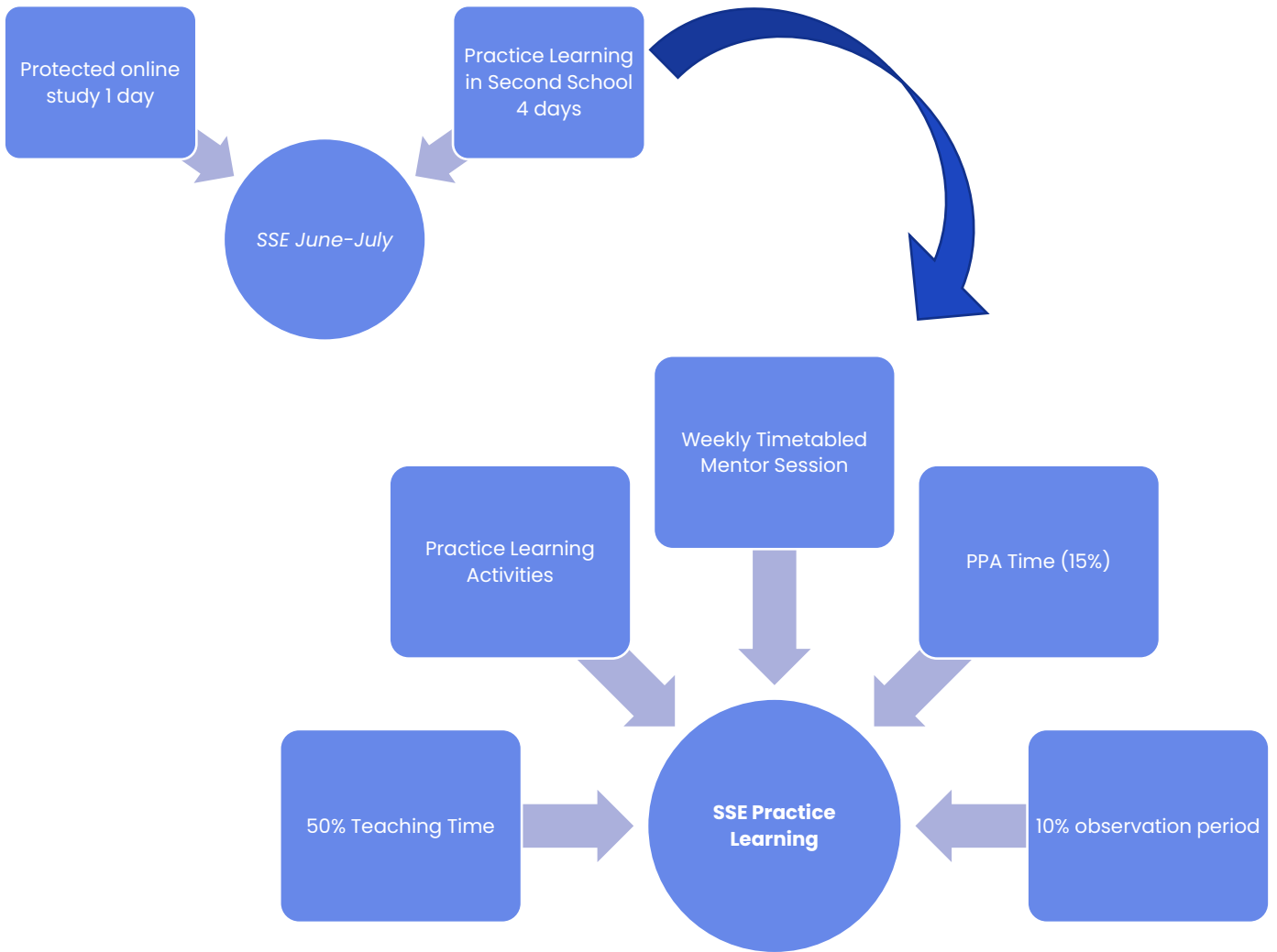


Figure 3: SSE requirements for employer schools

If you hold **Lead** or **Associate** status:

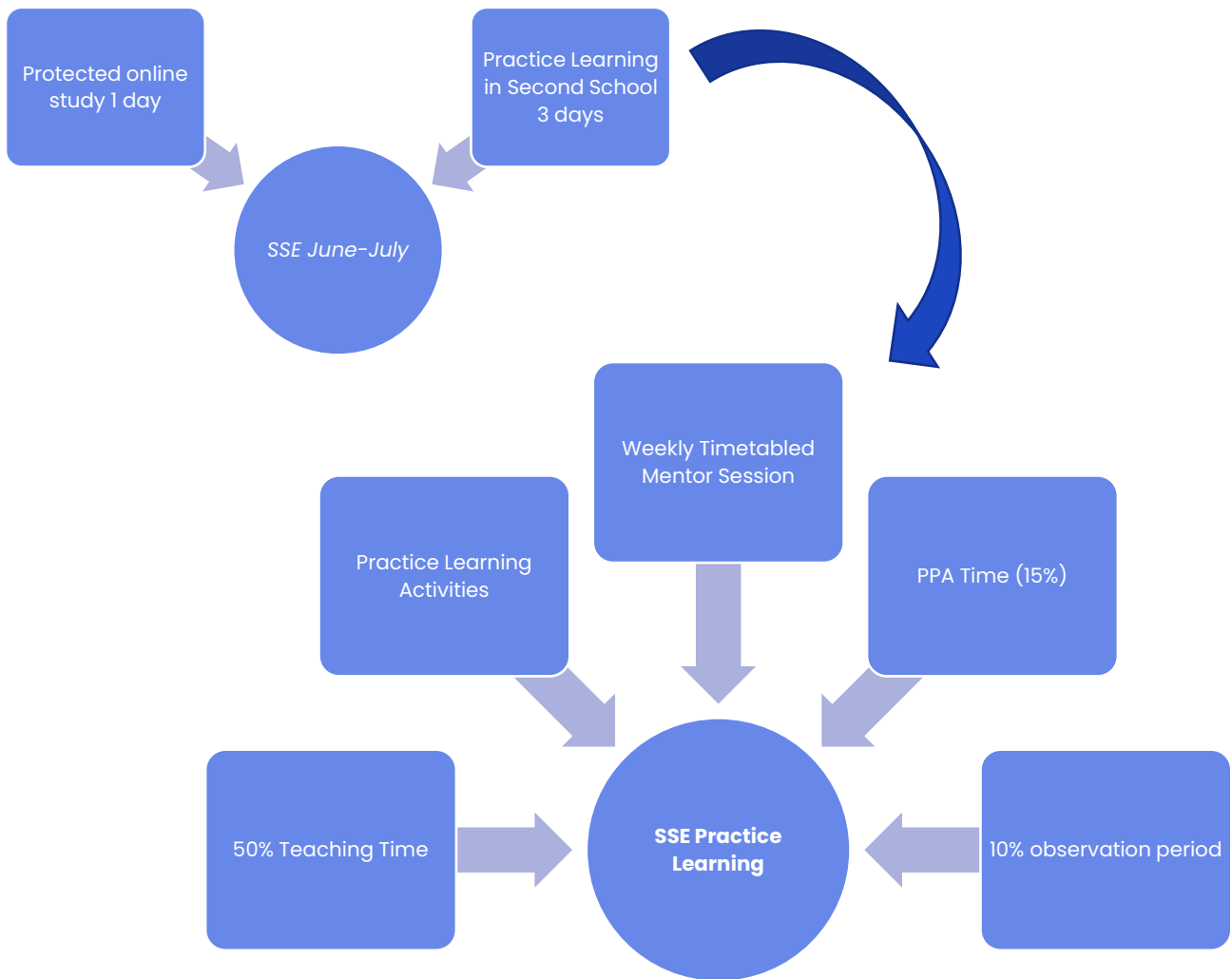


Figure 4: SSE Requirements for Lead and Associate Schools

Assessing Student Teachers

Student teachers are assessed each year. They submit a tutor-marked assignment (TMA) and an End of Module Assessment (EMA). For both Year 1 and Year 2, the EMA comprises of 2 Parts: Part 1 is a series of academic assignment tasks; Part 2 is an e-portfolio of evidence of progress towards the standards for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). The e-portfolio is called a Professional Learning Passport (PLP).

Students' practice learning is assessed by Mentors, School Coordinators and Practice Tutors. Most of the assessment is undertaken by the Mentor in the form of regular, formal lesson observations. Dates will be shared in the Key Dates Checklist for each year. You can read more about how to undertake lesson observations for the OU Partnership in the Mentor Guide.

As a School Coordinator, you have a key quality assurance role to play. You will quality assure the assessment judgements made of the student teacher's development. We ask **School Coordinators to ensure that they formally observe the student teacher at two points across the year**. As part of those observations, **we ask that you observe the lessons that the student records on IRIS Connect for their Practice Tutor**. Therefore, you will observe the lesson live in the class and then the Practice Tutor observes the recording.

An external Practice Tutor will also complete an on-line observation of each student teacher's teaching. The Practice Tutor will be asked to make an

assessment of the student teacher's progress based on their lesson observation and wider professional dialogue with the Mentor and student teacher.

Each year, Mentors are asked to complete completing a Practice Learning Report. This is an overall assessment of their student teacher's progress in relation to the professional standards. A section on the Practice Learning Report form needs to be completed that shows that you, as School Coordinator, agree with the Mentor's comments, targets and judgements. Practice Tutors also complete a section and complete an overall assessment within the Practice Learning Report. All Mentors, School Coordinators and Practice Tutors are asked to use the Practice Learning Assessment Framework to support them when assessing their student teacher, this framework document is available on the Partnership Website.

To conclude

This supplementary guide should be read in conjunction with the Guide to Practice Learning and/or Mentor Guide.

If you have any further questions or queries relating to the content of this guide, please contact Wales-PGCE@Open.ac.uk

Thank you for agreeing to undertake a critical role in the journey of aspiring new entrants to the teaching profession. We hope that you will enjoy the experience.

