

Electives Experience Handbook



PGCE with QTS
Primary and Secondary Pathways
13 – 15 March 2023

BA Primary Education with QTS
19 – 21 April 2023

Rationale

The electives experience is a non-assessed professional development opportunity for student-teachers. It takes place in a school setting and focuses on gaining a deeper knowledge and understanding of an area related to a personal interest.

The student-teachers follow a particular subject or theme of interest by engaging in activities such as:

- ❖ Observation
- ❖ Conducting interviews
- ❖ Reading research
- ❖ Engaging in professional dialogue

During the visit, time will be allocated for different types of activity in order to ensure each individual has a broad range of experiences within a given subject/theme. The intention is for student-teachers to receive a comparable experience, enriching their understanding and giving them a USP when applying for posts in schools.

Having undertaken the elective, the student-teachers share their findings to the professional community in the elective placement, to show their understanding and to share with the school positive aspects of the experience and new knowledge gained. This can be done by using the Estyn good practice model, available at the following link: <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/effective-practice/improving-wellbeing-and-standards-attainment>.

The summary of the electives experience can be used as an asset referred to in a completed Professional Experience Template linked to the appropriate Professional Standards (see Appendix 4)

Arrangements

Electives will normally take place within the network in which the student-teacher has been placed for the duration of their ITE programme. Arrangements will be made within the networks to match student-teachers' interests with available placements.

Each experience will differ slightly depending on the setting, however the expectation is that each student-teacher spends a sustained period of time in the school and that members of school staff will have been allocated the role of 'electives experience co-ordinator' for the duration of the electives visit. This will allow opportunities for professional engagement through dialogue and sharing of ideas and reflections. The electives experience co-ordinator should adopt the role of the discussant when conducting the share phase of the electives.

Expectations

Student-teacher role:

- ❖ To prepare in advance for the choice of elective
- ❖ To engage fully with the electives experience in order to enhance their knowledge and understanding
- ❖ To undertake personal research linked to the area/subject
- ❖ To share the experience with a variety of audiences in a professional manner

School role:

- ❖ To allocate a member of staff as the 'electives experience co-ordinator' to support the student-teacher team
- ❖ To ensure the students are supported throughout the experience by key staff members
- ❖ To provide a wide range of opportunities for students to gather information
- ❖ To engage in reflective dialogue with the students at various points
- ❖ To welcome observations and comments made by students

University role:

- ❖ To ensure student-teachers are prepared for the elective opportunities

Student-teacher preparation for the choice of elective

Student-teachers need to show a high-level of engagement with the electives offer from the outset and evidence undertaking self-directed research in their chosen area prior to the experience.

Student-teachers should consider the following questions for their choice of elective:

Question 1

Does it relate to an aspect of previous study?

Is there evidence of engagement with the area in other experiences e.g. community volunteering, clubs and societies?

Does it relate to future plans e.g. choice of phase or type of school?

Question 2

What key reading have you already undertaken?

Are you choosing from an informed position to maximise the experience?

Can you talk about some of your key reading to justify your choice?

Question 3

What do you intend learning from the elective experience?

What lines of enquiry have been raised from your reading?

Have you formulated some research questions?

What methodologies might you use?

Electives Checklist for Network Leads

Have I...?

Before the Electives experience	
Reviewed the expectations of the Lead School as set out in documentation provided by the University	
Recorded 'Electives' as an item on the Network meeting agenda	
Agreed a menu of Elective opportunities with Partner schools	
Liaised with the University Professional Tutor to confirm the Electives offer for the Network	
Contacted participating Partner schools to ensure understanding of their role in the delivery of Electives experiences	
Met with key staff leading on Elective experiences at the Lead School to clarify expectations for delivery and the support of student-teachers	
Agreed timetable of activities with key staff leading on Electives	
Incorporated an opportunity to meet with student-teachers into the timetable of activities. The purpose is to monitor progress and identify any additional needs or further clarification	
Quality assured experiences with staff leading on Electives	
Shared Lead School arrangements for the Elective experience with the Placement schools as a 'model'	
Organised resources for the Experiences and uploaded these to a shared area for access by the network	
Contacted Placement schools to finalise arrangements	
Finalised and shared arrangements for the Elective experiences with the Professional Tutor/student-teachers	
Allocated appropriate funding for the agreed activities	
After the Electives experience	
Reviewed evaluations provided by the student-teachers	
Gathered feedback from staff leading on Electives	
Evaluated Elective experience as an agenda item at next available Network meeting	
Shared feedback with the Network of Networks and Strategic Leadership Group	

Electives Checklist for Senior Mentors

Have I...?

Before the Electives experience	
Reviewed the expectations of the placement school as set out in documentation provided by the University	
Liaised with Network Lead to confirm the electives offer for the network	
Liaised with the Network Lead to ensure understanding of the placement school role in the delivery of electives experiences	
Met with key staff co-ordinating the elective experiences to clarify expectations for delivery and the support of student-teachers	
Agreed timetable of activities with key staff co-ordinating the electives	
Incorporated an opportunity to meet with student-teachers into the timetable of activities. The purpose is to monitor progress and identify any additional needs or further clarification	
Quality assured experiences with staff co-ordinating the electives	
Shared arrangements for the elective experience with the lead school	
Organised resources for the experiences and uploaded these to a shared area for access by the network	
Finalised and shared arrangements for the elective experiences with student-teachers via the Network Lead/ Professional Tutor	
Submitted invoice for funding of elective experiences	
After the Electives Experience	
Reviewed evaluations provided by the student-teachers	
Gathered feedback from staff co-ordinating on electives	
Contributed to the evaluation of elective experiences at the next network meeting	

EWC Code of Professional Conduct and Practice:

An expectation of professionalism, as outlined in the EWC's code of conduct, is expected from all stakeholder participants throughout the placement:

<https://www.ewc.wales/site/index.php/en/fitness-to-practise/code-of-professional-conduct-and-practice-pdf/file.html>

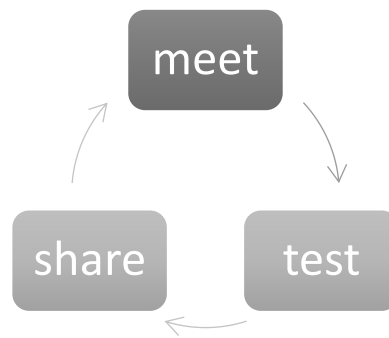
Making links with current education policy changes are critical, therefore the four purposes proposed by Donaldson (2015) are the overarching principles that will guide the student-teachers' thinking.



Donaldson (2015)

Additionally, the student-teachers will undertake the activity in a reflective practitioner role by following the model outlined below:

Think and Evaluate



Think and Research

Think and Reflect

Yr Athrofa (2017)

Host School Preparation for Electives Experience

- Schools should prepare a timetable which allows student-teachers a wide opportunity to gather information on their area of interest.
- The timetable can include guided time as well as independent work slots for student-teachers.

The following examples may be of help when planning a timetable.

Suggested structure of Electives Experience (Please note, schools may be flexible)

Setting and Date	Activity
Day 1 Elective School Meet	Meet – Induction • The first day will be an induction day getting to know the school e.g. expectations regarding arrival/base room, school information, a learning walk around the school, school vision, work in the community • The school should communicate their policies/vision/practice with regards to the student-teachers' elective area of interest. • The student-teachers will share the area chosen as their focus on this day. This will also be an opportunity to ask questions. • The student-teacher needs to ensure their register/consent forms have been signed by the appropriate members of staff (Appendix 1 and 2)
Day 2 Elective School Test	Test – Data Gathering Student-teachers begin to follow their lines of inquiry and gather evidence on their elective focus by undertaking relevant observations in various classes. Possible methods of data collection: • Narrative notes • Movement charts (or sociograms) • Classroom plan • Photographs • Bubble maps • Padlet

Day 3	Test - Reflection in preparation to <i>Share</i> findings with electives placement school in the form of a summary on OneDrive and PLP PET
Elective School	
Reflect	• This day will be a reflective day to give staff and student-teachers the opportunity to discuss the information gathered to date • During this time there should be opportunities for student-teachers to draw on the background reading undertaken, linking them to the practice observed and developing a critical analysis, initially through discussion that can potentially support the student-teachers' final electives summary and a PLP PET narrative • Student-teachers should use the time to review and clarify any unanswered aspect of their research e.g. through interview with the relevant co-ordinator, conducting pupil voice • Findings should be <i>shared</i> with a peer in order to offer a critical eye Suggested structure for elective summary to be located in Section 3 of the Planning folder on OneDrive and used as an asset for a completed PET: - Rationale for elective - Outline of activities from elective week - School context - What I have learnt from the literature - a review - What I have seen in practice - Data collection method - Pupil perspectives - Teacher perspectives - Limitations/success of data collection - Questions still unanswered - What can I take into my own practice? - Reference List [Refer to the University Referencing Handbook: Harvard]

Example of a sequence of actions undertaken by student-teachers to reinforce the engagement of all stakeholders in the electives experience

Induction

- Getting to know the school and its expectations e.g. arrival/ base room, school information, school vision and any information the school wishes to share.
- Student-teachers share electives focus and have their register/consent forms signed (Appendix 1 and 2).
- Student-teachers to ensure gathering of all relevant information about the school to inform the first part of the reflective report to the school.

Ethos, values and data gathering

- Student-teachers to gain an understanding of the ethos and values of the school – the data gathering strategies will have been discussed in the University, and ethical considerations involving pupil participation and consent reinforced in the research module. Possible data collection by narrative notes; movement charts; classroom plan; photographs; bubble maps; padlet etc.

Reflect and plan to test

- School electives coordinator to support discussion of student-teacher's research and facilitate activities to enable them to further develop their engagement e.g. tailor opportunities for them to answer questions in relation to their focus area.
- Student-teachers to refine their questions e.g. using a mind map of questions stimulated by discussion linked to agreed tailored opportunities. For example, using:



- Student-teachers collaborate with school staff to gather data in their chosen field. The reflective report (Appendix 4) can be used to record this activity for example:

Interviewing the relevant co-ordinator; reading policies; shadowing a staff member; collecting evidence of pupil voice; community links, multi-agency, parental links and engagement; CPD opportunities in the research area; Use of questionnaire, interview, visual data; links to the four purposes; possible links to cross-curricular responsibilities; wider issues – transition, school data.

These are suggestions and not an exhaustive list. The methodology should be a product of discussion between the student-teacher, school and University staff.

Reflect, review and clarify before sharing

Student-teachers review their evidence and seek clarification where needed in preparation for writing summary located in their OneDrive folder. The elective summary will then be used as an asset to inform a PLP PET narrative available to share with all collaborators with access to the student-teacher's PLP (See Appendix 4).

Depending upon the electives focus chosen, there will be opportunities for the student-teacher to use their reflection on the electives experience to populate a number of the professional standards headings located in the **Professional Standards workbook** section of the PLP (**Tab 6**). For example:

- **“Pedagogy, Teaching and Learning”** – The four purposes; Cross-curricular themes; Managing the learning environment; Involving partners in learning.
- **“Leadership”** – Taking responsibility for self.
- **“Professional learning”** – Wider reading and research findings; Professional networks and communities; Continuing professional learning.
- **“Collaboration”** – Working with in-school colleagues.

You can use the STEER template in Appendix 4 to consider the most appropriate connections between your evidence and the Professional Standards.

Appendix: 1

Personal Register

Name:

Student-Teacher Number:

School/Setting:

Date	Activity Undertaken	Signature (mentor, senior mentor or head)

Appendix: 2



Consent form

Student-teachers must gain the following written consent of the head teacher before taking photographs, filming or audio recording learners.

I agree to _____ as a representative of Yr Athrofa to:

Take photographs	Interview	
Take video	Quote school policy documents	
Tape-record	Questionnaires	(Tick accordingly)

Name of Head teacher _____ Signed _____

Name of school _____

To be completed by the student-teacher:

If I am granted such permission, I agree to abide by the ethics embodied within the EWC Code of Conduct and will not distribute any such material to audiences beyond the University authorities without their permission.

Name of student-teacher:

Signed:

Telephone number:

Email address:

Programme (BA Primary Education with QTS/PGCE Primary/PGCE Secondary):

Date:

Appendix: 3

Reading & Research from information sources:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Reflective Journal: General observations/data collection:

Date	Event	Comments

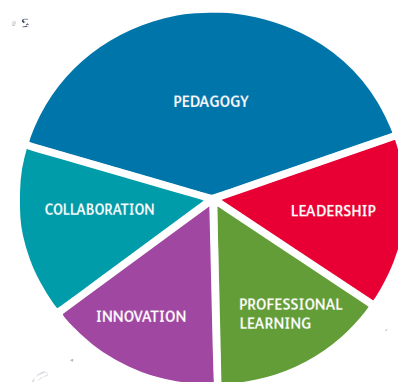
Appendix 4

PLP AND LINKS TO PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Your electives experience will support your development of the Professional Teaching Standards. Consider how you might use the experience to create Experience Templates for Tab 6 (Professional Standards workbook).

Remember that you can only link a maximum of three of the sub-headings within each standard to a Professional Experience Template (PET).

The executive summary stored in your OneDrive linked to this experience can be used as an asset for your PLP PETs.



PEDAGOGY During your test period did you use assessment for learning with the following outcomes? Refining: - Managing the learning environment - Assessment - Differentiation - Recording and reporting - Involving partners in learning. Advancing: - Four purposes for learners - Exploiting subject disciplines in areas of learning - Blended learning experiences - Real life, authentic contexts - Progression in learning - Cross curricular themes Influencing learners: - Challenge and expectations - Listening to learners - Learners leading learning - Sustained effort and resilience in learners - Reflection on learning - Learning outcomes and well being.	
COLLABORATION Were there opportunities to work productively with all partners in learning in order to extend professional effectiveness?	
INNOVATION Did you employ an innovative outlook which is exemplified through the controlled and measured development of techniques and approaches to improve pedagogic outcomes?	

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING Were there opportunities to extend knowledge, skills and understanding and can show how reflection and openness to challenge and support informs professional learning to progressively develop pedagogy.	
LEADERSHIP Were there opportunities to support the efforts of others across the school and beyond to fulfil the educational ambitions for Wales?	