

Teacher & Careers Advisers Conference

Wednesday 30th April 2025, 2:30-3:45pm

Session: Exploring the Diverse Graduate Career Paths of Students from the Faculty of Education

Facilitators: Dr Helen O'Keefe - Pro-vice chancellor and Dean of Education
Andy Smith (Head of Secondary and Further Education).

Introductions and welcome

Introduction to the faculty

The faculty has a very clear vision – to work creatively with others to enhance life chances. Everyone's life chances. This could be the students who walk through the door but also the life chances of the those they work with. Its working with each other, with our students, with our schools, with our partners, with our charitable organisations to impact the lives of everybody on that learning journey. There are five themes that drive the work.

- Teacher education and professional learning – core to who we are. Teacher education is key, but lifelong learning is also key. Constantly working with professionals throughout their lives in that space of growing and developing themselves.
- Transformative education – If education isn't about transformation, what is it about and what does that look like?
- Early years families and communities - If we don't get the beginning of life right. Where do we go from there? One of the only Early years departments in the country and are in the position to research, grow and develop the work in relation to early years. Recognising that Families and Communities are wrapped around everything that happens with children.
- Philosophy and values, ethics and worldviews – why do we do what we do? How do we make the right decisions.
- Inequalities, Health and wellbeing – We know there are a whole range of inequalities for pupils in our school.

These themes inform the curriculum, research and external activity. They are underpinning the themes to everything we do.

One of the questions most asked is around working with children and young people, they don't always know in what capacity, or the options available to them.

Session participants were asked if this is their experience with the students they come across. One participant explained that within their experience, they want to work with children, specifically primary aged having experienced enrichment opportunities whilst studying.

Helen explained that that is common, because that is what they know. They have been inspired by a primary school teacher; they understand the role of a primary school teacher but not necessarily that there are other opportunities out there because they've not experienced them.

Participant also expressed there has been a shift with students wanting to study psychology and education as well. Another participant mentioned that they have students who want to work with children, specifically within early years and that is their focus.

A participant raised the question about students who want to work with secondary school ages children, being advised not to go straight into a Secondary Education teaching programme, and doing a degree of their subject choosing first, followed by a PGCE and if that is a comment approach.

Helen explained that this is completely personal choice. For some, they've only ever wanted to teach, whereas for others they aren't quite ready to commit to teaching, which is why there is the flexible approaches. Neither route precludes anything. There have been students, who have done a degree in another subject, and then gone onto another career, yet feel they keep being drawn back to teaching and therefore come back to do a PGCE years after then undergraduate degree. Open days are the opportunities to showcase other routes available. There are no experts in all routes, there are so many opportunities available to young people, its just about finding out what the options are, and they are changing all the time to adapt to the demands of society.

Routes into teaching

- BA (Hons) Primary and Early Years Education QTS – a three year programme for those who wish to train to be a qualified teacher, working in nursery, reception or KS1 classroom.
- BA (Hons) Primary Education with QTS – a three year programme for those who wish to train to be a qualified teacher, working in Key stage 1 and Key Stage 2 classrooms
- UG degree in any discipline (including those outlined above) + PGCE Primary Early Years Education with QTS

- UG degree in any discipline (including those outlined above) + PGCE Primary Education with QTS (Incl, maths, PE, SEND and Mental Health)

Primary is slightly more popular than the Early Years route, however this may be down to not knowing about the Early Years route. With the PGCE Primary, there is the opportunity to narrow the specialism, due to the demands from school, therefore providing more job opportunities to the graduates. There are lots of different routes into Primary teaching. There isn't a requirement to have a particular undergraduate degree discipline, they can do a degree in whichever subject they want to commit to doing an UG degree in.

A participant asked regarding the specialism within PE and if that was a common theme. Seeing that more schools are buying in their PE provision rather than having them thought by teachers within the school.

Helen advised that there are several factors that is influencing the trend. It is the easiest subject to buy in to enable teachers to have the protected time for planning. As primary teachers, they need to have a knowledge of all the subjects and for some, they are not comfortable or confident within the PE space. The PE specialism encourages leadership within the subject area. Schools want it to be lead well, it is a curriculum subject, its inspected as a curriculum subject. They want leaders in the curriculum. Some teachers are more comfortable with just teaching PE, but they are skilled in the other subjects as well.

A participant asked about a specialism in Computing and if there is any demand for that.

They advised that there isn't a specialism within Primary as it is covered by the curriculum and there is no demand for it currently, but there is a specialism within Secondary.

Secondary teaching options

- PGCE Secondary (11-16) Computer Science with IT with QTS*
- PGCE Secondary (11-16) English with QTS*
- PGCE Secondary (11-16) Geography with QTS*
- PGCE Secondary (11-16) History with QTS*
- PGCE Secondary (11-16) Mathematics with QTS*
- PGCE Secondary (11-16) Physical Education with QTS*
- PGCE Secondary (11-16) Religious Education with QTS*
- PGCE Secondary (11-16) Science (Biology/Chemistry/Physics) with QTS*
- PGDiT Post-14 Education

There are bursaries available for some of the PGCE programmes, particularly within the sciences, and maths. There is a smaller bursary for English but none for PE, which is one of the most popular programmes.

For PGDiT Post-14 Education, this has QTLS, which is a specific qualification for post 14. Teacher with QTLS generally work within further education rather than the upper years of secondary school.

QTS enables teachers to work across the primary and secondary age ranges, there is no need to retrain if they've done Primary QTS and then want to work in Secondary schools, its more about the subject knowledge, the skills and experience of working within the age range they want to teach.

How our trainees are supported and work

The subject specialism is due to the demand of the partners as well as the individual trainee needs.

It is important to consider the whole role of a teacher, its not just the teaching side, it encompasses a wide range of responsibilities including pastoral responsibilities and its importance of outlining that from the beginning to ensure the students are prepared for the types of careers they are looking at.

What is it like to be a teacher trainee at Edge Hill?

A video was shown of students on the programme of their experience at Edge Hill. The students feel empowered to have a direct influence on the children which they are going on to teach. They feel supported and have had great opportunities whilst on programme such as play sessions, forest school, planning, and reflecting as well as the placement opportunities. They feel supported in their ECT years with CPD opportunities.

What if you don't want to teach?

There are lots of opportunities if students don't want to teach. They may want to be involved with children in the community, within criminal justice, social work, lifelong education, music, sport and in alternative settings.

- BA (Hons) Education – taught within the FoE
- BA (Hons) Education & Special Educational Needs - taught in conjunction with colleagues across the University
- BA (Hons) Education & Sociology - taught in conjunction with colleagues across the University
- BA (Hons) Education & History - taught in conjunction with colleagues across the University

These degree programmes are open and flexible, can be tailored to their own interests and within other settings, such as the community.

Overseas opportunities enable student to see how education and wider roles work internationally. Those students who have taken the opportunities to go aboard and

show willingness to expand their thinking, grown their experience and expertise are very employable.

It's recognised that not all students are able to go overseas and therefore the partnerships in this country are just as important. Enabling the students to think beyond their own experiences to roles they may not have known existed.

Partnerships

Examples of partnerships include Everton in the Community, Liverpool Tate, Shakespeare North, to provide opportunities within the charity sector, the community, and in culture settings. It could be providing sessions to schools, from within these organisations and a wide range of other opportunities.

The students get to go out and do completely different placements and are able to reflect on the time they've spent in the different areas to see what options they have to them when they finish.

Case study

A video was shown for a case study regarding 'Tackling the blues'. It is a sport, physical activity, art and education-based health programme aimed at children and young people from the age of 5-16. The students have been involved in its development and delivery.

Where our students are employed after graduation

Such a diverse employment opportunities students have gone onto following their programmes include:

- Culture and museum spaces
- Charitable organisations
- Leadership roles
- Working in schools and youth work
- Marketing - marketing and development of programmes

The more opportunities the students can experience whilst on programme, often, go on to shape their careers in ways they didn't necessarily expect. The students are keen, once in employment, to help provide placement opportunities and help the future generations coming through to see what career options there are out there.

Q&A

Are there any exit awards if they decide they don't want to teach?

This depends on what point they come to the decision. If its whilst on course, the university would support them to find an alternative route for them. If its once they've trained and gained their QTS, they can decide they don't want to teach but want to stay within education so will go onto work with partners like those mentioned previously.

Are the opportunities mentioned only open to those who are on the non-teaching routes?

No, they are open to those on the QTS programmes also. The group of students who previously went to Kuwait for example, was a mix of students from across the programmes, who don't normally overlap, so they get to experience the opportunities as well as learning off each other.

Are there any opportunities to do a degree in sport (for example) with QTS. Rather than doing a 3 year sport degree and then going onto a PGCE, are there opportunities to do a sports degree with QTS within 3 years? This would reduce time and financial expense.

Not currently, there are some Universities that offer this, and the market is starting to change so it is something we are looking closely at, currently.

Note: Edge Hill is not currently offering the 3 year Secondary Education with QTS programme as they are currently looking at the subject offering. It is taking a 12-month hiatus.