

Mentor 'Frequently Asked Questions'

PCET Partners

Q: Do you provide any training to help me better understand the mentor role?

A: Yes, there is an array of support on offer to you as a mentor for the PCET course. These include:

Mentor Briefing

All mentors are asked to complete an initial mentor briefing session. There are a number of sessions at the beginning of the year and this will usually take place at the City North campus of the University in Perry Barr, Birmingham. We can also, however, provide an alternative online briefing session or an in-house briefing session at your organisation, where a number of mentors are present. As soon as we have your details we will invite you to choose the most convenient option for all parties.

Online Mentor Training

In addition to the briefing session, we also offer an initial online mentor training course, which is free to take and offers access to support materials and activities designed to help you understand or consolidate what it is to be a Mentor. This is available at <http://goo.gl/T473TI> with an enrolment key of BCU_Mentor_14

The training may be described as 'entry level' and will take around one hour to complete (in short stages if you wish), including a test at the end. Once completed (with a score of 75% or above) a certificate is released to acknowledge your completion of the training package.

The course itself is about the dispositions, attitudes and skills required of mentors. It will encourage you to reflect on what it is to be a mentor in a general sense, what knowledge, skills and attitudes mentors need and how your context relates to that.

If you are interested in completing this training package please get in touch with the PCET Partnership Team.

Masters' level qualifications

In order to advance your skills and knowledge even further you may also wish to consider completing a Master's Level module in mentoring. There are many options available to you and opportunity to turn the role of mentoring in to a full Masters qualification. If you are interested in this please contact Stuart Mitchell on 0121 202 8550 or email stuart.mitchell@bcu.ac.uk

Information sheets

A number of short information sheets (including this document) have been produced to complement the Partnership Handbook, covering a range of useful topics. These cover issues such as what we expect as the University from our trainees in placement; the role of the PDT; guidance on the Professional Standards, and many more topics.

These are available to you on the PCET Partnerships Moodle page at

<http://www.bcu.ac.uk/education/partnerships-and-collaborations/pcet-partnerships>

Mentor 'FAQs' (continued)

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Q: When do the trainee teachers carry out their teaching practice?

A: Full-time trainees usually start teaching practice in October or as soon as possible in their first term, and will be available until the end of May the following year. They are available for teaching practice on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays throughout the academic year. They attend taught sessions at the University on Mondays and Thursdays.

Part-time trainees complete their course over two years and attend taught sessions at the University once a week. They usually start teaching practice by January of their first year. They are available for teaching practice at all other times by negotiation; because they are part-time they will spend approximately 1-2 days a week on teaching practice.

Q: How many hours teaching practice do trainees need to complete?

A: All trainees are required to complete a minimum of 150 hours. Typically full-time trainees teach an average 8-10 hours a week, although this may vary; perhaps 3-6 hours in the early weeks rising to 8-12 hours later on. However we understand that this will vary and that the trainee needs to be responsive and flexible depending on availability of hours and your own circumstances.

Part-time trainees will complete 75 hours in each year, typically teaching 3-6 hours a week.

Q: How many observations does the mentor carry out?

A: The trainee will be observed at least eight times across the course, seven of these will involve you as their mentor. The first and the last will usually be a joint observation, carried out in conjunction with the trainee's University Professional Development Tutor (PDT). For **full-time** trainees the first joint observation will usually take place in December or January and the last of the eight observations should be completed by the end of May. For **part-time** trainees the observations are spread across the two years, with four being completed in the first year and four in the second year.

In all cases observations should ideally be spread out across the placement, allowing the trainee time in between observations for reflection, evaluation and further development.

Q: Apart from the observations, what other paperwork will I be expected to complete?

There are three 'term reviews' (1st term, 2nd term and end of placement) that need to be completed in discussion with the trainee. We will also ask you to complete a short evaluation at the end of the placement. All of this will be explained in the mentor briefing session. For part-time trainees this paperwork is spread over the two years.

Mentor 'FAQs' (continued)

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Q: Where can I get copies of forms, handbooks and other information?

A: The trainee will usually provide the necessary paperwork, however you can view and download copies of the paperwork and other documents from the PCET partnership website:

<http://www.bcu.ac.uk/education/partnerships-and-collaborations/pcet-partnerships>

If there is anything specific that you are looking for, or if you are unable to locate the form required please do not hesitate to contact the partnership at pcet.partnerships@bcu.ac.uk

Q: What counts as teaching hours?

A: Any teaching and learning activity for which the trainee teacher has the opportunity to plan, deliver and then evaluate counts as 'teaching hours'. This might include a range of opportunities including:

- Whole-class teaching
- Team Teaching (where the planning has been carried out by the trainee)
- 1:1 sessions
- Workshops, revision & portfolio building sessions
- You might also include team meetings, visits and open day events, providing that the trainee is taking an active part in the process.

Trainees will keep a log of their hours and will ask you to sign it to confirm their teaching activity. Wherever possible trainees should be provided with opportunities to teach as broad a range of teaching contexts, levels and age ranges as possible.

Q: How soon should we let trainee teachers start teaching?

A: We hope that there will be time for a short induction allowing trainees to get to know your organisation, staff and students. They may be involved in observations and general assistance in the first week or two. Hopefully fairly soon after this your confidence in the trainee will be sufficient so that you will be able to start to hand over some of your classes and teaching hours. The table overleaf offers a suggested timeframe for teaching practice across the year.

Mentor 'FAQs' (continued)

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This is a suggested timetable to design and supervise a suitable teaching experience for the trainee, fitting the environment in which you deliver.	Suggested minimum contact hours
October/November: Induction Mainly observing and supporting staff, working towards teaching episodes, such as starter activities and plenaries.	10 hours (1-2 hours per week)
November/December: Begin taking individual responsibility for small groups, start teaching whole lessons supported by another teacher's scheme of work.	35 hours (4-5 hours per week)
December/January/February Preparing and planning for teaching linked to a SOW. Teach at least one group (unit/class) exclusively.	56 hours (7 hours per week)
March/April/ May: All trainees should, by now, be building towards teaching 9-12 hours independently; some or most without mentor present where possible.	100 (9-12 hours per week)

Q: Can I leave a trainee alone with a group of students?

A: Yes. Trainees may require closer supervision at the beginning of their placement, however once they are 'up and running' and have earned your trust we hope that apart from observations and any other checks you might need to make that you can soon start to let trainees get on with their teaching, independently where possible. Initially you might be at the back of the class, but soon you might prefer to be in a room nearby, but be on-hand if needed. Being left in charge will help the trainees to learn more rapidly and effectively. Of course trainees should know who to contact and what to do in the event of any problems or an emergency. We understand that this may depend on your own organisation's policy and your own level of confidence in the trainee. On some occasions where there may be a cause for concern a trainee may need greater monitoring or supervision.

Q: Does the trainee teacher possess DBS paperwork?

A: All of our pre-service trainee teachers have a DBS check carried out. They cannot fully enrol on our course unless they have been deemed to be fit to practice. Most of our trainees will be in this position, however if the trainee is employed by you at any stage (e.g. in-service trainees) then the onus will be on you as the

Mentor 'FAQs' (continued)

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employer to ensure that your policy is followed and that any DBS check is up to date. As part of any induction we ask that organisations make trainees familiar with any essential safeguarding (and related) policies.

Q: Do I get paid for being a mentor?

A: We do not pay individual mentors for acting as a mentor, however we do pay your organisation £500 for each full-time placement (one year) or part-time placement (over two years). This is paid at the end of the placement, subject to the completion of all associated teaching practice hours, observations and paperwork. We would always encourage organisations to use this money to ensure that the mentoring role is properly resourced and recognised so that the mentor has sufficient time to complete this important role effectively.

As detailed above, taking on a mentoring role can help you in developing new skills, and even offers links to gaining further qualifications. Speak to our team for further details on the Master's level qualifications available.

Q: Should trainees get involved in activities other than teaching?

A: Yes, it is important that trainees receive a full experience of the role of the teacher and that they understand as much as possible about your organisation's systems and procedures. Trainees benefit from being involved in a range of non-teaching activities including any appropriate team meetings, course development activities, staff training, open-day events and student assessments. In many cases they might not be able to claim these activities towards their teaching hours (unless they are actively involved), however it will provide valuable evidence towards completing certain professional standards and offer invaluable experiences to enhance their future employability.

Q: Can I count my mentor training towards my annual CPD?

A: Yes we strongly encourage it! In addition you might even consider reflecting on your role as a mentor and consider the impact it has had on your own teaching practice. By doing this you could easily claim many more hours of CPD than just those associated with the training process.

Q: Who should I contact if I need help, have a problem or need any more information?

A: The first point of call will be the trainees' Professional Development Tutor (PDT), followed by the Programme Director, Karen McGrath (karen.mcgrath@bcu.ac.uk). For general mentoring information you might also contact the PCET Partnerships administrator, Matt Waterhouse (matthew.waterhouse@bcu.ac.uk).

Q: I have colleagues who would like to offer teaching placements and act as mentors, what should they do?

A: We are always keen to develop new links, partnerships and placements so please ask them to contact the PCET Programme Director, Karen McGrath (karen.mcgrath@bcu.ac.uk)

Mentor 'FAQs' (continued)

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Q: I cannot see the answer to my question in this document, what should I do?

A: Please contact the Partnership Administrator Matt Waterhouse (matthew.waterhouse@bcu.ac.uk) and he will direct your enquiry accordingly.

PCET Main Contacts

Karen McGrath, Programme Director

karen.mcgrath@bcu.ac.uk Tel. 0121 331 7341

Matthew Waterhouse, Partnership Administrator:

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Stuart Mitchell, Mentor Briefing, Initial Mentor Training and additional qualifications

stuart.mitchell@bcu.ac.uk Tel. 0121 202 8550

PCET Partnership Team:

pcet.partnerships@bcu.ac.uk

Your Trainee's PDT: (enter contact details below)