

RUSSELL GROUP

Educating teachers of the future

Training expert and resilient teachers for schools across the UK to grow the workforce and deliver opportunities for young people

Russell Group universities have a long history of educating teachers, with 18 of our members collectively training 3,000, or 11% of teachers in England every year.¹ They work with thousands of schools, both primary and secondary, to provide placements for their trainee teachers, and also to support and provide academic accreditation for school-based initial teacher education (ITE).

Our universities are ready to work with government to improve the supply and retention of passionate and hardworking teachers. With access to an engaged talent pipeline of recent Russell Group graduates, equipped with subject-specialist knowledge, leadership and communication skills, our universities are well placed to help government achieve its goal of recruiting and training 6,500 new teachers. **Together, we can work towards ensuring ITE delivers high-quality, well-supported teachers into classrooms, who then remain in the profession for the long term.**

Russell Group universities train:



22% of
all geography
teachers



20% of
all physics
teachers



22% of all
modern foreign
language
teachers

Delivering quality courses

University-based teacher training programmes are primarily delivered at postgraduate level, with a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) in primary or secondary education allowing students to build on subject knowledge from their undergraduate degree. PGCE courses provide school-based learning supported by university teaching and immersive practice days. Training in an academically-challenging and research-intensive environment also develops our graduate teachers' confidence and resilience, giving them the best chance of a long and fulfilling career in teaching.

Central to our universities' offer is a commitment to delivering successful outcomes for all students, from all backgrounds. This means our universities can deliver quality ITE at scale:

- In 2021/22, 95% of university-based graduate teachers were awarded Qualified Teacher Status.²
- English Russell Group universities had a 94% average progression rate for full-time PGCE students (the OfS quality threshold is 85%).³

As well as ensuring successful outcomes for new teachers, our universities support trainee teachers to become specialists in their subjects. Russell Group universities educate 16% of all mathematics teachers, 20% of all chemistry teachers, 22% of all geography teachers, 20% of all physics teachers, and 22% of modern foreign language teachers.⁴ ITE tutors are often subject specialists engaged with research in their field. Being taught by subject experts and encouraged to engage critically with research, our graduate teachers can embed the latest methods into their practice throughout their careers.

Subject specialist teachers can integrate their knowledge and enthusiasm into their planning and teaching, leading to lessons full of high-quality subject-related knowledge. It is a concern that due to current teacher shortages; teachers increasingly have to deliver lessons outside of their subject area, including in maths, physics and modern foreign languages.^{5,6} This can impact student course choice and outcomes and add to teachers' stress and workload pressures. **Our universities would like to work closely with government and Skills England to ensure the right teachers with the right subject specialisms are ready to educate the next generation.**

The wider value of university ITE

Our members have well-established collaborative partnerships with hundreds of schools across the country. Partner schools are often involved in the design and delivery of ITE programmes and curricula, helping to ensure universities are considering current practice and the specific needs of local schools. These partnerships also provide diverse environments for trainee teachers to undertake their placements and apply research-informed training from their university in real-world situations.

But the benefits of university-school partnerships go far beyond these placements. **Through ambitious civic strategies, our universities are breaking down barriers to opportunity by providing teachers in local schools professional development opportunities and learning resources as well as directly engaging young learners and increasing their awareness of, and progression into, higher education.**

Provision of CPD and teaching resources

Opportunities for teachers to develop their skills on the job are often restricted by financial pressures on schools, which is why partnership working is so important to ensure teachers and mentors can continue to help them feel motivated in their careers and build their subject specialism.

At the **University of Cambridge**, the Faculties of Education and Mathematics collaborate on the [NRICH programme](#) to enrich the mathematical experiences of all learners. Alongside providing free online resources for ages 2 to 18 which focus on developing problem-solving skills, NRICH maps resources to the curriculum and enables teachers to embed engaging, creative mathematics in their teaching. Face-to-face workshops, webinars, conferences and bespoke training days are developed by leading subject experts to enhance teachers' professional knowledge.

In 2014, the **University of Warwick** launched its [Research in Action](#) conference following recognition of the benefits that exposure to research could bring to staff in partnership schools, including the CPD opportunities. The conference is celebrating its tenth year of operation. It provides school teachers based in Warwick with the opportunity to explore how research informs practice in schools and to understand the latest theoretical and policy developments in teacher education.

Engaging young learners

Our universities work with early years settings and primary schools to provide academic support by creating challenging curriculum materials and devising projects to enthuse and engage students.

For example, the **University of Southampton** organises the [Wild Citizens project](#) that aims to help primary school children to become active 'environmental citizens' by discovering, monitoring and communicating about the wildlife that exists in their school grounds. So far, the project has involved over 200 children from seven primary schools from socioeconomically disadvantaged areas in Southampton.

Promoting opportunities to progress to HE

Universities involved in ITE have direct routes into schools to support teachers to encourage and support their students to progress to higher education..

The **Russell Group's** [Advancing Access](#) initiative provides a variety of CPD resources, online events and offline conferences for teachers and advisers to help them support students' progression to our universities. All the resources and events are offered free of charge to ensure that teachers, regardless of their access to CPD funds, can support their students. As of August 2023, nearly 60% of FE colleges and state schools with a sixth form in England had engaged with Advancing Access. This includes 65% of mainstream state schools and FE colleges in the Northeast of England.

¹ [Initial Teacher Training Census, DfE](#) (2024) NB: these data refer to England only. There are 15 Russell Group universities delivering ITE in England and 3 in the devolved nations.

² [Initial teacher training performance profiles](#), DfE (2023)

³ The Office for Students (OfS) measures quality against three core metrics including progression into the labour market and other destinations after leaving higher education. [Office for Students Student Outcomes Data, OfS](#) (2024)

⁴ [Initial Teacher Training Census, DfE](#) (2024)

⁵ [Teacher supply and shortages: the implications of teacher supply challenges for schools and pupils](#), NFER (2022)

⁶ "One in six teachers teaching English does not have a degree in that subject, one in five maths teachers, one in five history teachers, one in four chemistry teachers, one in four French teachers, one in four digital technology teachers, and two in five physics teachers." Oral evidence to [Teacher recruitment, training and retention inquiry](#), House of Commons Education Committee (2023)