



The Open  
University  
Y Brifysgol  
Agored

Buffy Williams MS  
Chair of the Children, Young People and  
Education Committee  
Senedd

By email

Date: Wednesday 16 July 2025

Dear Chair,

Thank you for the invitation to give oral evidence to the Children, Young People and Education Committee's inquiry into teacher recruitment and retention this morning.

In response to a question from your committee colleague Natasha Asghar MS, I undertook to write to the committee with a more detailed response about withdrawal rates from The Open University in Wales' PGCE programme.

Cohort	# withdrew	% withdrew	# offered deferral	# returned
2022	28	18.2%	3	2
2023	50	28.1%	5	3
2024	13	9.2%	5	TBC
2022-2024	91	19.2%	13	TBC

Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a Saesneg ac ni fydd gohebu gyda ni yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi. | We welcome correspondence in Welsh and in English and corresponding with us in Welsh will not lead to delay.

Ymgorfforir y Brifysgol Agored drwy Siarter Frenhinol (RC 000391), sef elusen eithriedig yng Nghymru a Lloegr ac elusen gofrestredig yn yr Alban (SC 038302). Awdurdoddir a rheoleiddir y Brifysgol Agored gan yr Awdurdod Ymddygiad Ariannol mewn perthynas â'i gweithgaredd eilradd o froceru credyd. | The Open University is incorporated by Royal Charter (RC 000391), an exempt charity in England & Wales and a charity registered in Scotland (SC 038302). The Open University is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority in relation to its secondary activity of credit broking.

The most frequently cited reason for withdrawal is personal circumstances, which indicates that the withdrawing student has not shared full information about their reason for withdrawing.

We are currently working to improve our process for recording this data, with a view to capturing more precise information and ensuring that students are offered the appropriate support.

Other reasons cited included health and wellbeing issues; difficulty balancing studies with work or family commitments; financial issues; and realising that they do not wish to pursue a career in teaching. This reflects the oral evidence I gave this morning.

The highest number of withdrawals occurred in our primary part-time cohorts, which is unsurprising given this is the largest group within each cohort. For the same reason, a majority of withdrawals were from women students.

A majority of withdrawing students were over the age of 30, reflecting possible challenges with family commitments and other personal circumstances. Retention among ethnic minority students remains strong.

I trust that this information satisfies Ms Asghar's question, but if I or any of my colleague can be of any further assistance to the committee, please do not hesitate to let me know.

I look forward to the publication of the inquiry report in due course and thank you again for the opportunity to inform the committee's work.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "S Stewart".

Dr Sarah Stewart  
Director of the PGCE Programme, The Open University in Wales