



WEST LONDON TEACHER TRAINING ALLIANCE
2025-26 Cohort

in partnership with



St Mary's
University
Twickenham
London

**COURSE
CODE
VM7T**

UNSALARIED BIOLOGY PGCE(M)+QTS

WITH SPECIAL NEEDS HOST SCHOOL

Provider 2BV

West London Teacher Training Alliance (Secondary)

This programme is available at

- ◆ The Rise School TW13, (Ambitious about Autism)



APPLICATION LINK

Instructions on how to apply, with a link to the application form are included in Section 9. It is important that you read this short document thoroughly before you apply.

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1 About this course

1.1 Qualification

This Biology course **VM7T** leads to PGCE (M) QTS. Click here for [further clarity on the significance of different teacher training qualifications](#)

1.2 Special Features

- West London Teacher Training Alliance (WLTTA) in partnership with St Mary's University, Twickenham.
- WLTTA enables you to choose your main host school, as somewhere you aspire to work, in this case a SEN school. Later, if there is a teaching vacancy and they want to retain you, you can be employed for the following year **without the post being advertised**. By becoming a WLTTA trainee, all our schools could employ you this way and we operate a pool.
- Full time staff on hand to support you, prompt shortlisting decisions.

Our aim is to produce exceptional teachers who could remain in alliance schools to continue their careers, taking advantage of further professional development, including the accredited Early Career induction programme.

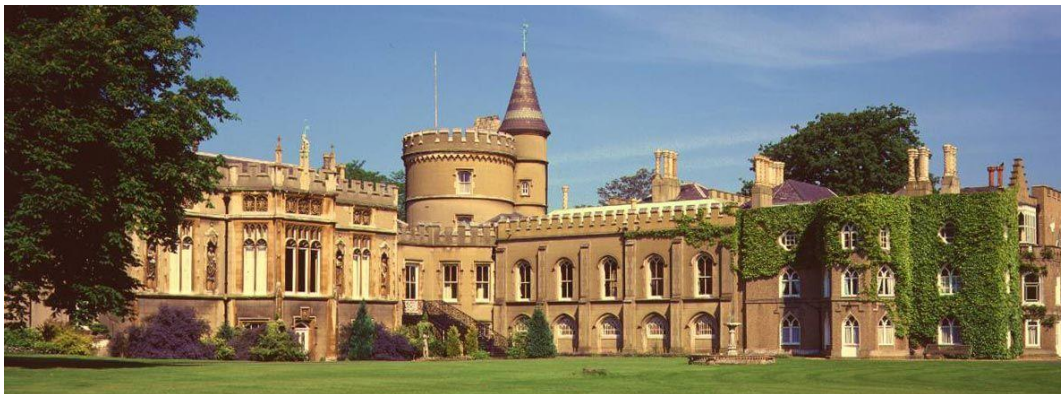
1.3 The Training

Most schools need you to be able to teach at least one of the three sciences to A-Level, and to be willing and able to teach all three Sciences at Key Stage 3 and ideally to GCSE. We can help you learn to do so.

While much of your training is in your host school, you would enrol at the university and would:

- attend all the same university sessions with those who had applied through the university; and
- have full access to university facilities and mentors.

The university awards your PGCE. WLTTA selects a second contrasting school for your 'away' placement.



St Mary's University Twickenham

As a guide: [Typical Timetable](#) Please note however that if your main host setting is The Rise SEN school, your mainstream placement will be longer - probably 10-12 weeks in the Spring term.

Lectures will include teaching, assessing, classroom management and child protection. Your university tutor leads subject seminars.

At school, through an initial programme of observations, you will become familiar with the workings of the school and department (pupil groups, pastoral systems, staffing, curriculum, resources, facilities, methods of teaching, lesson planning, and assessment).

You will be treated like a member of teaching staff and with your school mentors, you will feel supported as you become ready to teach. Our mentors are excellent experienced teachers who undertake rigorous training to develop their mentoring skills.

Throughout your time in both schools, your university tutor visits you to monitor your progress and to discuss your development with you and your school mentors.

You will have the opportunity to teach across KS3/KS4 and to support KS5. KS3 topics include elements and chemical reactions, cell biology, nutrition and digestion, atoms, energy and forces. Year 7-10 teaching will include aspects of nutrition and digestion, atoms, elements and chemical reactions, energy and forces.

2 How school placements work

2.1 Choosing your main host school

At application, with WLTTA, we want you to select your main host school as somewhere you aspire to work. For this course, which specifies at SEN setting, your host school would be:

- The Rise School, TW13.

You can read a description of The Rise and our other secondary schools; - see our overall [WLTTA Secondary School Summary Descriptions](#) and our [Map of WLTTA Schools](#)

We then later arrange your second placement at another contrasting (mainstream) WLTTA school to provide greater depth to your training experience.

If you want to see when you would be at the university; when at your main host school; and when the contrasting school, see our typical timetable linked above. Please note however that if your main host setting is The Rise SEN school, your mainstream placement will be longer - probably 10-12 weeks in the Spring term.

You can always contact us to ask how many applications (if any) are being considered at the point that you are about to apply.

2.2 Our Detailed Website and Live Presentation and Q&A

We recommend that you visit our website <https://www.wlta.org.uk/> to properly see all our vacancies, for example we have another separate Biology unsalaried course at a variety of mainstream schools. You can download the course information document and see a video about us, with previous trainees being interviewed.

If you want to, you can also sign up there to join our fortnightly 'live' Zoom presentation about getting into teaching and it includes an opportunity for Q&A. The presentation explains the different routes into teaching and their separate benefits; how the money works; tips about using the 'Find Postgraduate Teacher Training' portal; applications; offers; school experience etc. No pressure, you don't have to attend this at all. It's just there for anyone who is trying to understand it all better. We get excellent feedback on this event year after year.

[WLTTA online Information and Q&A session](#)

3 Entry requirements

3.1 Academic Requirements

You will need a scientific honours degree (2.2 or above) in Biology or a closely related subject.

We may consider alternatively well-qualified mature candidates or those whose studies indicate some breadth of scientific knowledge as a basis for further study both before and during the course.

We normally also expect two Sciences at A-Level standard (or the equivalent). This can really help because at KS3, schools teach general science before children then specialise for GCSEs and A-Levels in KS4 and KS5.

You will also need GCSE Grade C/4 in English Language and Mathematics GCSE, or the equivalent.

Where appropriate, please read our important guidance on [Overseas Qualifications](#) and if necessary about [GCSE Equivalency tests](#).

We would normally only accept a candidate with one of the two required GCSEs outstanding (not both).

3.2 Personal Qualities

We seek trainees with a passion to engage and inspire students to a love of learning, who are:

- committed to championing their students;
- passionate about their subject and about working with SEN pupils;
- open to learning about children's physical/social/emotional/cognitive needs and how these can affect behaviour;
- in good health with the ability to cope with stress. Teaching is incredibly rewarding, but it also requires an element of resilience and a sense of humour.
- professional and committed to equal opportunities;
- able to communicate well in written/spoken English, with at least basic computer skills and a commitment to developing these.

3.3 Other requirements

Some previous experience with SEN children would be a distinct advantage, ideally in a similar setting. We are looking for energetic and committed applicants with excellent subject knowledge in science.

A realistic understanding of the role of a teacher and an awareness of some current issues facing the profession is also important. We can try to help you to get some observational experience and we have some advice relating to school experience on our website: [WLTTA School Experience tab](#)

Offers are conditional on satisfactory outcome of a DBS check (approx. £60) and an occupational health check (approx. £20) both administered through the university after an offer is accepted.

4 Fees & financial support

4.1 Fees

2025-26: The tuition fee for this course is £9,250 for home students, payable to St Mary's University, Twickenham. Fees for international students for 2024-25 were £16,500 but the fees for 2025-26 will be confirmed by the university in October 2024.

4.2 Bursaries

DfE bursaried subjects for 2025, together with the amounts and eligibility (and any scholarships) are expected to be published from **early Oct 2024** on the DfE's 'Get into Teaching' website tab: [Funding & Support](#). This information will then also then be listed on the bursary tab on the secondary courses page of our WLTTA website.

4.3 Student loans

You may also be eligible for a student loan while you study but you'll have to apply for that. You can take out a student loan even if you already have an undergraduate loan.

Loans for tuition fees are not means tested (whereas loans for maintenance are means tested) but you should confirm all this using the same 'Funding your training' tab above.

4.4 Other financial support

While not provided directly by WLTTA, please be aware that as a full time student you would be eligible for cheaper travel in London using a student oyster card and in many boroughs, you can get a reduction on your council tax payments.

5 About the training provider

5.1 The West London Teacher Training Alliance (WLTTA)

The West London Teacher Training Alliance represents a large group of 60+ schools (nurseries, primaries, special needs, secondaries, sixth forms; faith and non-faith, maintained schools, independent schools and free schools) – who are all seeking to mentor and build a relationship with a trainee who aspires to work in their school.

Our schools are in Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington & Chelsea, Westminster, Richmond, Twickenham, Ealing, Hounslow, Hillingdon and Brent. The WLTTA office is based at Sacred Heart High School, in Hammersmith.

We have formal partnership arrangements for teacher training with two universities:

- St Mary's University, Twickenham
- University of Roehampton

5.2 Our approach to trainee recruitment

We are one of the very few providers who want you choose the school where you train, ideally a school where you aspire to work, when you apply. We pride ourselves in the support that we provide potential applicants and in the speed of our shortlisting. We have a detailed website (<https://www.wlta.org.uk/>) and the WLTTA office is staffed full time with teacher-training recruitment experts to talk to on the phone.

If you perform well at interview but fail to secure a place at your preferred SEN school, we operate an internal referral system rather than rejecting you (see the interview section below).

We place significant emphasis on getting a good fit between trainee and school because we are all keenly focussed on recruitment for qualified teachers in our alliance schools the following year.

5.3 The Accrediting Body

St Mary's University, Twickenham accredits this WLTTA course and in 2024 the St Mary's School of Education was once again rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted.

In *The Sunday Times Good University Guide 2024*, the university was ranked in the Top 10 for Student Experience and in the Top 5 for Teaching Quality. The Thames-side setting of the campus is stunning and the university has a long and distinguished history combined with a very modern outlook.

With just under 4,000 students training to teach on primary and secondary courses, the university is now London's second largest teacher training course provider. Course tutors at St Mary's are all skilful teachers themselves, with many years of experience in schools and higher education. Our WLTTA schools have been working with St Mary's for more than a decade and have established excellent relationships with the university.

6 Interviews

Our schools seek trainees who aspire to work for them. We enable you to select your preferred host school(s) at application and later through a referral process. We provide information about the schools, to help you choose. This course is currently offered at one SEN school, The Rise. Each of our schools interview independently, but the process is administered centrally through WLTTA.

6.1 Stage 1: University Interview

Once shortlisted, we arrange for you to be invited to a university interview. This will usually be online but if you particularly wish to visit the university, do mention this to them when they contact you about the interview.

The university may ask you to prepare a brief presentation on a particular topic and a subject audit questionnaire. This will help them to establish the breadth of your subject knowledge, which they will discuss with you. 'Subject Knowledge Enhancement' courses are sometimes included as an offer condition.

6.2 Stage 2: School Interview

The in-person school interview (including time in a classroom) follows 3-4 days later and may lead to an offer.

6.3 Internal Referrals

If you do not receive an offer from Stage 2 but have demonstrated potential, you can then choose another school, perhaps on our mainstream Biology course, and we would recommend your shortlisting without the need for you to reapply. The university interview would not be repeated.

We hope to fit good candidates with schools that they are happy with and where they can secure an offer. In this way we believe we are maximising the opportunity for a successful year for both trainee and school; in turn this increases the chances of the trainee's future employment within the school or the alliance.

7 Training with a disability

WLTTA and all our partner universities are committed to supporting students with disabilities. Please contact us as early as possible in your application process so that your needs are met and support can be arranged.

You can also find support and information from the university accrediting this course. St Mary's University offer advice and support to their students who have requirements as a result of a disability, specific learning difficulty (e.g. dyslexia), medical condition or temporary disability, such as injury. St Mary's Dyslexia and Disability Co-ordinator (DDC) works closely with the other members of the Student Services team, supporting students in their time at university assisting them to be proactive in their studies as an independent learner. <http://www.smuc.ac.uk/student-support/dyslexia-and-disability/>

8 Contact details

The WLTTA office team administers all WLTTA teacher training recruitment and training. If you need further help, you can find all our contact details here with information about our availability during school holidays: [One-to-one advice for candidates](#)

Office phone: **0208 748 7600** (Pippa Currey x290)

Email: pcurrey@sacredh.lbhf.sch.uk

Our website: <https://www.wlta.org.uk/>

9 How to apply

All applications for teacher training courses are made through the DfE portal: [Apply for teacher training](#).

The following link provides an overview of the application system which you might find helpful.

[How to apply](#)