



Teacher training

If you want to train as a teacher, United Kingdom institutions provide high-quality initial teacher training for all phases of education (early years, primary, secondary and post-compulsory education) at either undergraduate or postgraduate levels.

If you are interested in training as a teacher of English, please refer to *Study English language teaching* in this series.

If you are interested in studying education at postgraduate level, please refer to *Studying education* in this series.

Why train to be a teacher in the United Kingdom?

- UK universities have a tradition of welcoming overseas students and you will be made to feel at home.
- The UK is a world leader in providing quality-assured education.
- The opportunity to improve your fluency in English will improve your job prospects and help both you and your employer develop international links.

There are special arrangements for overseas graduates with teaching experience who want to gain accreditation as a qualified teacher in England.

1 Professional qualification as a schoolteacher in the UK

In **England** and **Wales**, the professional qualification required for all teachers in maintained (state-funded) or non-maintained (independent) special schools is Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). QTS is a set of standards formally setting out what a trainee teacher is expected to know, understand and be able to do. All initial teacher training courses enable you to develop and be assessed on the knowledge, understanding and teaching skills specified in the standards for QTS, leading to registration with the General Teaching Council for England (or Wales) as a qualified teacher. If you have the right experience you won't necessarily need to complete a full programme of initial teacher training. Special options are available for overseas trained teachers, including QTS *assessment only* options for people with teaching experience.

You can find out about the standards for QTS at www.tda.gov.uk/partners/ittstandards.aspx

In **Scotland**, you need a university degree which includes the Teaching Qualification of the General Teaching Council for Scotland. In **Northern Ireland**, you need a university or college degree or certificate which includes the teacher competences and core criteria for Eligibility to Teach conferred by the Department of Education (Northern Ireland).

Teaching in independent schools, further and higher education

The teaching qualifications expected vary from institution to institution. QTS is not always required in independent schools (except independent special schools). In further education, institutions normally expect evidence of formal training such as a PGCE in Post-Compulsory Education and Training (PCET), but this is being superseded by Qualified Teacher in Learning and Skills status (QTLS). In higher education, institutions set their own requirements for



new teachers/lecturers, which can include the Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education (PGCHE) or accreditation with the Higher Education Academy following completion of the specific institution's own internal training programme.

2 Routes to professional qualification

There are a range of courses available depending on your qualifications and previous experience. In all four countries of the UK, undergraduate routes are usually three or three years, and postgraduate routes are normally one year, all full time.

England and Wales:

- an undergraduate course of study which combines a first degree with QTS: Bachelor of Arts (BA) with QTS, Bachelor of Science (BSc) with QTS, or Bachelor of Education (BEd)
- a postgraduate programme: the Postgraduate (or 'Professional') Certificate in Education (PGCE)
- the Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP) employment route: working in a school as an unqualified teacher and being trained and assessed for QTS as you work
- School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT): designed and delivered by groups of neighbouring schools and colleges. This allows graduates to complete almost all of their training in a school environment. (Currently only available in England)
- Overseas Trained Teacher Programme (England only): for people already trained as teachers in their own country and already working (or about to take up appointment) as an unqualified teacher in a school in England. If you qualified as a teacher in the European Economic Area or Switzerland, you may be eligible for QTS without further assessment. You will need to contact the General Teaching Council for England (GTCE) to have your qualifications assessed.

A comprehensive guide, *How to Qualify as a Teacher in England: A Guide for Overseas Trained Teachers*, is available at www.tda.gov.uk/upload/resources/pdf/o/otthanbook.pdf

For further information on all these routes see www.tda.gov.uk > Get into teaching

Scotland:

- undergraduate route (for primary school teaching): Bachelor of Education (BEd) or a combined (or 'concurrent') degree
- postgraduate route: Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) in either primary or secondary education.

For further information see www.teachinginScotland.com > How do I train?

Northern Ireland:

Initial teacher training for primary and secondary education at undergraduate or postgraduate levels is provided by four universities or university colleges: Stranmillis University College, St Mary's University College, Queen's University and the University of Ulster.

For further information see www.deni.gov.uk/teachers/Car_dev/CoursesInitialTeacherEd.pdf and the institutions' websites.

3 Entry qualifications and requirements

There are three types of entry requirement:

- a general requirements for anyone applying to the institution – for example, proficiency in spoken and written English at a specified level. You should refer to the printed or online prospectus of the institutions you are interested in
- b all entrants to initial teacher training in the UK must have:
 - a qualification equivalent to GCSE Grade C or above in mathematics and English, and
 - a qualification equivalent to GCSE grade C or above in science if you intend to teach primary or Key Stage 2/3 (ages 7–14) and you were born on or after 1 September 1979
- c specific requirements for particular courses. PGCE secondary education courses normally require a first degree (or equivalent) substantially related to the subject you intend to teach.



There are no national guidelines about the equivalence of overseas qualifications to UK ones. You should contact the institution you are interested in to check the acceptability of your particular qualifications. Some information can be obtained from the National Academic Recognition Information Centre for the United Kingdom (NARIC). For further information see www.naric.org.uk.

Is a UK teaching qualification recognised in other countries?

UK qualifications are respected all over the world. However, a BEd (Bachelor of Education), BA/QTS, BSc/QTS, PGCE (Postgraduate/Professional Certificate in Education) or a PGDE (Professional Graduate Diploma in Education) does not in itself entitle an overseas student to teach outside the UK, and you should check in the country where you want to work as a teacher.

4 How do I apply?

- For first degree courses (BEd, BA, BSc), you should apply through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). (For further information see *Choosing your degree programme and institution* in this series.)
- For Postgraduate (or Professional) Certificate in Education (PGCE) courses, you should apply through the Graduate Teacher Training Registry (GTTR).
- For the Overseas Trained Teacher Programme, once you have a teaching post and you have established that you have all the necessary qualifications, you should apply directly to a designated recommending body (DRB) in your area. For further information, the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) can advise you about your application and the training options available to you. Their website is www.tda.gov.uk/Home/partners/recruiting/ebr/drbs/drregions.aspx

For more detailed information about application in UK countries, see:

- **England and Wales:** www.tda.gov.uk/Home/Recruit/readytoapply.aspx
- **Scotland:** www.teachinginScotland.com > How do I train? > How to apply
- **Northern Ireland:** the individual university prospectuses and their website information at www.deni.gov.uk/teachers > Links > Universities in Northern Ireland.

Background checks for trainee and new teachers

All trainee teachers on courses of initial teacher training (and newly appointed teachers and other school staff) must by law provide official certification of their suitability to work with children. In England and Wales this certification is provided by the Criminal Records Bureau. A different system for certification operates in Scotland and is administered by the General Teaching Council for Scotland.

If you have previously lived in the UK, you must apply for the check through an organisation registered with the Criminal Records Bureau. That organisation must countersign the application, which in most cases will be the institution where you have been accepted to do your training, such as a university. You will need to pay a fee for the check. If you have *never* previously lived in the UK, and have been offered an appointment in a UK school, that school should ensure that checks are made in your country of origin.

There are, however, no formal arrangements for checking police records in countries outside the UK. Citizens of some countries (including most countries in the EU) can obtain a certificate of good conduct. You must check with institutions you are applying to about what is required.

You may also be subject to other checks, such as:

- identity confirmation
- professional and character references
- previous employment history
- health check.

5 What else do I need to know?

You should bear in mind immigration requirements when considering whether to study in the UK. Requirements vary according to your nationality or citizenship and the length of time you want to study. You will not be allowed to extend your permission to stay in the UK for more than two years on courses that are below degree level and are of less than one year's duration. The UKCOSA website will give you further information on this topic –

www.ukcosa.org.uk/pages/guidenote.htm

Note in particular that you will not be given permission to enter the UK as a student if the school, college or university that you want to study at does not appear on the UK Department for Education and Skills Register of Education and Training Providers. You can check the register by clicking on 'Browse the Register' at

www.dfes.gov.uk/providersregister/

For practical advice on living in the UK download *Studying and living in the UK* from

www.educationuk.org/bc_img/body/articles/pdfs/stud_live_uk.pdf

6 Where can I find more information?

British Council

Website www.educationuk.org

www.educationuk.org/scotland

For further information, you can find details of your nearest office at www.britishcouncil.org/home-contact-worldwide.htm which includes links to all our country web pages and a worldwide address book giving contact details for all offices.

Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)

PO Box 28

Cheltenham

Gloucestershire GL52 3LZ

Telephone +44 (0)870 1122211

Fax +44 (0)1242 544961

Email enquiries@ucas.ac.uk

Website www.ucas.com

General Teaching Council for England (GTCE)

Victoria Square House

Victoria Square

Birmingham B2 4AJ

Telephone +44 (0)870 001 0308

Email info@gtce.org.uk (general enquiries)

Email tganswer@gtce.org.uk (teachers' qualifications helpdesk)

Email registration@gtce.org.uk (registration enquiries)

Website www.gtce.org.uk

Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET)

Whittington House

19-30 Alfred Place

London WC1E 7EA

Telephone +44 (0)20 7580 8000

Fax +44 (0)20 7323 0577

Email info@ucet.ac.uk

Website www.ucet.ac.uk

General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)

Clerwood House

96 Clermiston Road

Edinburgh EH12 6UT

Telephone +44 (0)131 314 6000

Fax +44 (0)131 314 6001

Email customerservices@gtcs.org.uk (general enquiries)

Email registration@gtcs.org.uk (registration enquiries)

Website www.gtcs.org.uk

Graduate Teacher Training Registry (GTTR)

Rosehill

New Barn Lane

Cheltenham

Gloucestershire GL52 3LZ

Telephone +44 (0)870 112 2205 (enquiries)

Website www.gttr.ac.uk

General Teaching Council for Wales (GTCW)

Fourth floor, Southgate House

Wood Street

Cardiff CF10 1EW

Telephone +44 (0)29 2055 0350

Fax +44 (0)29 2055 0360

Email information@gtcw.org.uk

Email registration@gtcw.org.uk (registration enquiries)

Website www.gtcw.org.uk

Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA)

(formerly Teacher Training Agency or TTA)

Portland House

Bressenden Place

London SW1E 5TT

Teaching Information Line +44 (0)845 6000 991

Email teaching@ttainfo.co.uk

Website www.tda.gov.uk

Department for Education and Skills (DfES)

Sanctuary Buildings

Great Smith Street

London SW1P 3BT

Telephone +44 (0)870 000 2288

Fax +44 (0)1928 794 248

Email info@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

Website www.dfes.gov.uk

**Department of Education for Northern Ireland**

Rathgael House
43 Balloo Road
Bangor
County Down BT19 7PR
Telephone +44 (0)28 9127 9279
Fax +44 (0)28 9127 9100
Email mail@deni.gov.uk
Website www.deni.gov.uk

Scottish Executive Education Department

Victoria Quay
Edinburgh EH6 6QQ
Telephone +44 (0)131 556 8400/+44 (0)845 774 1741
Fax +44 (0) 131 244 8240
Email ceu@scotland.gov.uk
Website www.scotland.gov.uk/About/Departments/ED

National Assembly for Wales Training and Education Department

Cathays Park
Cardiff CF99 1NA
Telephone +44 (0)292 082 5111
Fax +44 (0)292 089 8630
Website www.learning.wales.gov.uk

National Academic Recognition Information Centre for the United Kingdom (UK NARIC)

Oriel House
Oriel Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire GL50 1XP
Telephone +44 (0)870 990 4088
Fax +44 (0)1242 288 611
Email info@naric.org.uk
Website www.naric.org.uk

Independent Schools Council

St Vincent House
30 Orange Street
London WC2H 7HH
Telephone +44 (0)20 7766 7070
Fax +44 (0)20 7766 7071
Email office@isc.co.uk
Website www.isc.co.uk

Other useful resources

University Courses in Education in the UK Open to Students from Overseas (UCET, published annually in May) – comprehensive handbook of initial, postgraduate and short courses open to overseas students

While every effort has been made to ensure that the information given here is correct and up to date, the British Council accepts no legal liability for its accuracy, currency or completeness.

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