Department for Education

Guidance

Train to teach in England: non-UK applicants

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Before you start

You may want to refer to The Department for Education's Get into teaching website which contains general information on life as a teacher in England, including details about salaries and benefits.

You can also register with the UK government's Get an adviser service for personalised advice about teaching in England over email, phone or online chat. The service can help you get a statement of comparability confirming how your overseas qualifications compare to UK qualifications.

What you'll need to train to teach in England

You will need:

- a university degree (UK or non-UK)
- a standard equivalent to a grade 4 in GCSE English and mathematics
- a confirmed offer of a training place from an English teacher training provider
- a visa allowing you to study in the UK (in most cases, you will need a confirmed offer of a training place to apply for a visa)

To teach children aged 3 to 11, you also need to have achieved a standard equivalent to a grade 4 in a GCSE science subject.

For help understanding English qualifications and their international equivalents, contact UK ENIC.

Irish citizens do not need a visa to study in the UK.

You will also need to:

- have the health and physical capacity to train to teach
- undergo safeguarding checks carried out by your training provider
- show your training provider you meet their standards for maths and English

Search for teacher training courses

Use the Find postgraduate teacher training service to search for teacher training courses in England by location, teaching subject and age group.

Many training providers have experience of welcoming international candidates and can offer support but not all will be able to accept your application. You should contact your chosen teacher training providers directly before you apply online to get their advice about your eligibility and the application process.

Teacher training leading to qualified teacher status (QTS)

If you're accepted on to an English teacher training course, you'll train for one year to gain QTS. You will then be able to apply for paid teaching jobs in all schools in England.

Many schools will also require you to complete an early career teacher (ECT) 2-year induction period, when you'll work and be assessed as a paid teacher in a school. This induction period is part of the UK government's early career framework for teachers. You'll be expected to show you meet the teachers' standards and you'll also get training and support from a mentor.

Candidates who do not have a university degree

If you do not have a degree, you can apply to study a 3 to 4 year undergraduate course in England which combines a teaching degree with QTS. When you complete your studies, you'll be able to apply for jobs as a teacher in England.

Visas and immigration

This section explains the visas and immigration routes you may be able to use to study and work in England.

Check whether you can apply to the EU Settlement Scheme

If you are a citizen of a country inside the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland, and you were living in the UK on 31 December 2020, you can apply to the EU Settlement Scheme. The deadline for the scheme is 30 June 2021. If your application is successful, you can continue to live and study in the UK after 30 June 2021 without applying for a visa.

Apply for a visa for your teacher training course

The main visa routes for teacher training in England are:

- the student visa
- the skilled worker visa

Depending on your personal circumstances, you may be eligible for other visas.

Student visa or skilled worker visa

The type of visa you need will depend on whether you are on an unsalaried or salaried teacher training course.

An unsalaried teacher training course means you pay a fee to study as a teacher. The majority of international students training as teachers in England train on this type of course. Unsalaried courses include higher education institution programmes, school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) programmes and the School Direct fee-funded programme.

A salaried teacher training course means you are paid to work in a school while you learn to teach. Salaried courses include the School Direct salaried programme, the Teach First Leadership Development programme and postgraduate teaching apprenticeships.

Applying for a student visa for an unsalaried teacher training course

For an unsalaried teacher training course, you will need a student visa. Student visas must be sponsored by a Home Office licensed student sponsor.

Contact your chosen teacher training provider to check they are a Home Office licensed student sponsor – sponsors can help you apply for your visa. You can also refer to the UK government's Register of licensed sponsors: students, which lists all training providers who can sponsor students.

You'll be able to apply for your visa if you:

- have a confirmed offer of a place on a course with a Home Office licensed student sponsor teacher training provider
- have a reference number, called a confirmation of acceptance for studies (CAS), which your training provider will give you
- have enough money to support yourself and pay for your course
- can speak, read, write, and understand English

Apply for a student visa

Applying for a skilled worker visa for a salaried teacher training course

For a salaried teacher training course, you will need a skilled worker visa. Skilled worker visas are sponsored by Home Office licensed employers.

You will need to find out whether the school you'll be employed by during your training is a Home Office licensed employer sponsor. Sometimes it will be the local authority or academy trust that holds the sponsor licence instead of the individual school. You could check the Home Office's Register of licensed sponsors: workers, but you should also check directly with your chosen teacher training provider. Sponsors can help you apply for your visa.

You'll be able to apply for your visa if:

- you have an offer for a salaried training place at a school that is a licensed Home Office employer sponsor
- you can speak, read, write, and understand English
- your salary meets the requirement for a skilled worker visa

Salary requirement for a skilled worker visa

The salary threshold you must meet depends on the region you work in as a salaried trainee. This table shows the minimum salary non-UK salaried trainee teachers must earn to be eligible for a skilled worker visa, by region.

Inner London	Outer London	London fringe	Rest of England
£22,849	£21,582	£20,480	£20,480

These thresholds match the minimum salaries on the national teachers' pay range for unqualified teachers, except for the rates in the London fringe and the rest of England, where the threshold is the minimum for a skilled worker visa. Because the minimum salary for a skilled worker visa is higher than the minimum salary rates for unqualified teachers in these regions, you may find it hard to get a skilled worker visa for a salaried teacher training course in these areas.

Part-time salaried teacher training courses

You may be able to work part-time, but your salary must meet the threshold for a skilled worker visa. There are 2 requirements:

- your part-time salary must be at least £20,480
- the full-time equivalent of your salary must meet the minimum set in your region for unqualified teachers

Apply for a skilled worker visa.

Studying and working as a teacher in the UK without a skilled worker visa or a student visa

This section explains the other visas and immigration routes you can use.

Check if you need a UK visa.

Graduate visa for salaried and unsalaried teacher training courses

If you are already an international student in the UK, you can apply for a graduate visa on successful completion of your degree. To apply, you will need to have been sponsored by a Home Office licensed student sponsor over the course of your studies. The graduate visa will be available from July 2021.

The graduate visa will allow you to study, work, or look for work in the UK for up to 2 years after completing your studies (3 years for PhD students), without a sponsor. This includes training as a teacher on a salaried or unsalaried initial teacher training course, if the course does not meet the requirements needed for you to apply for a student visa.

You will be able to switch from a graduate visa to another visa (such as the skilled worker visa) without having to leave the UK, if you meet the requirements for the new visa.

The Youth Mobility Scheme visa

The Youth Mobility Scheme allows young people from certain countries to come to the UK to study or work without a sponsor. This includes training as a teacher via either a salaried or unsalaried initial teacher training course.

A Youth Mobility Scheme visa lasts up to 2 years. You may be able to switch from a Youth Mobility Scheme visa to another visa route (for example, the skilled worker visa) without having to leave the UK. You'll need to meet the requirements for the other visa route.

Other visas

Depending on your personal circumstances, you may be able to work or study in the UK on alternative visas – for example, a Family visa, a UK Ancestry visa or, if you are from Hong Kong, a British National (Overseas) visa.

Financial support for non-UK applicants for unsalaried teacher training in England

You may be eligible for financial support if you meet the requirements in this section. This is an overview of the rules and exceptions may apply in certain circumstances.

Applicants from countries outside the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland

If you are an applicant from outside the EEA or Switzerland, you are unlikely to be eligible for financial support.

To be eligible for student support, you must usually have settled status and have been living in the UK throughout the three years immediately before the start of your course.

For more information, contact Student Finance England.

Applicants from countries within the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland

If you have settled or pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme, you may be able to get some or all of the following types of financial help with your living costs or teacher training course fees known as tuition fees.

Special provisions apply to Irish citizens.

Types of financial help

This section explains the types of financial help you can get.

Tuition fee loan

Your tuition fees are paid, with the money going directly to your teacher training provider. This is a loan you have to pay back, but you'll only start your repayments when your income is over £27,295 per year.

Maintenance loan

Money is paid directly into your bank account to help with living costs. This is a loan you have to pay back, but you'll only start your repayments when your income is over £27,295 per year.

Home fee status

You are charged tuition fees at the domestic rate which is usually lower than the rate charged to international students.

Extra financial support

You can apply for extra help if you have a disability, or children or other people to care for. You do not have to pay this money back.

Teacher training bursary or scholarship

Money is paid directly into your bank account and you can use this as you wish. You do not have to pay this money back.

Check your eligibility for financial support

This section tells you how to check whether you are eligible.

Tuition fee and maintenance loan

You will generally be eligible for both a tuition fee loan and a maintenance loan if you meet these requirements. You must:

- have settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme
- have been resident in the UK throughout the 3 years before the start of your course

You will also generally be eligible for both a tuition fee loan and a maintenance loan if you meet these requirements. You must:

- have settled or pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme
- have been resident in the UK, EEA or Switzerland throughout the 3 years before the start of your course
- be an EEA or a Swiss worker, or a family member of one

A worker is someone who is employed or self-employed in the UK. A family member is a spouse or civil partner, child and, sometimes, parent or grandparent.

Tuition fee loan without maintenance loan

If you are not eligible for both a tuition fee loan and maintenance loan then you may be able to get a tuition fee loan without a maintenance loan if you:

- are an EU national with settled or pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme
- and have been resident in the UK, EEA or Switzerland throughout the 3 years before the start of your course

More detailed guidance is available for EEA and Swiss students about eligibility for tuition fee and maintenance loans in the academic year 2021 to 2022.

Irish citizens

Special provisions apply to Irish citizens. If you are an Irish citizen then you do not need to have settled or pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme as you already have settled status in the UK.

You will generally be eligible for a tuition fee loan and a maintenance loan if you meet these 2 requirements:

- you are an Irish citizen
- you have been resident in the UK throughout the 3 years immediately before the start of your course

You may be able to get a tuition fee loan without a maintenance loan if you meet these 2 requirements:

- you are an Irish citizen
- you have been resident in Ireland, or Ireland and the UK, throughout the 3 years before the start of your course

Home fee status

If you meet the requirements for a tuition fee loan, or tuition fee and maintenance loan, we anticipate that providers will award you home fee status.

Extra financial support

If you have a disability, children or adult dependents, and you are eligible for a tuition fee loan and maintenance loan, you may be able to apply for extra help. You could apply for:

- Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)
- Childcare Grant
- Parents Learning Allowance
- Adult Dependants' Grant

Teacher training bursary or scholarship

If you meet the eligibility requirements for a tuition fee loan, or tuition fee and maintenance loan, you may also be eligible for a teacher training bursary or scholarship.

Bursaries and scholarships are only available in certain subjects.

Apply for financial support

You can apply for financial support when you've accepted your place on an unsalaried teacher training course.

Apply to Student Finance England for:

- tuition fee loans
- maintenance loans
- extra help if you have a disability, children or adult dependents

Talk to your training provider about:

- home fee status (they are likely to offer this if you've been awarded a tuition fee loan)
- a bursary or scholarship

Further information on financial support

There's more detailed information at:

- Guidance for EU Students studying in the UK
- New eligibility rules for home fee status and student finance for 2021 to 2022 academic year
- Access to student finance FAQs

Student Finance England have a dedicated service for EU students and for EEA citizens working in the UK.

You can also contact the UK Council for International Student Affairs for advice.

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