Qualified teacher status: routes to QTS for teachers and those with teaching experience outside the UK

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Overview

This guidance explains how to apply for qualified teacher status (QTS) if you qualified to teach, in your chosen teaching experience, outside the UK.

You may find it useful to refer to our related guidance for international teachers and trainees:

- Teach in England if you qualified outside the UK gives an overview of visas and immigration routes for teachers to work in England, including QTS
- Teach in Wales or England: your UK qualifications gives an overview of visas and immigration routes and how to apply to teach in Wales or England
- the Department for Education (DfE)'s Get into Teaching offers information and advice on becoming a teacher in England, including details about salaries and benefits

Qualified teacher status (QTS)

Qualified teacher status (QTS) is a legal requirement to teach in many English schools, and considered desirable for teachers in the majority of schools in England.

Some independent schools in England can be employed without QTS include academies, free schools and private schools.

However, even where QTS is not a legal requirement, many schools use QTS to assess the quality of candidates for teaching jobs.

QTS exemption for teachers from outside the UK

Qualified teachers from outside the UK are allowed to teach in England for up to 4 years without QTS – unless in schools where QTS is normally a legal requirement. You can learn more about this exemption, known as the '4-year rule', from the school employing you.

To be eligible for the 4-year rule, you will need to have:

- qualified as a teacher in a country outside the UK
- successfully completed a course of teacher training recognised by the organisation that regulates teachers in the country where you qualified

The 4-year rule exemption does not apply to post-referral units (PRUs), alternative provision academies, or alternative provision free schools, where QTS is required from the beginning of your employment.

Apply for qualified teacher status (QTS)

There are 3 main routes to QTS, but your eligibility for each route will depend on where you qualified, and whether you already have teaching experience.

You can obtain QTS by:

- applying to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA)
- undergoing an assessment to demonstrate you meet the standards for QTS (with no teaching experience)
- completing a teacher training course in England

This section explains the eligibility requirements for each route to QTS so you can choose the most relevant route for you.

Apply to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA)

You can apply for QTS to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) if:

- you have a teaching qualification from:
  - the EEA
  - Gibraltar
  - Australia
  - Canada
  - New Zealand
  - Switzerland
  - the USA
- you can submit evidence that you are recognised as a teacher in the country where you qualified
- you are not prohibited or restricted from teaching by a professional sanction against you

Evidence can include documents that show your official status as a teacher from the organisation that regulates teachers in the country where you qualified.

You will not need to do any further teacher training, or undergo an assessment, to get QTS via this route.

Teachers with a special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) qualification only

To gain QTS, you must be able to adapt your teaching to meet the needs of all pupils in all phases and age groups. Teachers with a qualification limited to SEND pupils are not automatically eligible for QTS. Only the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) can grant they qualified for the European Economic Area (EEA), Gibraltar, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Switzerland or the USA.

However, SEND teachers can apply for QTS through the assessment only route, or by applying for a teacher training course in England. These routes are open to SEND teachers from anywhere in the world. You'll find more information about these routes to QTS in this publication.

If you're not sure whether you're eligible to apply to the Teaching Regulation Agency for QTS, contact pts.enquiries@education.gov.uk

Apply to the Teaching Regulation Agency for QTS

Assessment only QTS to demonstrate you meet the standards for qualified teacher status

If you have a teaching qualification from a country which is not part of the European Economic Area (EEA), and is not Gibraltar, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Switzerland or the USA, assessment only QTS may be the most appropriate route for you.

Assessment only QTS means assessors judge teachers with a degree can gain QTS without having to undergo a teacher training course. Teachers can also use assessment only QTS, but you do not need to and the UK to do so. You can apply remotely for assessment only QTS to a UK government-approved teacher training provider in England.

Qualifications and experience you'll need to be eligible for an assessment only QTS

To apply for assessment only QTS, you do not need a formal teacher training qualification.

However, you must have:

- a minimum of 2 years' teaching experience
- a first degree from a UK or non-UK university
- achieved a pass/merit equivalent to grade 4 or C in GCSE English language and mathematics
- for teaching children aged 3 to 11 (English primary school), a standard equivalent to grade 4 in a GCSE science (biology, chemistry or physics) subject

For help understanding English university degree and GCSE qualifications, and their international equivalents, visit UCAS, the UK National Information Centre for global qualifications and skills.

Your teaching experience must:

- consist of time spent teaching (as opposed to other responsibilities in a school)
- have taken place in 2 separate schools (not 2 classes within the same school or 2 different roles in the same school)
- demonstrate you've taught young people from at least 2 different age groups
- demonstrate you're familiar with different approaches to teaching, learning and school management

Your teaching experience can have been:

- gained in any type of school (for example, international schools, schools teaching the international baccalaureate, or independent schools outside the UK)
- spent teaching a non-English curriculum (though you may need to show you have knowledge of the subject taught in the English curriculum)
- divided between 2 school settings as long as you have 2 years teaching experience in total

How to apply for an assessment only QTS

Your application for assessment only QTS must be made to one of the UK government's approved assessment only teacher training providers in England. Your application will be processed remotely, but an assessor and your teaching will be carried out in person at your place of work by an assessor from your chosen teacher training provider.

Before you apply, contact your chosen teacher training provider directly to:

- check they accept international applications for assessment only QTS
- confirm your eligibility for assessment only
- learn more about their specific requirements

If your application is successful, the assessment only provider will:

- help you put together a portfolio of your teaching work, to demonstrate you meet English Teachers' Standards
- carry out an assessment of your teaching
- ask to see evidence of your qualifications
- provide you with a report that demonstrates your written and spoken English is fluent, accurate and clear, and is equivalent to grade 4 in GCSE English language
- potentially ask you to sit a test to demonstrate your mathematics knowledge and, for primary school teaching, science knowledge is equivalent to grade 4 in GCSE mathematics or science

You will also need to:

- have the health and physical capacity to train to teach
- undergo safeguarding checks to assess your suitability to teach, carried out by your assessment only provider

If your assessment only provider is satisfied you've met the standards required to teach in England, you'll be awarded QTS and will be able to apply for teaching jobs in England.

If you fail to meet the standards required for assessment only QTS, you can:

- re-apply when you've gained more relevant skills and experience
- gain your QTS by training to teach in England

Apply for an assessment only QTS

Complete a teacher training course in England leading to QTS

All non-UK citizens can apply to train to teach in England. Train to teach in England: non-UK applicants explains the academic qualifications and visa you will need, and how to apply for a teacher training course.

Visit the UK government's Get Into Teaching to learn more about teacher training in England, including details about salaries and benefits. Get Into Teaching has updated advice about teaching in England over email, phone or a range of other channels. They can help you with a UK DBS (Disclosure Of Criminal Records) confirming how your overseas qualifications compare to UK qualifications.

Qualified teacher learning and skills (QTLS)

If you have QTLS status and membership of the Society for Education and Training (SET), you are eligible to work as a qualified teacher in schools in England. It will be up to schools and local authorities to decide whether you are suitable for a post and to hold a teacher's particular subject. You will be exempt from serving a statutory induction period in schools.

Contact the Society for Education and Training (SET)

Countries outside the UK that recognise QTS as a teaching qualification

Your English QTS will be recognised in many countries around the world. However, the requirements for teachers to work in the UK, Ireland, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Switzerland may have changed since 1 January 2021. Check with the organisation responsible for regulating teachers in the country where you want to teach.

International teacher training courses that do not include QTS

International teacher training courses (for example the PGCE) do not lead to QTS and will not qualify you to teach in English schools where QTS is a legal requirement.

A variety of international teacher training courses are offered by both English and non-English colleges and universities to candidates outside England.

These courses include:

- Postgraduate Certificate of Education International (PGCE), sometimes called an International Postgraduate Certificate of Education, or (PGICE)
- Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE)
- Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE)

After completing one of these courses, and depending on where you gained your experience and qualifications, you can apply:

- for an assessment only QTS
- to train to teach in England

Get help from training providers in England

Some English colleges and universities offering PGCE and similar courses can also help with your application for assessment only QTS.

To check which training providers offer this support, see the UK government's approved teacher training providers in England and contact them for advice.

Combined PGCE and QTS training courses

Combined PGCE and QTS teacher training courses are only available if you study in England. Search the UK government's Find postgraduate teacher training service for details.

Early career teacher (ECT) induction

Having qualified teacher status (QTS) allows you to apply for paid teaching jobs in schools in England. However, it also requires you to complete an Early career teacher (ECT) 2-year induction period.

During this time 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 take part training and support from a mentor.

Induction for teachers working or training outside England

If you are already working as a teacher outside England, and applying for an assessment only QTS, you may not need to complete an induction period in England. Check with your assessment only provider.

You can also complete your induction outside England in the country where you are now working or training. However the school where you complete your induction must have met requirements set by DfE in England. Check a list of schools which have met these requirements.

Teacher training to English standards outside the UK

You can continue to live and work outside the UK while:

- gaining your 2 years' teaching experience for assessment only QTS
- completing a teacher training course leading to QTS
- applying for QTS to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA)
- completing your early career teacher (ECT) induction period

These routes to QTS suit candidates who wish to teach:

- in their home country
- internationally to English standards
- in schools in England later

Read:

- details of the teaching experience you'll need for assessment only QTS
- how to apply for the TRA for QTS
- more information about ECT induction

While QTS and ECT induction are not legal requirements for schools outside England, they will strengthen your application for teaching jobs in British international schools and many schools teaching in the English language.

If you are planning to teach outside the UK, you should always check the specific qualifications needed to teach in your chosen country and type of school before training or studying.

Find teaching jobs in England

Use the Teaching vacancies service to find and apply for teaching jobs in England.

British international school organisations

British international schools provide suitable experience for teachers wishing to apply for assessment only QTS.

For more information, please read Assessment only QTS.

- the Association of British School Overseas (AoBSO)
- the Council of British International Schools (COBIS)
- the Federation of British International Schools in Asia (FOBISIA)
- British Schools in the Middle East (BSME)
- the Association of International Schools in Africa (AISA)

Further reading

These resources offer an overview of English standards for teachers, curriculum, discipline and school inspections, as well as teaching information and materials:

- general guidance on Get into Teaching
- the Teachers' Standards: setting the minimum requirement for English teachers' practice and conduct
- curriculum and qualifications
- behaviour and discipline in schools
- materials to help you develop your teaching skills, designed in line with the Department for Education's Early career framework
- Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspection reports
- the Education Endowment Foundation – a charity gathering international evidence on teaching 3 to 18-year-olds
- Times Educational Supplement (TES) – for information and resources for teachers

Contact and further information

For general enquiries about teaching or learning in England, please refer to:

- Train to teach in England as an international student
- Come to England to teach if you're a teacher from outside the UK

Email: international.teachers.recruitment@education.gov.uk

For enquiries about QTS:

Email: pts.enquiries@education.gov.uk
Telephone: 0207 593 5394

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