

Overseas Trained Teachers – What you need to know

department for
children, schools and families

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This leaflet is for overseas trained teachers (OTTs), i.e. those who have qualified as teachers in countries outside the European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland. It applies to those who teach in state maintained schools or non-maintained special schools in England. We will call them relevant schools in England. It is intended to make the legal position clear for you and we hope that schools, local authorities, employment agencies and other bodies will make it available to all newly appointed OTTs immediately on taking up teaching posts. It should also be made available to OTTs who are already teaching.

Teachers from overseas make a valued contribution to our schools and we hope you enjoy a long and successful teaching career in England. It is important you understand there is a legal limit on how long you can teach in a relevant school in England unless you have obtained qualified teacher status in England (QTS).

What are the rules for OTTs teaching in England?

The law allows you to work in a relevant school in England for up to four calendar years if you have successfully completed teacher training which is recognised by the authorities in your own country. This is often called 'the four year rule'. It is very important to be aware that you must have obtained QTS in order to continue teaching after four years.

How does the "four year rule" operate?

The four year period during which you are allowed to work without QTS starts on the day you first worked as a teacher in a relevant school in England and will expire exactly four years later even if you have not taught

continuously throughout the four year period or if you were overseas.

How do I obtain QTS?

The best and quickest way is to undertake an employment based training programme, usually the Overseas Trained Teacher Programme, which allows you to work as a teacher and study for QTS simultaneously. It is sometimes possible to be awarded QTS without undertaking extra training by assessment only but the type and length of training depends on your qualifications and previous experience as a teacher.

What action should I take if I am an overseas trained teacher?

In order to avoid problems in the future, it is strongly recommended that you carry out the following either before or shortly after arrival in the UK:

- (i) arrange a check on whether your home qualifications are equivalent to a UK first degree. This check should be made with UK NARIC – tel. 0870 990 4088 or email: info@naric.org.uk If your qualifications are assessed as below first degree standard, you may need extra study to obtain a first degree before you can start a course leading to QTS. You will need to complete the extra study to reach first degree standard and also obtain QTS within four years of the first day you taught in a relevant school. Extra time is not permitted to top up qualifications to degree standard; and
- (ii) arrange to take part in an employment based training course leading to QTS at or near the beginning of your four year period.

Although it is your responsibility to arrange training, it is hoped that you will receive the necessary co-operation and support of your school during the training process.

Where can I obtain more advice and information on training courses?

You can obtain further information on training programmes for OTTs by contacting the Training and Development Agency for Schools' Overseas Trained Teacher helpline on 0845 6000 998 or from their website at:

<http://www.tda.gov.uk/Recruit/thetrainingprocess/typesofcourse/ottp.aspx>

What happens if I have not obtained QTS after four years?

It is unlawful to continue working in a relevant school although extra time is available if you have taken maternity, paternity, parental or adoption leave allowed under employment law (see the section 'Can I have extra time to obtain QTS'). It may be possible for you to be employed as an instructor but only for the time there is no qualified or trainee teacher available to fill the post. Otherwise, you should stop teaching and if you want to teach again study for QTS via a non employment based route such as the Postgraduate Certificate in Education. The Border and Immigration Agency does not normally renew work permits if you have not obtained QTS within four years. Work permits are only issued for instructor posts if that position has been advertised separately for teachers and instructors and no resident labour is available to fill it.

Can I have extra time to obtain QTS?

Extra time is available if you have been absent from teaching during your four years because you have taken statutory maternity (or maternity leave allowed under your contract

of employment), paternity, adoption or parental leave. In such cases, your four year period may be extended by the amount of statutory leave entitlement that you have taken during your four year period.

Until 31 August 2008 only, the law also allows you to continue teaching after four years if you were undertaking an employment based training programme, such as the Overseas Trained Teacher Programme or the Graduate Teacher Programme, leading to QTS when your four year period expired. However, from 1 September 2008, it will no longer be possible to have extra time to complete your training unless you qualify for extra time as detailed in the previous paragraph.

Do these rules apply to me if I was born in the UK or I do not need a work permit?

The rules apply if you qualified as a teacher in a country outside the EEA or Switzerland regardless of where you were born or your terms of entry to the UK.

Can I appeal against these rules?

The rules on OTTs have been approved by Parliament with no provision for discretion or exemptions under any circumstances.

Where can I obtain more information on the rules?

You can find more detailed help and guidance through the link on the Department for Children, Schools and Families website [teachernet](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/overseastrainedteachers/) page at:

<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/overseastrainedteachers/>

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