

Guidance

Recruit teachers from overseas

How schools can hire teachers who are not UK or Irish nationals.

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Applies to England

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The points-based immigration system

The UK introduced a [points-based immigration system](#) on 1 January 2021. This affects how you employ teachers who are not UK or Irish nationals. All overseas nationals arriving in the UK from 1 January 2021, including those from the [European Economic Area \(EEA\)](#) and Switzerland, come under the points-based immigration system.

Irish citizens can continue to enter, work and study in the UK under the Common Travel Area as they could previously.

Recruit by becoming a visa sponsor

Skilled Worker visa

Overseas teachers can apply for a [Skilled Worker visa](#) up to 3 months before they start work in the UK under the following conditions:

- you, as the employer, are a licensed Home Office employer sponsor and have offered the overseas teacher a teaching job
- the overseas teacher can speak, read, write and understand English
- the role pays at least £20,480 or the relevant minimum rate for teachers in England, whichever is higher (minimum rates for teachers are in the [School teachers' pay and conditions document 2021 and guidance on school teachers' pay and conditions](#)) - if the role is part-time, pro-rata rates will apply as long as the salary is at least £20,480 a year

Become a licensed sponsor

You need a sponsor licence to hire a teacher from overseas on a Skilled Worker visa.

You can be the employing local authority, multi-academy trust or school to hold the sponsor licence.

You can [check if you are already a licensed sponsor](#). You can become a licensed sponsor [by following this step-by-step guidance](#). This guidance covers further information about being a sponsor, including your responsibilities.

Recruit without becoming a sponsor

Graduate visa

The [Graduate visa](#) is available to international students who have

successfully completed their degree in the UK and been sponsored by a Home Office licensed student sponsor. This includes certain postgraduate courses such as initial teacher training at universities.

Those on a Graduate visa will be able to work or look for work in the UK at any skill level without a sponsor for up to 2 years after completing their studies (3 years for PhD students). This includes working as a teacher.

Teachers on a Graduate visa will be able to apply to switch to another visa route such as the Skilled Worker visa without having to leave the UK if they meet the requirements for the other visa route.

Youth Mobility Scheme visa

A [Youth Mobility Scheme visa](#) lasts for up to 2 years and is for young people aged 18 to 30 who have certain types of British nationality or are from certain countries. Teachers can work on this visa without a sponsoring employer.

Teachers on a Youth Mobility Scheme visa may be able to apply to switch to another visa route (such as the Skilled Worker visa) without leaving the UK. They'll need to meet the requirements for the other visa route.

Other visas

Teachers on other types of visas may also be permitted to work in the UK. You can find out more about [Family visas](#), the [UK Ancestry visa](#) and the [British National \(Overseas\) visa](#).

You can also find out more about the various documents that can be accepted when [checking a job applicant's right to work](#).

EU Settlement Scheme

Citizens of the EEA or Switzerland might be able to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme to continue living, working and studying in the UK without applying for a visa.

The deadline for most people to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme was 30 June 2021.

Citizens of the EEA or Switzerland, and their family members, can still apply if they or a family member were living in the UK by 31 December 2020.

They must also either:

- meet one of the criteria for a later deadline to apply

- have 'reasonable grounds' for not applying by 30 June 2021

More information is available about the eligibility criteria for [later applications to the EU Settlement Scheme](#).

Applications to the EU Settlement Scheme can also be made by those who [already have pre-settled status and are applying for settled status](#).

Those who have pre-settled status must apply to the EU Settlement Scheme again before their pre-settled status expires to stay in the UK.

International travel during coronavirus (COVID-19)

Global travel, including to the UK, is affected by coronavirus (COVID-19). Non-UK nationals should check their country's advice as well as the UK's advice to [find out what they must do before they travel to England and after they arrive](#), including what COVID-19 tests they need to take and the quarantine rules for travel to England.

The UK government has also published guidance about [what to do if you need a visa to travel to the UK](#) and further information is available for those affected by [changes to UK immigration and borders due to COVID-19](#).

Teaching vacancies

Schools can also advertise teaching roles free on DfE's [Teaching Vacancies](#) service.

Getting qualified teacher status (QTS)

There are different arrangements for overseas teachers who want to get QTS.

If the teacher has a degree but has limited teaching experience, they can [train to teach on a course that will give them QTS](#). There is also [guidance on becoming a qualified teacher if they're not a graduate](#).

If they have a degree and more than 2 years teaching experience, they can achieve QTS by completing the [assessment only route](#) without doing more training.

If they are a qualified teacher from the following places, they can [get QTS without having to do teacher training or assessment only](#):

- Australia
- Canada

- the EU
- Gibraltar
- Iceland
- Liechtenstein
- New Zealand
- Northern Ireland
- Norway
- Scotland
- Switzerland
- USA
- Wales

There is [more information about QTS](#) and about [routes to QTS for teachers and those with teaching experience outside the UK](#). There is also information on [how overseas teachers can come to England to teach](#).

Employing overseas teachers without QTS (the 4-year rule)

Overseas teachers can teach in maintained schools and non-maintained special schools in England without qualified teacher status (QTS) for up to 4 years. This is called the 4-year rule.

It is illegal for overseas teachers to continue working as a teacher in a maintained school or non-maintained special school in England for longer than 4 years without QTS unless there is another legal basis to teach.

The 4-year rule applies to overseas teachers who meet all of the following conditions:

- they have qualified as a teacher in a country outside of the UK
- they have completed a course of teacher training that is recognised by the competent authority of that country
- they are employed in maintained schools and non-maintained special schools, but not a pupil referral unit

What you need to do

If you are employing an overseas teacher, you should tell them:

- about the 4-year rule when you employ them
- that they need QTS (or another legal basis) to teach longer than 4 years in some types of school

There is guidance for overseas teachers who want to get QTS at [qualified teacher status \(QTS\)](#).

When overseas teachers can teach for longer than 4 years without QTS

Statutory leave

Overseas teachers can teach longer than 4 years without QTS if, during that time, they have taken one of the following forms of leave:

- maternity leave
- paternity leave
- adoption leave
- parental leave
- shared parental leave
- time off because of pregnancy

If they have taken statutory leave, then overseas teachers can teach for longer than 4 years for an equivalent period of the statutory leave that they have taken.

Example

If they took 34 weeks of statutory maternity leave during their 4-year period, they can then teach 34 weeks longer than 4 years before having to get QTS or teaching under another legal basis.

Instructors

Overseas teachers can teach longer than 4 years if they are employed as an instructor. Instructors can teach subjects, including vocational training, that require special qualifications or experience (or both).

There is no definition of special qualifications and experience. These are matters that the local authority or governing body need to be satisfied with. An overseas teacher can only be employed as an instructor if they have the special qualifications or experience needed for the instructor post.

Overseas teachers can also work as teaching assistants (without QTS) for any period of time.

Safeguarding checks for teachers from overseas

Candidates from overseas must undergo the same checks as all other staff in schools, including obtaining an enhanced DBS certificate with barred list information. This still applies even if the candidate has never been to the UK.

When recruiting, you must:

- follow part 3 of [Keeping children safe in education \(KCSIE\) statutory guidance](#), which sets out the safer recruitment checks schools must conduct.
- make any further checks they think appropriate so that relevant events that occurred outside of the UK can be considered - the Home Office provides guidance on [criminal records checks for overseas applicants](#).
- carry out additional checks for teaching roles, which may include information about their past conduct, for example, by checking documents issued by overseas teaching authorities - you should also consider this evidence together with other information which you have obtained through other safer employment checks.

Get help with the acclimatisation support service pilot

DfE is trialling a new, funded acclimatisation service to give international teachers the knowledge and skills they need to flourish in English classrooms.

The acclimatisation support service will offer:

- pre-arrival support and pre-arrival webinars for overseas teachers
- a 3-day acclimatisation event held in August 2022 covering:
 - behaviour management
 - lesson planning
 - professional standards
 - subject specific content
- a training and networking event in October 2022
- on-going support during the first term

Schools can sign up to participate in this pilot if:

- they are a state-funded secondary school or academy
- they are employing, or plan to employ, international teachers to begin teaching from September 2022 in the following subjects:

- mathematics
- physics
- chemistry
- biology
- computing
- geography
- design and technology
- modern foreign languages (MFL)

We recommend you nominate an in-school mentor for your international teachers when they participate in the acclimatisation support service pilot. Mentors will get training on how best to support newly recruited international teachers.

Apply

To participate in the pilot, email us at international.teacherrecruitment@education.gov.uk. Please note that we'll be seeking your feedback to improve the service for future users. This will be made up of a survey and interview taking place in autumn 2022.

Our [privacy policy](#) gives information about how your data will be processed and used.

Helping teachers settle in to school

You may find the following checklist helpful when putting support in place for international teachers. Before term starts:

- help the teacher secure local accommodation
- allocate a mentor to support with lesson planning, behaviour management strategies or peer observations
- put together a detailed induction pack including:
 - details of key staff, timetable and tutor group (if applicable)
 - behaviour management strategies for the classroom, the school's behaviour policy - rewards and sanctions, what support is available and when it should be sought
 - tour of the school
 - health and safety
 - safeguarding policy
 - use of computers and software (for example, General Data Protection Regulation, acceptable use policy, whiteboard training, staff email)
 - management information system training (for example, SIMS) to

include taking registers, behaviour and rewards, student progress data

- school day and calendar (for example, lesson times, hours, staff meetings and briefings, term dates, inset days, parents' evenings)
- key school policies to include behaviour, sanctions and rewards, assessment, teaching and learning, special educational needs and disabilities
- reception and visitors to school protocols
- shared resources (for example, teaching resources, exam board specifications, schemes of work and lesson plans, equipment, stationery)
- CPD and staff training
- protocols for absence and illness reporting
- professional expectations (for example, dress code)
- performance management and probationary procedures

International teachers may find the following websites about English education helpful:

- [types of English schools](#)
- [curriculum and qualifications](#)
- [behaviour and discipline in schools](#)
- [Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills](#) (Ofsted)
- the [Education Endowment Foundation](#) – a charity gathering international evidence on teaching 5- to 16-year-olds
- [Times Educational Supplement](#) (TES) – information and resources for teachers
- [Oak National Academy](#) - video lessons and accompanying resources in a broad range of subjects for reception (age 4) up to Year 11 (age 16), including specialist content for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

Contact

Email international.teacherrecruitment@education.gov.uk. We aim to respond within 5 working days.

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