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Guidance

Recruit trainee teachers from overseas: accredited ITT providers

How accredited initial teacher training (ITT) providers can recruit trainees who are not UK or Irish nationals.

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Applies to England

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The points-based immigration system

All overseas nationals arriving to work or study in the UK from 1 January 2021, including those from the [European Economic Area \(EEA\)](#) and Switzerland, come under the UK's [points-based immigration system](#).

The type of visa trainee teachers from overseas need to apply for may depend on whether their teacher training course is salaried or unsalaried.

Unsalaries includes:

- higher education institution programmes
- school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) programmes
- School Direct fee-funded programme

Salaried includes:

- School Direct salaried programme
- Teach First Leadership Development programme
- postgraduate teaching apprenticeships

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

Related content

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Recruit by becoming a visa sponsor

Student visa - for unsalaried teacher training courses

Teacher training candidates can apply for a [Student visa](#) to train to teach in England if they are undertaking an unsalaried initial teacher training (ITT) course and:

- they have an unconditional offer from a licensed sponsoring institution
- they can financially support themselves in the UK and pay for their course
- they can speak, read, write and understand English

Trainee teachers undertaking an unsalaried ITT course can apply:

- up to 6 months before their course starts if they're applying from outside the UK
 - up to 3 months before it starts if they're applying from inside the UK
-

Sponsoring Student visas

To sponsor a Student visa your institution must be a licensed sponsor.

State-funded schools cannot sponsor Student visas.

You can [check if your institution is already a licensed sponsor](#).

If you are not already a Student visa sponsor, you can [apply for a student sponsor licence](#). This guidance has further information about being a sponsor, including your responsibilities.

Skilled Worker visa - for salaried teacher training courses

Teacher training candidates can apply for a [Skilled Worker visa](#) to train to teach in England if they are undertaking a salaried ITT course and:

- they are offered a salaried training place by a school that is a licensed Home Office employer sponsor
- they can speak, read, write and understand English
- their role pays at least £20,480 or the relevant minimum rate for unqualified 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 they work part time, pro-rata rates can be used as long as they earn at least £20,480 a year

Trainee teachers undertaking a salaried ITT course can apply for a [Skilled Worker visa](#) up to 3 months before they are due to start work in the UK.

Sponsoring Skilled Worker visas

State-funded schools can sponsor Skilled Worker visas.

Schools can [check if they're already a licensed sponsor](#).

Sometimes it will be the [local authority or academy trust](#) that holds the sponsor licence instead of the individual school.

Schools can become a 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

Some visa routes in the points-based immigration system do not require you to sponsor the trainee.

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.

Those on a Graduate visa will be able to study, work or look for work in the UK for up to 2 years after completing their studies (3 years for PhD students) without a sponsor. This includes training as a teacher via either a salaried or unsalaried ITT course, if the course does not meet the requirements for a student visa.

Teachers or trainee 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.

High Potential Individual visa

To be eligible for a [High Potential Individual visa](#), trainees must have:

- a Bachelor's degree, Master's degree or PhD from a university listed in the [Global Universities list](#)
- been awarded their qualification no more than 5 years before they apply
- English language skills to [B1 intermediate level](#)
- personal funds of £1,270
- passed a security and criminality check

Trainees do not need an offer of a place on a teacher training course to apply for this visa. They will be able to stay in the UK for 2 years with a Bachelor's or Master's degree, and 3 years with a PhD.

If their visa application is successful, they will be able to train as a teacher on either a salaried or fee-paying ITT course, as long as the course does not meet the requirements for a student visa. If the course can sponsor a student visa, they must apply for this type of visa.

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. Young people can study or work while on this visa without a sponsoring educational institution or sponsoring employer. This includes training as a teacher via either a salaried or unsalaried ITT course.

Teachers or trainee teachers on a Youth Mobility Scheme visa may be able to apply to switch to another visa route without leaving the UK. They'll need to meet the requirements for the other visa route.

Other visas

Trainee teachers from overseas may be able to work or study in the UK on another type of visa.

Guidance is available about [Family visas](#), the [UK Ancestry visa](#) and the [British National \(Overseas\) visa](#).

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](#). To stay in the UK, those with pre-settled status must apply to the EU Settlement Scheme again before their pre-settled status expires.

Entry criteria for ITT

[More information about ITT entry criteria](#) is available.

Support for candidates

DfE offers [support to international candidates on the Get into Teaching website](#) and guidance on [training to teach in England if you're a non-UK citizen](#).

Our guidance tells candidates that if their qualifications come from a non-UK institution, their chosen training provider may want to see a '[statement of comparability](#)' from [UK ENIC](#) showing their equivalence to UK qualifications.

Candidates are invited to call Get into Teaching on 0800 389 2500 for:

- guidance on the UK equivalents of their qualifications
- a free statement of comparability once they've submitted their application if their provider asks for this

International candidates can also register with Get into Teaching's [Get an adviser service](#) for personalised advice about teaching in England over email and phone, or use the online chat service on the website.

The final decision on eligibility still lies with the accredited ITT provider before an applicant enters teacher training.

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