

Teaching – Frequently Asked Questions

Teaching and Related Professions Task Group, January 2015

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A. Entry to teaching – general

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A1. Is it possible to go into teaching if your degree isn't in a national curriculum subject?

You are expected to have a good knowledge of your subject, normally to degree level; many teacher training providers expect at least half your degree to be in your chosen school subject, however some (specifically Teach First, and some School Direct providers) will also look at your A level subjects, particularly if you wish to teach a shortage subject (for example someone with an economics degree and A*/A/B grade maths A levels wanting to teach maths).

For primary teaching, you normally teach across the whole national curriculum; you should show a good understanding of national curriculum subjects, even if you may not have studied some of them beyond GCSE, and even if your degree is not in a national curriculum subject. Increasingly, primary teachers will have subject specialisms such as science or languages.

For secondary teaching, you may still be able to teach even if your degree is not in a national curriculum subject; it helps if you can show that your degree included a lot of content which does relate to a national curriculum subject (e.g. statistics for a prospective maths teacher). It may also be possible to study additional modules in a national curriculum subject (e.g. if your course offers 'free elective' modules, or by taking Open University modules); and there are Subject Knowledge Enhancement courses to bring your knowledge up to the required level in certain subjects (currently Maths, Physics, Chemistry, Modern Foreign Languages, Computing, Design & Technology, see <http://www.education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching/subjects-age-groups/age-groups/teaching-secondary/boost-subject-knowledge>). It is advisable to contact admissions tutors at the teacher training institutions you are thinking of applying to, in order to find out how they would consider your particular qualifications.

Note that ultimately your teaching qualification is not subject-specific so once established in a teaching job it may be possible to teach a range of subjects that relate to your experience and interests.

For more information see: <http://www.education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching/subjects-age-groups/>

A2. How much classroom experience is needed to get into teacher training? How do you find it?

All applicants for teacher training are advised to have recent classroom experience prior to applying (or failing this, to have arranged to get experience in the near future). The exact amount required varies from institution to institution (some specify a minimum number of hours required; others are less specific); and from subject to subject (you will generally need more in a competitive area like English or primary, than in a 'shortage' area like Maths); check the websites of individual institutions.

There are various ways of finding work experience, from making direct contact with individual schools, to participating in university outreach activities involving local schools, to the government's School Experience Programme (secondary): <http://www.education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching/school-experience.aspx> . For contact details of schools in any area, see the Edubase website: <http://www.education.gov.uk/edubase>

A3. Can you train as a teacher if you have a Foundation degree?

To train as a teacher you need a degree, 2.2 or above although some institutions ask for a 2.1 or above. If it is as a secondary teacher it would usually be teaching your degree subject.

You also need a GCSE grade C or equivalent in maths and English – and science for primary teaching, some areas and providers ask for B's.

Your main options would be:

- Top up your foundation degree to an honours degree, followed by a teacher training programme such as PGCE or School Direct (check that your foundation degree and top-up modules have sufficient national curriculum content to be accepted onto a PGCE). Top-up courses usually last one-year full-time, find them using the course search at <http://search.ucas.com/>;
- It may be possible to take a two-year degree course with qualified teacher status (QTS) (these are mainly in shortage subjects and can be found by searching for 'QTS' on the UCAS course search at <http://search.ucas.com/>).

A4. What are the shortage subjects for teaching?

The Department for Education offers enhanced bursaries to trainees in the following priority subjects in England: Maths, Physics, Chemistry, Computing, Languages. Other subjects also attract an enhanced bursary, though at a lower level: Biology, Geography, Primary Maths and Design and Technology. Subject Knowledge Enhancement (SKE) courses are available to attract applicants from a wider range of first degree subjects into Maths, Physics, Chemistry, Languages, Computing and Design and Technology, see <http://www.education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching/subjects-age-groups/age-groups/teaching-secondary/boost-subject-knowledge.aspx>

In Wales, the priority subjects are maths, physics, chemistry, languages, computing and Welsh, see <http://teachertrainingcymru.org/home>.

The list for Scotland is English, Gaelic (or any subject taught through the medium of Gaelic), Physics, Home Economics, Mathematics, Modern Languages (French, German, Italian, Spanish, Chinese), Physical Education, Primary Education, Technological Education, see (<http://www.teachinginscotland.com/704.455.497.html>).

No specific shortages are reported for Northern Ireland.

A5. How do you train to teach in Further Education or Sixth Form Colleges?

Post compulsory teaching qualifications are available at various levels including Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) and Associate Teacher Learning and Skills (ATLS). Anyone with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) for teaching in schools is recognised as qualified to teach in further education. They need to undertake [Professional Formation](#) leading to Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS). The government allows those with QTLS to be appointed to teaching jobs in schools (in England only).

There are a number of PGCE courses both full and part time for teaching in post-compulsory education. PGCE applicants need a degree with many institutions preferring at least a 2:1. Students may also study for a Certificate of Education.

To gain Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) status, students need to register with the Education and Training Foundation (ETF), pay a fee and put together a portfolio of evidence.

Individual FE institutions are able to decide which qualifications they require, so it can be possible to teach some subjects in Further Education or Sixth form without a teaching qualification. However your prospects will be much better if you have a teaching qualification or are willing to get one. Some will train you in-service and others look for qualifications before the teaching role begins.

For more information see [FE Advice](#), [ETF](#) and [Prospects-Further education lecturer](#)

The [Talent](#) database includes most post-16 teacher training courses. Entrants wishing to teach Skills for Life (Literacy, Numeracy, and English for Speakers of Other Languages) need additional qualifications, which can also be found on this database

A6. How do you train to become an Early Years teacher?

Early years teachers are trained to teach across the Early Years Foundation Stage (from birth to 5 years old) and may be employed in a wide variety of early years settings. Initial teacher training programmes lead to the award of Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS), which is deemed to be equivalent to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). Entry requirements for early years teacher training are the same as for primary teacher training: GCSE grade C (or equivalent) in English, maths and a science subject; a degree; successful completion of the professional skills tests.

Early Years Initial Teacher Training (EYITT) programmes are available to graduates in two forms:

Mainstream Graduate Entry - a 12 month full time programme including substantial placement experience, for graduates with little or no experience of working with children aged 0 to 5 years. For graduates beginning their training in 2015, a grant of £7000 for course fees is available to all trainees, whilst trainees with a First Class or 2:1 degree will receive bursaries of £9000 and £4000 respectively. Training may be led by a Higher Education Institution or by a school or nursery in partnership with an accredited training provider. The [Department for Education](#) has a list of accredited providers. Applications are made directly to the training provider for both HEI-led and school-led routes.

Employment Based Graduate Entry - a part time programme of up to 12 months for graduates employed within an early years setting. Tuition fees are funded by the NCTL. If you wish to follow the employment-based route, you'll need to speak to your employer in the early years setting and get their agreement.

For further information, see [Get into Teaching](#).

B. School Direct and PGCE courses

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B1. Is it possible to get on a teacher training course without the required GCSEs?

“If you don't have the necessary GCSEs in maths, English or science, you may be able to take a pre-entry test set by your teacher training provider. Some providers may also accept skills developed through other work experience. If in doubt, contact the school or the university that you would like to train with to find out what their requirements are.”

<http://www.education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching/apply-for-teacher-training/basic-requirements>

B2. Is it possible to get on a teacher training course with a 3rd class degree?

While it is theoretically possible to get onto a teacher training course with a third class degree, only third class degree holders in Maths and Physics, with a B or A or A* grade in maths or physics (or equivalent), will be eligible to receive a training bursary from the Department for Education. In all other subjects only those with a 2:2 or better will qualify for available bursaries. Many providers will not consider applicants without at least a 2:2, and those applying for competitive areas, such as primary, history or PE, are unlikely to be accepted. Other providers look at what skills and school experience the applicant brings, and may give credit for studying additional (e.g. Open University) modules, or undertaking postgraduate study. So for the right person with really good school experience, it may be possible to get onto a PGCE, though you would be likely to have to support yourself. Researching and contacting the institutions before applying is essential.

B3. Some PGCEs are at Masters level, others are not – will this affect my job prospects?

UCAS explain the difference between the two levels of PGCE course:

“[In addition to QTS] many training programmes also award you the Professional Graduate Certificate in Education, the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) or the Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE). These are academic qualifications focusing on developing teaching skills. You still get QTS, but you'd get a PGCE as well. The Professional Graduate Certificate in Education is at the same level academically as the final year of an honours degree course. The Postgraduate Certificate in Education and the Professional Graduate Diploma in Education contain some credits at master's degree level. The number of credits at this level varies a lot from one training programme to another. Some providers give you the chance to study for the credits you'd need for a full master's degree after you've completed your training.”

The UCAS Course Search allows you to specify professional (not Masters level) or postgraduate (Masters level) PGCEs (or either) – select these in the “outcomes” drop-down box.

QTS is required to teach in state schools in England. However, if you want to teach internationally, or in other UK regions (particularly Scotland) you are likely to need an academic qualification such as a PGCE alongside this. The requirement for masters-level credits varies between countries.

B4. How are PGCE and School Direct courses financed?

As the situation tends to change from year to year, the best way to answer this is by referral to the official websites.

For England: <http://www.education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching/funding>

For Wales: <http://teachertrainingcymru.org/node/16>

For Scotland: <http://www.teachinginscotland.com/642.455.497.html>

For Northern Ireland: <http://www.studentfinanceni.co.uk/>

B5. What are the key differences between School Direct and PGCE?

To answer this question consider:

Base for training: School-led or University-led training is one of the first differences for applicants to consider, School Direct training places are based within a group of schools with experience offered within these schools for a University-led PGCE placements could be across a wider region.

Qualification offered: Successful completion of School Direct will guarantee Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) but may offer also an option to achieve a PGCE. Applicants should search on [UCAS](#) for details of individual programmes. Some University led PGCE programmes offer the option to undertake Masters credits during the course.

Entry requirements: School Direct (Salaried) requires 3 years' experience whereas School Direct (fee paying) and University led PGCE programmes are both open to all graduates.

Application process: All applications for full-time programmes are through UCAS. Approaches to the UCAS supporting statement should take into account the lead i.e. School or University for the training route chosen; schools may be more concerned about readiness for classroom teaching than universities.

<http://targetpostgrad.com/study-areas/teaching/overview-of-your-postgraduate-teacher-training-options>
<http://www.education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching/teacher-training-options>

B6. What is a SCITT?

A SCITT is a group of schools working in conjunction with a local teacher training provider, such as a university, which offer teacher training courses. They are only available in England. The courses are usually full-time and last one year. The course is a mix of academic and practical, school based elements, but there is a much higher percentage of the course spent on the school-based part. The successful completion of the course leads to QTS, and some SCITT programmes also lead to a PGCE. Applications are made through UCAS Teacher Training.

C. Alternative entry routes

- C1. Where can I find out about Teach First?
- C2. Can I train to teach in an independent school?
- C3. I've been teaching in an independent school – how can I get QTS?
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- C5. I've heard that there's a new route into teaching for Armed Services leavers?
- C6. I've heard there's a new route into teaching for researchers?

C1. Where can I find out about Teach First?

Teach First offers a route to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) including a PGCE through its two-year Leadership Development Programme, which places well-qualified graduates into teaching roles in schools facing challenging circumstances; it operates in many regions across England and Wales. See their graduate website for details: <http://graduates.teachfirst.org.uk/>

C2. Can I train to teach in an independent school?

It is possible to gain employment in an independent school without qualified teacher status (QTS). Many schools offer training while in post, often leading to the award of QTS and possibly a PGCE too via an [assessment only route](#).

A new teacher training route for the independent school sector started in 2015. [HMC Teacher Training](#) offers a two-year salaried training programme based in an independent school and leads to both QTS and PGCE.

C3. I've been teaching in an independent school – how can I get QTS?

It is possible to work as a teacher in an independent school (or in a Free School) and then to gain Qualified Teacher Status based on your experience. This may be through Assessment-based training, requiring a minimal period of training and a portfolio of evidence, or Assessment Only for very experienced teachers already meeting all the standards. These options are available in England only.

For further information see:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching/teacher-training-options/assessment-only.aspx>

C4. Is there any help for someone wanting to return to teaching after a career break?

The Department for Education has announced that a new package of support for returning teachers will be launched in 2015. This will include Subject Knowledge Enhancement courses for returning teachers who already have QTS. There is no age limit for returning teachers, and headteachers often appreciate the additional life experience that they bring to the classroom. For the latest on this see:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching/returning-to-teaching/>

If you are returning to teaching in Scotland, you may need to re-register with the General Teaching Council for Scotland. Some local authorities in Scotland may ask you to complete a return to teaching refresher course. See <http://www.gtcs.org.uk/registration/returning-to-teaching.aspx>

If you are returning to teaching in Wales, after an absence from teaching in the UK or EEA of five years or more then you will need to complete a minimum of ten days updating through the Return to Teaching Programme, see <http://www.gtcw.org.uk/> (look in Qualifications and Registration).

C5. I've heard that there's a new route into teaching for Armed Services leavers?

The government-run Troops to Teachers programme provides opportunities for both non-graduate and graduate Armed Service leavers to enter teaching, within 2 years of the end of their military service. See <http://www.education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching/troops-to-teachers/>

C6. I've heard there's a new route into teaching for researchers?

All of the other routes into teaching are also open to academic researchers. A new programme **Researchers in Schools**, exclusively for those who have completed a doctorate, began in 2014. It aims to attract researchers into the classroom, whilst still keeping in touch with their research interests. Researchers in Schools is a two-year salaried programme with the option of a third year on the Subject Leader Programme. It is open to anyone who has already completed their PhD, or will have done so prior to the start of the programme. Placements are available across most of England. See <http://www.researchersinschools.org/>

D. Teaching jobs / Early careers

D1. Can supply teaching count towards induction?

D2. Is it possible to teach in primary schools if you have trained in secondary (and vice versa?)

D3. Do you need to be a member of a faith to teach in a faith school?

D4. Do you need to speak Welsh to teach in Wales?

D1. Can supply teaching count towards induction?

Qualified teachers who are employed in maintained schools, non-maintained special schools, maintained nursery schools and pupil referral units in England must, by law, complete an induction period after gaining

qualified teacher status (QTS). Periods of long-term supply teaching can count towards the three-term induction period provided that it is clear from the start that it will last for at least one term, and that the headteacher agrees.

A NQT can undertake short-term supply work (less than one term) but cannot count this towards induction. From September 2012 for an NQT who gained QTS on or after 1 September 2007, there is a limit of five years (from the point of award of QTS) during which NQTs can undertake short-term supply work. There is no time limit on starting or completing an induction period.

For more information on induction, see:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/deployingstaff/newstaff/b0066959/induction-newly-qualified-teachers>

<http://www.education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching/about-teaching/induction-year>

D2. Is it possible to teach in primary schools if you have trained in secondary (and vice versa?)

Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) is required to teach in any maintained school (or non-maintained special school) in England; but in theory it is possible with QTS to teach any age range (5-16) and subject. In practice, it is for each school to decide whether an individual has sufficient subject knowledge or experience of the age group to be appointed to any specific position. It may be more feasible in areas with recruitment difficulties and/or in shortage subjects, and undertaking additional subject study may improve the chances.

Teachers with QTS are also allowed to teach in the post-compulsory sector (further education and sixth form colleges etc.).

D3. Do you need to be a member of a faith to teach in a faith school?

Most teachers in faith schools are members of that faith, but the proportion varies from school to school and anecdotal evidence suggests that school governing bodies differ in their recruitment policies. For example, about 70% of teachers in Catholic schools in England and Wales are Catholic. All faith schools will expect their teachers, regardless of whether they have no religious faith or a different faith, to support the religious ethos of the school (as indeed any teacher would be expected to support their school's ethos).

Voluntary Aided schools (VA) may fill all of their teaching staff places from staff that are of their particular faith and may apply a faith test for appointment of support staff if there is a genuine occupational requirement. Voluntary Controlled (VC) and Foundation faith schools are required to reserve up to a fifth of their teaching posts as religious posts, where those teachers are specifically appointed to teach religious education. These schools may not discriminate in relation to support staff or teachers who are not reserved.

The picture may be different when applying for leadership positions – in Catholic schools for example, each appointment has to be approved by the diocese, who in the past, with a few exceptions, have expected heads, deputies and heads of RE to be practising Catholics.

With the expansion of Academy schools and the advent of Free Schools, the number of faith schools is has increased, and their autonomy in appointing staff is greater.

In Northern Ireland, teachers can only be appointed to a Catholic maintained nursery or primary school if they hold a recognised Certificate in Religious Education; and for all Catholic maintained schools, all applicants must be committed to the religious and pastoral development of a Catholic school., . For more information see the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) website (<http://www.onlineccms.com>)

In Scotland, the relevant legislation on denominational schools states that: *"A teacher appointed to any post on the staff of any such school ... shall be required to be approved as regards religious belief and character by representatives of the church or denominational body in whose interest the school has been conducted"*.

In addition, to teach RE in a Catholic school in Scotland, you are required to take an extra Certificate in Religious Education by Distance Learning.. You can sit this externally through Glasgow University:
<http://www.gla.ac.uk/postgraduate/taught/religiouseducationbydistancelearning/>

D4. Do you need to speak Welsh to teach in Wales?

Welsh is a core curriculum subject in Wales, and it is compulsory for all pupils up to the age of 16. However, the ability to speak Welsh is not a requirement for anyone entering teacher training in Wales (unless they wish to undertake a Welsh medium teacher training course). All students who undertake their teacher training in Wales will be given Welsh language training as part of their course.

Should you wish to teach in a primary or secondary school in Wales, you will be required to understand and use basic, incidental Welsh in and around the classroom; for example greetings, days of the week, simple commands etc. In primary you will also teach basic Welsh as part of the Foundation Phase and KS2 curriculums. For teachers who completed their training outside of Wales there are a wealth of Welsh courses available, including short sabbatical courses which are written specifically for schools to send their staff on.

E. International and UK cross-border issues

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E1. Can an international student apply for UK teacher training programmes?

You can apply to do a PGCE course if you are an international student with a degree from a UK higher education institution, or with a recognised equivalent qualification).

You must have a very good standard of written and spoken English, and you must have the qualifications (or equivalent qualifications) that an ITT provider asks of all its applicants.

You should be aware that a teaching qualification gained in the UK may not qualify you to teach in your home country. If you are thinking of training in the UK and then teaching in your home country, check first in your own country to see whether UK qualifications are acceptable.

You will only be eligible for the government-funded bursaries to train as a teacher if you have been in the UK for three years or more and have a residency visa. See the Department for Education website for further information: <http://www.education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching/funding/training-in-england/postgraduate-funding.aspx>

Once you have completed your teacher training, you may need a work permit if you wish to teach in the UK. This could be challenging, especially if you have trained to teach at primary level. See the UK Border Agency (UKBA) website for more information: <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas-immigration/working/>

E2. Can you teach in Europe if you have a UK teaching qualification?

The answer to this will vary with the country where you want to teach and the type of school (private or public). Assuming you want to teach the subject/age range relevant to your training in a school in Europe, the following information may help:

The teaching profession is covered by the general system for the recognition of professional qualifications across European Economic Area (EEA) member states. Although covered by the general system, teaching qualifications are not automatically recognised by EEA states, so you have to apply for recognition in the country where you want to teach. See

http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/qualifications/contact/national_contact_points_en.htm to find links to information relevant for your chosen country

Getting recognition does not mean you will find it easy to get a job, as competition may be high. You will find most jobs require at least one year's experience. Language fluency will be expected in most countries, except in English medium schools. For further information on these schools see <http://www.cois.org> and <http://www.cobis.org.uk>. You can search for job vacancies in Europe at: <http://ec.europa.eu/eures> and <http://www.tes.co.uk/jobs/>.

E3. Are UK teaching qualifications valid abroad?

A PGCE and the achievement of qualified teacher status do not necessarily qualify you to teach in another country. All countries have their own rules and regulations as to who can and who cannot be accepted as a qualified teacher. Most, but not all, overseas schools will require applicants for teaching posts to have a recognised degree and in practice, most jobs would require you to be a fully qualified teacher with experience.

In Europe the teaching profession is covered by the general system for the recognition of professional qualifications across EEA member states. Although covered by the general system, teaching qualifications are not automatically recognised by EEA states, so you have to apply for recognition in the country where you want to teach.

For non-European countries you will need to contact the teaching professional body for the countries you are interested in to find out specific requirements. Also, be aware that in some countries, e.g. Canada and the USA, different regions or states have different policies so you will need to contact local education departments for information. In some cases, PGCEs are recognised but non-PGCE routes to qualified teacher status are not. You will need a working visa or permit for certain countries.

Some starting points:

Europe: http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/qualifications/contact/national_contact_points_en.htm

USA: <https://2b.education.uky.edu/certification-requirements-by-state/>

Canada: <http://resource.educationcanada.com/certification.html>

Australia: <http://resource.australiateachers.com/certification.html>

E4. If you have qualified in one country in the UK, can you teach in the other UK countries?

Generally speaking, yes. There is mutual recognition of QTS between England and Wales, and teachers trained in Scotland and Northern Ireland are generally eligible to teach in England and Wales.

In Scotland, the General Teaching Council for Scotland require a reference and documentation (and fee) to support an application for registration from teachers who qualified outside Scotland:

<http://www.gtcs.org.uk/registration/qualified-outside-of-scotland/qualified-outside-of-scotland.aspx>

For Northern Ireland, teachers who trained elsewhere in the UK are required to register with the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland: <http://www.gtcni.org.uk>.