There is a diverse range of routes into teaching and a multiplicity of providers of initial teacher education.

Teachers in primary and secondary schools must generally have Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and programmes leading to the award of QTS are the main focus of this article. This article also provides brief information on non-QTS routes to leading practice / teaching in early childhood education and care: Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS) and Early Childhood Educator.

QTS is a professional accreditation. Regardless of the route they follow to QTS, all teachers must meet the Teachers’ Standards on which it is based. These are set by the Secretary of State [1] for Education in the Department for Education and define the minimum level of practice expected. QTS is mandatory for appointment as a qualified teacher in a maintained school [2] and, although not mandatory for appointment in an academy [3], the great majority of serving teachers have the accreditation.

QTS is not age- or subject-specific and teachers with QTS can be employed to teach any subject and any age. It is, however, usual for schools to appoint teachers trained for the relevant subject / age group.

Most programmes leading to QTS involve school experience and award an academic qualification in education, in addition to professional accreditation, on successful completion. The Bachelor of Education and concurrent (undergraduate) programme is abbreviated to BEd. The Professional Graduate Certificate in Education and the Postgraduate Certificate in Education, which are consecutive (postgraduate) programmes, are both abbreviated to PGCE. Traditionally, intending primary teachers followed a concurrent programme, while intending secondary teachers followed a consecutive programme. The majority of primary and secondary teacher trainees now follow a consecutive (postgraduate) programme (in 2018/19 [4], 29,085 trainees entered consecutive programmes, compared with 5335 entering concurrent programmes). Some programmes are employment- rather than university-based.

Alternative training routes, including Assessment Only routes, are covered in the subheading ‘Alternative training pathways’ below.

All teachers are trained to have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs (SEN) [5]. Teachers working in specialist roles with pupils with SEN may require additional qualifications. The subheading ‘Additional qualifications for specialist SEN roles’ below provides further information.
Institutions, level and models of training

All providers of initial teacher training (ITT) must be accredited by the Department for Education (DfE) [6], based on criteria specified by the Secretary of State. Accredited providers include both higher education institutions (HEIs) [7] and school-centred initial teacher training providers (SCITTs). Accreditation covers all courses run by that provider and is neither conditional nor time limited. Government guidance [8] explains the accreditation process.

The DfE manages the allocation of training places to individual providers. In making its allocation decisions, it has regard to the annual ‘teacher supply model’ [9] (TSM). The TSM is designed to estimate the number of postgraduate initial teacher training places needed to ensure a sufficient supply of qualified teachers for the publicly funded sector. It enables estimation of the number of trainees required by subject and phase of education.

For some subjects, recruitment is unlimited, but for others it is fixed and places are allocated by the DfE. Both unlimited and fixed subjects attract government funding. A full list of the subjects and routes that are unlimited is available in Annex A of the DfE document Initial teacher training allocations methodology: 2019 to 2020 [10]. Following proposals in the White Paper Educational Excellence Everywhere [11] (2016), multi-year allocations have been made to the highest performing ITT providers since 2017/18, guaranteeing them a minimum number of ITT places for three years.

Training routes can be divided into the following.

- **HEI-led training routes, where the HEI is** accredited by the DfE and the theory component of training takes place within the HEI. Practical teaching experience takes place in schools.
- **School-led training routes, which** are divided into:
  - School-centred initial teacher training (SCITT), where the school is accredited as a provider by the DfE
  - ‘School Direct’ [12] routes, where the school is not accredited as a provider but works with an accredited provider (usually a HEI).

The remainder of this section outlines these routes in more detail and is divided into two parts.

- Routes to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) [13] for intending teachers of children and young people within the age range 3 up to 18/19. These routes involve undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications (at Level 6 [14] and Level 7 [15]).
- Other (non-QTS) routes to teaching / leading practice specific to early years education and care, including qualifications at Level 3 [16] that lead to the ‘early years educator’ title.

**Routes to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)**

The table below shows the main training routes leading to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) for intending teachers of children and young people in schools from age 3 up to age 18/19. It also includes the number of trainee teachers that commenced each route in 2018/19.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Routes to QTS</th>
<th>Entrants 2018/19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEI-led undergraduate (concurrent) programmes</th>
<th>5335</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concurrent programmes are led by a higher education institution (HEI) which is the accredited provider, selects applicants and teaches the programme.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Trainees pay tuition fees and are eligible for financial support.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Primary and secondary programmes exist (but the great majority of programmes are for primary teaching).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The route may be offered as a 4-year programme with classroom experience of 32 weeks, or as a 3-year programme with classroom experience of 24 weeks.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Programmes lead to professional accreditation (QTS) and an academic qualification (a bachelor’s degree such as the BEd).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEI-led postgraduate (consecutive) programmes</th>
<th>13,570</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consecutive programmes are led by an HEI which is the accredited provider, selects applicants and teaches the programme.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Trainees pay tuition fees and are eligible for financial support, with additional financial incentives available for some.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Primary and secondary programmes exist.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The route is offered as a 1-year programme with classroom experience of 24 weeks.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Programmes lead to professional accreditation (QTS) and an academic qualification (Postgraduate Certificate in Education / Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
School-led postgraduate (consecutive) routes

The following five routes are school-led postgraduate (consecutive) routes.

i. School-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) programmes (non-salaried)

Programmes are led by a consortium of schools and colleges, typically a ‘teaching school alliance’ (see below), which is the accredited provider and teaches the programme.

- Only schools that have been judged ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’ by Ofsted, the inspectorate, are considered for accreditation.
- Trainees pay tuition fees and are eligible for financial support, with additional financial incentives available for some.
- Primary and secondary programmes exist.
- The route is offered as a 1-year programme. Classroom experience depends on the programme.
- Programmes lead to professional accreditation (QTS) and most also lead to an academic qualification validated by an HEI (PGCE).

ii. School Direct Training Programmes (non-salaried)

Programmes are led by a school or a consortium of schools and colleges (typically a ‘teaching school alliance’), which selects applicants and selects an accredited ITT provider (usually a HEI) to provide the training. The school or group of schools is expected to employ the trainee as a qualified teacher on successful completion of the programme.

- Trainees pay tuition fees and are eligible for financial support, with additional financial incentives available for some.
- Primary and secondary programmes exist.
- The route is offered as a 1-year programme with classroom experience of 24 weeks.
- Programmes lead to professional accreditation (QTS) and may also lead to an academic qualification (PGCE).
- Introduced in September 2012.

iii. School Direct Training Programmes (salaried)

Programmes are led by a school or a consortium of schools and colleges (typically a ‘teaching school alliance’), which selects applicants and selects an accredited ITT provider to provide the training. Applicants are expected to be career-changers with at least 3 years’ relevant work experience. Trainees earn a salary as an unqualified teacher and teach on a reduced timetable. The school or group of schools is expected to employ the trainee on successful completion of the programme.

- Primary and secondary programmes exist.
- Programmes lead to professional accreditation (QTS) and may also lead to an academic qualification (PGCE).
- The route is offered as a 1-year programme.
- The programmes replaced the Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP) which closed in 2012/13.

iv. Teach First (salaried)

Run by Teach First [17], an independent charity, which is funded by corporate contributions and fees paid by schools and has support from the DfE. Teach First works with accredited ITT providers to provide the training and places participants in schools in challenging circumstances. Trainees are paid a salary as an unqualified teacher for the first year, at the end of which they qualify. They then work for a further year as newly qualified teachers (NQTs) [18] in the same school.

- Primary and secondary programmes exist.
- Aimed at high-attaining graduates with leadership potential who might not otherwise consider a career in teaching. After an intensive 6-week residential summer course, participants begin teaching in a school on a reduced timetable.
- Leads to professional accreditation (QTS) and an academic qualification (Postgraduate Diploma in Education and Leadership, or PGDE).
- First introduced in 2003 and now being expanded with government support.

v. Postgraduate Teaching Apprenticeship (PGTA) (salaried)

Introduced in 2018/19, PGTAs are for apprentices employed by schools, which must partner with an accredited provider (SCITT or HEI) to provide the training.

- Primary and secondary apprenticeships exist.
- The apprenticeship must last a minimum of 1 year.
- At least 20% of the trainee’s time is spent in off-the-job training, learning about the pedagogy of teaching.
- The PGTA leads to a professional accreditation (QTS) and may lead to an academic qualification (such as a PGCE). Trainees also complete an end point assessment (EPA) to consolidate their learning from initial teacher training.
The number of entrants to each route above is drawn from the Initial teacher training: trainee number census - 2018 to 2019 (Table 8 of the main tables), published by the Department for Education (DfE).

Teaching schools and teaching school alliances were set up to improve the quality of teaching and leadership in schools. Their remit includes initial teacher training and developing existing teachers. They provide ITT programmes either through becoming accredited as a school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) provider, or through the School Direct model. Teaching schools were introduced under the 2010-2015 Government.

In 2018/19, 53% of trainees followed a school-led ITT route. The majority of ITT routes are non-salaried. Statistics for 2018/19 are available from the Initial teacher training: trainee number census.

This House of Commons Library briefing (February 2019) provides further information on initial teacher training in England and on recent policy developments in the area.

Routes to other qualifications specific to early childhood education and care (ECEC)

Professionals working in early childhood education and care (ECEC) can hold Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) or follow one of the routes below to qualify with ‘Early Years Teacher Status’ or as an ‘Early Years Educator’.

Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS)

Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS) is a postgraduate (consecutive) accreditation for those leading practice in early years settings. It is awarded by the Department for Education (DfE) on behalf of the Secretary of State and was introduced in 2013. Training providers under contract to the DfE provide training and assessment, which is underpinned by the 2013 Teachers’ Standards (Early Years). In order to achieve EYTS, trainees must demonstrate that they:

- set high expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge all children
- promote good progress and outcomes by children
- demonstrate good knowledge of early learning and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)
- plan education and care, taking account of the needs of all children
- adapt education and care to respond to the strengths and needs of all children
- make accurate and productive use of assessment
- safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and provide a safe learning environment
- fulfil wider professional responsibilities.

There are three main training routes to EYTS.

- Graduate entry – this typically involves one year of full-time study.
- Graduate employment-based – this is a one-year part-time route for graduates working in an early years setting who need further training to demonstrate the Teachers’ Standards (Early Years).
- Undergraduate entry – this is a full-time, three- to four-year route leading to EYTS for those studying for a degree in an early childhood-related subject.
There is also an Assessment Only (AO) route. This is for graduates with experience of working with children from birth to five years old, who can meet the requirements of the Teachers’ Standards (Early Years) without further training.

Non-EYTS qualifications

**Early Years Educators** are staff qualified with a ‘full and relevant’ [Level 3](#) qualification according to the early years educator qualifications criteria. The criteria were introduced in July 2013, and new qualifications based on them began in September 2014. A Level 3 [early years educator apprenticeship standard](#) has also been developed.

An [Early Years Qualifications List](#) containing qualifications considered to be ‘full and relevant’ is maintained by DfE.

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage sets out minimum levels of qualification for staff which relate to staff:child ratios in early childhood education and care.

- Where a person with QTS or EYTS is working directly with children aged three and over, there must be at least one member of staff for every 13 children, and at least one other member of staff must hold a Level 3 qualification.
- Where a person with QTS or EYTS is not working directly with children aged three and over, there must be at least one member of staff for every eight children, at least one member of staff must hold a Level 3 qualification, and at least half of all other staff must hold a ‘full and relevant’ [Level 2](#) qualification.

**Historical note:** Until the late 1990s, early years and childcare was characterised by minimal government intervention. As the schools system was traditionally a provider of early education for some children, many teachers of young children already had Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), but the expansion of publicly funded early childhood education and care (ECEC) from the 1990s drew attention to the status and professionalism of the wider workforce. The Children’s Workforce Development Council (CWDC) was set up by the Government in 2005 to strengthen qualifications and skills in the children’s workforce, including ECEC. Through the CWDC, a new professional qualification, Early Years Professional Status (EYPS), was introduced in 2007 to improve professionalism in early years settings such as children’s centres and day nurseries. It was a postgraduate (consecutive) programme with four different routes depending on the applicant’s level of experience with young children. The CWDC was closed in 2012 and the EYTS replaced Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) in 2014.

Admission requirements

The [Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)](#) is the central clearing house for higher education applications, handles applications for all routes to [Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)](#), except Teach First and assessment-only routes (see the subheading ‘[Routes to Qualified Teachers Status (QTS)](#)’ and ‘[Alternative Training Pathways](#)’ respectively).

The [undergraduate UCAS system](#) handles undergraduate (concurrent route) admissions, while the UCAS [Teacher Training](#) system handles postgraduate (consecutive route) admissions.

UCAS does not make admissions decisions.
Admission requirements for routes to QTS

This section describes the admission requirements for initial teacher training (ITT) routes leading to QTS. The same legislation and requirements apply to all routes.

The Teachers’ Standards [31] underpin every route to QTS, and the central judgement for providers is whether a candidate is likely to be able to meet the Standards by the end of their training if they train on that provider’s course.

Admission decisions are the responsibility of the individual programme provider, within the framework of the Initial Teacher Training (ITT): criteria and supporting advice [32] for training providers. The criteria are determined by the Secretary of State under the Education (School Teachers’ Qualifications) (England) Regulations 2003 [33], made under the Education Act 2002 [34].

According to this advice, providers should consider a wide range of evidence to judge applicants’ suitability to teach, for example information from application forms; referees’ reports; advice from schools; results of any entry tests or tasks; applicants’ portfolios; and interviews. ITT providers should consider:

- appropriate qualities, attitudes, ethics and values
- health and physical capacity to teach
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks [35] (where applicants for ITT are salaried by a school or college, the school or college must by law ensure that all necessary checks are carried out).

The criteria and advice document also requires that all accredited ITT providers must ensure all of the following:

- that all entrants have achieved a standard equivalent to a grade 4 in the GCSE [36] examinations in English and mathematics, and that all who intend to train to teach pupils aged 3-11 have also achieved a standard equivalent to a grade 4 in the GCSE examination in a science subject
- that, in the case of postgraduate (consecutive) QTS courses of initial teacher training, all entrants hold a bachelor’s degree of a United Kingdom higher education institution or recognised equivalent qualification
- that all entrants, as part of the provider’s selection procedures, have taken part in a rigorous selection process designed to assess their suitability to teach
- that all entrants, prior to beginning their training, have passed the professional skills tests [37] in numeracy and literacy – these assess the core skills that teachers need to fulfil their professional role in schools, regardless of their specialism and subject knowledge needed for teaching.

For entry to concurrent (undergraduate) ITE programmes, in addition to the GCSE requirements outlined above, candidates will normally be expected to have achieved a minimum number of UCAS tariff points [38] at A level [39] or equivalent.

Many ITT providers also ask for a minimum amount of experience of working with young people prior to application, so that candidates can demonstrate understanding of the role of a teacher. The ‘Get School Experience [40]’ service is a portal to assist prospective ITT candidates in accessing school experience locally.

To support the recruitment of candidates to some ITT courses, the Department for Education (DfE) funds providers to offer subject knowledge enhancement (SKE) [41] courses in priority subjects.
(biology, chemistry, computing, design and technology, English, geography, languages, mathematics, physics and religious education). These courses are designed to bring applicants’ subject knowledge up to appropriate levels before they commence training. Providers judging that an applicant has the right qualities to become a teacher, but requires additional subject training first, may make the offer of a place conditional upon completion of an SKE course.

In the case of selection for initial teacher training via the Teach First programme, applicants need to demonstrate that they have the qualities to meet the above standards through following an accelerated style of programme. Applicants who meet Teach First’s entry criteria attend ‘assessment centres’, which involve rigorous recruitment processes including group activities, problem-solving tasks, mini-teaching activities, and assessed self-evaluation of candidates’ performance. They are assessed for programme entry against an explicit competence framework.

**Admission requirements for non-QTS routes in ECEC**

Professionals working in early childhood education and care (ECEC) may have QTS, Early Years Teacher Status, or be qualified as an Early Years Educator.

All candidates wishing to obtain Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS) must hold a degree and GCSEs at grade 4 or above in English, mathematics and science, or equivalent qualifications. They also need to pass the professional skills tests in numeracy and literacy.

Early years practitioners looking to become qualified as an Early Years Educator with a Level 3 qualification must achieve grade 4 at GCSE in English and mathematics, or equivalent qualifications. They may, though, study for these alongside their early years qualifications if they do not hold them on entry. In such cases, they serve as an ‘exit standard’ rather than an admission requirement.

**Curriculum, level of specialisation and learning outcomes**

This section focuses on initial teacher education programmes leading to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). It also briefly describes additional qualifications for teachers working in specific roles with pupils with special educational needs (SEN).

**Programmes leading to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)**

The Framework of core content for initial teacher training aims to ensure that programmes of initial teacher training (ITT) enable trainees to meet the Teachers’ Standards. The Standards apply to all training routes and define the minimum level of practice expected of trainees and teachers from the point of being awarded Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). They are specified under the following headings.

Part One: Teaching. A teacher must:

- set high expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge pupils
- promote good progress and outcomes by pupils
- demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge
- plan and teach well structured lessons
- adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils
- make accurate and productive use of assessment
- manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment
- fulfil wider professional responsibilities.
Part Two: Personal and Professional Conduct. A teacher must:

- uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour
- have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach
- understand and act within the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The *Framework of core content* was published in July 2016, in response to recommendations from the [Carter Review of Initial Teacher Training (ITT)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/carter-review-of-initial-teacher-training-itt) [45].

More broadly, the content, structure, delivery and assessment of initial teacher training are underpinned by **criteria for all ITT programmes**. These criteria are determined by the Secretary of State under the [Education (School Teachers' Qualifications) (England) Regulations 2003](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-scholl-teachers-qualifications-england-regulations-2003) [33], made under the [Education Act 2002](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-act-2002) [34]. They specify the level to which ITT programmes are specialised by age range/subject. ITT providers must, for example, prepare all trainee teachers to teach within one of the following age phases: 3-11; 7-14; or 11-19. Typically, primary training is provided across the 3-7, 5-11, or 7-11 age ranges. For teaching in the ‘middle years’ (encompassing both primary and secondary phases), training is typically provided across the 7-14 age range, and for secondary education, training typically takes place across the 11-16, 11-18, or 14-19 age ranges, depending on the subject(s) of training. No training programme should cover fewer than four school years. The ITT criteria [32] came into effect in September 2012 along with supporting advice.

Trainees preparing to teach in primary schools are trained to teach all subjects in the curriculum. Trainees preparing to teach in secondary schools are trained to teach one subject or subject area in the curriculum. The criteria do not specify that teachers must have a degree in a particular subject or discipline; it is the [Teachers’ Standards](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-standards) [31] that specify that a teacher must demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge. The scope of ‘good subject and curriculum knowledge’ is defined as a teacher (page 11):

- having a secure knowledge of the relevant subject(s) and curriculum areas, fostering and maintaining pupils’ interest in the subject, and addressing misunderstandings
- demonstrating a critical understanding of developments in the subject and curriculum areas, and promoting the value of scholarship
- demonstrating an understanding of, and taking responsibility for, promoting high standards of literacy, articulacy and the correct use of standard English, whatever the teacher’s specialist subject
- if teaching early reading, demonstrating a clear understanding of systematic synthetic phonics
- if teaching early mathematics, demonstrating a clear understanding of appropriate teaching strategies.

Although ITT programmes are specialised by age range/subject, a teacher with QTS is accredited to teach children of any age and any subject.

School experience (H4)

School experience is an integral and major element of all programmes. The minimum amount of time for school experience is set by the Secretary of State in the ITT Criteria. It varies according to the training route selected and is summarised in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Route to QTS</th>
<th>Minimum school experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| HEI-led undergraduate (concurrent) programmes | 24 weeks (3-year programme)  
32 weeks (4-year programme) |
| HEI-led postgraduate (consecutive) programmes | 24 weeks (1-year programme) |
| School-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) programmes | Depends on the programme |
| School Direct training programmes | 24 weeks (1-year programme) |
| School Direct Training Programmes (salaried) | Employment-based route: trainees perform no more than 90% of the teaching load of a full-time teacher |
| Teach First (salaried) | Employment-based route: trainees perform no more than 80% of the teaching load of a full-time teacher |
| Postgraduate Teaching Apprenticeship (PGTA) (salaried) | Employment-based route: apprentices spend at least 20% of their time off-timetable to learn the pedagogy of teaching |

The supporting advice to the ITT criteria emphasises that trainee teachers need breadth and variety of experience in schools to enable them to meet all the standards for QTS. As a result, they are required to have taught in at least two schools prior to the award of QTS.

**Additional requirements**

Teachers are trained to be able to adapt their teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils. This requirement is set out in the *Teachers’ Standards* [31] (pages 11-12). A teacher must:

- know when and how to differentiate appropriately, using approaches which enable pupils to be taught effectively
- have a secure understanding of how a range of factors can inhibit pupils’ ability to learn, and how best to overcome these
- demonstrate an awareness of the physical, social and intellectual development of children, and know how to adapt teaching to support pupils’ education at different stages of development
- have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs (SEN) [5]; those of high ability; those with English as an additional language; those with disabilities; and be able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them.

The *Teachers’ Standards* do not make specific reference to school management/administration. They do, however, specify that teachers must fulfil wider professional responsibilities, which include (page 13):

- making a positive contribution to the wider life and ethos of the school
- developing effective professional relationships with colleagues, knowing how and when to draw on advice and specialist support
- deploying support staff effectively
- taking responsibility for improving teaching through appropriate professional development,
responding to advice and feedback from colleagues
• communicating effectively with parents with regard to pupils’ achievements and well-being.

In November 2018, the Government also published guidance on addressing workload in initial teacher education. This includes principles, considerations and examples of practical support to help providers reduce the workload faced by trainee teachers and their school partners.

Additional qualifications for specialist SEN roles

All teachers are trained to have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs (SEN). Teachers working in specialist roles with pupils with SEN may require additional qualifications. These are normally taken after gaining experience as a qualified teacher (i.e. with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)), often on a part-time basis while in post.

For teachers of classes of pupils with a hearing impairment, visual impairment or multi-sensory impairment, there are additional specialist qualifications known as Mandatory Qualifications. The Education (School Teachers' Qualifications) (England) Regulations 2003 require such teachers to hold a mandatory qualification in addition to QTS or to gain the qualification within their first three years in post. Responsibility for approving providers to deliver these qualifications lies with the Department for Education (DfE).

All mainstream schools must have a qualified teacher (with QTS) designated as a Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO). The SENCO oversees provision of teaching and learning for pupils in the school with SEN, and all SENCOs appointed since 1 September 2008 who have not previously gained at least 12 months’ experience in the role must achieve the National Award for Special Educational Needs Coordinator within 3 years of appointment. The qualification typically takes 1 year to complete on a part-time basis. The requirements for SENCOs to have QTS and additional training apply to academies as well as to maintained schools.

Teacher educators

All initial teacher training (ITT) routes leading to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) involve a high proportion of school experience; most routes also involve higher education institutions (HEIs). It follows that educators in both HEIs and in schools play key roles in training programmes.

ITT tutors in HEIs

Teacher educators providing initial teacher training (ITT) in HEIs are normally referred to as ‘ITT tutors’. There are no regulations on minimum qualification requirements, but the normal expectation is that, as a bare minimum, they will have a bachelor’s degree and QTS; many will also hold a master’s degree. New entrants to the role would also be expected to undertake a professional teaching programme alongside their employment, leading to, for example, the Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education (PGCHE). The Higher Education Academy (HEA) (now part of Advance HE), a national body which champions teaching quality in higher education, recommends that all probationary academic staff in HEIs should be required to complete a relevant HEA-accredited teaching programme. However, this is not mandatory unless an individual HEI chooses to make it a contractual requirement.

Professional/school-based mentors

According to the National standards for school-based initial teacher training mentors, the professional or school-based mentor is ‘a suitably-experienced teacher who has formal responsibility
to work collaboratively within the ITT partnership to help ensure the trainee receives the highest-quality training’ (page 7). The mentor may be working with several trainees at the same time, in a coordinating/overseeing capacity. They are responsible for liaison with the higher education ITT provider and with the classroom teacher(s) who host the trainee in the classroom; for supporting the professional development of the trainee; and for assessing/monitoring progress. ITT providers require all those working with trainee teachers to have undergone mentor preparation and training and may offer academic accreditation for such training.

The National standards are non-statutory and were introduced in 2016, following the Carter Review of initial teacher training (2015). The review recommended that the Department for Education (DFE) should commission a sector body to develop national standards for mentors. In response to the review, the DfE commissioned the Teaching Schools Council (TSC) to develop the National standards. The TSC is a representative body for ‘teaching schools’, which are outstanding schools that work with other schools to provide training and development to new and experienced school staff.

The National standards for school-based mentors are divided into four areas (pages 11-12).

1. Standard 1 - Personal qualities. Establish trusting relationships, modelling high standards of practice, and empathising with the challenges a trainee faces.
2. Standard 2 – Teaching. Support trainees to develop their teaching practice in order to set high expectations and to meet the needs of all pupils.
3. Standard 3 – Professionalism. Induct the trainee into professional norms and values, helping them to understand the importance of the role and responsibilities of teachers in society.
4. Standard 4 – Self-development and working in partnership. Continue to develop their own professional knowledge, skills and understanding and invest time in developing a good working relationship within relevant ITT partnerships.

Qualifications, evaluation and certificates

This section describes the qualifications awarded on successful completion of an initial teacher training (ITT) programme for teaching in schools. Most programmes lead to both the professional accreditation of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and an academic qualification such as the Professional Graduate Certificate in Education or Postgraduate Certificate in Education (both abbreviated to PGCE), or the Bachelor of Education (BEd).

Not covered here is Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) status, which is the professional accreditation for teachers in the further education sector. It is conferred by the Education and Training Foundation (ETF). Further information on gaining this accreditation is available in the article ‘Continuing Professional Development for Teachers and Trainers Working in Adult Education and Training’. Since April 2012, further education teachers with QTLS have been recognised as qualified to teach in schools.

Academic qualifications (PGCE, BEd)

Most initial teacher training programmes leading to QTS also lead to an academic award such as a bachelor’s degree (concurrent model) or the PGCE (consecutive model). The award of the academic qualification is separate from the award of QTS. It is awarded by a university or other higher education institution (HEI) with degree awarding powers (DAP).

The concurrent model (BEd)

The concurrent (undergraduate) model of training involves a single three- or four-year programme
leading to the award of Bachelor of Education (BEd), Bachelor of Arts (BA) or Bachelor of Science (BSc) with QTS. These awards are pitched at the level of a bachelor’s degree with honours (Bologna first cycle, Level 6 [14]). Typically, a programme leading to a BEd with QTS is focused on the study of education and is geared towards primary teaching, whereas a programme leading to a BA or BSc with QTS is focused on a specific subject discipline and is geared towards secondary teaching.

Assessment procedures are decided by the individual institution and typically involve a variety of modes, similar to those used for other qualifications at the same level. See the indicative list of assessment methods provided under the subheading ‘Student assessment’ [61] within the article ‘Bachelor’.

The consecutive model

The consecutive (postgraduate) model mostly commonly refers to the PGCE. The academic level of the PGCE may be equivalent to the final year of a bachelor’s degree (with honours) (Level 6); a master’s level [52] qualification (Bologna second cycle, Level 7 [15]); or, more commonly, may incorporate modules at each of these levels. The full title of the PGCE may be either the Professional Graduate Certificate in Education for Level 6 PGCE qualifications; or the Postgraduate Certificate in Education for PGCE qualifications above this level. Teachers taking the second of these two routes gain credits at master’s level that may be used towards a master’s degree.

Professional accreditation (QTS)

Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) is a professional accreditation rather than an academic qualification.

Maintained schools [2] are required by law to ensure that teachers hold QTS. There are limited exceptions to this, such as the eligibility of overseas-trained teachers to teach in England, as specified in the schedule to the Education (Specified Work) (England) Regulations 2012 [62] (as amended). See the section below on ‘Alternative training pathways’ for further information on overseas-trained teachers.

Since August 2012, academies [3] have been able to employ a teacher without QTS if they believe the teacher is suitably qualified. However, special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs) [48] and designated teachers for looked after children [63] in academies must have QTS.

The method of assessment for QTS is determined by the training provider. It is underpinned by the requirement for all accredited ITT providers to ensure that the content, structure, delivery and assessment of programmes are designed to:

- enable trainee teachers to meet all the Teachers’ Standards [31] across the age range of training
- ensure that no trainee teacher is recommended for the award of QTS until they have met all of the Standards.

QTS is awarded by the Department for Education (DfE), when informed by an accredited initial teacher training provider that a trainee has met all the Standards.

Teachers undertaking an assessment-only route to QTS (see the subheading ‘Alternative training pathways’ below) must still be assessed for QTS accreditation, even though they do not require assessment for an academic qualification.

Consultation on QTS and career progression for teachers

In December 2017, the Department for Education (DfE) launched a consultation [64] on proposals to
introduce strengthened Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and career progression for teachers. The Government published its response [65] to the consultation in May 2018, confirming that it would:

- explore the possibility of introducing ‘Endorsed QTS’ at the end of the induction [66] period for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) [67]
- increase the length of the induction period for teachers from one to two years
- introduce an Early Career Framework (ECF) [68] of support and mentoring from Autumn 2021, to create a better and more consistent induction experience for all new teachers
- explore the creation of new qualifications [69] for experienced classroom teachers
- pilot a sabbatical fund for experienced teachers.

**Alternative training pathways**

This section includes information on pathways to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) [28] which assess the experience that a teacher without QTS already holds. They are known as ‘Assessment Only’ routes and specialist training options.

The main employment-based routes are covered alongside other mainstream training pathways in the section on ‘Routes to Qualified Teacher Status’ above.

**Assessment Only routes**

The ‘Assessment Only’ (AO) [70] route to QTS is aimed at experienced teachers who hold a bachelor’s degree [51] - for example, an individual who has worked as an unqualified teacher in at least two schools, early years and/or further education (FE) [57] institutions. The AO route allows candidates from the UK and abroad to demonstrate that they already meet all of the standards for QTS without the need for any further training.

Individuals achieving QTS via the AO route must present detailed evidence that they already meet all of the standards for QTS. They must also have their teaching assessed in a school by an accredited and approved AO provider, and pass the professional skills tests [37] in numeracy and literacy.

A range of universities, colleges, schools and school-centred initial teacher training providers (SCITTs) offer the AO route. Candidates apply to them directly if they are interested in the route.

**Specialist training options**

**Future Teaching Scholars** is a six-year programme aimed at undergraduate [71] students studying mathematics or physics. Trainees receive a £5,000 (€5398.69*) grant at the beginning of each academic year during their degree, after which they undertake one year of postgraduate employment-based teacher training and two further years of employment as a maths or physics teacher. The first cohort of students commenced the programme in September 2016. Further information is available from the Department for Education (DfE) [72] and on the Future Teaching Scholars website [73].

**Researchers in Schools** is a three-year employment-based course that offers a salaried teacher training option for candidates who have completed, or are finishing, their doctorate [74]. This route also commenced in September 2016 and aims to enable researchers to maintain their academic profile while training to teach; up to 20% of their time is allocated to their own academic pursuits. Trainees have access to a research grant to cover both years and receive a salaried training scholarship in the first year and as a newly qualified teacher (NQT) [67] in the second year. Further information is available from the Department for Education (DfE) [75] and on the Researchers in
Now Teach was set up in 2016 to encourage people who have already had one successful career to retrain as teachers. The programme provides individually tailored support for career changers and is school-based. It is delivered in partnership with initial teacher training (ITT) providers over two years. Now Teach works with secondary schools in several regions, mainly providing training in the shortage subjects of maths, science and languages. Further information is available from the Now Teach website.

Troops to Teachers supports eligible leavers from the armed services (the Royal Navy, the British Army and the Royal Air Force) to become teachers through the provision of a tax-free £40,000 bursary (€43,189.55*). Candidates must not already hold a degree and must be planning to teach secondary maths, biology, chemistry, physics, computing or modern foreign languages. They can apply for the consecutive (undergraduate) training routes listed in the table under the subheading ‘Routes to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)’. Further information can be found from the Department for Education (DfE).

*Exchange rate used: €1 = £0.93, ECB, 12 August 2019.

Application for QTS

Teachers qualified in the UK outside of England or Wales are entitled to apply for the award of QTS in England without being required to undertake any further training, as outlined on the Teaching Regulation Agency website.

An individual who is recognised as a qualified teacher by any European Economic Area (EEA) member state (and Switzerland) may also apply for QTS in England under the terms of Council Directive 2005/36/EC.

Similarly, teachers who qualified in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States of America are also entitled to apply for the award of QTS in England without being required to undertake further training. This is providing that they satisfy certain conditions as outlined in the Education (Specified Work) (England) Regulations 2012. On application, the Teaching Regulation Agency verifies that an individual is a fully qualified teacher in one of those countries and has not been barred from teaching. Subject to satisfactory completion of these checks, the teacher will be issued with a letter confirming the award of QTS. Their details will be added to the database of qualified teachers in England.

Article last reviewed August 2019.

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