For more information about how to get into teaching, see our print product TARGETpostgrad Teaching. Visit each article online for further references and useful links.

The steps to becoming a teacher
targetpostgrad.com/study-areas/teaching/how-do-you-become-a-teacher

To work as a teacher in state maintained schools (excluding academies and free schools) in England and Wales you need to have professional qualified teacher status (QTS). To be awarded QTS by the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) you must complete a period of training, such as a one-year Professional or Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) course or school-centred training, which recommends you for QTS. This is known as initial teacher training (ITT).

Newly qualified teachers (NQTs) then complete a period of induction, which is the first year of employment as a teacher in a school. NQTs are encouraged to start their induction as soon as possible after gaining QTS but there’s no set time limit for starting or completing the induction.

Teachers in independent schools aren’t required to have QTS, but most do. Many independent schools don’t offer an NQT induction year.

It is possible to teach within further education without a teaching qualification, but career prospects are improved with one. For further information on teaching in other areas of the UK see our advice on training to teaching in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

What age range do you want to teach?

All school teachers are trained to teach across two key stages (KS). The key stages include:

- **Early years foundation stage (EYFS):** 3–5 year olds; nursery and reception
- **KS1:** 5–7 year olds; school years 1–2
- **KS2:** 7–11 year olds; school years 3–6
- **KS3:** 11 to 14 year olds; school years 7–9
- **KS4:** 14 to 16 year olds; school years 10–11

Once you have achieved QTS, it’s legal for you to teach any age range, although it’s not easy to move from one to another. Most teachers stay within the age ranges they trained to teach. If you want to change once you’re qualified, you’ll need to build up a portfolio of evidence to persuade the head teacher you are able to teach a different age range.

If you would like to teach children aged 0–5, you can pursue a course of early years initial teacher training, leading to early years teacher status (EYTS). Teachers with EYTS specialise in early childhood development and may be employed in any early years setting including private, voluntary, maintained and independent establishments, as well as primary and nursery schools, free schools and academies in England that deliver the early years foundation stage.

What subjects can you teach at primary level?

Primary schools cover KS1 (5–7 year olds) and KS2 (7–11 year olds). In general, you’ll need to feel confident about teaching the wide range of national curriculum subjects, which include:

### Core subjects
- English
- mathematics
- science

### Foundation subjects
- art and design
- computing
- design and technology
- foreign languages
- geography
- history
- music
- physical education

In addition to these national curriculum subjects, primary schools must also teach religious education. They may also cover citizenship and personal, social and health education (PSHE).

Primary ITT courses increasingly offer a specialism in a growing range of subjects. Incentives are available for training to teach as a primary maths specialist, teaching maths across the primary age range as well as supporting other teachers.

What subjects can I teach at secondary level?

ITT in secondary teaching entails a specialist subject, but once you’ve gained QTS, you’re legally qualified to teach any subject. It’s common to find teachers in schools teaching subjects other than those they specialised in during their teacher training.

Secondary schools cover KS3 (11–14 year olds) and KS4 (14–16 year olds), and sometimes post-16. The compulsory subjects required by the national curriculum are:

### Core subjects
- English
- mathematics
- science

### Foundation subjects
- art and design
- citizenship
- computing
- design and technology
- geography
- history
- modern foreign languages
- music
- physical education

Schools must also provide religious education (RE), sex and relationship education (SRE) and careers guidance. Some schools additionally offer personal, social and health education (PSHE). Schools also offer subjects outside this core list, for example, drama, dance, and media studies, and ITT courses exist to accommodate them.

From September 2015, 14–16 year-olds will be able to study Technical Awards alongside GCSEs and 16–19 year-olds will be able to study Tech Levels alongside or instead of A levels.

Written by Margaret Evans, Northumbria University
What different types of school can you teach in?
targetpostgrad.com/study-areas/teaching/what-different-types-of-
school-can-you-teach

Education in the UK falls into two sectors: state maintained and independent. An understanding of the system will help you to decide where you would prefer to work.

The information that follows applies to England. For variations in the other parts of the UK, see our advice on teaching in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

What are state maintained schools?
Within the maintained sector there are different types of schools which can be defined by who employs the staff, controls admission and owns the land and buildings. Combinations of local authorities (LA), school governing bodies and charitable trusts or religious organisations might be involved.

The main types of maintained school are:
• Community schools: wholly LA controlled.
• Foundation and trust schools: controlled principally by a trust and governing body.
• Voluntary aided and controlled schools: mainly religious or ‘faith’ schools run by a charitable foundation, often a religious organisation.
• Academies: set up by businesses, faith groups or voluntary groups in partnership with the Department for Education and local authorities. They are publicly funded and have some freedom from the national curriculum.
• Free schools: not-for-profit, government-funded schools which have some freedom from the national curriculum.
• City technology colleges: focus specifically on mathematics, science and technology.

Most state-maintained secondary schools are all-ability comprehensive schools, but a few are grammar schools, which select pupils according to ability. Any maintained secondary school can apply to become a specialist school in a certain area, for example sports, arts, science, etc.

What is available in the independent sector?
The independent sector includes:
• Independent schools: no direct income from the state. These schools are sometimes called public schools or private schools and there are about 2,400 in the UK. They don’t have to teach the national curriculum or employ teachers with qualified teacher status (QTS), although most do. Information about independent schools is available from the Independent Schools Council and the Independent Schools Directory.
• Montessori schools: follow their own teaching method and in the UK cater for children mostly from the ages of three to six though there are some primary schools. For more information see Montessori.
• Steiner Waldorf Schools: part of an international movement with a particular philosophy of education. Find out more at Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship.

Many training providers, particularly for PGCE courses, stipulate that this experience should have been for a minimum of two weeks and prefer it to have been done in a state school. Getting classroom experience will also help to confirm that teaching is the right career for you.

If you’re not able to complete the experience quickly, don’t delay sending your application, but state in the application that you have experience arranged in the near future.

How do you get work experience?
Use your contacts through family and friends. You can also contact schools directly to ask for work experience or to observe classes or shadow teachers. EduBase has a list of all schools.

Work experience in schools is popular and it may take time to arrange a placement so try to plan in advance. There are also a number of formal schemes which can help:
• School Experience Programme (SEP): This is a programme for final year students and graduates interested in gaining experience in the classroom and considering teaching mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, computer science, geography, history, English or a modern foreign language (MFL) at secondary level.
• Student tutoring programmes: Some institutions offer student tutoring programmes through which you go into schools to help with classes. These programmes are often available through university careers services or students’ unions.
• Undergraduate Ambassador Scheme (UAS): If you are a mathematics, science, technology or engineering undergraduate, your department may offer a classroom-based module. This would involve spending around 40 hours working in schools. It may also be possible for students of mathematics, science, technology or engineering to become STEM ambassadors, which involves enthusing school students about these subjects and the careers they open up.
• Taster courses and open days: These are organised by universities and colleges offering PGCE courses to provide an insight into teaching and teacher training. Taster courses tend to be targeted at shortage subjects or candidates from under-represented groups.
• Paid work: You may be able to obtain paid work in schools as a cover supervisor, teaching assistant, laboratory technician or learning mentor, for example. These posts are usually advertised on local authority (LA) websites or through recruitment agencies.
• Voluntary work: Most LAs run schemes for voluntary mentors to work with pupils on a one-to-one basis. Contact your LA for more information. Many universities work closely with local schools to encourage pupils to consider higher education (HE).

Tips for work experience
• Keep a diary of any work experience you do; this will be invaluable when it comes to writing your applications or preparing for interviews.
• Write notes about anything that you experience. For example, if a lesson did not work, think about how you would do it differently.
• Think about classroom control, different teaching styles and effective uses of technology.

Written by Margaret Evans, Northumbria University

How to get the work experience you need to teach

Training providers want to know that you have the skills and motivation to teach, and you’ll usually be required to have experience of working with children of the relevant age – preferably in a school environment.

Many training providers, particularly for PGCE courses, stipulate that this experience should have been for a minimum of two weeks and prefer it to have been done in a state school. Getting classroom experience will also help to confirm that teaching is the right career for you.

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Written by Margaret Evans, Northumbria University

What qualifications do you need to become a teacher?
targetpostgrad.com/study-areas/teaching/what-qualifications-do-you-
need-become-a-teacher

To teach in the state maintained sector you’ll need to gain qualified teacher status (QTS) in addition to your first degree, unless you have completed a Bachelor of Education (BED) or a BSc/BA with QTS.

There are a number of different training routes available which provide QTS, with the opportunity to train in different settings. Some of them offer the chance to gain a PGCE. To attain QTS you will also need to satisfy a range of criteria outlined below.
What are the entry requirements for a career in teaching?
To qualify as a teacher in England you must meet the following requirements:

- GCSE grade C or above in mathematics and English: for primary teaching you also need GCSE science grade C or above.
- Professional skills tests: in literacy and numeracy (if training in England). You must pass these before starting your teacher training course.
- A degree: for primary teaching some ITT providers prefer you to have a degree in a national curriculum subject. If you don’t, you should talk directly to the training provider to see if they will accept your degree. For secondary teaching you’ll need a degree in, or closely related to, the subject you would like to teach.
- Subject Knowledge Enhancement (SKE) courses: if you want to teach a shortage subject and your degree is not closely linked to it, your training provider may decide that you need to take an SKE course to boost your subject knowledge. These courses comprise the equivalent of between two weeks’ and six months’ study but may sometimes be done over a longer period through part-time study or distance learning.
- Declaration of health questionnaire: you may be asked to complete a declaration of health questionnaire before starting the ITT course. Any information you provide about disability is protected by the Equality Act 2010. If you have a disability it is advisable to make early contact with the training provider.
- Declaration of criminal convictions: the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, which allow convictions for criminal offences to be regarded as ‘spent’ after a period of time, don’t apply to the teaching profession. You’re required to declare any previous convictions. All trainee teachers undergo a criminal record check through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) before starting school-based training.

Written by Margaret Evans, Northumbria University

Overview of your postgraduate teacher training options

targetpostgrad.com/study-areas/teaching/overview-of-your-postgraduate-teacher-training-options

There are several types of teacher training programmes available which lead to qualified teacher status (QTS). Whichever route you take, the training will be specific to the age group and/or subject that you want to teach. All involve learning the principles of teaching and gaining practical experience in schools, but there are significant differences in the way this is delivered.

In Scotland and Northern Ireland all teacher-training programmes are university or college-based. In Wales, most courses are university/college based, but there are some school-based places available on the Graduate Teacher Programme. See the advice on teaching in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland for details.

University-based Postgraduate or Professional Certificate in Education (PGCE)

Higher education institutions (HEIs) throughout the UK offer courses leading to a PGCE. The courses usually last one academic year if completed full-time, but part-time and flexible learning options are also available. You will attend classes at the university or college where you’re based, and will also spend a minimum of 24 weeks for both primary and secondary courses on placement in at least two schools. Placements are arranged by the HEI with their partner schools.

School-centred initial teacher training (SCITT)

SCITT programmes provide school-based training run by a consortium of schools and colleges. They’re offered throughout England and most of the training is delivered by experienced teachers in the school setting. Usually you’ll do most of your training within one school with further placements in other schools in the consortium. In addition to QTS, most SCITTs will also offer a PGCE validated by an HEI, with training provided by university staff. Courses usually last for one academic year full-time.

School Direct

School Direct programmes provide school-led training run by a lead school in partnership with a university or SCITT and other schools, mostly on a one-year full-time basis. School Direct offers the prospect of being employed within the school or alliance once qualified, though this is not guaranteed. Some School Direct programmes lead to the award of a PGCE in addition to QTS.

There are two differently-funded programmes:

- The School Direct training programme: open to all graduates and funded in the same way as a university-based PGCE or SCITT. Trainees pay tuition fees and may be eligible for a bursary and/or loans for fees and maintenance.
- The School Direct training programme (salaried): for graduates with three or more years’ career experience. The trainee is employed as an unqualified teacher by the school and schools receive funding which they can use to subsidise the trainee’s salary and/or training.

Teach First

Teach First is a two-year school-based salaried programme, operating in ten regions of England and Wales, in primary and secondary schools that are in challenging circumstances. These are schools that experience high levels of poverty or underachievement amongst their pupils, as the aim of Teach First is to address educational disadvantage.

Following a six-week residential training course in the summer, successful candidates are employed as unqualified teachers, gaining a PGCE in the first year and completing a newly qualified teacher (NQT) induction in the second year. Teach First also offers leadership development training, coaching and the opportunity to work towards a Masters qualification. It is aimed at graduates with a 2.1 or above and 300 UCAS points.

Early years initial teacher training

Those who want to teach children up to the age of compulsory education (age 5), can follow a course of early years initial teacher training. This leads to early years teacher status (EYTS) which is deemed to be equivalent to QTS. University-led early years initial teacher training programmes are available in two forms:

- Mainstream graduate entry: a 12-month full-time academic course that includes school placements.
- Employment-based graduate entry: part-time 12-month programme for those already employed in an early years setting.

A limited number of School Direct places may also be available for early years training.

Researchers in Schools

Researchers in Schools (RIS) is a salaried two-year teacher training programme based in non-selective state schools for researchers who have completed, or are about to complete their PhD. The aim of the programme is to increase subject expertise, promote research and champion university access within schools. You are supported to achieve QTS in the first year and NQT status in the second year.

Available in most national curriculum subjects, the programme offers enhanced salaries and benefits worth up to £40,000 for those training to teach maths and physics. On completion, teachers can choose to stay in schools or return to work in higher education. Although London-based in 2014/15, the programme is expected to expand to other regions in 2015/16.

Assessment Only (AO) route into teaching

The AO route is primarily for experienced teaching assistants or unqualified teachers already working in schools who wish to attain QTS. It allows you to show that you already meet all of the standards for QTS without having to do any further training. You’ll need to provide detailed evidence and will be assessed in a school by an accredited and approved provider. The programme can also provide an employment-based training route for graduates entering teaching via independent schools or academies.

Written by Abigail Evans, University of Oxford
How do you apply for postgraduate initial teacher education and training?
targetpostgrad.com/study-areas/teaching/how-do-you-apply-postgraduate-initial-teacher-education-and-training

Some initial teacher training programmes use the UCAS Teacher Training website for applications. For other programmes, you may need to apply directly to the provider. As part of the application process, you’ll also need to arrange to sit the professional skills tests.

What is the application process?
For university/college-led PGCEs, SCITTs and School Direct throughout England and Wales, you apply through UCAS Teacher Training. The applications system opens in late October 2014 for training courses starting in 2015 and it’s possible to make applications right up to the beginning of the academic year. Each training provider, however, can decide when to open and close their programme for applications, so the course you want may not be available when applications first open and many providers will fill their places well in advance of the start of the course.

The system operates in two phases:
Apply 1: You can make up to three choices, which must all be submitted at the same time. They can include both primary and secondary choices and may be across the three routes of PGCE, SCITT and School Direct. The choices are considered by your chosen training providers simultaneously. Before you can be offered a place, you’ll have to attend an interview or selection day. Some training providers require you to have passed the professional skills tests before interview, while others will make offers of places conditional on passing them. The training providers must make a decision on your application within 40 working days of receiving it. You must then respond to any offers within ten working days and can accept only one offer.

Apply 2: This phase begins in early January in the year the training programme begins. If you don’t hold any offers from the Apply 1 phase, you can make further applications. They have to be made one at a time but can be for any route and you can keep applying until you’re offered a place.

Applications for PGDE courses in Scotland are made through the central UCAS system which will open in the autumn.

How do you apply for early years initial teacher training?
If you want to take the mainstream graduate entry route, you need to apply directly to higher education institutions that provide early years ITT. The Department for Education has a list of accredited providers. 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. Applicants for both routes must meet the same eligibility criteria as for primary school teacher trainees, including passing the relevant skills tests.

How do you apply to Researchers in Schools?
Application forms are available on the Researchers in Schools website, and should be emailed along with a CV to the address indicated on the form. Those who are successful at the first application stage are then invited to an assessment centre which is held at one of the partner schools. You will have to deliver and evaluate a mini-lesson, take part in a group exercise and have a one to one interview. The dates of assessment centres are published on the Researchers in Schools website and run throughout the year.

How do you apply for the Assessment Only (AO) route?
Initially, you should talk to your current employer about this option and establish their willingness to support your progress to qualified teacher status (QTS). They may have already taken staff through this route and will be able to advise you on the options. You will then need to apply directly to an approved provider and details of these are available from the Department for Education.

How do you apply to Teach First?
Applications are made online through the Teach First site. Applications open in June for the programme starting in the summer of the following year. Vacancies are filled as soon as suitable candidates are found. It’s best to apply early as the participating schools’ requirements in some subjects will be met quickly. If you’re successful at the online application stage, you will then be asked to attend an assessment centre, where you deliver a short sample lesson, take part in a group case study exercise and have a competency-based interview.

How do you choose a course?
Research your options thoroughly, including looking at the institutions’ own websites and visiting if possible. You may want to discuss your ideas with a careers adviser, to help work out what best suits your own preferences and circumstances.

Things you might consider when deciding where to apply include:
• Do you need to gain a PGCE? QTS alone qualifies you to teach in England but may not be sufficient elsewhere. PGCEs enable you to gain credits at masters degree level, which you may be able to use toward a full masters degree after you have completed your training.
• Are you restricting your choice to a particular geographical area? If so, there may not be courses of all types available for your subject or age range.
• Would you like to be fully immersed in the life of one school right from the start of your training or would you prefer more progressive placements in several schools?
• If you’re considering a school-based route, it’s important to find out as much as you can about the school or group of schools, their partner training provider(s) and the nature of the programme they offer as they do differ.
• Competition for places can be intense. Consider the balance of applicants to number of places available. Some school-based providers may only have one place available in the subject you wish to teach. Higher education institutions vary widely in the number of places they have to offer, and may have many applicants for some courses.

Written by Abigail Evans, University of Oxford

Training to teach in further and higher education
targetpostgrad.com/study-areas/teaching/training-teach-further-and-higher-education

The further education and skills sector includes further education (FE) colleges, independent training providers, the third sector (charities and social enterprises), adult and community learning, offender learning and the armed and uniformed services. There are several teaching qualifications available if you wish to teach students beyond the age of compulsory education; your choice will depend on the type of teaching role you wish to pursue.

What qualifications do you need to teach in FE?
It is possible to gain a lecturing job without a teaching qualification, but your prospects of gaining a position and of progression once in the sector are likely to be greatly enhanced by possessing an appropriate qualification.

You can take qualifications at various levels:
• Level 3 Award in Education and Training: a short introductory course including peer-to-peer teaching practice, which you can take without the need to have a placement or be employed as a teacher.
• Level 4 Certificate in Education and Training: develops practical teaching skills and includes a minimum of 30 hours of teaching practice.
• Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training: training for a full teaching role which includes educational theory and a minimum of 100 hours of teaching practice. It’s possible to include specialist training at this level in literacy, English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL), mathematics or teaching disabled learners.
These qualifications may be undertaken in FE colleges, often on a part-time basis. For level 4 and 5 qualifications you'll usually need to be employed in a teaching role or be able to organise your own placement for teaching practice.

PGCEs in post-compulsory education are offered by higher education institutions either directly or through associated colleges. This is the most usual route into the profession for new graduates. The PGCE incorporates the requirements of the level 5 diploma, but offers additional units at a higher level. The PGCE can be undertaken as a full-time one year course, incorporating teaching practice, or part-time. You will need a degree in the subject you wish to teach.

There are no nationally specified entry requirements for these qualifications, though you need to evidence level 3 skills in English or mathematics to pursue specialist qualifications in these areas. Training providers, however, may have their own entry requirements. It’s also possible to train in secondary teaching and then apply for work in the further education sector.

Where do you find FE teacher training courses?
You’ll find a range of relevant courses using our TARGETpostgrad search. Some PGCE courses can be found by searching on UCAS Teacher Training – select the further education age range on the course search. For other courses, look at the websites of individual further and higher education institutions to see what’s available and apply directly to the training provider.

How do you become a higher education lecturer?
To become a university lecturer, you normally need to study for a masters or PhD qualification in the specialist subject area you want to teach. You’re not expected to have a teaching qualification before you begin, but can study for teaching qualifications once in post. The Higher Education Academy accredits university teaching and learning courses. ●

Written by Abigail Evans, University of Oxford

Funding for teacher training
targetpostgrad.com/study-areas/teaching/funding-teacher-training

Loans are available to cover tuition fees for unsalaried teacher training routes and you may be eligible for a student maintenance loan and/or a non-repayable bursary of up to £20,000.

This section covers funding in England. For information on funding in other parts of the UK see our advice on training to teach in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Bursaries for shortage subjects
Non-repayable bursaries are available for trainee teachers on some full and part-time primary and secondary Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) courses, school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) schemes and non-salaried School Direct programmes. The amount you receive depends on your subject area and degree class. Updated funding information for courses starting in 2015 will be released in autumn of 2014. As a guide to what you may expect, the following scholarships and bursaries were available for 2014/15:

- Graduates training to teach primary education, design and technology, English, history, biology, geography or music can get bursaries of £9,000 if they have a first or £4,000 if they have a 2.1.
- Trainees with School Direct places may be eligible for an additional payment worth 25% of their standard bursary. To qualify for this payment, trainees will need to be based in a school where more than 35% of pupils are eligible for free school meals.

Loans and grants to cover tuition fees and maintenance
Tuition fees have to be paid for postgraduate ITT courses and the amount of these will vary depending on the course and institution. Home and EU students on full-time and part-time courses may be eligible for a loan to cover tuition fees. This will not have to be repaid until you’re working and earning over £21,000 a year.

Home students may also be able to apply for a student maintenance loan to help with accommodation and living costs. Some may also qualify for a non-repayable maintenance grant that will be means tested.

Other support is available for certain groups of students, for example, students with disabilities and students with dependent children. If you’re in financial hardship, you can also apply to your university for help from the access to learning fund.

Funding for early years initial teacher training
For those starting the mainstream graduate entry training in 2014, the following funding was available from the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL):

- A grant of £7,000 for course fees for all graduates.
- A bursary of £9,000 for those with a first and £4,000 for those with a 2.1.

Funding for training to work in FE
Tuition fee loans from Student Finance England are available to both full-time and part-time trainees (if the trainee meets the required criteria) for PGCE programmes accredited by a higher education institution. Full-time students may also apply for maintenance loans and grants. Loan support may be available for level 5 programmes accredited by other awarding organisations – contact your chosen provider for further information.

For 2014/15 grants of £20,000 were available for maths graduates training to teach in further education colleges. There will also be £9,000 grants available for graduates training to teach English/literacy and for those training to specialise in teaching special educational needs (SEN) students. ●

Written by Abigail Evans, University of Oxford