

An overview of the UK educational system

General education system

General education glossary

<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/educationoverview/uksystem/glossaryofterms/>

The following extracts are from:

<http://www.britishcouncil.org.uk/education/system/index.htm>

- **primary education**, up to age eleven
secondary education, up to age sixteen
tertiary education, for those over the age of sixteen
- **Primary:** The emphasis is on group work, creative activity and guided play. There is little or no specialist subject teaching and great emphasis on literacy and numeracy in early years
- **Secondary:** at age sixteen pupils in England and Wales may transfer to sixth form colleges or tertiary colleges
- The **National Curriculum** in England and Wales is divided into four Key Stages (KS), three core subjects (English, Mathematics and Science) and nine non-core foundation subjects.
Towards the end of the first three Key Stages, when pupils are generally aged seven, eleven and fourteen respectively there is statutory assessment in language, maths and science through national tests/tasks and teacher assessment.
- **HE:** All UK post-school courses above GCE Advanced level ('A-level') or Scottish Highers standard, are classified as higher education. Courses are available at universities, colleges and institutions of higher education.

The following extracts are from:

<http://www.eurydice.org/Eurydice/Application/frameset.asp?country=UK&language=VO>

- **FE: Adult literacy and basic skills** courses are designed specifically for adults and include very flexible and informal programmes. They often take the form of drop-in workshops, where voluntary tutors provide tuition on a one-to-one basis. The Basic Skills Agency is the central development agency for adult literacy, adult numeracy and related basic skills learning in England and Wales.
- Institutions and teachers are free to choose the **appropriate teaching methods** for the courses they are teaching. Courses may be structured in a variety of ways and the degree of practical training will depend on the course syllabus and the requirements of the [awarding body](#)

The following extracts are from:

<http://www.eurydice.org/Eurybase/Application/frameset.asp?country=UK&language=VO>

8.1.2. Initial training of teachers in further and adult education institutions

In **England** and **Wales**, persons training to teach in the post-compulsory education sector can work in [further education](#), [tertiary colleges](#) or [sixth-form colleges](#). The sector also includes agricultural and horticultural colleges and there are also opportunities to work in adult and community education and in private training organisations. [Maintained schools](#) may also have post-compulsory age students (16+) in [sixth-form](#) classes; regulations concerning teacher training and qualifications for those teaching in these schools are covered by those for the school sector (see [8.1.1.](#)).

Teachers (often known as lecturers) in [further education institutions](#) or in adult education centres have been encouraged to undertake specialist training for further education teachers but, until recently, this has not been a statutory requirement. However, since September 2001, all new entrants to teaching in the post-compulsory sector are required to undergo teacher training and to complete a professional teaching qualification that is endorsed by the Further Education Training Organisation (FENTO). Serving lecturers who were employed before September 2001 are also being encouraged to obtain relevant teaching qualifications through a process of continuing professional development.

In **Northern Ireland**, further education lecturers who do not have an initial teacher training qualification on appointment must hold an approved qualification such as a university degree or a vocational qualification in the subject they wish to teach. They are contractually required to obtain the Postgraduate Certificate (Further and Higher Education) within three years of appointment and are encouraged to extend this training to obtain the Postgraduate Diploma (Further and Higher Education).

[Further Education National Training Organisation \(FENTO\)](#)

Further education [FE]

Forms: further education, FE, further,

Note: Full- and part-time education, outside the higher education sector, for persons over compulsory school age [16 years], including vocational, academic, social, physical and recreational courses which is provided in further education institutions. The term post-16 education is also used but this encompasses the education of 16 to 19 year olds in schools.

Tertiary college

Forms: tertiary colleges,

Note: A type of further education institution, in England and Wales, which combines the functions of a further education college and a sixth-form college, and which offers the full range of courses, including basic education and general and vocational education and training, largely to students over compulsory school age [16] including adults.

Sixth form college

Forms: Sixth-form college, sixth-form college, sixth-form colleges, sixth form college, sixth form colleges,

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Note: A type of further education institution, in England and Wales, which offers full-time, largely general education courses, for students aged 16 to 18. Until 1992, these institutions were part of the school sector and were governed by schools regulations. These are funded by the Learning and Skills Council in England, and in Wales by the National Council for Education and Training for Wales.

Maintained school

Forms: maintained school, maintained schools,

Note: A term used to define a publicly-funded primary school or secondary school in England and Wales. It includes: community schools, foundation schools, voluntary aided schools and voluntary controlled schools. These schools are funded by local education authorities. In Northern Ireland this term describes a legal category of grant-aided school which are mostly owned by trustees, usually representatives of Roman Catholic churches and fully funded by the Education and Library Boards for revenue expenditure and mainly funded by the Department of Education [Northern Ireland] for capital expenditure. These institutions are normally co-educational, but can be single sex. No fees are payable.

Further education college

Forms: further education colleges, further education institution, further education institutions, fe college, fe colleges,

Note: Establishments providing full- or part-time education and training for students over compulsory school leaving age [16 years] and outside the university sector. Traditionally, further education colleges offered vocational courses. They now tend to offer a combination of academic and vocational courses, but some remain specialised, as e.g. colleges of agriculture and horticulture, technical colleges, colleges of art and of commerce. See also, tertiary colleges and sixth form colleges.

-> Further Education National Training Organisation [FENTO]

Address: 4th Floor
32 Farringdon Street
London EC4A 4HJ

England

Tel: +44 [0]20 7332 9500

Contact:

Note: e-mail: enquiries@fento.ac.uk

<http://www.fento.org>

8.1.2.6. Curriculum and content

The most common qualifications in England and Wales are the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), the Certificate in Education (Cert. Ed) for [further education](#)/post-compulsory education and the Further Education Teachers Certificate. In Northern Ireland, the Department of Education (DE) requires newly appointed further education teachers to obtain the Postgraduate Certificate (Further and Higher Education). Teachers are also encouraged to continue training to obtain the Postgraduate Diploma (Further and Higher Education).

Since September 2001, all courses in England and Wales leading to a further education teaching qualification have been based on standards developed by the Further Education National Training Organisation (FENTO) and endorsed by FENTO as doing so. The standards consist of the following three main elements:

- professional knowledge and understanding;

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- skills and attributes;
- key areas of teaching.

The curriculum and duration of courses may vary according to the qualification and specialisation concerned. The choice of teaching methods is largely determined by the staff of the institution providing the training. Training involves both theoretical and practical elements. Courses may be offered on a full-time, part-time or day-release course basis. Practical teaching experience is an essential element in all courses.

[Department of Education \(DE, NI\)](#)

[Further Education National Training Organisation \(FENTO\)](#)

Also, for adult basic skills teacher training:

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/qualityandtraining>

-> Department of Education [DE, NI]
Address: Rathgael House
43 Balloo Road
Bangor
County Down
BT19 7PR
Northern Ireland
Tel: +44 [0]28 9127 9279
Contact:
Note: e-mail: mail@deni.gov.uk
<http://www.deni.gov.uk>

8.1.2.7. Training models and duration of training

Professional training for [further education](#) teaching may be obtained by full-time study or by a part-time, employment-based route.

The following courses are available:

The Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) or Certificate in Education (Cert. Ed.) course for further education/post-compulsory education

This qualification applies only to the post-16 sector and gives Qualified Teacher (FE) (QTFE) status for [further education](#). It is different and distinct from a PGCE for school teaching, which confers [Qualified Teacher Status \(QTS\)](#). In England and Wales, the qualification is usually obtained after successfully completing one year of full-time study (or two years' part-time) of educational principles and their application to the teaching of specialist subjects. The courses are intended to develop teaching abilities by fostering practical skills and providing the necessary theoretical framework. Serving teachers may be admitted to in-service courses or day-release courses. The qualification is mainly offered by universities or other higher education institutions but may also be located at [further education institutions](#). Part-time courses are more likely to be offered within [further education colleges](#).

The Further Education Teachers' Certificate

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In England and Wales, courses leading to this qualification are offered on a part-time basis in daytime or evening classes to meet the needs of students and include practical teaching experience. This route is aimed particularly at those who start teaching at further education institutions on a part-time non-permanent basis and the course is offered in three stages. Stages 1 and 2 normally take one year in total, and stage 3 a further year. Completion of stage 3 gives an equivalent professional qualification to the PGCE/Cert. Ed. The qualification is validated and awarded by national [awarding bodies](#), such as City and Guilds or Edexcel, and is available at further education institutions with a tradition of offering teacher education.

Qualified Teacher Status

Forms: QTS,

Note: In England and Wales, all teachers who teach in maintained schools for pupils of compulsory school age [5-16] and those appointed since 1st September 1989 to teach in nursery schools [2-5] are required to have Qualified Teacher Status [QTS]. Qualified Teacher Status is awarded by the Secretary of State on satisfactory completion of an approved course of initial teacher education.

Awarding body

Forms: awarding bodies, awarding body's, awarding bodies',

Note: An organisation which awards qualifications such as GCSE and GCE Alevels and NVQs. Awarding bodies include, for example, the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance [AQA]. Professional bodies which award their own qualifications are also awarding bodies, as are National Training Organisations who award their own National Vocational Qualifications. See section 2.5.1.5.

8.1.2.8. Evaluation and certification

The assessment of students' performance for [further education](#) teaching qualifications is, like other teaching qualifications, increasingly based on demonstrated competences, and the practical teaching component is a particularly important part of the assessment. The most common qualifications awarded are outlined in section [8.1.2.7.](#)

In-service Teacher Training

8.3.2. Further education

There is no legal requirement for teachers in [further education colleges](#) or [tertiary colleges](#) to undertake professional development courses. However, most employers would expect their staff to participate in courses and conferences as the need arises.

In [sixth-form colleges](#), five days are designated for participation in professional development activities within the 195 days of [directed duties](#).

directed duties

Forms:

Note: In England and Wales, full-time classroom teachers in schools and sixth-form colleges must perform duties as directed by the headteacher [or employer] for 1265 hours in any school year. The headteacher may also specify the times and places the duties must be performed, provided they are allocated reasonably throughout those days [195] in the school year on which the teacher is required to work. Any additional time [beyond the 1265 hours] required for

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a teacher to effectively discharge his professional duties, such as the marking of pupils' work, the writing of pupils' reports and the preparation of lessons, teaching material and teaching programmes is dependent on the work needed to discharge the teacher's duties and cannot be defined by the employer .