



Department
for Education

Recruiting teachers from overseas

Department for Education

Introductions and housekeeping

Purpose of the webinar



This webinar is predominantly aimed at schools – both those who currently sponsor visas and would like a refresher and schools who have never sponsored visas before



The purpose of the session is to provide information about sponsoring visas, and how schools can recruit international teachers



At the end of the session, we will post a link in the chat with a short survey so we can understand how the session has been helpful and what additional information we could include if we were to run future sessions

Routes into teaching

Qualified Teacher Status

Qualified teacher status (QTS) is a legal requirement to teach in many English schools and is considered desirable for teachers in the majority of schools in England.

Overseas trained teachers do not need QTS to teach in most roles that otherwise require QTS in England for the first 4 years. This exemption is known as the '4-year rule'.

To be eligible for the 4-year rule, the applicant will need to have:

Qualified as a teacher in a country outside the UK

Successfully completed a course of teacher training recognised by the organisation that regulates teachers in the country where they qualified

Please note: If you are employing a teacher without QTS, their salary will **still** need to meet the minimum requirement for a skilled worker visa.

Routes into teaching for non-UK citizens

Initial Teacher Training in England

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To gain QTS in England, non-UK nationals can complete an ITT course with an accredited ITT provider. These normally last for a year, and can be with a School Centred ITT provider or Higher Education Institute.

Apply for QTS in England

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Depending on where a teacher qualified, the subject they teach and their qualifications, a teacher may be able to use the DfE's professional recognition digital service, Apply for QTS in England to gain QTS.

Assessment Only

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The Assessment Only route to QTS is for experienced teachers with a degree who can show they have met all the teachers' standards. This is a non-training route which consists of a series of teaching observations and assessments. It typically lasts 12 weeks.

Once completing an ITT course, or gaining QTS through other routes, Early Career Teachers (ECTs) have to complete a two-year mandatory induction period during their first teaching role. There are some exemptions to this depending on prior experience.

Skilled worker visa

Overview of visas and immigration

All applicants for teaching roles need an immigration status that allows them to work in England. Employers are able to verify this by asking the candidate for a share code that proves their right to work.



Skilled worker visa

This is the most common type of visa for individuals who want to work in England.

It requires the individual to be sponsored by their employer and meet certain salary conditions.



Graduate visa

This visa gives permission to stay in the UK for 2 years (or 18 months from 1 January 2027) to look for work, after successfully completing an eligible course in the UK.

It does not require sponsorship.



Indefinite leave to remain / settled status

Individuals already have the right to work in the UK if they are Irish Citizens, have settled or pre-settled status or have indefinite leave to remain.

These do not require sponsorship.



Other routes that don't require sponsorship

There are other visa routes that do not require any form of sponsorship, such as: British National (Overseas) visa, Family visa, High Potential Individual visa and Youth Mobility Scheme visa.

Who can get a skilled worker visa?

A skilled worker visa allows an individual to come to, or stay in the UK to do an eligible job with an approved employer

Who can get a skilled worker visa?

To qualify for a skilled worker visa, typically an individual must:

- work for a UK employer that's been approved by the Home Office
- have a 'certificate of sponsorship' (CoS) from their employer with information about the role they've been offered in the UK
- do a job that's on the list of eligible occupations
- be paid a minimum salary - how much depends on the type of work they do and the date they got their CoS

Skilled worker visas for teachers:

For teachers, eligibility for skilled worker visas is based on the national teacher pay scales, rather than the standard salary rate of £41,700 which applies for most other professions.

Teachers must be paid at least the minimum skilled worker salary, which is currently £25,000 or the relevant minimum rate for teachers in line with the national teacher pay scales, whichever is higher.

How to be a Skilled Worker visa sponsor

What does it mean to be a Skilled Worker visa sponsor?



A sponsor can be the school where the international teacher works, the local authority, or an academy trust. Sponsors must have a 'worker licence', sometimes referred to as an 'employer licence'.



Your school, MAT or Local Authority may already be a licensed sponsor, and you can check the [register of licensed sponsors: workers](#) to find this out.

How do we become a visa sponsor?

To become a licensed worker sponsor, you will need to:

- ✓ show you're suitable to be a sponsor
- ✓ appoint a member of staff to manage the sponsorship process
- ✓ supply supporting documents
- ✓ pay your licence fees
- ✓ meet your responsibilities as a sponsor

How much does it cost?

The cost for your skilled worker licence can vary depending on the size of your school and whether it is a registered charity.

Licences are valid indefinitely and do not need to be renewed.

Type of licence	Fee for small or charitable sponsors	Fee for medium or large sponsors
Worker	£611	£1,682

You only need 1 sponsorship licence per school, multi-academy trust or local authority.

How to tell if your school is a small or charitable sponsor

You're usually a small sponsor if **at least 2** of the following apply:

- ✓ your annual turnover is £15 million or less
- ✓ your total assets are worth £7.5 million or less
- ✓ you have 50 employees or fewer

You're a charitable sponsor if you're:

- ✓ a registered charity in England or Wales
- ✓ a registered charity in Scotland
- ✓ a registered charity in Northern Ireland - if you're not on the register, you must provide proof of your charitable status for tax purposes from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC)
- ✓ an excepted charity
- ✓ an exempt charity
- ✓ an ecclesiastical corporation established for charitable purposes

We have a sponsor license, what's next?

As well as the visa sponsorship licence, there are two other costs that must be paid per international teacher you hire:



Certificate of sponsorship fee - this is a one-off payment for each teacher sponsored and is only paid again if the visa needs to be renewed.

The cost per certificate is £525



Immigration skills charge – this cost can vary, and it is paid up front for each year of a teacher's visa (unless they are switching from a student visa).

The cost for small or charitable sponsors is £480, and for medium or large sponsors is £1,320

Example

Total costs example:

A small school employing their first overseas teacher on a 2-year visa would need to pay for the following:

- skilled worker sponsor licence (only paid once to get your licence): **£611**
- certificate of sponsorship fee: **£525**
- 2 amounts of immigration skills charges (one per each year): **£480 x2**

Total cost = **£2096**

You only need 1 sponsorship licence per school, multi-academy trust or local authority (not a licence per school within the trust/LA).

Support for schools

Sponsors can get advice from the sponsorship, employer and education helpline:

Sponsorship, employer and education helpline

Telephone: 0300 123 4699

Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm

[Find out about call charges](#)

UK businesses can also get help from the Business Helpdesk:

Business Helpdesk

businesshelpdesk@homeoffice.gov.uk

How to recruit an international teacher

Advertise your teaching role

Teaching 
Vacancies

Visa sponsorship

☒ Only show jobs with visa sponsorship



Teacher Vacancies is a free service that you can use to advertise teaching jobs and other school roles

When you create a job listing, you can select whether you:

- ✓ offer skilled worker visa sponsorship for the role
- ✓ would be willing to apply for a sponsorship licence to sponsor a candidate

To attract high-quality overseas applicants, you should be clear that English schools often require teachers with qualities beyond academic excellence and subject knowledge

Offering a candidate a job

An applicant can only apply for their skilled worker visa once they have received a job offer. They can apply up to **3 months** before they need to start work in the UK, providing they meet the following criteria:

- ✓ you as their employer are a licensed worker sponsor
- ✓ you have offered them a job
- ✓ they have met the [English language requirements for a skilled worker visa](#)
- ✓ payment for their role, or part-time role is in line with the [skilled worker visa](#) salary requirements or the [relevant minimum rate for teachers in England](#), whichever is higher.

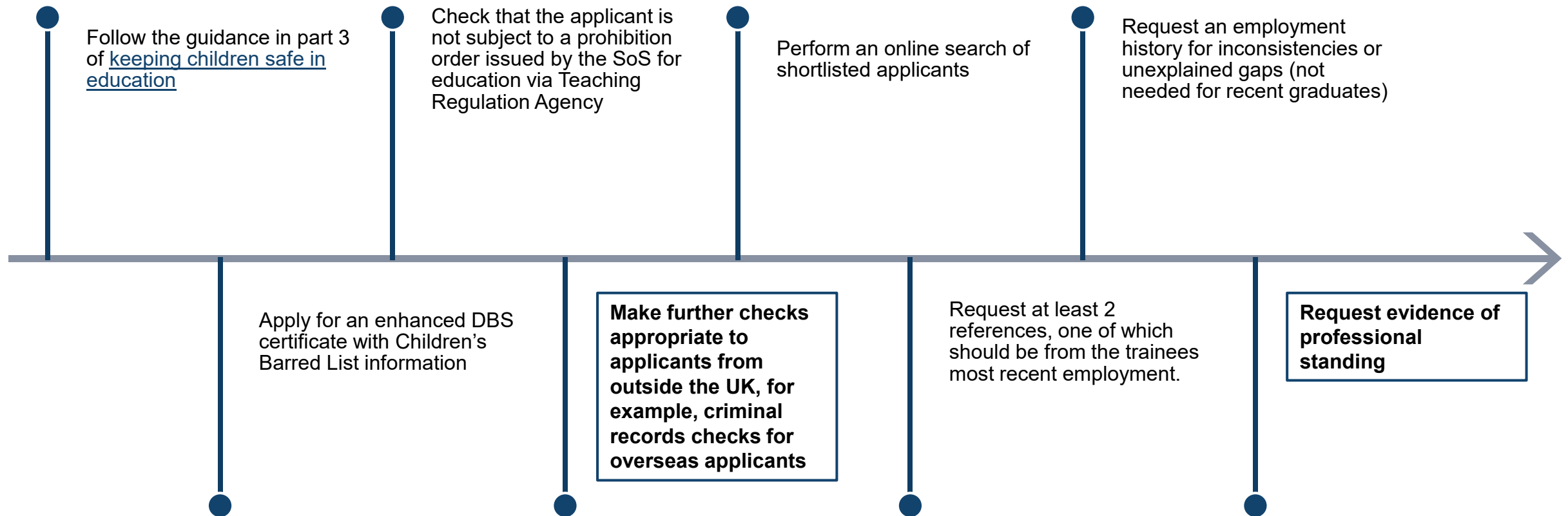
You could also recruit an ECT on a graduate visa who will not need immediate sponsorship. From 1 January 2027, the graduate visa will last 18 months, so you might want to explore the transition for these teachers onto a skilled worker visa, so that they are able to complete their induction and continue teaching with you.

The service standard processing time for a skilled worker visa is approximately **8 weeks** for applications made in the UK, and **3 weeks** for applications made overseas and there are circumstances when it may take longer.

This is something you should consider when recruiting for an international teacher, or transitioning a teacher from a graduate visa to a skilled worker visa.

Safeguarding checks for teachers from overseas

Applicants who have lived or worked outside the UK must undergo the same checks as all other staff in schools. They should also undergo additional checks related to international recruitment and training.



Checking an applicant's right to work

Whatever the successful applicant's visa or immigration status, the employing school is responsible for checking their right to work.



To assess an individual's right to be in the UK and any conditions attached to their stay, the UK Visas and Immigration service have introduced eVisas, which have replaced physical immigration documents.



An eVisa will provide a digital record of:

- A migrant's identity and immigration status
 - the conditions of their status - for example if they're allowed to work in the UK
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This should always be checked prior to the commencement of work to ensure they meet the conditions of their immigration status.



An individual will need to supply you with a 'share code' and date of birth which you can check online Check someone's immigration status: use their share code - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Additional support for international teachers

There may be some ways that you can consider to provide additional support to international teachers who may be less familiar with the English school system. Much of this will be best practice for any new teacher, but included below are some additional ideas for how you can support an international teacher to thrive.

Understanding the English School system

This could include:

- pastoral duties
- English School Curriculum
- teaching to different abilities
- providing your schools induction pack

Before the term starts, you may wish to allocate a mentor to offer supports and share teaching resources

Signposting to practical information

This might include:

- finding somewhere to live
- guidance how to open a bank account
- registering with services, such as doctors
- applying for a national insurance number

School experience of hiring international teachers

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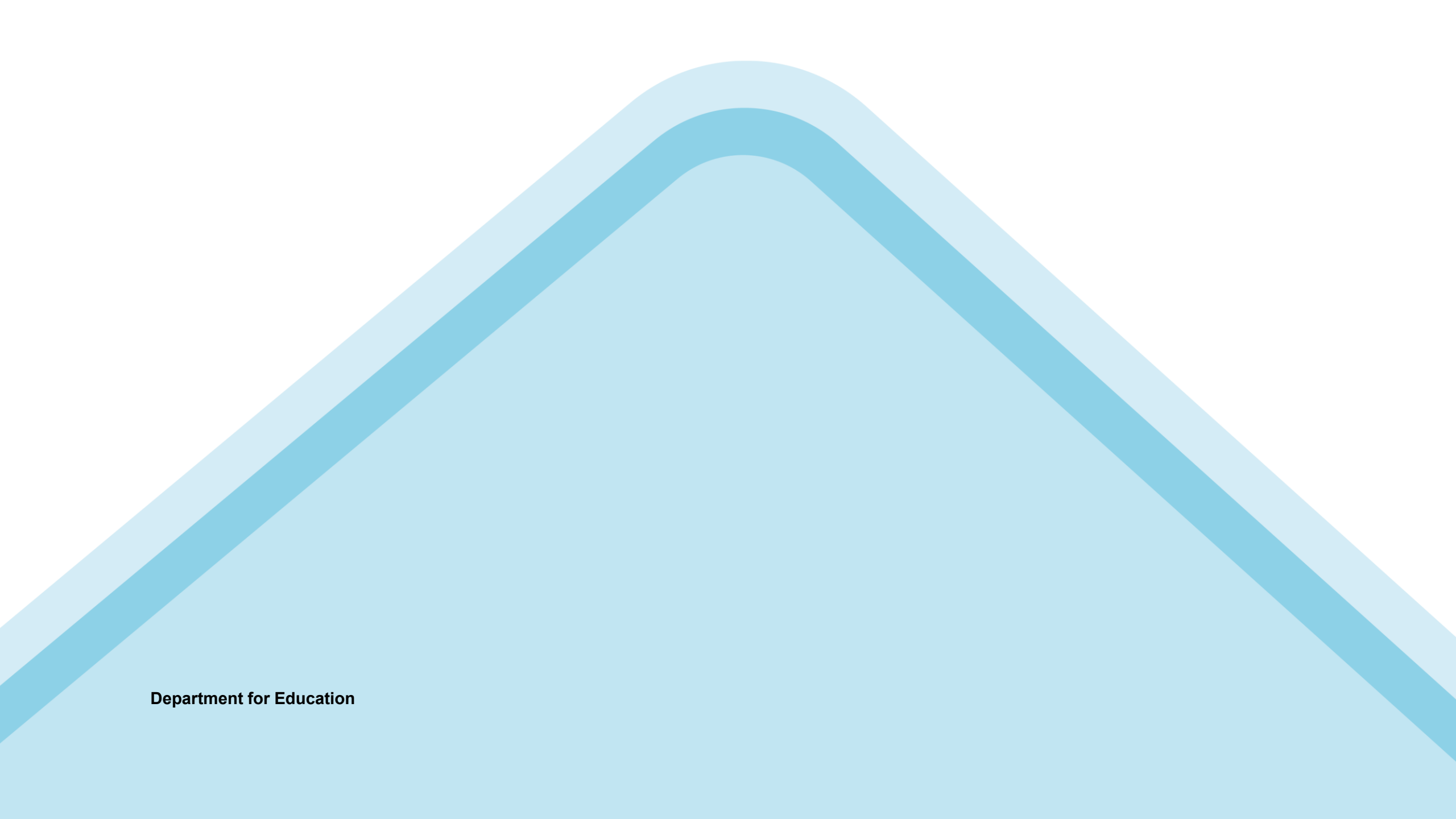


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International teacher recruitment webinar - feedback survey



Get in touch: teach.inengland@education.gov.uk



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