Philippa Baker – Course Leader Science -
Nottingham Trent University

Rob Campbell – PGCE Science Course Lead
St Mary's University Twickenham

Juliette Claro :PGCE – MFL and iQTS
International PGCE support St Mary's university

The pipeline of international teachers: Opportunities and challenges

International Trainee Teacher Education

Special interest group

Aims of the session

- To explore the teacher recruitment and retention in secondary shortage subjects especially in Physics and Modern Foreign Languages (MFL)
- To explore the international recruitment that has recently changed the Initial Training Education landscape in these subjects
- To explore why international trainee teachers and Early Career Teachers are important in our profession
- To explore challenges and opportunities through the UCET Special Interest Group

Juliette Claro Co-chair of the SIG
MFL PGCE –iQTS St Mary's University- Twickenham
juliette.claro@stmarys.ac.uk



Organisations comments on recruitment of international teachers

- The Association for Science Education have launched research into the challenges and barriers to recruiting international teachers

"Initial findings suggest that financial incentives to attract overseas students to train and teach in the UK has real potential. However, this potential is at risk of being undermined by challenges and complexities in the system."

- Lynne Ladrook, Chief executive, ASE

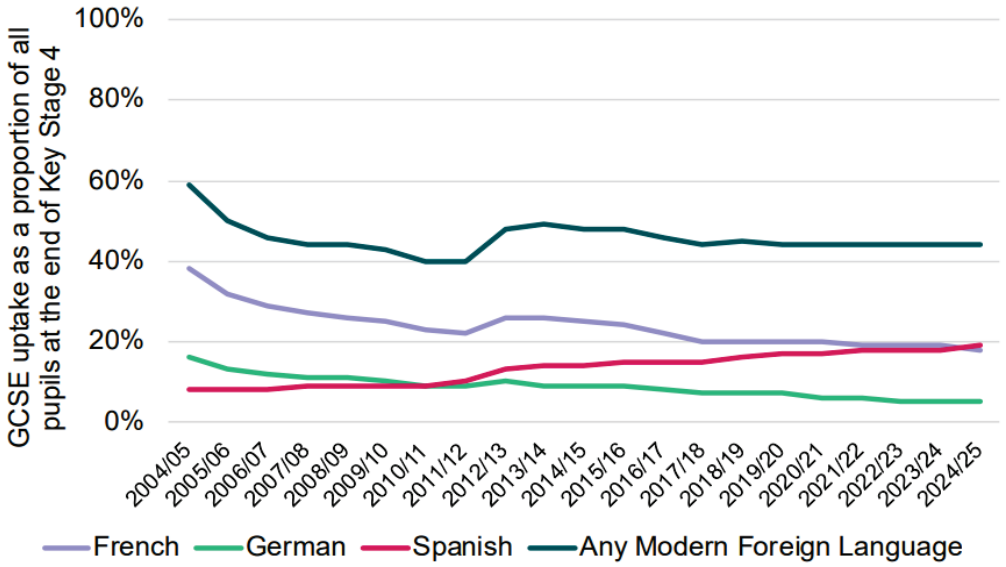
- **Foreign language teachers as ambassadors of multilingualism and international exchange (OECD 2020)**

International Taskforce on Teachers for Education 2030 (ITTE), 2023. *Potentials of international teachers: Experiences and examples*.

- 'International teachers can enrich schools: as masters of their subject and through new methods, through multilingualism and pluralisation of ideas of normality, through specific access to international pupils and their families and as a role model in the school of the migration society. We would be pleased if the examples contribute to the empowerment of international teachers and give impulses for their strength-oriented perception' (p1)

The pipeline of linguists

Figure 6. Modern Foreign Language GCSE uptake as a proportion of all pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 by year[231]



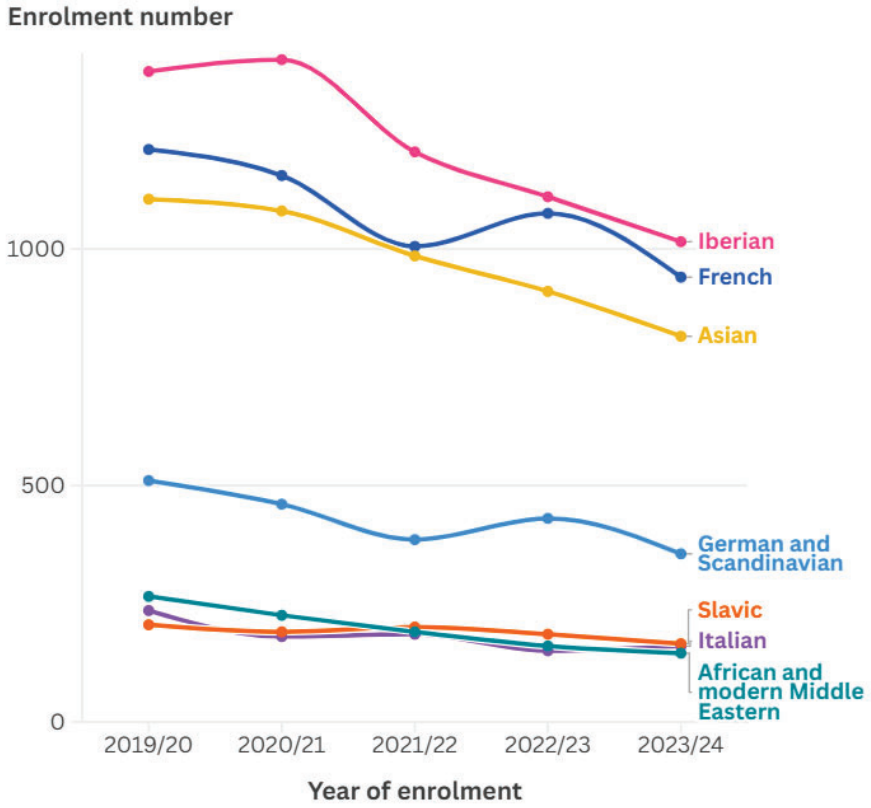


DfE(2025)

- A Level French entries made up 2% of A Level entries in 2009/10 and 1% in 2023/24. A Level Spanish entries made up 1% of A Level entries in 2009/10 and 1% in 2023/24. A Level German entries made up 0.6% of A Level entries in 2009/10 and 0.3% in 2023/24.

Enrolment in UK higher education foreign language studies by area of study 2019/20-2023/24

Undergraduate entrants



Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency

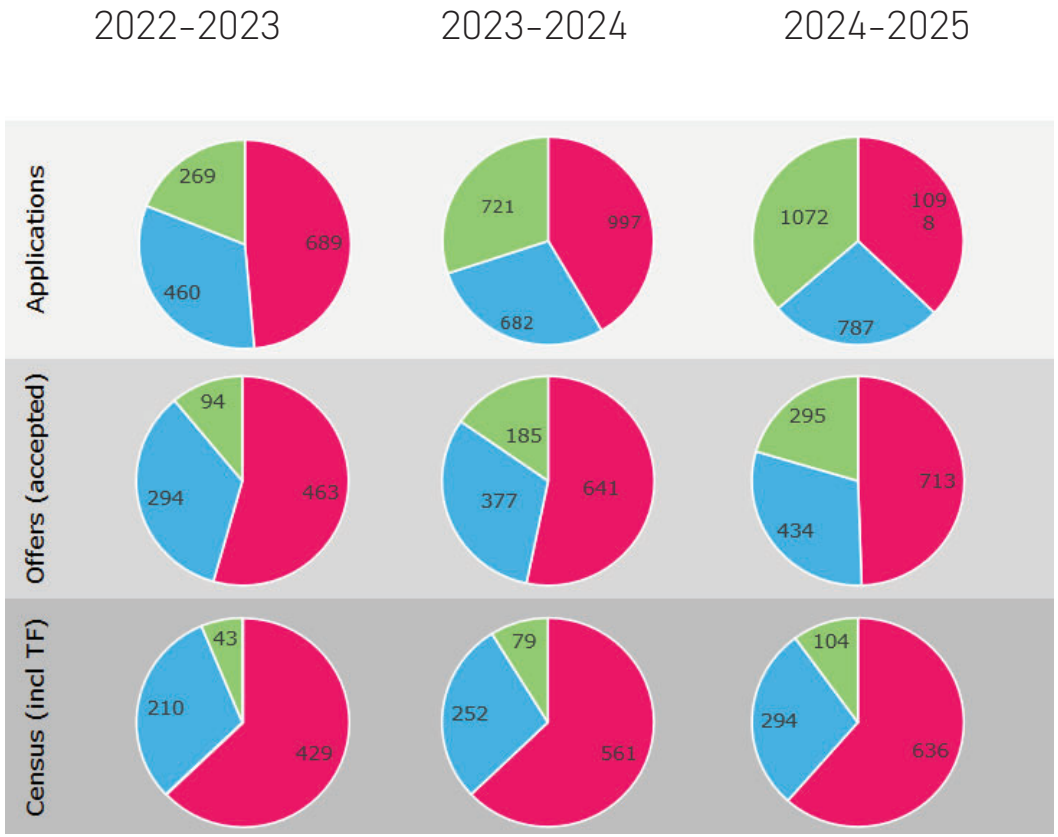
- Social Justice issue
- 'cold-spots' in South-West , North and East on England

- Modern foreign language GCSE uptake is more than 20 percentage points higher in the most affluent state schools.
- 68% of the least affluent schools face difficulties recruiting language teachers.
- Almost one-third of the most disadvantaged schools have pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- French continues to be the most offered language at Key Stage 3, while Spanish retains more pupils at the age 14 and age 16 transition points.
- Small A-level class sizes are a growing concern; fewer than one-third of the most disadvantaged schools can run them

Mitchell, 2023

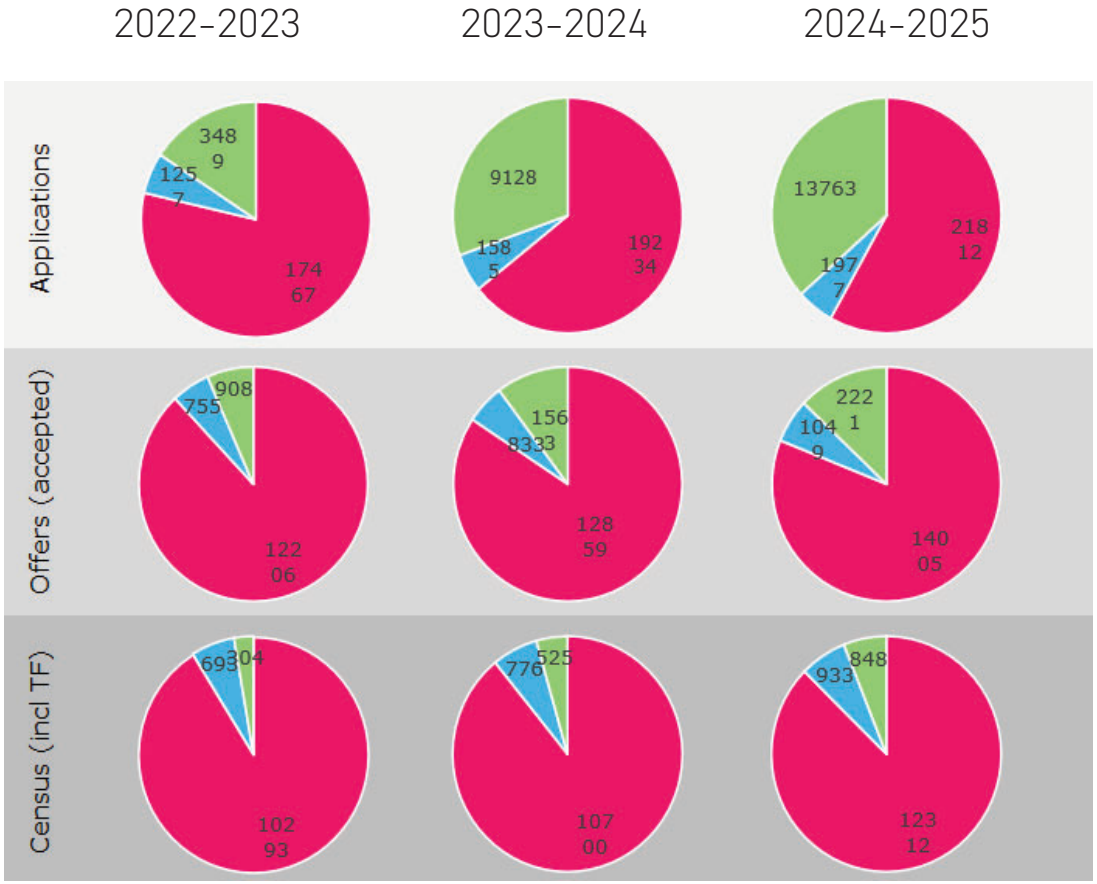
Collen, 2025 (Language Trends British Council)

Conversion from Application to employment languages



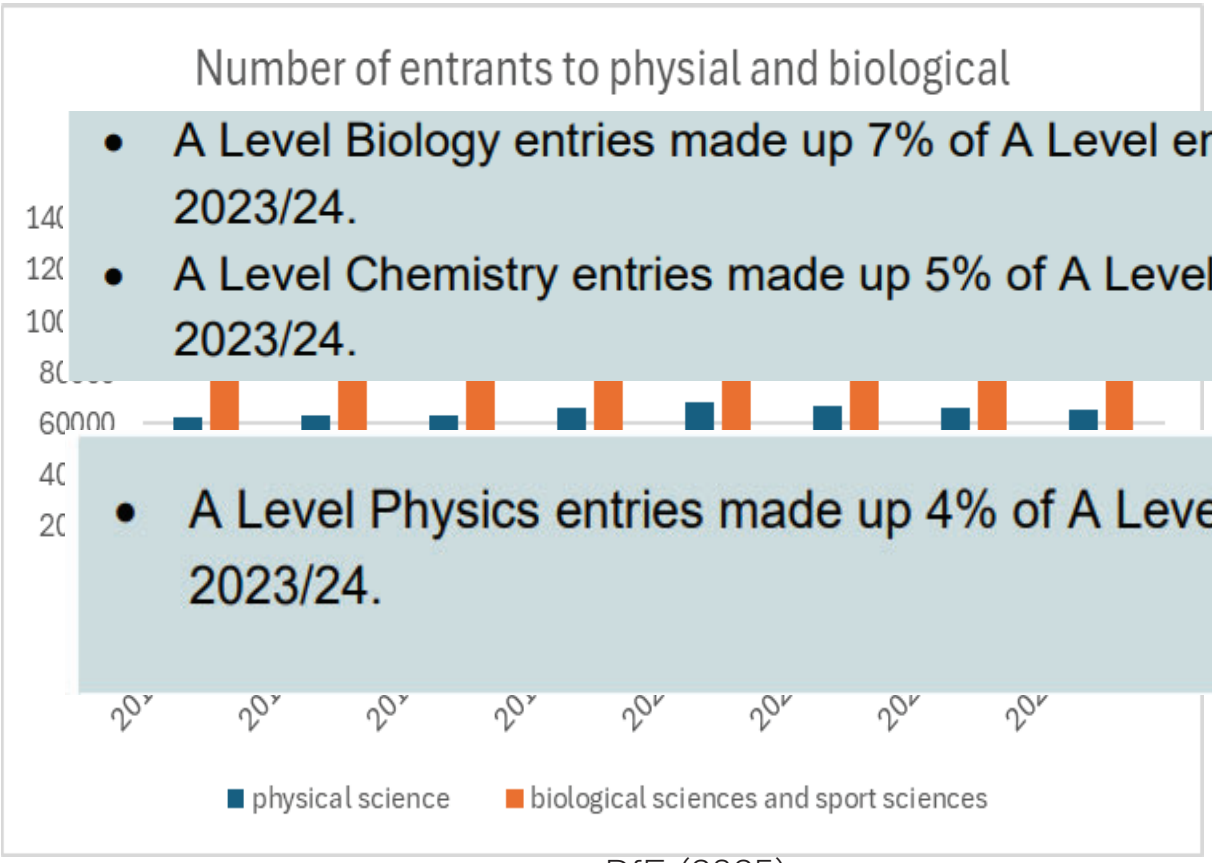
DfE Apply Data collected and Analysed by Mark Crawley Nottingham Trent Universty

Conversion from Application to employment Secondary courses



DfE Apply Data collected and Analysed by Mark Crawley Nottingham Trent Universty

Data on Uptake of sciences

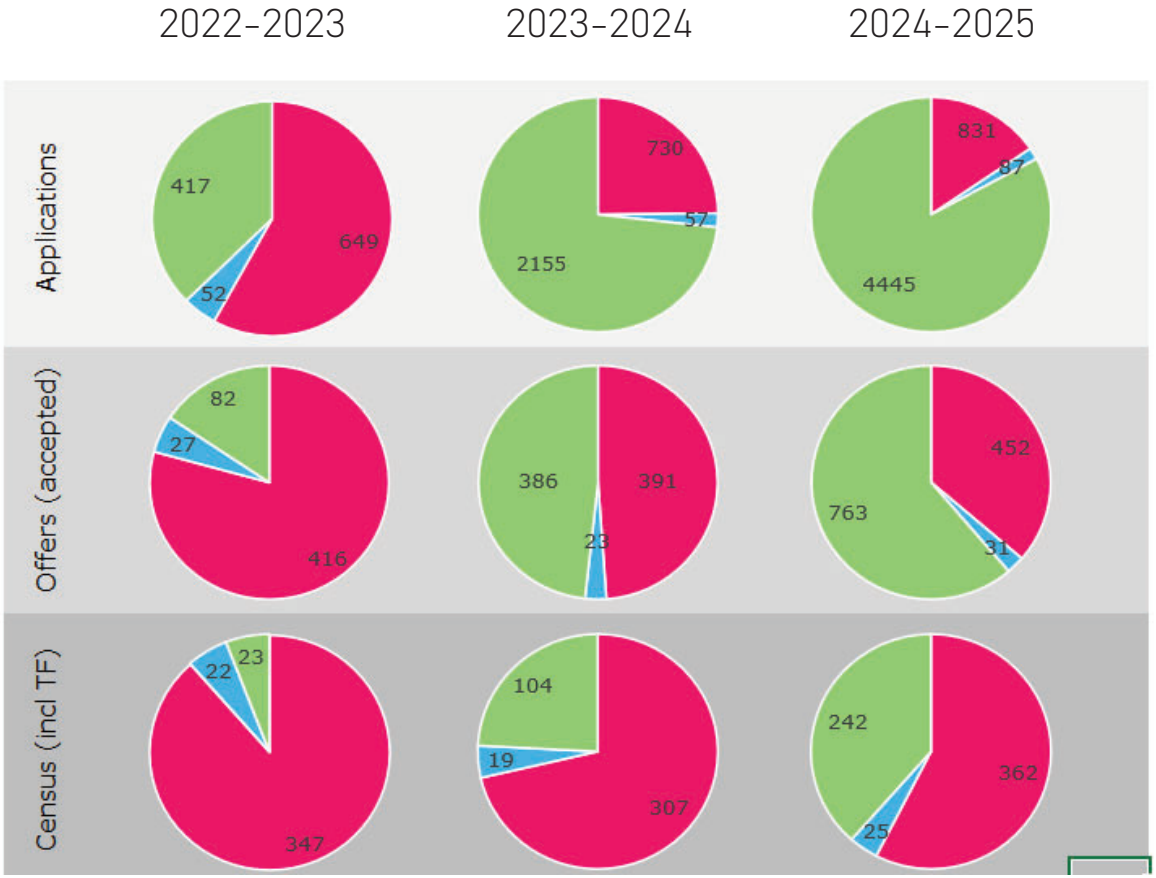


- A Level Biology entries made up 7% of A Level entries in 2009/10 and 8% in 2023/24.
- A Level Chemistry entries made up 5% of A Level entries in 2009/10 and 7% in 2023/24.
- A Level Physics entries made up 4% of A Level entries in 2009/10 and 5% in 2023/24.

DfE (2025)

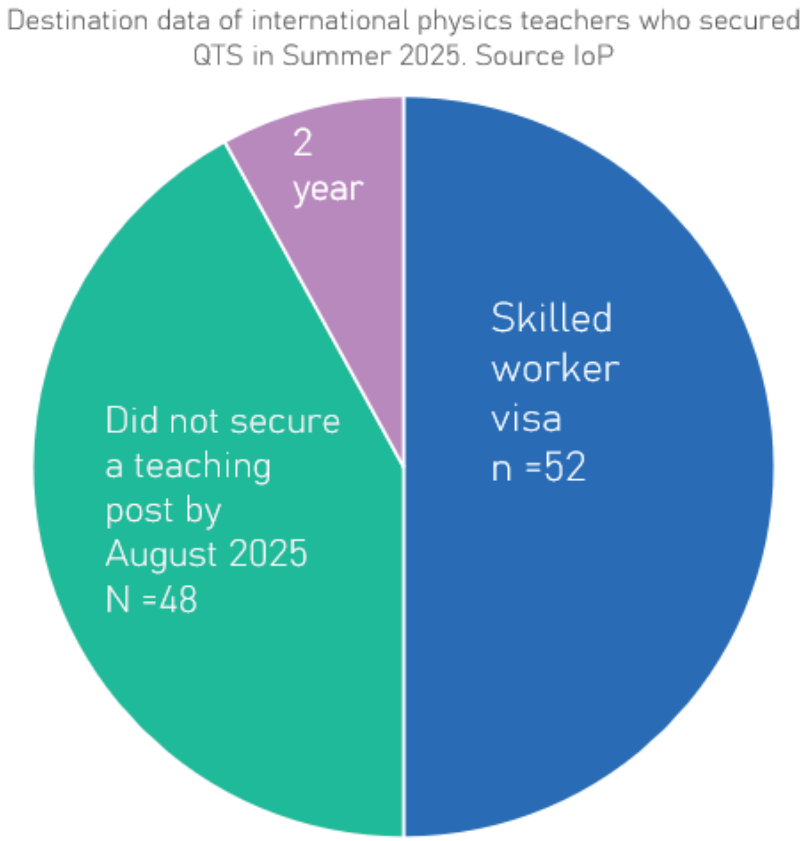
HESA (2025)

Conversion from Application to employment physics



DfE Apply Data collected and Analysed by Mark Crawley Nottingham Trent Universty

Employment rates 2025 cohort



Source IoP 2025

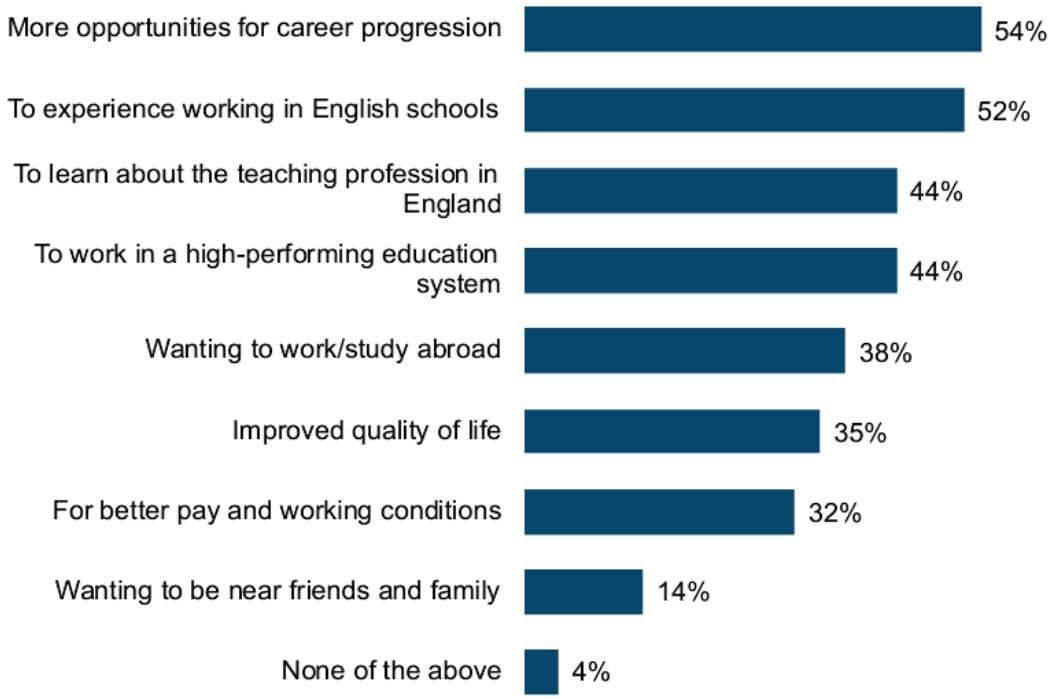
Home Office: employers should prioritise 'Domestic workforce'

- What if the domestic workforce is currently non existent?
- How does the workforce represent the diversity of students in schools?
- How do we create role models and bring expertise in the classroom?
- How do we bring subject experts, and experience in the classroom?
- How do we live our British Values?

Reasons why internationals come to train in England

International teacher recruitment: research report Department for Education (June 2025)

Figure 2.1 Teacher's motivations for applying for a teaching role in England



Source: Q59 Which of the following attracted you to teach or train to teach in England?
Base: All teachers (3,396)

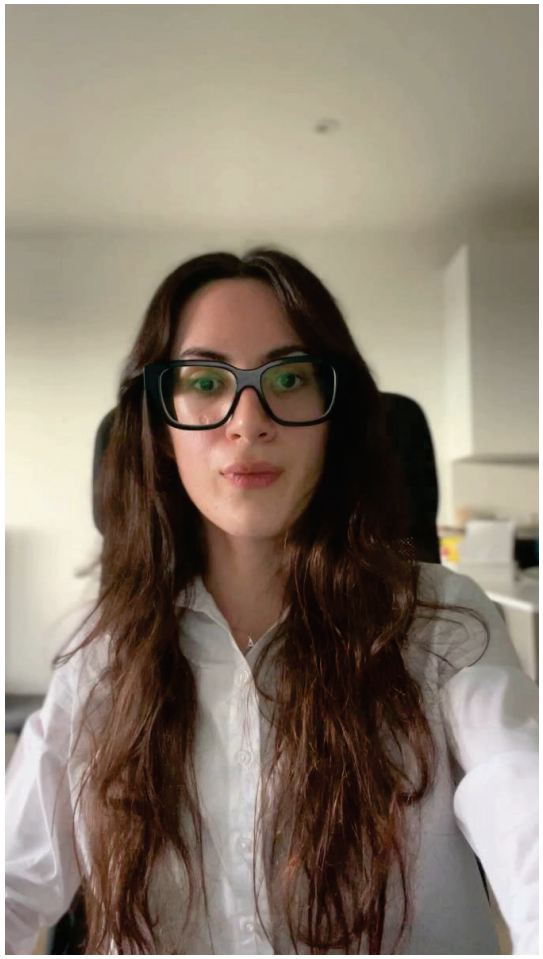
International trainees...through their voice

Anna

PGCE MFL 2024-2025

Italy

ECT year 1 – Graduate Visa



What resonated for you in Anna's experience?

Sarah

PGCE Physics 2024-2025

Ghana

ECT Year 1 Skilled Worker Visa



What resonated for you in Sarah's experience?

Reflections



•How do these experiences sit with your experience?

•What surprised you?

•What challenged your thinking?

Why international teachers matter in modern Britain schools?

- Subject knowledge
- Experience
- Cultural capital
- Inclusion
- Resilience
- Determination to grow and stay in education

What is the SIG trying to achieve?



The SIG

- 86 members
- 51 ITE providers
- Association for Language Learning
- Institute of Physics
- All Party Parliamentary Group
- Universities International UK
- A Padlet of shared resources to share pra

And work collaboratively

International Trainee Teacher Education

International Trainee Teacher Education Special Interest group

The mission

The mission of the group is to:

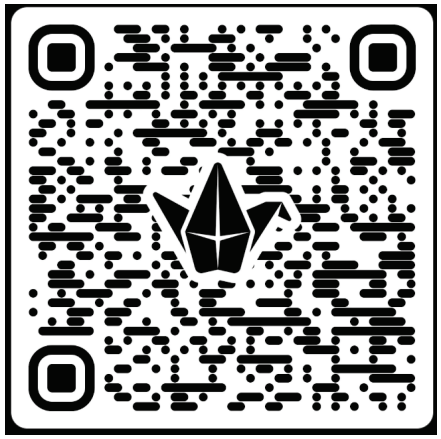
- Provide a research-led forum for ITE providers to support the education of international trainee teachers in readiness for becoming Early Career Teachers.
- Support the development of a joined-up response to the Department for Education for coherence in policies and practices between the government recruitment policies of international trainee teachers and ITE providers.
- Add to the field of knowledge about supporting international pre-service and early career teachers navigating their transition in the English education system to maximise their retention by providing support and guidance to schools and academies in retention strategies of international Early Careers Teachers.

The objectives

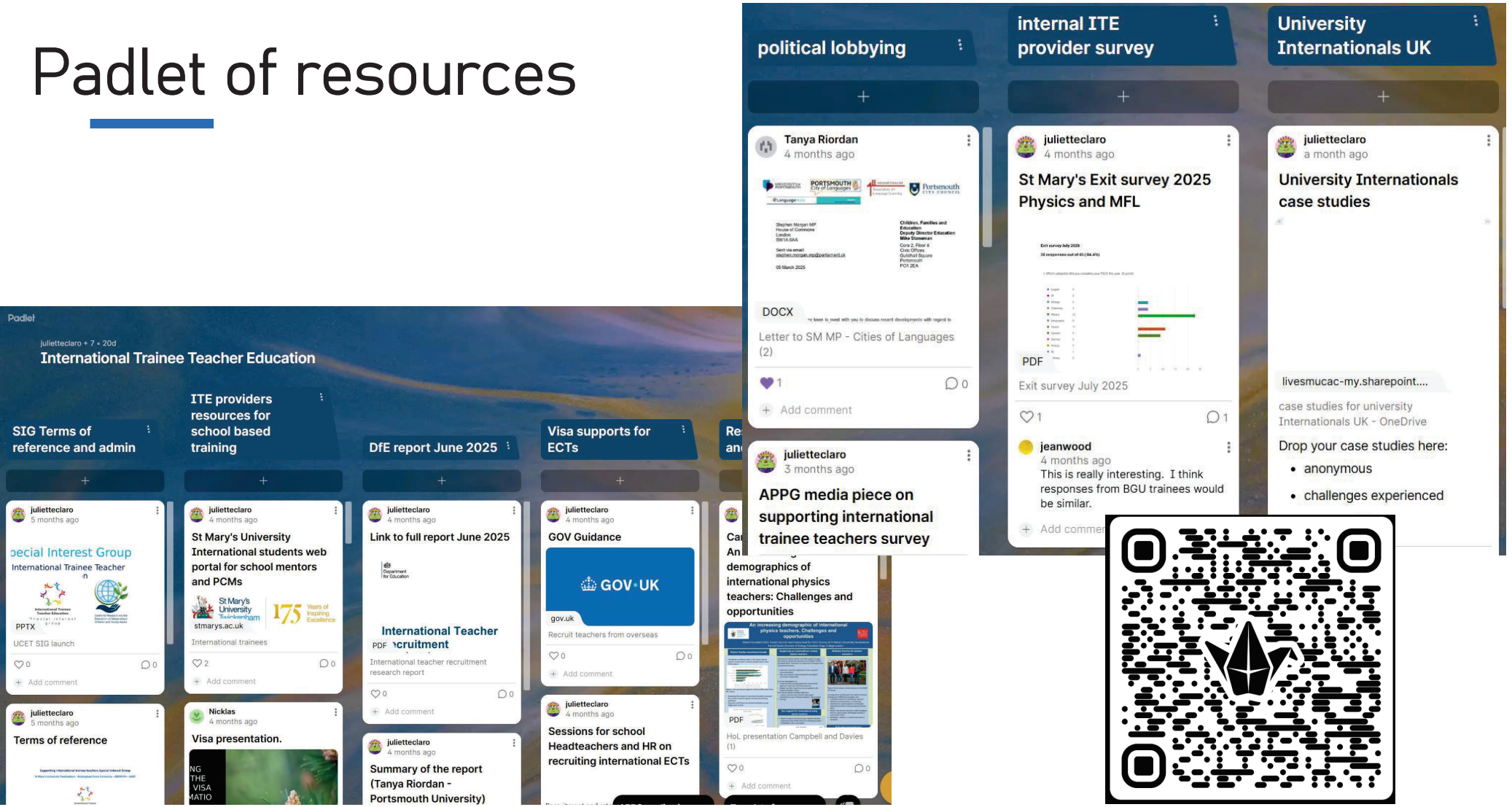
- To collate and disseminate research and best practice focusing on how to integrate international teachers to the English school setting
- To explore the main challenges international trainees face and opportunities to mitigate those challenges during training and during induction
- To make recommendations to UCET and therein the Department for Education for the recruitment and retention of international trainee teachers and Early Careers Teachers in our education system.
- To create document guidance for ITE providers to best support international trainee teachers

Where we are so far....

- ITE providers create content for each other for mentor training
- Bank of resources for pre-arrival modules shared
- Consultation and collaboration on recruitment processes and school placement issues
- Collaboration with associations on guidance and updates on publications and webpages
- Case studies for UCET and Universities International UK for the Migration Advisory Committee
- Lobbying with MPs, DfE
- Pending publication for HEPI



Padlet of resources



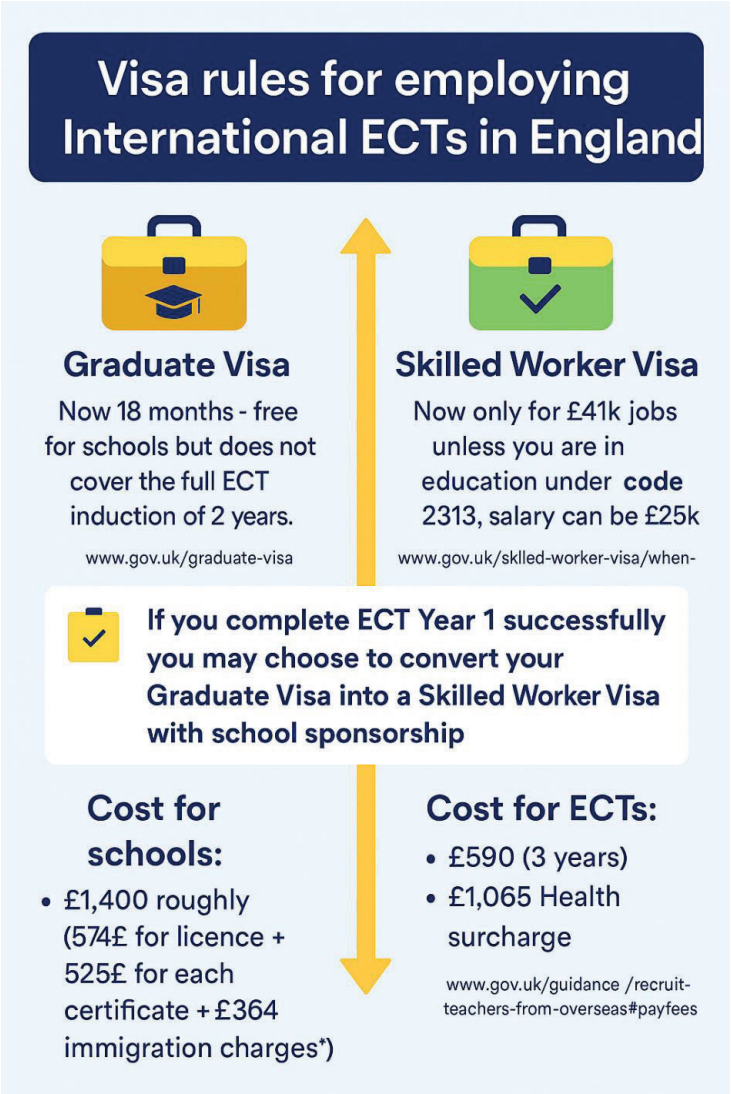
Guidance for Schools, international applicants and initial teacher education providers

- Three documents aimed at:
- International trainee teachers
- Schools and school teachers supporting international trainee teachers
- ITT providers.

The guidance will be published by the end of November 2025 on the following website

Guidance for international trainee physics teachers | Institute of Physics

Impact of immigration rules and the graduate visa



SIG and APPG collaboration

- Outreach to Members of Parliament
- Outreach to Universities International UK and Migration Advisory Group
- Outreach to DfE

Skilled Worker visa: If you work in healthcare or education - GOV.UK

If you work in healthcare or education

There are different salary rules if you work in some healthcare or education jobs. Your salary must be at least £25,000 - or more if your job's 'going rate' is higher.

The going rates for these jobs are based on the national pay scales set by the relevant independent body, for example the NHS.

View the list of eligible healthcare and education jobs to see if your job is included.

The SIG is a voice for our international teachers

July 2026 publication
Supporting international trainee and early career teachers in school placements

- Nottingham Trent University
- University of Worcester
- University of Portsmouth
- Manchester Met University
- St Mary's University
- UCL- IOE
- University of Reading

Supporting with:
- Pre-arrival
- On arrival
- School training
- Micro-aggression
- Accents
- Validating prior experience
- Culturally responsive training
- Visas / employment

Would you like to contribute?
Email: juliette.claro@stmarys.ac.uk

Recommendations for Education Policy

Solving the shortage of teachers	Coherence in policies
1. Review National recruitment and retention policies through pay, workload and flexible working conditions 2. Anti-racist curriculum and racial literacy training to be part of teacher training and on-going CPD 3. Support teacher mobility as an opportunity to develop and grow the curriculum and role models for young people not as a deficit model	1. Waiving visas for shortage scheme subject aligned with NHS recruitment – or support school's sponsorship 2) Standardised on-boarding through the DfE 3) funding for ECTs who completed their induction in all shortage subjects and reinstalment of relocation package



Any 3 points / questions/ reflection part of the international trainee discourse



" We are stronger together" (R. O'Sullivan MMU)



UCET Special Interest Group – join us!

International Trainee Teacher Education

Special interest group

UCET

Universities' Council for the Education of Teachers

Meeting 2 : Monday 15 December
1pm-2pm Teams



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