

Teacher - Secondary School - Community Languages

Community language teachers prepare and give lessons in community languages such as Urdu or Chinese. They work to guidelines set up by the Curriculum of Excellence and prepare pupils, aged 11 to 18, for national exams.

They normally teach another subject as well as teaching a community language.

The Work

You could be:

- teaching pupils to speak, read and write community languages
- using a variety of teaching techniques such as discussions, whole class lessons and group work
- using a range of materials including computers, textbooks, work sheets and interactive whiteboards
- organising and directing the whole class and helping individual pupils as required
- setting assignments, projects, tests and exams, preparing and carrying out continuous assessment, marking pupils' work and writing reports
- keeping good order in the classroom and dealing with discipline issues
- doing administrative work, including keeping a register of pupils
- preparing for and attending parent-teacher meetings and staff meetings
- sometimes supervising out-of-hours activities such as visits or social events.

Pay

Teachers in Scotland are paid on a national salary scale. The starting annual salary for a probationer teacher is £35,022 (April 2026).

If you do your probationary period on the Teacher Induction Scheme, and are prepared to work anywhere in Scotland during that probationary year, you can also apply for the Preference Waiver Payment. For secondary school teachers, the payment is £8,000 before tax and national insurance.

Where a teacher is employed in a remote school on a distant island both the remote schools allowance and the distant islands allowance are paid, in addition to the teacher's normal salary.

Lead teachers earn between £59,871 and £85,047.

A principal teacher earns between £57,498 and £74,205 a year, while the scale for depute head teachers and head teachers ranges from £65,214 to £120,450 a year, depending on the size of school.

(April 2026)

Salaries in independent schools may differ slightly.

Conditions

- You would work in a classroom or a language laboratory.
- Your working hours are based on a 35-hour week and are usually 9.00am to 3.30pm or 4.00pm.
- You would probably teach for 22.5 hours a week, so you would have some time for preparation and marking or assessment in school. But you would often have to do more at home, in evenings or at weekends.
- You would have 13 weeks holiday each year, but you would probably use some of this time to prepare next term's work.
- You would have to prepare for and attend parent-teacher meetings, which are usually in the evening.
- You should be aware that teaching is a mentally and physically demanding job.

Getting In

To qualify as a secondary school teacher of community languages, you must have:

- a degree equivalent in standard to a UK degree
- studied your own native language up to A level or equivalent standard
- a Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE).

Most community language teachers also teach another subject, so you really need to have another teaching subject as well.

Your degree

- For entry to a degree course you normally need 4-5 Highers. Depending on the degree, you may be required to hold passes in particular subjects or at particular grades.
- Your degree should normally contain 80 Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) credit points relevant to the subject you wish to teach, and 40 of the credit points must have been studied at SCQF level 8 (second year undergraduate level) or above.

PGDE

- For entry to the PGDE, you need an approved degree and Higher English plus Maths at National 5 - some institutions specify at B.
- You must be able to write and speak fluently both in the community language and in English. You may be asked to demonstrate this.
- Aberdeen University offers a PGDE in Secondary Education (Mandarin).
- Edinburgh University offers a PGDE in Secondary Education (Chinese).
- There is a lot of competition for places in these courses. It helps if you have experience of working with children or young people.
- For PGDE courses, apply through UCAS.

You would require a satisfactory PVG (Protecting Vulnerable Groups) check to show you are suitable for this type of work. Contact Disclosure Scotland for details.

Newly qualified teachers who want to teach in local council schools must complete a probationary period to demonstrate that they meet the Standard for Full Registration of the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTC

Scotland). Those who wish to teach in independent schools may also require to be registered.

You are guaranteed a teaching post with a Scottish local authority for a full school year to complete this probationary period.

What Does It Take

You need to have:

- an interest in child development and an understanding of how children learn
- patience and adaptability
- enthusiasm and energy
- confidence
- a firm and assertive approach when necessary
- good organisational skills
- a sense of humour and a positive outlook.

You need to be able to:

- hold the interest of pupils of all abilities and encourage them
- work on your own and as part of a team and stay calm under pressure
- get on well with other staff members, parents and carers.

Training

- You will do in-service training (often provided by local councils) throughout your teaching career.
- You might also take part time courses in specialist aspects of education, run by universities.

Getting On

- You may be promoted to be a principal teacher or head of department.
- You may then become a depute head teacher and then a head teacher.
- You might move into related work such as learning support teaching, further education lecturing, advisory work, education authority administration or schools inspection.

More Information

Most teachers work in local council schools but there are also jobs in independent schools, British schools abroad, such as schools for the children of British armed services and in private tuition.

Job vacancies are normally advertised on local authority websites or look on myjobscotland website.

Contacts

Association for Language Learning

Tel: 01332 227779

Email: info@all-languages.org.uk

Website: www.all-languages.org.uk
X: @ALL4language
Facebook: www.facebook.com/alllanguages.org.uk

Education Scotland

Tel: 0131 244 4330
Email: enquiries@education.scot.nhs.uk
Website: education.gov.scot
X: @EducationScot

General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTC Scotland)

Tel: 0131 314 6000
Email: gtcs@gtcs.org.uk
Website: www.gtcs.org.uk
X: @gtcs

Teach in Scotland

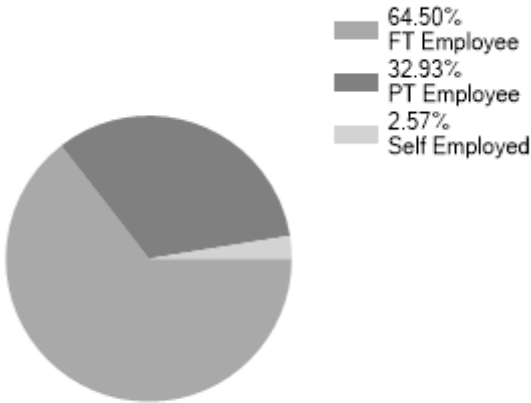
Tel: 0845 345 4745
Email: teachinscotland@gtcs.org.uk
Website: teachinscotland.scot

University and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)

Tel: 0371 468 0 468
Website: www.ucas.com
Website (2): www.ucas.com/postgraduate/teacher-training/train-teach-scotland
X: @ucas_online
Facebook: www.facebook.com/ucasonline

Statistics

Employment Status UK %

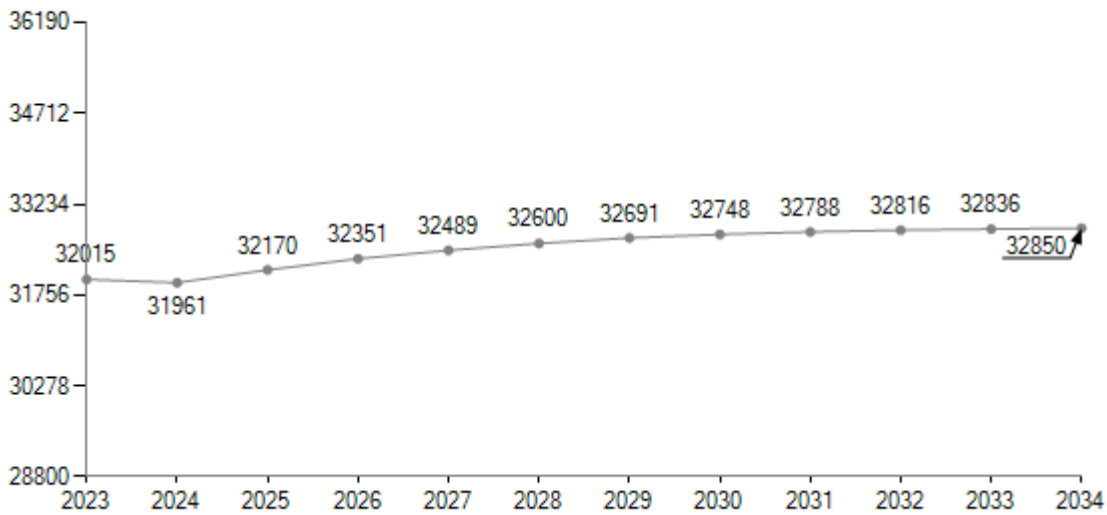


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

LMI data powered by [LMI for All](#)

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)