

# APPLYING FOR YOUR FIRST TEACHING POST

## WHERE DO I WANT TO TEACH?

Making a decision about where you want to look for your first teaching post is very important. Many students find their first teaching post either in the area near to where they trained or they return to the area where their family lives. It is important to make sure:

- that you have good support for your first teaching post,
- that your domestic arrangements run as smoothly as possible,
- that you are not going to be distracted from your job by financial worries.

Working out a cost of living budget, thinking about who will support you, and what kind of place you want to live in are important considerations.

Mature students usually have family commitments which limit the area in which they can look for a new post. It's common sense that the more specific and constrained your search-area is, the more difficult it may be to get your first post.

In general, the less flexible you are over issues like location, the longer it can take to get your first job. On the other hand there is little point in applying for a post that is not relevant to your training or does not really appeal to you. You are most likely to be successful if the post advertised is close to the age range or subject area for which you have been trained.

The vacancy situation varies around the country and lots of different factors affect the market for jobs, such as whether the school population in an area is rising or falling and Local Authority policies. If you can't find any appropriate vacancies you may need to consider other areas as the situation may well be different.

You should use all the available information about a school mentioned in this handbook, such as the job advertisement, information sent from the school, the school prospectus, Ofsted reports etc to help you decide whether or not the job could be the right one for you. (Ofsted reports can be accessed from our links page).

## WHERE DO I FIND OUT ABOUT JOBS?

**[www.epm.co.uk](http://www.epm.co.uk)**

On the web! You can access all of the Local Authority vacancy lists through the 'vacancy links' page on [www.epm.co.uk](http://www.epm.co.uk). Here you will find all of the locally advertised jobs which don't necessarily appear in the newspapers.

There is also a hot-link to the Times Educational Supplement and EPM's own database of vacancies. Using the vacancy links will save you the time and cost of writing to ask for paper copies of its job lists to be sent to you. Vacancies in Catholic Schools can also be accessed through our hotlink.

### **Newspapers and periodicals**

The Times Educational Supplement is the single biggest source of advertisements and is published every Friday.

The Education Guardian Supplement, available in The Guardian on Tuesdays, is another good newspaper source. Many local authorities (LAs) and schools advertise in local and regional newspapers. They may publish vacancy lists and bulletins and some will, for a fee, send you vacancy lists by post. There are also religious and ethnic newspapers, e.g. *Church Times*, *Jewish Chronicle*, *Universe*, *Catholic Herald*, the *Asian Times* and the *Voice* which carry advertisements for teaching posts.

### **Other methods**

A few LAs hold 'Open Days' (usually in the Spring term and normally for primary posts) to allow applicants to visit several schools in the area. This is a good opportunity to find out more about the schools and their requirements but the day may include a selection interview as well. You may only get an invitation to an Open Day if you have already sent in an application form to that particular LA.

### **Recruitment agencies**

Some recruitment agencies offer a job finding service for NQT's mainly for supply teaching but sometimes also for permanent positions. Beware of any agency that wants to charge you a fee – it is illegal to make a charge for finding someone a job.

### **The grapevine**

It is quite possible that you will hear about vacancies in schools where you have done teaching practice or voluntary work so make sure that you network and keep in touch with former colleagues.

## **What about jobs in Scotland?**

Vacancies in Scotland are advertised in the TES, The Glasgow Herald and The Scotsman; Recruitment agencies are not widely used. If you want to work in Scotland then contact the Education Department of the Council(s) in the area(s) which interests you to get an application form for suitable jobs and/or supply work.

## **What about jobs in Northern Ireland?**

Posts in Northern Ireland are advertised in the Belfast Telegraph on Tuesdays and Fridays.

## **WHEN SHOULD I START APPLYING FOR JOBS?**

Start looking for advertisements from January and February onwards. Most students get jobs during the summer term but jobs continue to be advertised well into the autumn term.

The peak for job advertisements is in April and May. This is because 31<sup>st</sup> May is an important deadline. Any teacher who is in a job and wants to leave it at the end of the school year (31<sup>st</sup> August) has to resign before 31<sup>st</sup> May so very often there is a flood of advertisements leading up to, and just after, 31<sup>st</sup> May.

## **HOW DO I APPLY?**

### **Register on [www.epm.co.uk](http://www.epm.co.uk)!**

You can register your CV on the EPM web site which will then give you an ID and password. This is a free secure service. When you have published your CV you can go back and alter or delete it at any time. Your CV can only be accessed by schools who have authorised access through EPM's secure arrangements. Schools will probably want you to complete their own application form and go through the usual recruitment process but by posting your CV you gain an advantage in finding the right job because you have made people aware that you are available. If a school contacts you and invites you to apply for a particular post you are under no obligation to accept the invitation.

## **Make a “pool” application**

A “pool” is a system where a Local Authority invites NQTs to register an interest in working in their schools. Sometimes there is a closing date. Most "pool" procedures are for primary posts although in a few areas secondary posts may be included, particularly shortage subjects. Sometimes there is a screening interview and the LA produces a list of "approved" applicants from which schools with vacancies can decide who they want to interview. Remember that, in nearly all cases, LAs cannot offer jobs on behalf of schools and there will be a job interview, usually involving Governors, for specific posts.

In some LAs where pools operate primary schools may not advertise in the national press. So if you want to work in that authority you should apply through the pool. In other LAs some of the primary vacancies may be advertised nationally and not others. This is because each individual Governing Body is responsible for deciding how to recruit to their school. If you are interested in a particular LA phone them up and find out about their NQT arrangements. The vast majority of secondary vacancies are advertised individually.

## **Respond to specific advertisements**

These are vacancies for specific posts in individual schools which are generally advertised in the local or national press, LA vacancy lists and/or notified to your college or university. Applications should be made direct to the school, according to the instructions in the advertisement. Remember that first impressions count. Follow the instructions when you send for details. For instance, do not phone if they ask you to write. Enclose a large stamped-addressed envelope if requested.

## **I’VE GOT MY INFORMATION ABOUT THE JOB AND I WANT TO APPLY.....WHAT NEXT?**

Read the information that you have been sent carefully. You will have been sent some or all of the following

- a person specification
- a job description
- information about the school
- information about the job e.g. whether it is full time or part time, temporary or permanent.

You might also want to look at the last Ofsted report for the school. You can search the Ofsted database for the school you are interested in from our useful links page.

## What is a Person Specification?

A person specification lists the qualifications, knowledge, experience and skills required by the postholder in order to carry out the tasks in the job description. The person specification helps the employer to avoid unfair discrimination. It also helps you to show how your knowledge, experience and skills match the school's requirements.

- Your commitment enthusiasm and ability to work hard.
- Inter-personal and team working skills
- Subject knowledge and IT skills.
- Reliability.
- Ability to maintain good standards of pupil behaviour

You are more likely to be successful if you are able to demonstrate how you meet the criteria listed in the person specification.

## What is a job description?

This describes the teaching job in that particular school. However, there is also a "national" job description for a class teacher in England and Wales which sets out the duties and tasks you are legally obliged to carry out. It can be found in Section XII of the School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document which can be accessed via our useful links page. It is useful to look at this job description as well as the one that the school may have sent you since it will help you to consider what you want to say in your application. The School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document also give the salary scales for teachers.

## What kind of job is this anyway?

There are some employment issues you should consider:

- Who is the employer?  
There are quite a number of different kinds of schools. The main categories are:

*Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary, Secondary and Special schools.*  
In these schools the Local Education Authority is the contractual employer but the Governors are responsible for making nearly all of the decisions in relation to the employment of staff.

Job interviews will be carried out by the Headteacher and some Governors (probably between one and three). These schools have to follow national rules on pay and conditions.

*Foundation and Aided Primary, Secondary and Special schools.*

In these schools the Governing Body is the employer. Schools may, or may not, have close links with the LEA. Church schools have advice from the local Diocese and many choose to use the recruitment procedures that the Diocese recommends.

*Independent Schools.*

The owners of the school are the employer (sometimes this is a Trust). These schools do not have to follow national rules on pay and conditions, though many are closely related to the national arrangements.

- What kind of contract is being offered?

*Permanent:*

Obviously, this is the most attractive kind of contract from your point of view and provides the most secure start to your career. In nearly all cases the contract continues indefinitely until you resign. In a very small number of cases an employer will give notice to end the contract but this has to be for a reason like redundancy or failure to complete the Induction period satisfactorily.

*Fixed term:*

This is a contract issued for a specific period which identifies the end date and the reason for temporary employment when it is issued. When you have been employed for one year you would have the same rights to claim unfair dismissal as a permanent employee, and after two years the same right to a redundancy payment should your employment cease for this reason.

- Is it full time or part time?  
It is better to complete your induction year on a full time basis. If you are employed part time then your induction period would be extended accordingly.

- How much will I be paid?



All qualified teachers in maintained schools receive national rates of pay. This could be increased if you have experience outside teaching which the school governors wish to recognise - so the point at which you start may be open to negotiation.

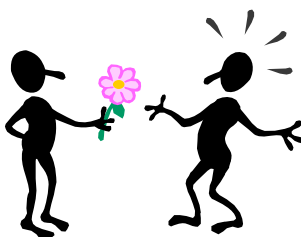
Take advice before negotiating!

Scale point	Annual Salary England and Wales excluding the London Area	Annual Salary Inner London Area	Annual Salary Outer London Area	Annual Salary Fringe Area
	£	£	£	£
M1	19,641	23,577	22,554	20,586
M2	21,195	24,924	23,901	22,137
M3	22,899	26,658	25,605	23,841
M4	24,660	28,452	27,366	25,608
M5	26,604	30,594	29,478	27,549
M6	28,707	32,820	31,674	29,649

## Teachers

In the past it was usual for people to accept a teaching post and to have the salary confirmed later. This was because there was really no negotiation.

The pay structure is now quite flexible so it is perfectly legitimate to negotiate.



However many schools still have not entered into the culture of negotiation and may be quite hostile to a candidate who has the temerity to talk about money! If you do decide to negotiate then it is better to do so before you have accepted the offer of employment.

Not surprisingly, Heads usually feel wrong footed if someone asks for more money just after they have been offered the job.

## What should I say in my letter of application/ supporting statement?

Some schools will tell you which areas you should address. If you are putting your CV on the EPM website or making a general application then it is useful to set out some headings and write two or three short paragraphs for each one.

The Standards for the Award of Qualified Teacher Status produced by the Teacher Training Agency sets out the competencies that NQTs must have in order to qualify as a teacher.

The points below are taken from the “Planning” and “Teaching and Class Management” sections of the booklet and provide a useful checklist to help make sure that you have considered these important professional areas.

*Do not attempt to cover everything – you won’t have enough space! Concentrate on the points which are key ones for you and reflect what you have achieved.*

### Planning

Does your letter/ statement reflect, with some specific examples, that

- you plan your teaching to achieve progression in pupils’ learning through:
  - identifying clear teaching objectives and content, appropriate to the subject matter and the pupils being taught, and specifying how these will be taught and assessed;
  - setting tasks for whole class, individual and group work, including homework, which challenge pupils and ensure high levels of pupil interest;
  - setting appropriate and demanding expectations for pupils’ learning, motivation and presentation of work;
  - setting clear targets for pupils’ learning, building on prior attainment, and ensuring that pupils are aware of the substance and purpose of what they are asked to do;
  - identifying pupils who have special educational needs, including specific learning difficulties; are very able; are not yet fluent in English; and knowing where to get help in order to give positive and targeted support
- provide clear structures for lessons, and for sequences of lessons, in the short, medium and longer term, which maintain pace, motivation and challenge for pupils;
- make effective use of assessment information on pupils’ attainment and progress in their teaching and in planning future lessons and sequences of lessons;
- plan opportunities to contribute to pupils’ personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;
- where applicable, ensure coverage of the relevant examination syllabuses and National Curriculum programmes of study.



## Teaching and Class Management

Does your letter/statement reflect, with some specific examples, that you

- ensure effective teaching of whole classes, and of groups and individuals within the whole class setting, so that teaching objectives are met, and best use is made of available teaching time;
- monitor and intervene when teaching to ensure sound learning and discipline
- establish and maintain a purposeful working atmosphere
- set high expectations for pupils' behaviour, establishing and maintaining a good standard of discipline through well-focused teaching and through positive and productive relationships;
- establish a safe environment which supports learning and in which pupils feel secure and confident;
- use teaching methods which sustain the momentum of pupils' work and keep all pupils engaged through:
  - stimulating intellectual curiosity, communicating enthusiasm for the subject being taught, fostering pupils' enthusiasm and maintaining pupils' motivation; matching the approaches used to the subject matter and the pupils being taught;
  - structuring information well, including outlining content and aims, signalling transitions and summarising key points as the lesson progresses;
  - clear presentation of content around a set of key ideas, using appropriate subject-specific vocabulary and well chosen illustrations and examples;
  - clear instruction and demonstration, and accurate well-paced explanation;
  - effective questioning which matches the pace and direction of the lesson and ensures that pupils take part;
  - careful attention to pupils' errors and misconceptions, and helping to remedy them;
  - listening carefully to pupils, analysing their responses and responding constructively in order to take pupils' learning forward;
  - selecting and making good use of textbooks, ICT and other learning resources which enable teaching objectives to be met;
  - providing opportunities for pupils to consolidate their knowledge and maximising opportunities, both in the classroom and through setting well-focused homework, to reinforce and develop what has been learnt;
  - exploiting opportunities to improve pupils' basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT, and the individual and collaborative study skills needed for effective learning, including information retrieval from libraries, texts and other sources;
  - exploiting opportunities to contribute to the quality of pupils' wider educational development, including their personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;
  - setting high expectations for all pupils notwithstanding individual differences, including gender, and cultural and linguistic backgrounds;
  - providing opportunities to develop pupils' wider understanding by relating their learning to real and work-related examples;.
- are familiar with the Code of Practice on the identification and assessment of special educational needs and, as part of their responsibilities under the Code, implement and keep records on individual education plans (IEPs) for pupils at stage 2 of the Code and above;.
- ensure that pupils acquire and consolidate knowledge, skills and understanding in the subject; evaluate their own teaching critically and use this to improve their effectiveness.

## Other Areas to Cover in your Application

You should also cover any skills abilities or experience which have relevance to the post in question

- Hobbies and interests
- Sports and games, qualifications and experience e.g. life saving certificate
- Arts experience, qualifications or skills e.g. amateur dramatics productions, musical skill.
- Clubs and organisations e.g. Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.
- Voluntary work as well as paid employment
- Positions of responsibility held
- Any other experience or achievement which indicates a sense of purpose, commitment or adventure.

## Ten Top Tips For Successful Job Applications

Your application is the only evidence the prospective employer has about you when deciding on a shortlist. So it very important to provide a clear, interesting picture of your skills and experience in your supporting statement or letter of application. The importance of presenting yourself effectively on paper should never be underestimated as this is the first stage in the selection process. First impressions are all important. Applications might be eliminated straight away because of:

- Untidy or illegible handwriting, word processing errors
- Confused layout and poor general presentation
- Bad spelling, grammar and punctuation
- Incorrect spelling of the name of the headteacher or the school
- Gaps in dates, inconsistencies, vagueness
- Missed questions on the application form.

Below are some suggestions which may help you to maximise your chances of being called for interview.

1. Follow the instructions in your application pack very carefully.
2. Prepare a rough draft so you are less likely to make a mistake on the application form.
3. If you are replying to a specific advert then make sure you respond to that particular school, rather than making just general comments.
4. Make sure your spelling and grammar are absolutely spot on.
5. An application which is clear, easy to read and not too long or complicated will be more attractive than one which is muddled long or too theoretical.
6. Applications are often photocopied so make sure that you use a good quality black pen.
7. Word processing your supporting statement/letter of application makes it easier to change it to fit different schools.
8. Ask someone else to check your application before you send it off.
9. Keep a copy of your application. It will be referred to at the interview and it will help you to complete other applications more quickly.
10. Do not include a curriculum vitae (CV) unless you are asked to do so.

## Who should I choose for my Referees

Usually, you will be asked to provide two referees. You should give at least one referee who can comment on your teacher training experience. Some colleges and departments specify which tutor or other person should be named as a referee. If you have the choice, select someone who can comment on your academic ability and your teaching performance. Headteachers always want to know how successful you were on teaching practice and school placement. So you may also wish to name a headteacher or teacher from one of your placement schools. Do be careful, though, since the burden of reference writing can be onerous and your college may have specific arrangements about references arising from teaching placements.

It is courteous to inform (non-college) referees each time you apply for a different post, so that they do not unexpectedly receive requests for references.

***Always ask permission before naming referees!***

## What does 'Declare Criminal Convictions' mean?

You will be asked to declare any criminal convictions or cautions you have. The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act does not apply to teachers, or those applying for teaching posts. You must fill in this section, including any juvenile offence, police caution or bind over. The police may disclose any information about you which they have on record. Failure to give these details, or giving misleading or false information, can have serious consequences, such as summary dismissal or withdrawal of the offer of employment.

## Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure

You need a CRB Enhanced Disclosure. The school will provide you with the application form. If you have recently received a CRB enhanced disclosure the school may accept it – but they may not. Schools will normally pay the cost of the disclosure.

## SHOULD I VISIT THE SCHOOL?

Many schools offer the opportunity of a visit to the school. Take up this opportunity if you can. It will give you a real insight into the school and what the Headteacher is looking for. This will help you in your application. Remember if an advert says something like 'visits welcome' they really do want you to visit: It is usually considered to be a black mark, especially for primary posts, if the opportunity to visit is not taken up without good reason. If you do want to visit then follow the instructions given in the applicant's pack. Some schools *will* organise an individual visit, others will arrange a set day and time for everyone. If a visit is not possible then try to have a telephone discussion instead – but plan your questions in advance. You will not impress if your ring up and have nothing to say!

It is a good idea to give both term-time and home addresses with telephone numbers and dates when you will be there - you may be called for interview at short notice. It is also worth thinking about whether you are easily contactable by telephone as some schools may prefer to phone you, especially if time is short.

## **YOU'VE GOT AN INTERVIEW!**

Contact the school as soon as you receive your invitation to let them know whether you will attend. At this point you can check any details about the process that you are unsure of.

Every interview is different but there are some areas that you can prepare for in advance:

- Make sure that you find out about the school. This shows that you are keen on this particular job.
- Be prepared to answer questions about your training course and give an enthusiastic account of why it has been very useful and/or interesting.
- Your teaching placements will always be an area of questioning. Make a note of your key achievements/ learning points to help you to get the main points across.

Refer back to the checklists on Planning and Teaching and Class Management to help you.

### Your Own Questions

- You will usually be asked whether you have any questions for the interviewers at the end of your interview. Only ask questions if you really want to know the answers, don't ask them just to impress; however they can indicate a genuine interest in the post, the school and the area.
- Be aware of time constraints and do not ask too many questions. If you genuinely have no questions, then just say that all the points you wanted raise have already been covered.

## **ACCEPTING AN OFFER**

Very often applicants are asked to wait after their interview until the panel make its decision. The successful candidate is then called back into the room and offered the job and they are then expected to say whether or not they accept the offer.

Since this is very common practice you should try to be sure that the post is for you before you go into the final interview. Asking for time to think or indicating that you have another interview the following day usually puts interviewers off the candidate. Accepting the post puts you in a legally binding position. It is unprofessional to accept a job at the interview and then renege on this acceptance later. You must therefore be clear about issues like salary and whether or not you really want the job before you accept it.

## **Expenses**

Expenses are usually paid for travelling to interview including overnight accommodation if necessary. Schools usually stipulate how much can be claimed so if you do have to travel a long distance you may want to check in advance whether your claim is likely to be approved and whether receipts are required

## **Withdrawing from the interview**

Occasionally, you will get to the school on the day of the interview and realise that the post is not for you. If this happens then you should tell the headteacher that you wish to withdraw your application as soon as you have made your decision. You should not waste people's time by continuing with the interview process if you are not interested in the job.

# Good Luck!