

Preparing for applications and interviews

Once you have decided that you want to return to teaching, preparing thoroughly for application and interview is crucial.

The application is the first contact you have with your potential employer; it is therefore essential that you use this chance to impress and to sell yourself, your experience and your skills. Thorough preparation for the interview is also vital to success.

Resources

Researching teaching posts:

There are various places you can find current teaching vacancies:

The Schools Recruitment Service is used by schools across England to post vacancies and manage their communications with applicants. The Service puts the whole application process online for jobseekers, from searching for vacancies and receiving alerts to applying for jobs and arranging interview times. Jobseekers are able to apply on the system for all types of school-based vacancies.

<https://www.schoolsrecruitment.dcsf.gov.uk/>

The Times Educational Supplement is the main source of recruitment for many schools. It is available in paper form or online at <http://www.tes.co.uk/>

Teachernet offers quick links to other sites with vacancies and a guide to making online job advertising work for you, whatever your needs.

<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/professionaldevelopment>

Applying for jobs and preparing for interviews:

There are a number of useful resources providing advice and tips on how to prepare for application and interview. Some of these are listed below.

Edubase offers 'School finder' for quick access to information about national and local schools, which provides background information useful in preparation for application and interview.

<http://www.edubase.gov.uk>

The **Office for Standards in Education**, children's services and skills is a useful resource for researching a school prior to attending a job interview.

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/>

The Subject Associations

If you are considering returning to teaching or are preparing an application or interview, you may wish to join a subject association. This will give your potential

employer tangible evidence of your commitment to keeping your subject knowledge up to date

The subject association's site www.subjectassociation.org.uk provides a one-stop shop for teachers to find appropriate sources of specialist subject focused support.

Making a successful application – hints and tips

These are some of the things head teachers might be looking for in your application:

- Commitment to returning to teach and a clear explanation as to why you would like to return
- Evidence of keeping up to date with the curriculum and changes in national policy which affect schools and the teaching profession.
- How the experience you have gained since you last taught can benefit pupils and help you make a positive contribution to the school.
- Your potential and ambition to go into middle-range management, especially in schools in urban areas where there are middle-management vacancies.
- Evidence of a proactive and collaborative approach to your own and your colleagues' professional development.
- Key strengths in terms of teaching and school leadership experience, which can be demonstrated through strong references.
- A willingness to travel to a school for work, and honesty about any flexible work patterns you may be hoping for.
- Understanding of national strategies, both in terms of subject and general teaching recommendations, and information communication technology (ICT) in teaching and learning.
- Subject knowledge and how you have kept up to date, with specific examples and evidence of this.

Tips for CVs

When writing your CV, you should:

- Keep it to a maximum of two pages of key information
- Take into account what you say in your letter of application, and support rather than duplicate its content
- Adjust content to fit the position you are applying for
- Present achievements and experiences positively for what they are rather than simply listing what you have done
- Be prepared to answer questions during an interview on anything that you include in your CV, but resist the temptation to exaggerate achievements. A good interview panel will soon notice that you have done so.

Preparing for a job interview – hints and tips

Here are a few tips on improving your interview technique:

- First impressions count. Ensure you are well presented and professionally turned out.
- Reflect upon the sort of questions you might be asked and the topics on which you might need to demonstrate an opinion.

- Remember that you ARE a qualified teacher. Think and act as a teacher, a serious professional going for the job you want. Don't perceive yourself as a newcomer – have confidence in your abilities.
- Research in advance about the school and the job for which you are applying, and make a mental note of any key points that you may be able to use during the interview.
- Try to give structured and concise responses.
- Show a considered viewpoint and how your knowledge and experience relates to the questions being asked. Be prepared to be challenged by interviewers and to justify your view points.

Return to teaching courses

To prepare yourself for a return to teaching, you may decide to apply for a return to teaching (RTT) course which will provide you with a safe and supportive environment in which to develop your skills. It will also highlight your commitment to teaching to a potential employer and as a part of the course you will be offered support and advice on preparing your application.

RTT courses are fully funded by the TDA.

For more information contact the RTT helpline on 0845 6000 993