



## Your future in ... Teaching in schools

### Introduction

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Are you inspired by happy memories of your schooldays and respect for the teachers who worked with you? What you remember from your schooldays may not be an accurate reflection of this constantly evolving profession now. Before you apply, do your research to get a clear picture of what it's like.

Training and recruitment opportunities vary widely from year to year as the education sector is very much affected by political and economic factors.

Within the UK, the responsibility for education is devolved to the Parliament and Assemblies of Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. Because of this there are variations across the regions in training routes and qualifications, school curricula and issues facing the profession.

Wherever you hope to train and teach, you will need:

- **a realistic understanding of the role of a teacher**
- **a love of your subject (especially at secondary level)**
- **a desire to pass on knowledge and the ability to explain things clearly**
- **an enjoyment of working with children and young people**

### What is teaching in schools like?

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- **Who would you like to teach?** Children at primary or secondary school? You may want to specialise, e.g. upper or lower primary, teaching Highers/'A'-Levels or not. Does the broadness of primary teaching appeal, or the specialism of secondary? Might the discipline of older pupils be an issue for you, or would you find it difficult to teach a mixed-ability primary class?
- **What would you like to teach?** Do the components of your degree (and school qualifications) allow you to teach your chosen subject? (If in doubt, always check with the training providers, as entry requirements can vary.)
- **Is there a shortage of teachers in your subject?** Each year shortage subjects are identified, and courses in these subjects may attract extra funding or incentives. The subjects can vary from region to region so be sure to check the information from the relevant bodies (links on our website).
- **How would you prefer to train?** In Scotland, the university-based PGDE course is the graduate route into teaching. In England and Wales, besides the university-based PGCE courses, programmes such as School Direct offer employment-based training opportunities. The Teach First and Researchers in Schools programmes offer two-year teacher training and professional development, giving the opportunity to make teaching a career or to move into another field.





- **Where would you like to teach?** The location may influence your choice of training provider and even style of training. Some employment-based training programmes in England, for example, may not be accepted for registration in Scotland or N. Ireland. If you want to teach in another part of the UK or overseas check how your proposed teaching qualification is viewed by other countries. Also check how much experience they expect before accepting you for registration – it can be as much as two years.
- **Language?** In Wales and parts of Scotland schools may be bilingual (or even non-English speaking). Some schools in large urban areas may also cater for minority ethnic languages, so having Welsh, Gaelic or Urdu could be an advantage.

Being a teacher is to be on the frontline of change; educating a new generation, raising self-esteem in your pupils, fostering a love of learning and a belief that the future will be better than the past.

Iain Harrison, Teach First

## Work experience and skills development

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To get a place on a teacher training course you'll need to have evidence of an interest in teaching, an awareness of key issues and of the curriculum, and have practical experience working with the age group you want to teach. Classroom experience is important and, while there is no set number of hours, for popular subjects like history you will be expected to demonstrate that you have spent a significant amount of time in the classroom. For shortage subjects, especially STEM subjects, other experience of working with children may be considered. Here are some ways you can develop your knowledge and skills.

- Work part-time as a **Learning/Classroom/Pupil Support Assistant**. Many jobs available, and the low number of hours allows many students to fit the work around their studies. The best type of work experience. [www.myjobscotland.gov.uk](http://www.myjobscotland.gov.uk)
- **Lothian Equal Access Partnership for Schools (LEAPS)** – volunteer with LEAPS to work with secondary school pupils from the local area, both in schools and at university. This programme provides ideal pre-entry work experience, and it's highly valued by course providers.
- **'A day in school'** – spend the day in a local high school, at this event organised by the Careers Service. Check the **Events** section of **MyCareerHub** for details.
- In England & Wales, the **Teaching Agency (TA)** runs the School Experience Programme, which can help you decide if you would suit a career in teaching.
- Arranging your own **school experience** – Approaching your old school (or your children's school) is a good starting point. As teachers are under increasing time pressure schools may not be able to accommodate your request. You may have to undergo a Police Disclosure check.





- Increase your experience of working with children at youth groups, playgroups, Brownies, Scouts, befriending/mentoring etc.
- Consider looking for **voluntary work** in the vacations or during semester. There is a useful voluntary work section on the Careers Service website to help you get you started, and voluntary positions are also advertised on MyCareerHub
- If you would like more in-depth experience of teaching before committing to it as a career, the **Graduate Teaching Intern (GTI) scheme** provides an opportunity to try teaching after graduation, as part of a paid internship programme in an English school

#### **A Day in School, 2016**

*This was a great experience to help try and understand the role of a teacher, the challenges facing them on a day to day basis, and how they successfully manage these situations, and run a classroom.*

Rebecca Foster, 3<sup>rd</sup> year History undergraduate

## **Applications**

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The application systems vary across the constituent parts of the UK, so it's essential to keep an eye on the relevant websites for up-to-date news, and opening and closing dates.

**Scotland** – apply through the main UCAS system at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com). Applications open 15 September, close 15 January. You can still apply after this date if there are unfilled places on your chosen course.

**England & Wales** - apply through the UCAS Teacher Training system. Applications open in late October. Your application will be considered as long as there are vacancies, but early applications will stand the best chance of success.

**Northern Ireland** - apply directly to the institutions. Deadlines can be as early as November. There is a list of course providers and links on the Target postgrad website:  
<https://targetpostgrad.com/subjects/teaching-and-education/training-to-teach-in-northern-ireland>

**Teach First** - applications open in June, to start the following year. Places fill up quickly for the popular subjects. Apply via the Teach First website.

**Researchers in Schools** – applications are made online via the RIS website.

## **Find out more...**

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Save yourself some time by visiting our webpages on teaching. **These include links to all the essential sites, including those mentioned above, with detailed job profiles and advice about applying for teacher training:** [www.ed.ac.uk/careers/teaching](http://www.ed.ac.uk/careers/teaching)

