INTO FOR Beginning Teachers

GUIDE TO FINDING YOUR FIRST TEACHING POST
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As you prepare to embark upon your professional career you are no doubt considering such practical matters as employment prospects, salaries, terms and conditions of employment and professional issues such as induction. The following information has been prepared by INTO to help you as you enter into the teaching profession.

Seeking Employment

Your first task will be to locate vacancies for teaching posts. Some important points you should note are:

- Keep a careful watch on all vacancies advertised in the press. Vacancies can occur at any time but start looking from January onwards – the majority of posts will be advertised in May and June but posts will continue to be advertised into the autumn term.
- Advertisements may appear on any day although Tuesday, Friday (Belfast Telegraph) and Thursday (Irish News) are the main days.
- Surf the Internet. The addresses are: www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk, www.irishnews.com
- You should inform the Principals of the schools in your local area that you are available for work. If possible visit the schools in your area and introduce yourself to the Principal. In all cases make sure that you give your name, address, telephone number and brief details of your expertise and experience in writing.
- You may find that many teaching posts are temporary appointments. Schools can only employ temporary teachers who are registered on the Northern Ireland Substitute Teachers Register (NISTR). It is vital that you are registered with NISTR. This can be done through its website www.nistr.com

Is This The Job for 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. If you are prepared to be flexible, however, you will increase the number of posts available to you.

Apply for all suitable posts even though you may have been shortlisted for other appointments. Do not turn down the opportunity of an appointment or interview until you are certain of a firm offer of employment.

If the post you are interested in is not advertised as full-time and permanent you should check the exact nature of the contract being offered.
Applying for a Teaching Job

When sending off for details of an advertised post you should seek, even at this stage, to make the right impression with a prospective employer. Do not phone if they ask you to write. Enclose a stamped addressed envelope, if requested.

Most advertisements will indicate that application should be made by completing and returning a standard application form. It is likely that along with this application form you will be sent a job description and personnel specification. You should use these to carefully plan your answers to the questions on the application form. All applications should be carefully planned. One of the first criteria for short listing may well be - properly completed application form.

The most successful applications are those where the applicant has demonstrated through their experience how they meet the criteria in the personnel specification.

Important Dos and Don’ts

**DO** read the employers instructions carefully
**DO** prepare a rough draft
**DO** look at the job description and personnel specification and relate your knowledge, experience and skills to each criterion
**DO** be concise in your answers
**DO** make sure that your application is neat and easy to read. Use a good quality black pen so that it can be easily photocopied. Pay attention to spelling and grammar
**DO** keep a copy of your application, as it will be referred to at the interview stage
**DO** make sure you answer all questions.

**DO NOT** provide irrelevant information
**DO NOT** include anything that you could not back up in an interview
**DO NOT** include a CV unless specifically requested to
**DO NOT** miss the closing date!

References

You will usually be asked to give the names of two persons to whom references can be made for their opinion of you. The employing authority will seek this information on a confidential basis from the persons you name.

In the case of newly qualified teachers most employing authorities will normally seek a reference from the training institution. You may wish to consider the Principal of your College or Head of your Faculty as one of your referees. You may also wish to
name a Principal Teacher or Head of Department of one of your teaching practice schools.

**You should obtain the permission of your referees before you use their names on the application form.**

**Criminal Convictions**
You will be asked to declare any criminal convictions you have. You must complete this section truthfully and include any juvenile or adult convictions you may have. Failure to answer these questions truthfully or giving false or misleading information may have serious consequences, such as summary dismissal.

For further advice please contact INTO Northern Office.

**Interviews**

The purpose of an interview is to select the best candidate for the job. If you are called for interview you should remember it is the employer’s opportunity to find out more about you. A successful interview will be dependent upon your preparation beforehand and the interview itself.

**Preparation is Key**

As for any job interview, preparation is the key to success on the day. If you are well prepared your performance will be more confident and you will be more likely to say what you intended to:

- Remember to confirm that you are available to attend the interview!
- Re-read your application form carefully.
- Read all the details about the school and the post.
- Prepare key points and examples of your knowledge, experience and skills to give evidence that you meet each of the selection criteria.
- Keep up to date with educational developments.
- Pay attention to how the requirements of the Revised NI Curriculum impact on your subject or age range.
- Be prepared to answer specific, job-related questions.
- Accept any invitation to visit the school to meet with members of staff and children. Use this as an opportunity to ask any questions you may have about the school or post on offer.
The Interview

- Make sure you know how to find the school and leave yourself plenty of time to get there.
- Be particular about your appearance – wear clothes that make you feel confident about the appearance you project.
- Try to be relaxed during the interview and be prepared to answer questions about your qualifications and experience, particularly in relation to the nature of the post for which you have applied.
- Repeat and expand on what you have said on your application form.
- Ask for a question to be repeated if you do not hear it properly or if you are not sure what it means.
- Feel free to ask the panel if you have said enough or if you feel your answer is too long.
- Do not give just ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answers.
- Do not be negative about yourself.
- You may be given the opportunity to ask questions at the end of the interview – have one or two relevant questions prepared.

Congratulations – You are offered the Post!

If you are successful and you are offered an appointment, ensure that you confirm your acceptance or rejection, in writing, to the employing authority.

If you are not successful this time

Make sure you accept your non-appointment gracefully. You may have been very close to getting the job and panel members may be at future interviews you attend.

After the interview, if you are not offered any guidance on your performance you should request feedback. Any opportunity to improve should be welcomed.

Take the opportunity to attend any training sessions in interview techniques in your College or by attending the annual seminar arranged by the INTO.
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