

Applying for teaching jobs

The application form

1. **A visit to the school is highly recommended**, as it will give you a greater understanding of what they are looking for. Be as flexible as possible when looking through adverts – you may find that when you visit the school you will be pleasantly surprised and your priorities may change. However, you should also be selective if you are currently carrying out teaching practice, as a day away from the classroom may not be the best use of your time. Before the visit, carry out research on the school so that you can ask questions when you're there – and they're then more likely to remember you.
2. **Follow the instructions** on the application form – if you miss out sections or write too many words, it could be rejected.
3. **The personal statement is the most important part** of the application form. You should provide written evidence of how you have met each criteria, in the order that it is written on the Person Specification. This makes it easier for schools to shortlist, as they tick off each one you have met. Make sure each example shows the impact of your actions – there is more guidance about this in our job packs.
4. **What extra can you offer** a school that will make you stand out? Remember that headteachers may be looking through multiple applications and most new teachers will have similar experiences.
5. **Keep a copy of your application form**, as it will be referred to at interview.
6. Make sure your covering letter/email is grammatically correct and well written – it helps to **create a good impression**.
7. If you are not shortlisted, **ask for some feedback** on your application form – the headteacher may not have time to do this, but it's worth asking!
8. **Don't get disheartened** – if you're getting through to interview stage, then you're on the right tracks. You never know who you'll be up against on the day. If you're not getting interviews, then ask someone to look at your application forms to see if they can be improved.

Preparing for the interview

1. First, **confirm that you can attend** the interview. Check any other instructions on the letter to see what you need to prepare for.
2. **Re-read your application form**. The interview questions will be based on the person specification, so you will be able to elaborate on some of the key skills, knowledge and experiences you have mentioned.
3. Ensure you are **up to date about local and national developments** in education, as these will have an impact on the school's priorities and you may get asked about them.

4. Ensure you have a **good understanding of the National Curriculum** requirements for the age range/subject you will be teaching.
5. **Read the school's latest Ofsted report** and think of how you could add value to the areas that need some development – these are likely to be priorities in the School Improvement Plan.
6. **Make a note of some questions** about the post/school that you may have following your visit.
7. If you have already visited the school, then you will know how to get there. But remember that **journey times can vary at different times of the day**, so do a trial run if possible. If you are using public transport, aim to get an earlier train/bus in case of delays.
8. **Ensure you have appropriate interview attire ready.** You should be smart, but comfortable, so that you will feel confident.

The interview

1. **Be polite and friendly** to everyone you meet on arrival – the headteacher may ask office staff for feedback afterwards, as this is evidence of how well you communicate with others.
2. As well as the headteacher, **the panel may include senior teachers, governors and/or local authority staff**, depending on the position you are applying for.
3. Be prepared to give a full answer to every question – you can take a moment to think before responding. **Talk about your achievements rather than just what you believe in.** For example, in managing behaviour, talk about the system you used at your last school and give an example of how you have been successful in using this.
4. **Don't worry about repeating what you have written** in the application form, as the panel won't have memorised very detail and you can elaborate further. Remember to talk about your experiences with enthusiasm, explaining the positive impact your actions had on the children and the class/school.
5. If you're not sure what a question means, **don't be afraid to ask for clarification** – they may use different terminology than you are used to.
6. **The panel will be writing notes** throughout, as they will be scoring each answer and need to be able to refer to their comments during their discussions afterwards.
7. **Be positive** – don't be negative about yourself. However, it's always good to show that you have good skills of self-reflection, so you could explain how you've learnt from your actions if something didn't go according to plan.
8. **Always ask for feedback** if you're not successful at interview, as soon as possible so it's fresh in the headteacher's mind. You should thank them for their comments and show that you are grateful for the opportunity to improve. You may apply for another job at that school in the future or come across panel members again, so leave a good impression!