

# Preparing for Teacher Training Interviews

## Introduction

Whichever teacher training route you are being interviewed for, in order to be successful it is crucial that you have done your research and prepared well. The selection process used will vary between Training Providers (TPs) so it is important that you have got a clear idea of exactly what will be involved and what their selection criteria are.

## Background research

Prior to making applications you are likely to have done some initial research when selecting which TPs to apply to and whether your preference is for University-led training e.g. PGCE / PGDE or school-led training such as School Direct, SCITT or Teach First. However – in preparing for the selection stage, you should continue this process. If applying for a PGCE / PGDE you will need to find out:

- How is the training programme structured?
- At what stage do you undertake your school placements and how long do these last?
- Which schools are placements likely to take place in?
- What is the format of the selection day?

For School Direct and SCITT, make sure that you read through the 'Entry Profile' on the UCAS Teacher Training website <https://www.ucas.com/ucas/teacher-training> and have found out as much as you can about:

- The lead school
- Which other schools form part of the consortium
- How the training programme is structured
- Which Higher Education Institution (HEI) this is linked to and how much of your training will be delivered within school and within the HEI
- What they are looking for in candidates
- What their selection process involves.

## Effective self-marketing

In preparing for the selection day, reflect upon what you can offer as a candidate and the evidence which you can provide to demonstrate your suitability as a candidate. In particular you should be able to explain:

- Why you are motivated to teach
- Your choice of subject / age range
- Your 'passion' for your subject, especially if applying for the secondary age group
- The skills and personal qualities which you possess which make you well suited for this profession
- Your ability to engage with children / young people / parents / other teachers and professionals
- The 'added extras' which you can offer e.g. ability in sports, music, drama, crafts and a second subject you'd be able to teach (for secondary).
- Your knowledge of the curriculum / key stages for your subject and age range



## Typical interview format

The format of the selection day will vary between different TPs, but whether this is for a University or a school-led programme, it is likely to involve staff both from the school and a linked Higher Education Institution (HEI). Interviews will often take place within a school and could involve a variety of elements including:

- **Introduction** - Applicants will typically be asked to arrive at the start of the school day (8-30 to 9-00 am) and initially there may be a short talk about the selection process and the school / consortium.
- **An activity with a small group of children** - This would usually be to deliver a 'mini-lesson' for about 15 minutes to a group of 5 – 6 pupils and full instructions will have been provided for this in advance. The delivery of this is not expected to be perfect, but the ability of the candidate to engage with pupils, to enthuse them and to use appropriate language and activities is what will be observed.
- **A lesson observation** – Candidates may be required to observe a lesson and then provide some feedback on this, in terms of what they noted e.g. the teaching style used, the way any difficulties were handled.
- **A presentation** – Applicants may be asked to make a 10 minute presentation, on a topic they have been given in advance.
- **Written Task** (typically about 30 minutes) – This could be to read a newspaper article and to then present their own viewpoint on the topic. Alternatively they might be asked to write a letter to parents e.g. about a trip they are organising. The language, spelling, grammar and punctuation used will be looked at.
- **Formal Interview** – There will usually be 2 – 3 people on the panel, typically a subject teacher, a university tutor and another. The interview will commonly last for 10 – 15 minutes.
- For **Languages applicants** there will be both a written and spoken language test within the selection process and part of the interview will be conducted in the chosen language.

## Reasonable adjustments

If you are dyslexic, have a disability or have health related issues, the decision as to whether or not you choose to disclose this in your application is a personal one. If you make a disclosure on your UCAS form, this information will be used for equal opportunity monitoring, but will **not** be passed on to the selectors. Therefore it is up to you to ensure that if you require any 'reasonable adjustments' within the selection process, you request this in advance of the selection day. In order to ensure that you are not disadvantaged you may like to discuss this matter with a member of the Careers Service.

## Teach First Assessment Centres

Shortlisted applicants for Teach First will be invited to attend an assessment centre; this is competency based and all activities are designed to test the following selection criteria – interaction; knowledge of Teach First (their vision, Leadership Development Programme); resilience; self-evaluation; planning and organising; humility, respect and empathy; leadership; problem solving. There are three activities which applicants will need to complete – an interview (lasting from roughly 45 minutes), a group exercise and a 7 minute sample lesson, which they are instructed to prepare in advance and to deliver to two assessors, who will role play pupils.

As the teacher training provided by Teach First is structured in a different way from other university or school based training programmes, candidates will need to be able to demonstrate background knowledge of Teach First and to show their passion for what it is trying to do as a charity, as well as their resilience and ability to take on the challenge of working in a tough environment. They need to be able to convince the assessors that they have the capacity to 'hit the ground running' and can cope with the heavy workload of

the Teach First programme. For more background information there's a really good interview with a senior member of the Teach First recruitment team here:

<https://targetjobs.co.uk/employer-hubs/teach-first/421486-how-to-succeed-in-teach-first-applications-and-assessments-recruiter-ga>

## Further resources

There are a number of websites which you can refer to for more information about teacher training and the typical questions to expect at interview.

Department for Education <https://getintoteaching.education.gov.uk/preparing-for-your-interview>

Target Postgrad: What to expect at teacher training interviews <http://targetpostgrad.com/study-areas/teaching/what-expect-teacher-training-interview-and-selection-day>

Target Postgrad: Teaching Advice [www.targetpostgrad.com/teaching](http://www.targetpostgrad.com/teaching)

Teach First Interview Tips <http://graduates.teachfirst.org.uk/application-selection/selection-process/hints-tips>

Times Education Supplement – Interview question and answer bank <https://www.tes.co.uk/teaching-resource/interview-question-and-answer-bank--pgce-3003822>

Times Education Supplement <http://newteachers.tes.co.uk/news/how-prepare-your-teacher-training-interview/46081>

University of Kent Careers Service <http://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/interviews/ivteaching.htm>

University of Newcastle Careers Service

[http://www.ncl.ac.uk/careers/assets/documents/Typical\\_PGCE\\_interview\\_questions.pdf](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/careers/assets/documents/Typical_PGCE_interview_questions.pdf)