A Guide to Getting into Teaching

Teaching is one of the most rewarding professions, offering the chance to shape young minds and make a real difference. If you are considering a career in education, this guide will take you through the essential steps to becoming a teacher in the UK.

1. Decide if Teaching is Right for You

Before embarking on this journey, reflect on whether teaching suits your skills, values, and aspirations. It requires patience, dedication, and a passion for helping others learn.

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." – Nelson Mandela

Consider gaining experience by volunteering in a school or working as a teaching assistant to get a real sense of the classroom environment.

2. Choose Your Teaching Path

There are different routes into teaching depending on the age group and subject you want to teach. The main options include:

Nursery Teaching (Ages 0-5) – Focusing on early years education and development.

Primary Teaching (Ages 4-11) – Covering a broad range of subjects.

Secondary Teaching (Ages 11-18) – Specialising in a specific subject.

Further Education (Post-16) – Teaching in colleges or vocational training.

"The best teachers are those who show you where to look, but don’t tell you what to see." – Alexandra K. Trenfor

3. Gain the Necessary Qualifications

To become a qualified teacher in the UK, you generally need:

A degree

GCSEs in English, Maths (and Science for primary teaching)

Initial Teacher Training (ITT) through a PGCE, School Direct, SCITT, or an apprenticeship

For those without a degree, there are options such as undergraduate teacher training courses.

4. Apply for Teacher Training

Applications for teacher training programmes in England are typically made through Apply for Teacher Training via GOV.UK. In Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, application processes vary slightly.

Most training programmes include a combination of theoretical learning and practical school placements.

"Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn." – Benjamin Franklin

5. Gain Classroom Experience

During your training, you will complete placements in schools, where you will:

Plan and deliver lessons

Assess student progress

Work alongside experienced teachers

This hands-on experience is crucial in developing your skills and confidence.

6. Achieve Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)

In England and Wales, you need Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) to teach in state schools. You achieve this by completing your ITT and passing the required assessments.

In Scotland, teachers must register with the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS), while in Northern Ireland, registration is with the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI).

7. Secure Your First Teaching Job

Once qualified, you can start applying for teaching roles. Most newly qualified teachers (NQTs) begin their career with an induction year, which provides additional support and mentoring.

Websites such as Supply Today, TES Jobs, and Gov.uk Teaching Vacancies are great places to find openings.

"A good teacher can inspire hope, ignite the imagination, and instil a love of learning." – Brad Henry

8. Continue Professional Development

Teaching is a lifelong learning journey. Opportunities for career progression include:

Specialising in a subject or pastoral care

Becoming a head of department or school leadership

Engaging in further training or research

"Teachers affect eternity; no one can tell where their influence stops." – Henry Adams

Final Thoughts

A career in teaching is demanding but incredibly fulfilling. By following these steps, you can embark on a path that not only changes your life but also the lives of countless students.

If you’re ready to take the next step, consider reaching out to Supply Today for support in finding teaching roles or gaining classroom experience.

"The dream begins with a teacher who believes in you." – Dan Rather

