

Careers in Teaching

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Introduction

- Teaching is not simply standing in front of a class and talking, or handing out discipline and assignments. It is a complex, sophisticated task requiring a high level of skill and training, and offers financial and professional rewards on a par with many other professional careers.
- Teaching offers a creative, stimulating and rewarding career, with the opportunity, within guidelines, to work autonomously in the classroom.
- Demand for teachers is increasing, as was predicted for the years leading up to 2000 and beyond, and job opportunities for new graduates are improving rapidly.
- Starting salaries are above those for many new graduates, and employment conditions are generally good, although there has been an increase in short term and contract work in some states.
- Schools are changing and the work that teachers do is also changing to include new roles in collaborative teaching, tailoring curriculum to local school needs, using information technology to teach, and taking on a variety of administrative, management and planning roles within increasingly self-managing schools.
- Teaching graduates have the skills to practice in a range of educational settings, and to take on a variety of roles in the wider employment market.
- Almost regardless of employment trends, there are always opportunities for good graduates who are energetic, enthusiastic and creative, and who want to make a difference, to help shape the future of our community.

Why choose teaching?

Teaching is the largest profession in Australia. Over two hundred thousand teachers work in ten thousand schools teaching over three million students. Most teachers work in state or independent primary and secondary schools teaching children and teenagers. Many others work in pre-schools or childcare centres with very young children, in special education with people of all ages, or with older teenagers and adults in institutes of Technical and Further Education (TAFE), community education centres, private colleges, universities and workplaces.

Unlike other professions, everybody has some knowledge and experience of schools, and the roles teachers play in them, because everybody has been to school. Most of us think we know what the job of teaching involves, but often we are not aware of all the things a teacher does as well as teach in the classroom. For many of us, our own experience as a student influences how we see teaching as a possible career.

'I think kids have a pretty negative view of teaching now. They often say, 'Why do you want to be a teacher, Miss?', which is a pity. They comment on the low pay, but really the starting wage for a first year teacher is not that bad. I am on \$33,000 this year and lots of other new graduates would not be earning that'.

Daniela, Art teacher at an independent school, completed Bachelor of Fine Arts and then a two-year Bachelor of Teaching.

'I always wanted to be a teacher and had a couple of teachers at secondary school who really inspired me, especially my physics teacher. He always made everything relevant to the real world.'

Soula, Maths and Science teacher at an inner-suburban secondary school, completed a Bachelor of Science degree and a one-year Diploma of Education.

People choose to be teachers for all sorts of reasons:

- they enjoy communicating and exploring ideas
- they get satisfaction from watching students learn and develop
- they have an enthusiasm for learning or for a particular subject and want to pass this on to others
- they want to work with young people, have an impact on future generations and make a contribution to the community.

Teaching offers a stimulating and absorbing career with scope for creativity, and provides a chance to influence students as well as parents and other teachers. Many teachers like the way they can, to some extent, be professionally autonomous. As long as the curriculum is covered and any other guidelines followed, the way they deliver the 'product' is up to them. They can put their own stamp on their own work and gain a great deal of satisfaction when they see positive results from their own creativity and innovation in the classroom and wider school community.

'Teaching does provide more significant autonomy in terms of work role than many other professions. Within the constraints of school policy and subject guidelines you have a certain amount of freedom to run your own show, create and deliver your own individual product. It is something I have missed from time to time since I left teaching.'

Jan, experienced Commerce and Social Sciences teacher, now a senior manager in a large higher education institution

'I really like the interaction with the students, and the sense of satisfaction you have when they get something right. I think to myself, 'I did that, I taught them that.' I am glad to be getting up each day and coming to school where there is just so much happening, rather than going off to a desk job. And I do like having lots of holidays!'

Kim, Maths teacher at an outer-suburban independent school, completed a four-year Bachelor of Education

Teaching is a job that requires commitment and dedication. A common perception of teachers is that they are lucky because they have a job that finishes

earlier in the day than most and has 10 weeks holiday a year. As most teachers will tell you, they really need those holidays.

'The kids are great. I really enjoy being with them, looking at their ideas and seeing how they develop. I find that intriguing. It is mentally tiring and I am exhausted at the end of the day, so you really need your holidays to recover. I also get the chance to be involved in lots of different things around the school, such as painting the backdrop for the school drama production. It is a job where you can't really get bored, there are too many things to do.'

Daniela, recently graduated Art teacher

Teaching is demanding. The job is not confined to school hours and teachers do much more than stand in front of a class. After school hours most teachers can be found marking books, preparing lessons, writing student reports, arranging parent interviews, attending various school committees, organising the school play or coaching the basketball team. Most teachers will tell you the greatest rewards come from the students and the stimulating nature of the work rather than the salary or working hours.

'Every lesson is different, and you really have to be on the ball. There is always a lot happening in a classroom. Senior students are usually more attentive and motivated, junior classes need more management. You have to vary your techniques to keep them interested, and learn to be flexible in your approach and take some cues from them. The students are not just passive listeners, they are active learners and they have expectations that must be taken into account.'

The main rewards from the job are the positive feedback you get from kids. Most kids hate Maths and getting them to be more comfortable with the subject takes persistence. It is satisfying to be able to enrich the good students, and seeing improvement in students who have really struggled is always very rewarding.'

Soula, experienced Maths and Science teacher

'The job is pretty much as I expected, although I did not realise all the things that teachers do as well as take classes. As well as all the extra-curricular activities you can get involved in, there



is lots of work in things like developing and writing curriculum. At the moment, I am writing the Maths curriculum for Years 8, 9 and 10 at my school. It is a big job.'

Kim, recently graduated Maths teacher

Teachers have been described as 'part educator, part social worker, part administrator – a figure of authority one minute and a sympathetic ear the next'. It is a challenging and complex role where, in addition to skills in classroom teaching practice, the ability to cope with a changing school environment, working as part of a team and communicating with fellow teachers, parents, school administrators, the school council and the local community are becoming important.

Independent schools have always been self managing, but as state schools become more autonomous organisations responsible for managing their own budget and staffing, skills in management and administration, public relations and strategic planning are also becoming increasingly important.

Teaching is a complex, sophisticated task and requires a high level of skill and training. Intelligent, well qualified and committed young people, who are interested in the challenge and stimulation a career in teaching can provide, have always been attracted to the job.

'A teacher is firstly, and most importantly, a leader of people; a manager of groups of students. Teachers must be highly professional, well informed, skilled in conveying enthusiasm for learning, and in understanding the way students learn and how to motivate them. The content of what you teach will be of secondary importance to your capacity to effectively manage people in the classroom.'

Teachers also have to be involved in the wider community of the school, not just involved in their own subjects and activities. They won't be expected to do everything, but they will be expected to contribute at a high professional level to the whole school community. Evaluation, accountability, and appraisal is more and more a part of the working environment. Teachers have to be observers, reflectors, open and productive team members.'

State secondary school principal



Employment outlook

It is never easy to forecast the supply and demand for specific occupations and, to some extent, the demand for teachers will always fluctuate depending on factors such as:

- school retention rates (which have risen in recent years)
- resignation rates of existing teachers (expected to increase in the next few years)
- government policy
- the number of new teaching graduates (decreased in the last 20 years)
- the number of school-age children in the population

Opportunities for employment are also affected by the subjects graduating teachers are qualified to teach (in some states Maths/Science and Asian language teachers are in demand), the geographical areas in which they are prepared to work (most states find it hard to fill jobs in country and remote areas) and the talents and attributes of the individual.

The pattern of demand is not uniform across Australia but several studies have indicated that there is a substantial and widening gap between the supply and demand for teachers to 2001 and beyond caused by a lower number of teaching graduates, an aging teacher workforce and fewer currently unemployed trained teachers returning to fill the gap.

Most states are starting to report shortages of teachers in areas such as science, mathematics, computing, and LOTE (Languages Other Than English), as well as primary teachers of children with special needs and teachers with a trade skill or who can teach in a vocational education area.

Teacher unions and professional organisations involved in the placement of teachers say that employment prospects for new graduates are improving rapidly.

Teacher training

All teachers are required to undertake 4 years of training. Primary school teachers are trained to teach in all curriculum areas. Some specialist teachers are employed in areas such as art, music, physical education, special education, library or LOTE.

Secondary school teachers are required to teach two or more subjects within the school curriculum which covers subjects from a range of areas including English, languages, humanities, mathematics, science, music, art, physical education, personal development, technology studies and commercial subjects.

Like many other areas of teaching, teacher training courses have experienced some changes over the past five years. In some institutions teacher training is being offered only after a three year undergraduate degree has been completed. Students complete a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science and then start a two-year postgraduate Bachelor of Education (sometimes called Bachelor of Teaching) which qualifies them to teach at primary and/or secondary level. Another model is that of the combined degree where students study education subjects concurrently with their own discipline over four years to complete a Bachelor of Teaching in either primary or secondary teaching and a Bachelor of Arts, Science/Applied Science or Commerce.

There are now many more schools which span both primary and secondary levels, particularly independent schools, but increasingly government schools too. Teachers with skills in both primary and secondary teaching are highly valued in these schools as they are often good at assisting students with the transition from primary to secondary schooling and have a good understanding of the learning process enabling them to assist students who may need extra assistance with literacy or numeracy at the secondary level.

'Breadth of experience is becoming more important, along with being able to teach a range of subjects at different levels. Primary trained teachers know how to break up complex learning into small parts. Secondary trained teachers often don't have as good an understanding of how kids learn. Having teachers trained in both areas is useful in supporting kids who are struggling in secondary school and helps greatly with the transition from primary to secondary school.'

State secondary school principal

'I did majors in chemistry and geology at university. I had a sub major in physics so I decided to take it as one of my methods. There were only five female physics teachers in my Dip Ed year. One of the best things about the course was mixing with teachers from all disciplines and practicing teaching each other in different subject areas.'

Soula, Maths and Science teacher

There are several ways to qualify as a primary or secondary teacher.

- a four year undergraduate degree, such as a Bachelor of Education (BEd)
- a combined degree program combining a Bachelor of Teaching with another degree, such as a Bachelor of Arts or Science
- a three year undergraduate degree (with subjects suitable for teaching) and a one or two year postgraduate course, such as a one year Diploma of Education (DipEd)
- a two year Bachelor of Education. BEd courses vary across states and may qualify you to teach at both primary and secondary levels, at one of these levels only, or at upper primary and lower secondary levels.

Please note: Courses vary from state to state and institution to institution, and may change from year to year. Check all courses carefully through OZJAC (Australian Job and Course Explorer – refer www.curriculum.edu.au/ozjac/), the DETYA Job Guide, the Directory of Postgraduate Study and individual institution handbooks.



What does a teaching course involve?

A typical four-year undergraduate teaching course offers the equivalent of two years of subject discipline and two years of professional teacher development. In a postgraduate Diploma of Education the program concentrates on professional teacher development. Courses provide theoretical knowledge in the psychology, philosophy and sociology of education, and the practical skills to teach your subjects effectively and 'manage' your classroom.

Student teachers are also required to complete several weeks of teaching experience in a school, known as teaching rounds, field placement or practicum. Some courses are offering an Internship program where students effectively teach for a year as part of their course.

These practical placements are crucial for getting a taste of what teaching in schools is really like, for practicing your skills, and for making contacts for possible future employment. The practical experience is formally assessed, and your performance can be important to your job prospects upon graduation as the reports are often used by employers during the application and interview process.

'Teaching rounds were a little scary at first. I prepared very detailed lesson plans and felt I had to memorise all my material for fear that the kids would think I was incompetent. I had very high expectations, as I think many new teachers do. After some discussion with my supervisors I learnt to relax a little. The biggest challenge was to stop seeing myself as a student and start seeing myself as a teacher. At first I didn't feel comfortable disciplining the kids but I soon realised that if they weren't paying attention I had to adopt a stricter line and take charge of my classes.'

I think it is important for new teachers to experiment a little during their training because if you make mistakes you can learn from them and move on. Once you get to a school you really need to be confident with who you are and the approach you are taking. If you are not the kids can sense it, they pick up on any tension or anxiety. The best advice I got was from one of my teaching method lecturers who said at the end of

each lesson take a few minutes to assess what worked and what didn't, and what part you played in that. It was really good advice as the environment you foster in the classroom can make a big difference to what you bring out in the kids.

Good feedback from other teachers is important too. It has taken me a long time to learn that asking for assistance is not a sign of weakness, and discussing with other teachers what works for them and what doesn't has opened my eyes to different ways of doing things.'

Soula, experienced Maths and Science teacher

'In first semester we could do an observation placement in a primary school to see if we had chosen the right stream. We had the option to change and some students did. There were several teaching rounds in first year, starting quite early in the year. In my second year I worked as an intern four days per week. I had a mentor with whom I met at least once a week to discuss any issues or problems, anything affecting my work.

I found this system really good. As an intern, you are not paid but it is a good way to learn to teach, to learn all the things they don't teach you at uni. You have your own classes, write reports, do parent/teacher interviews, the lot. You are basically a staff member. It really felt like my first year of teaching.

I found it a breeze going into my first paid job this year. I think if I had not done the internship last year I would have been very nervous. I had no problems because I had managed all the different aspects of the job the year before. Other teachers were very impressed and said things like, "Where do you come from?" and "How come you know all this?"

More of the students who did the internship program got jobs than those who did a DipEd. At the interviews, I could show a big folio of kids' work, and I was very well prepared and could speak confidently about all aspects of the work which I don't think I would have been able to do if I had not had so much experience in a school.'

Daniela, recently graduated Art teacher

Opportunities for further training

As with most occupations now, training for teachers does not stop after the initial qualification. Teachers are expected to continue with their training and development and formal and on-the-job training is ongoing. There are a number of skills that teachers can develop within their schools through the variety of special responsibilities they have in addition to their classroom teaching. However, after several years experience many teachers decide to undertake further formal training through one of the various Graduate Certificate or Diploma, Masters and PhD programs available. Some teachers choose to increase expertise in their curriculum area, others take qualifications in management and administration relating to schools, and some seek to broaden the areas in which they are qualified to teach.

Here is a sample of some of the areas teachers may study for professional development or to gain specific qualifications to enable them to move into other areas of teaching or fulfil special roles within schools:

- Adult and Workplace Education
- Arts Education
- Careers Education
- Children's Literature
- Computer Education
- Curriculum Administration
- Design and Technology
- Distance Education
- Educational Management
- Environmental Education
- Health Education
- Industrial Education/Training
- Information Technology
- Integration
- International Education
- Leadership
- Librarianship
- Literacy
- Media Education
- Music Education
- Outdoor Education
- Science Education
- Special Education
- Student Welfare
- TESOL (Teaching English to speakers of other languages)

'I got involved in internal selection panels, writing curriculum, and the politics of the school very early in my career. It was an excellent learning experience, although I would advise new graduates to establish themselves and gain experience first before getting too involved in too many things. It is easy to get burnt out. This year, after a break to have a child, I will be the Professional Development Co-ordinator.'

Special roles like this are good for developing yourself professionally, and also for developing application and interview skills, especially as many teachers move on to other jobs after teaching. I may do some further study in the future, probably in the area of administration or management, but for the moment there is always a lot to learn within the school so I am not in a hurry.'

Soula, Maths and Science teacher

Teaching and skills for other employment

A teaching qualification is also a good general qualification for many areas of work. As a graduating teacher, or after some years of experience, you will have developed a range of skills which make you attractive to employers in many fields. You will have acquired a broad knowledge of your subject and skills related to that area, studied human relations and social organisation, learnt how to present information simply and sequentially, organise activities and programs, manage groups of people and research material to support your presentations and programs.

After many years working in schools some teachers find it difficult to make the transition to other employment. It may not be easy for everyone, but many teachers succeed and it should be remembered that the skills gained through teaching and teacher training are essential to many types of employment. These skills are highly valued by many employers in commerce, industry and the public service.



'The best thing about employing ex-teachers is that they are skilled in delivering multiple outcomes by deadlines which are repetitive and concurrent. They are good at working under stress and managing their time and resources effectively.'

Ian, previously a Geography teacher, is now a senior manager with a large community organisation



Graduates and experienced teachers who want to use their skills in the wider employment market, need to be able to make employers aware of the different skills and abilities they have, and to describe them in a way that is relevant to the work for which they are applying. An awareness of your own skills and abilities is essential in this process. Information and assistance with identifying and communicating personal and work related skills are available through Careers Advisory Services at universities. By gaining an understanding of the value of your skills and learning to think of having 'a degree' not 'just a teaching degree' you will begin to understand the transferable nature of the skills you have developed through teacher training and/or practising as a teacher.

Work roles in schools

Classroom/Subject Teacher – In secondary schools new teachers are quite often given a lighter teaching 'load' than the 'normal load' (20-24 fifty minute periods per week) which is expected of more experienced teachers. A faculty co-ordinator will generally provide some supervision and some schools have a mentor system for new teachers.

Senior Teacher – Most states now have a system which recognises very experienced teachers, usually with at least eight to ten years experience, who wish to remain in the classroom rather than advance to senior management roles. Advanced skills teaching positions attract additional salary increments or allowances.

Deputy or Assistant Principal – There may be one or more Assistant Principals in a school and they are responsible for a whole range of administrative and management functions for the school, including areas such as student welfare and discipline, negotiating staff allotments and timetabling and, along with the principal, forward planning for the school.

Principal or Head of School – The most senior position in the school, the Principal, has responsibility for the overall management of the school and works with the staff, the school council, and other organisations relevant to the running of the school, in developing and implementing the school program. Many Principals develop a management team including the Heads of the different areas of the school as well as year level and faculty co-ordinators to develop and implement school policy. Skills in areas such as public relations, marketing and fundraising are becoming more important for senior managers in many schools.

Special roles within the school – Most schools have positions of special responsibility that are filled from within the school. These might be year level or subject co-ordinator positions, or responsibilities like student welfare, careers education, professional development, or co-ordinating school performances. New teachers often prefer to gain two or three years experience before applying for one of these positions, but once they have settled in there is nothing to stop them applying and they can be an excellent way to broaden experience or further an existing interest in an area of activity within the school. The number and variety of positions varies depends on the size of the school, and they generally attract an extra salary allowance.

Teaching in non-school settings

Not everyone who graduates from a teaching course wants to teach in a primary or secondary school. Some education graduates have always gone into areas of employment relevant to their subject areas, such as a drama teacher moving into community theatre, or economics and accounting teachers transferring into business or the public service. Others realise during their training that they would like to use their teaching skills but not in a traditional school environment, and some, after a few years experience in schools, decide they would like to teach in a different environment. Here are a few of the areas where new graduates or experienced teachers work while still remaining in the education field.

Home Tutoring – There are many private tutoring agencies and colleges operating, particularly in capital cities, that need tutors in all subject areas. New graduates sometimes find this a good way to build up their skills and confidence with their subject area, or they use it as a useful way to build up experience and earn some money while still studying.

Adult and community education – Teaching in adult and community education organisations, such as in community houses or short course programs, requires a genuine interest in, and commitment to, teaching adults, enthusiasm, a thorough knowledge of a subject area, and preferably some teaching experience. Formal teaching qualifications are necessary for some basic education programs.

'I taught at the Primary level for several years after graduating until I had my children. When I was ready to return to work, I started to do some contract work in community houses initially and this has gradually grown, along with my skills and knowledge in community work, into a co-ordinating position with a group of neighbourhood houses. I think the organisational and people skills I developed as a teacher helped me make the move into this area of work'.

Carolyn, ex primary teacher, now a community worker

Early childhood teaching – Early childhood teachers work with young children and provide basic educational programs in music, art, literacy and numeracy, and activities to promote physical, mental and social development. They mostly work in kindergartens or pre-schools but also in day care centres, hospitals and special education areas. The number of childcare centres has increased in the last few years and some teaching graduates have found their skills can be very effectively utilised in some of the programs offered for very young children, although experience and/or further training in working with 0-5 year olds is usually required. TAFE courses in Childcare or a Bachelor of Education or Teaching (Early Childhood) can provide initial qualifications for people working in this area but there are also postgraduate programs in Early Childhood and Special Education.

TAFE/VET teaching – TAFE/VET teachers are often people who have qualifications and experience in a particular trade or technical area, or they may be trained teachers with experience in a relevant field, such as accounting, computing or engineering. Individual TAFE/VET colleges have different requirements for employment, and these vary depending on the course. There are undergraduate and postgraduate courses available to qualify in TAFE/VET teaching. Secondary teaching or qualifications in the areas of adult and migrant education, teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) or Languages Other Than English (LOTE) may also be appropriate depending on the teaching position. Many trained secondary teachers teach in TAFE/VET.

Training and development – It may be difficult for someone whose experience is solely in teaching to gain a position in training and development within industry or government. However, some teachers who have experience in an area other than teaching, for example human resources or management, or who have skills in an area that is relevant to business, engineering or another specialist field, may be able to move into training and development officer positions particularly after further training in this area.

English language teaching – Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) or English as a Second Language (ESL) at Adult Migrant Education Centres or ELICOS (English Language Intensive



Courses for Overseas Students) has been another area where qualified teachers, particularly English teachers and those prepared to gain the appropriate qualifications, have pursued their careers.

Overseas opportunities – Each year some teaching graduates seek work outside Australia. Opportunities are expected to increase over the next few years and many countries including the United States, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom are beginning to experience teacher shortages. Overseas teaching positions are sometimes advertised in major daily newspapers, occasionally embassies send delegates to recruit teachers in the capital cities, and there are temporary placement agencies, for example in the UK, which graduates can contact for work. Teaching English overseas (privately and at language schools) and voluntary teaching in developing countries are also two areas where many Australian teachers have worked successfully. There are also exchange schemes for experienced teachers.

'I found it quite difficult to get work after I finished uni. I applied for about 60 positions and got only one interview. I decided to apply overseas because of this and went to teach in Pakistan through the Overseas Service Bureau.

I taught in a private school with upper middle class kids, 95% of whom were Muslim. It was a struggle culturally, being a woman in a Muslim country, and living from day to day was hard. The teaching was very talk and chalk, and learning by rote compared to here.

Despite all that, I would not swap the experience for anything. It was the most interesting experience of my life and I don't regret doing it, even though I would not want to go back. It helped me get a job too. When I got home I applied for three positions and I was offered all three.'

Kim, Maths teacher

Choosing teaching after graduation

Teaching is just one option for graduates. Often graduates from generalist courses in Arts and Science see it as an attractive option. However, if you have appropriate subjects from other areas such as Commerce or Business, Engineering or Health or Behavioural Sciences, you may also find teaching offers a career path not previously considered.

If you are interested in teaching it is wise to spend some time investigating it as a career to be sure you understand what it is really like, and whether it is your preferred career. Look at your own interests and abilities, talk to teachers, perhaps do some voluntary work in a school, read the information available in careers libraries or reference centres and discuss your interest with a careers adviser if you are still unsure.

After completing an undergraduate degree it is possible to qualify for teaching by completing a one year graduate Diploma of Education or a two year postgraduate Bachelor of Education or Teaching which qualifies you to teach at both primary and secondary levels. Not all institutions offer the same courses so it is important to consult an adviser in the Faculty or School of Education in which you are considering training. Generally, State Departments of Education stipulate those undergraduate university courses intending teachers must have completed in order to teach particular subjects in secondary schools or to teach in a primary school. Be sure to check that you have an appropriate combination of subjects for employment as a teacher before starting a postgraduate course.

New graduates and the search for work

New teaching graduates are now generally offered temporary contracts at the first level of teacher classification. Permanent positions are not available in the numbers they were in the past, even in state schools. Non-government schools also generally offer contracts which are then followed by a review process and further appointment.

Increasingly, recruitment for teachers is being handled at the school level, and school principals, like other graduate employers, want the best person for the job. They will be interested in your teaching skills, a good academic record, relevant experience, and good references. However, it is often the case that the person who is successful in the interview is the person who is most proficient at communicating their skills, attributes and experience to a potential employer.

Teaching graduates need skills in searching and applying for employment just like everyone else. Ask for help from the Careers Advisory Service at your institution and make the time to hone up your interview skills well before graduation. If you seek out information, make contacts, take every opportunity to gain relevant experience, and apply widely, your chances of success will be greatly enhanced.

There are many ways to gain relevant experience and develop contacts in schools. Emergency teaching, after school or holiday programs or volunteering for activities in schools can be valuable ways to 'get a foot in the door'.

'Although trained in primary teaching, I am now employed as a physical and outdoor education teacher with an independent school. I got the job as a result of the school knowing me well through the voluntary work I had done with them teaching and coaching swimming.

The position was initially advertised and filled by someone who was not able to start when required. It became vacant once again and I then expressed my interest and confidence in my ability to do the job. Being well known to the school and well regarded, I was interviewed and later offered the position. This occurred while I was still in my final year so I was unable to start until the new year.

Because I had been honest and up front about this in the interview they held the job open for me. The interviewers were also impressed with the range of experience I had acquired whilst studying. I had worked at five or six camps with various schools on a voluntary basis and had deferred second year to work as an assistant at a camp. In the interview I tried to come across in a positive manner and show that I knew my limitations and strengths.

My experience in getting a job showed me the importance of volunteer work and making contacts. I would advise any teaching undergraduates to volunteer for as many things as possible while on teaching rounds. Take the initiative and always be prepared to do that bit extra.'

Michael, Physical and Outdoor Education teacher

(Reprinted from *Life after Graduation*, University of Melbourne)

'When I got this position I had applied for about twenty-three jobs all up. Eleven of these were advertised and the rest were schools I was interested in and approached myself.

I only have a one year contract, replacing someone on family leave, so I will have to start looking for another position soon. I think my internship experience does help make me competitive. Others have commented that I was lucky to get this position first year out and I think that is again because of my experience through the course.'

Daniela, Art teacher, independent school

'I spent one and a half years as a live-in nanny after graduating as I found it hard to get work at that time. I then decided to teach overseas and when I came back I found it much easier to get a position'.

Kim, Maths teacher, independent school





Applying for teaching positions

The employment situation for teachers varies from state to state. Some initial research will need to be undertaken to find out what the situation is in your own state, or other states. The move away from centralised recruiting to individual school or regional recruiting in recent years makes it more important to research the employment market very carefully.

Careers services at universities where teaching courses are taught can usually assist with some initial information. The addresses provided in this booklet also provide a starting point.

Each state education department, independent school or other organisation will have their own application procedures. Follow these procedures very carefully. As with all applications for graduate employment, pay special attention to your own resumé and letter of application. Be sure to clearly articulate all your teaching related experience, whether it has been through a teaching course or on a voluntary or paid basis. You will also need to be able to speak confidently about your skills and experience in an interview. Again, careers services can provide assistance with developing these skills.

If you are applying for teaching positions interstate remember that preference is generally given to applicants from the home state, although all applications will be considered. The chances of success will be influenced by the demand for specific teaching methods/subjects and geographical areas where you are prepared to teach. Most states have some difficulty in attracting experienced teachers to teach in remote country areas and some, like the Northern Territory, offer a range of incentives to attract teachers to these areas.

Teachers in the Catholic Education system are not recruited centrally but by individual schools. There is an office for each diocese, however, the capital city offices can generally provide information and contact details for other areas of the state. Independent schools also generally recruit their own staff. Some of the independent schools organisations listed keep a register of teachers interested in positions with independent schools. They can also provide lists of schools in the state or areas where you are interested in applying for employment.

Many new graduates undertake casual or relief teaching while seeking a full time or on-going position, and increasingly new teachers are being employed on limited term contracts. Seek information from the contacts listed here and from individual schools about these options.

Pay and conditions

Teaching graduates enjoy good commencing salaries when compared to graduates from many other areas. When compared to average weekly earnings, teaching graduates' salaries have declined over the past few years. However, they are close to the average starting salaries for all graduates, and are still above those for psychology, accounting, law and architecture graduates.

In 1998 starting salaries in government schools in different states ranged from \$30,000 to \$34,000pa. Advancement is based on performance and merit. Independent schools generally offer similar levels of salary. Further information on salary levels can be gained from the contacts listed below, as well as the *gradlink* website (www.gradlink.edu.au), and vary a little from state to state. In some states, if you are appointed to a position in a country area some assistance with removal and transportation costs is provided.

Most states have a system of allowances for advanced skills teachers. Advanced skills positions reward classroom teachers for their excellence in teaching and enable them to earn a higher salary without having to leave the classroom to gain promotion. Senior teacher salaries can exceed \$50,000. Conditions of employment for teachers also include provision for eleven weeks annual leave, superannuation, long service, parental, sick and other forms of leave. Individual employers can provide further specific details about employment conditions.

'There is an expectation that teachers will have an enthusiasm for teaching. They have to be prepared to join the fast lane because it is an increasingly dynamic profession. The changes won't slow down, if anything they will increase, and to cope with this teachers need to be flexible and adaptable

and to become lifelong learners. The environment will be more one of team problem solving within the school community.

Schools are more and more alive, and are offering many more exciting programs and activities for students. They are now competing with each other more, and there are pressures all round to offer great things for kids. Schools need teachers who want this too. The teaching service needs lots of new young enthusiastic professional teachers to replace those who have left the teaching service. There is a need for lots of new energy.'

State secondary school principal

'If you are thinking of going into teaching, I think you have to be an organised person just to keep up with all the things you have to do. I also think you have to really want to be a teacher, to really want to teach, because there are lots of teachers whose hearts are not really in the job and you can spot them easily.'

Kim, Maths teacher

Further information

STATE/TERRITORY CONTACTS

Australian Capital Territory

ACT Department of Education and
Community Services
PO Box 1584
Tuggeranong ACT 2901
Web: www.decs.act.gov.au/

Catholic Education Office
PO Box 3317
Manuka ACT 2603
Telephone: (02) 6234 5455 Facsimile: (02) 6239 6567

Association of Independent Schools of the ACT
42 Tyrrell Court
Kambah ACT 2617
Telephone: (02) 6241 2429 Facsimile: (02) 6241 5923

New South Wales

NSW Department of Education and Training
35 Bridge Street
Sydney NSW 2000
Telephone: (02) 9561 8000
Web: www.det.nsw.edu.au/

Catholic Education Office, Archdiocese of Sydney
PO Box 217
Leichardt NSW 2040
Telephone: (02) 9569 6111 Facsimile: (02) 9550 0052
Web: <http://ceo.syd.catholic.edu.au>

Association of Independent Schools NSW
Level 9, Reid House
75 King Street
Sydney NSW 2000
Telephone: (02) 9299 2845 Facsimile: (02) 9290 2274
Web: www.studentnet.edu.au

Northern Territory

NT Department of Education
GPO Box 4821
Darwin NT 0801
Telephone: (08) 8999 5511 Facsimile: (08) 8999 5690
Web: <http://www.ntde.nt.gov.au/>

Catholic Education Office
PO Box 219
Berrimah NT 0828
Telephone: (08) 8984 3833 Facsimile: (08) 8947 1517

Association of Independent Schools of the
Northern Territory
2nd Floor, Darwin Central
21 Knuckey St
Darwin NT 0800
Telephone: (08) 8981 8668 Facsimile: (08) 8941 3061

Queensland

Teachers in Queensland schools must hold current registration with the Board of Teacher Registration.

Board of Teacher Registration
39 Sherwood Road (PO Box 389)
Toowong QLD 4066
Telephone: (07) 3377 4777



Education Queensland
 Education House
 30 Mary Street
 Brisbane QLD 4000
 Telephone: (07) 3237 0111
 Web: www.qed.qld.gov.au
 Catholic Education Office
 GPO Box 1201
 Brisbane QLD 4001
 Telephone: (07) 3840 0400 Facsimile: (07) 3844 5101

Association of Independent Schools of Queensland
 96 Warren Street
 Spring Hill QLD 4000
 Telephone: (07) 3839 2122 Facsimile: (07) 3839 2158
 Web: www.uq.net.au/~zzaisq/

South Australia

Teacher Registration Board
 1st Floor, 45 Wakefield Street
 Adelaide SA 5000
 Telephone: (08) 8207 0066 Facsimile: (08) 8207 0060

Department of Education, Training and Employment
 31 Flinders Street
 Adelaide SA 5000
 Telephone: (08) 8226 1000
 Web: www.nexus.edu.au/

SA Catholic Education Office
 116 George Street
 Thebarton SA 5031
 Telephone: (08) 8301 6600 Facsimile: (08) 8301 6611
 Web: www.ceo.adl.catholic.edu.au/

South Australian Independent Schools Board
 301 Unley Rd
 MALVERN SA 5061
 Telephone: (08) 8373 0755 Facsimile: (08) 8373 1116

Tasmania

Registration is required to teach in independent schools but not for teaching in state schools.

Teachers and Schools Registration Board
 116 Bathurst Street
 Hobart TAS 7000
 Telephone: (03) 6233 7104 Facsimile: (03) 6324 7882

Department of Education, Training, Community and Cultural Development
 116 Bathurst Street
 Hobart TAS 7000
 Telephone: (03) 6233 8011
 Web: www.tased.edu.au/

Catholic Education Office
 432 Elizabeth Street (PO Box 102)
 North Hobart TAS 7002
 Telephone: (03) 6231 1033 Facsimile: (03) 6231 1793
 Web: www.ceo.hobart.catholic.edu.au/
 Association of Independent Schools of Tasmania
 Suite 15, Galleria Bld
 33 Salamanca Place
 Hobart TAS 7000
 Telephone: (03) 6224 0125 Facsimile: (03) 6224 0174

Victoria

There is no teacher registration in Victoria for the government system. The Registered Schools Board registers both schools and teachers for non-government schools in Victoria.

The Registered Schools Board
 Level 15, Rialto Towers
 525 Collins Street
 Melbourne VIC 3000
 Telephone: (03) 9637 2099

Recruitment for Victorian government schools is now done directly through individual schools. Many positions are now offered on a casual or contract basis.

Department of Education (Education Victoria)
 2 Treasury Place
 East Melbourne VIC 3002
 Telephone: (03) 9637 2222 Freecall: 1800 809 834
 Facsimile: (03) 9637 3260
 Web: www.eduvic.vic.gov.au

The Standards Council of the Teaching Profession
 Telephone: (03) 9628 2688 Facsimile: (03) 9628 2342
 Web: www.eduvic.vic.gov.au/structure_bodies.htm#standards

A statutory body advising the Minister for Education on professional matters.

Catholic Education Office
 228 Victoria Parade (PO Box 3)
 East Melbourne VIC 3002
 Telephone: (03) 9267 0228 / Facsimile: (03) 9415 9325
 Web: www.cecv.melb.catholic.edu.au/

Association of Independent Schools of Victoria
20 Garden Street
South Yarra VIC 3141
Telephone: (03) 9825 7200 Facsimile: (03) 9826 6066
Web: www.ais.vic.edu.au

Incorporated Association of Registered Teachers of
Victoria (IARTV)
Mercer House
82 Jolimont Street
Jolimont VIC 3002
Telephone: (03) 9654 1200 Facsimile: (03) 9650 5396
Provides a range of services to independent schools
including professional liaison, professional development
and advisory and consultancy services. It also operates
a Teachers Agency to provide a placement service for
registered primary and secondary teachers in
independent schools. It is the only agency operating in
Victoria which charges the employer rather than the
employee for placement services. To contact the
agency direct call (03) 9650 4388.

Victorian Independent Education Union (VIEU)
120 Clarendon Street
Southbank VIC 3006
Telephone: (03) 9254 1860 Facsimile: (03) 9254 1865
Web: www.edunions.labor.net.au/view
Covers employees in non-government schools. Can
provide information and advice on employment
conditions and contracts. Offers free union
membership to all education students.

Western Australia

There is no teacher registration in WA, however
Ministry guidelines must be met. In independent
schools Ministry guidelines also tend to be followed
except in the case of extremely scarce supply, for
example, music instrumental specialists.

Education Department of Western Australia
Employee Advisory Service
151 Royal Street
East Perth WA 6004
Telephone: (08) 9264 4111 Facsimile: (08) 9264 5005
Web: <http://www.eddept.wa.edu.au/>

WA Catholic Education Office
PO Box 198
Leederville WA 6903
Web: www.ceowa.perth.catholic.edu.au/

Association of Independent Schools of Western
Australia
Suite 3, 41 Walters Drive,
Herdsman Business Park,
Osborne Park WA 6017
Telephone: (08) 9244 2788 Facsimile: (08) 9244 2786
Web: www.ais.wa.edu.au

GENERAL EDUCATION AND CAREER-RELATED WEBSITES

gradlink – Job-seeking information and a listing of
university homepages
www.gradlink.edu.au

EdNA – Education Network Australia
www.edna.edu.au/EdNA/

Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs –
Information on employment prospects and an online
version of the Job Guide
www.detya.gov.au

Australian Government Directory – Education Australia
www.agd.com.au/eddir.html

**The Australian Capital Territory Education
Information Network**
<http://freenet.actein.edu.au/>

**Edsite WA (formerly The Western Australian
Education Site)**
www.edsitewa.iinet.net.au/

Oz-Teachernet – a starting point for Australian teachers
who want to use the Internet for professional
development and curriculum purposes.
<http://owl.qut.edu.au/oz-teachernet/>

Studentnet
www.studentnet.edu.au/

Education Unions of Australia – information on all
education unions
www.edunions.labor.net.au



OTHER USEFUL REFERENCES

Directory of Postgraduate Study, AVCC, GCCA,
The Graduate Connection (Also accessible via gradlink
website - www.gradlink.edu.au)

*Your Career and You: Self-Assessment for Students
and Graduates*, GCCA