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Careers for
Teaching Graduates

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NOTE:

Wherever you see this icon  please go to www.graduatecareers.com.au>>What Job For You>>Career Profiles>>Teaching>>More Information for continued discussion and/or useful websites on that subject.

Introduction

To teach (according to the thesaurus) implies educating, tutoring, lecturing, instructing, edifying, coaching and training. At its essence, it is about understanding the needs and circumstances of the learner (or audience) and designing a relevant program of instruction which will connect with their context. At every stage during the lifespan, teachers can make a significant impact on the growth and development of individuals in our society, as they interact with individuals – in their early childhood, in the pre-teen years, through adolescence and throughout the adult years.

Modern day teachers are motivators, managers, communicators, leaders, facilitators, negotiators, creators and mentors. It is for this reason that teachers can enjoy many other worthwhile career paths during their working lives.

Teaching in the 21st Century combines all of the above, with a heavy mix of societal and technological developments – with less reliance on traditional teaching or lecturing formats and more learning – with student-centred and collaborative learning being the dominant mode.

Teachers have an important role in contributing to our future, as young people are supported to become lifelong learners and take their place as valuable members of society.

What Motivates People to Become Teachers?

"I saw it as an occupation where many different tangible outcomes were possible and it meant I had the opportunity to 'make a difference'. I also saw the job as important for developing the youth of tomorrow – as both role model and mentor, as well as an educator and facilitator" – **Anja**

"I studied acting, doing a Creative Arts degree. I thought then, and I find now, that teaching drama in schools is a great way to use my acting talent and skill everyday, doing performances for kids, and immersing myself in theatre and drama"

– **Ben**

"Teaching has always been an ambition of mine. I was inspired by my mother, who is a Primary School Teacher, so I have been influenced by an educator all my life.

My passion and participation in sport and my general academic interest in well being and the body is specifically why I have selected PE teaching. Prior to commencing my degree I experienced tutoring and coaching through school sport, membership of sporting clubs and working with talented groups of young people. I thoroughly enjoyed the role of a Coach/Teacher/Leader in peer support and SRC programs as well." – **Melissa**

"Being the eldest of four children from a non-English speaking background I was the first in our family to experience racism. This experience was not only from fellow students – but from some of the teachers as well. When I was looking at what to do with my Visual Arts degree, I decided that teaching would be a way that I could make a difference. And if not, then I could be different. I could show kids that they too can be treated with respect." – **Beatrice**



What Does It Take? - Reality Check: Is Teaching Right for You?

Work Experience - Find Out What It's Really Like

When the time comes to seriously make the decision as to whether the teaching profession is an appropriate match to your future career aspirations; it may be worthwhile pursuing activities or interests which place you in a situation where you can work with or lead young people (ideally within the age range at which you are hoping to teach in schools).

These could include one or more of the following:

- coaching or refereeing sports teams
- tutoring young people
- volunteering at the local school to assist with reading
- leading a church youth group
- working with at risk students at the local community centre
- being involved in sport and recreation camps in the holidays.

These voluntary roles will give you insights into what it might be like working closely with young people. Of most benefit would be working in a school as a Teacher's Aide or assisting with a reading program on a regular basis, as this will give you a feel for the culture within schools, and you can get a sense of the challenges faced within a school setting.

Speaking in Front of an Audience - We All Have to Face It

Speaking to groups and conveying information are the life of the teacher; if this is an issue for you then perhaps it is worthwhile making an appointment with one of the counsellors at your university's Careers Service. This is part and parcel of classroom management and handling student behaviours

- you'll be glad to know all teacher education courses cover the latest material and strategies on managing classroom environments.

Personality Type - Are You a 'Teacher'?

Is it possible to say that to teach, you need to have a certain personality? The reality is that there are many different types of people working in schools; from the very conservative to the very alternative. Schools need different personalities working with children.

What Does It Take? - Qualities, Skills and Experiences

To be an effective teacher, a broad range of qualities, skills and experiences are relevant; but at the very least, you must be able to relate well to children and enjoy working with others.

- **Qualities:** commitment; empathy; motivation; passion; understanding
- **Skills:** administration and coordination; communication; cross-cultural and community development-focused; initiative and creativity; knowledge of IT; leadership; negotiation; problem-solving; teamwork
- **Experiences:** leading young people in educational, sporting, community or workplace settings; participation in the performing arts; training people at work or in sports teams

While all of the factors listed above are not absolutely essential, it would be useful to be able to draw upon a number of these qualities, skills and experiences when considering your suitability to enter the profession. Certainly you will be more employable if you already have these behind you.

And finally, in terms of your own values, you should be excited by the opportunity to motivate, inspire and shape the next generation.

What Does It Take? - Educational Requirements

There are several ways to qualify as an Early Childhood, Primary or Secondary Teacher. The requirements are reasonably consistent across all states and territories, involving at least four years of study.

The courses available at universities are broadly similar. However, it is important to check details with whichever university you are interested in.

...working...as a Teacher's Aide or assisting with a reading program on a regular basis...will give you a feel for the culture...and...a sense of the challenges faced within a school setting.

One thing you will find is that the terminology does differ. For example, the titles Bachelor of Teaching and Bachelor of Education are used for both undergraduate and graduate courses. You should also note that there are courses in Education, especially at the graduate level, which do not result in a teaching qualification.

The major paths to qualification as a teacher are:

- a four-year undergraduate degree, such as a Bachelor of Education (BEd). This is the most common preparation for Early Childhood and Primary Teaching
- a double-degree program – combining a Bachelor of Teaching with another degree, such as a Bachelor of Arts or Science
- a three- or four-year undergraduate degree (with subjects suitable for teaching) and a graduate course, such as a one-year Diploma of Education (DipEd), or a one and a half or two-year Bachelor of Education or Master of Teaching. This the most common method of preparation for Secondary Teaching, but is also available at some universities for Primary Teaching
- training courses in specialist subjects for people with trade or other qualifications and workplace experience.

All teacher training programs will incorporate the following elements:

- information and communication technologies
- challenging behaviours/classroom management
- literacy education
- Non-English Speaking Background (NESB) education
- special education
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education
- professional experience (ie. practical experience in the classroom). 

Scholarships

Educational authorities throughout Australia are currently embracing the need to attract high quality teaching graduates to particular disciplines and regions which are harder to staff. In Victoria, the Department of Education's Teaching Scholarship Scheme offers financial incentives to final year student teachers and new graduates. 

“Each year [in NSW,] up to 230 scholarships are offered to ensure more graduate teachers are available in the schools where they are needed most.

The scholarships support talented students who wish to be employed as secondary teachers in

mathematics, science, technological and applied studies or English.

In order to employ more Aboriginal teachers scholarships are available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people wishing to become Primary Teachers or Secondary Teachers of any subject.

Scholarships can [range in duration from one to] five years and are available to students who are or will be studying an approved pre-service teacher training course at a NSW or ACT tertiary institution. Eligible students include those undertaking an undergraduate or postgraduate teacher education program.

The scholarships cover the cost of HECS fees for subjects successfully completed while studying for a teacher qualification. A training allowance of \$1500 for each year of the scholarship is also provided to meet the costs of incidentals, textbooks and student administration fees.

On successful completion of studies, scholarship holders will be guaranteed permanent employment in a NSW public school in Sydney's western or south-western suburbs or in a non-coastal rural area of New South Wales.”

(Source: 'Teaching Scholarships – smart career move!' – www.det.nsw.edu.au/employment/teachnsw/scholarships.htm)



Career Opportunities in Education

Within each state and territory in Australia, different systems operate whereby an Education graduate can find employment. Public Schools are the largest employer in each state; however there are strong employment options within Independent Schools and religious-based organisations – such as the Catholic Education Office or Christian Community Schools.

Alternatives to formal teaching opportunities in schools include: adult education; continuing education centres; day care (early childhood education); English language centres; higher education (university or TAFE); local government; and private training providers.

And of course, within schools themselves, there are a variety of different specialisations one can enter.

- In **Early Childhood** there are roles for Teachers and Directors of the specific centres, which may be located in schools, long day care centres and hospitals.
- In **Primary** there are roles for Classroom Teachers, Executive Teachers and Principals and Deputy Principals (depending upon the size of the school). There may also be roles as a support teacher for learning difficulties, as an English language specialist (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) or as a teacher for gifted and talented children.
- In **Secondary** again there are roles in classroom teaching and in various levels of educational management within the school, such as Head Teacher Welfare, Director of Curriculum, Year Adviser, Faculty Head, Deputy Principal, etc., but within the classroom there are many specialisations across the Key Learning Areas. For example, health, careers, special or environmental education options exist alongside the more traditional subject areas of Maths, English, Science, Art, Music and Commerce.

On successful completion of studies, scholarship holders will be guaranteed permanent employment in a NSW public school...

Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) is an important discrete career option within the teaching profession. TESOL can take you in many different directions. You could find yourself teaching English to oil company workers in Saudi Arabia or to Primary school children in Korea. You could also remain in Australia and teach young adults who are migrants, overseas students whose main interest is to learn basic English, or non-English speaking students in Primary and Secondary schools. The international demand for English teachers has increased dramatically in recent years. In this profession, the travel opportunities are endless.

Transferring Teaching Skills to Career Opportunities Outside Education

A teaching qualification, combined with the experiences gained within school settings, provides a broad spectrum of marketable skills and experiences which an individual can use to make a step into another occupational area.

Reflecting on earlier observations about what is at the core of the teaching process – it is important to understand your audience and then deliver an effective communication strategy to inform them about identified topics and material. Add to this skills in negotiation, mediation, administration, marketing, leadership, teamwork and strengths with IT and you are looking at a very useful skill set which does transfer to other settings.

Combine these skills with other qualifications and then you may start heading towards a career as an 'education officer' within public institutions, where they wish to inform the public about their services or facilities. For example, a Visual Arts degree combined with teaching qualifications and experiences could lead to roles in art galleries, or a Biological Sciences or Ecology qualification along with teaching could lead to roles in national parks; a love for and qualification in History could lead to roles in museums.

One of the more obvious roles is within training and development, or learning development functions in HR settings within organisations – teachers are well prepared to design, deliver and evaluate work-based training programs on site.

A career in education has the potential to provide teaching roles in many settings – from ecotourism and outdoor guiding activities to corporate training in leadership development, teamwork and personal development. For those with an interest in Physical

Education, there may be opportunities within the Tourism and Hospitality sectors in major resorts or hotels, where they require 'Activities Officers' or 'Recreational Officers' to coordinate programs for guests.

Recruitment Processes and Accreditation

All educational authorities or departments across Australia have their own list of criteria which will result in an applicant being more attractive for full-time employment at the end of their studies.

"[As an example, in NSW, all final year teacher education students] may apply to become a permanent, temporary or casual teacher by lodging an application online with the Graduate Recruitment Program (GRP)...

The GRP offers a 'fast track' point of entry for students who meet both university and Department of Education and Training requirements. Many applicants will have interim casual approval to teach in NSW public schools by the beginning of term four.

Each year, up to 1000 students are appointed [to] permanent teaching positions within our schools, based on individual merit and staffing needs."

(Source: <https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/employment/teachnsw/grad.htm>) 

(For further information directly applicable to your state or territory please go to **www.graduatecareers.com.au**>>What Job For You>>Career Profiles>>Teaching>>More Information and look under 'Recruitment Processes and Accreditation'.)

Contributing factors to obtaining full-time employment include: where you are willing to work (regions outside the cities are harder to staff but offer more options); what you are qualified to teach (disciplines such as Mathematics, Science and IT are highly desirable); academic performance, performance at interview; performance in practical teacher placements during your studies; and personal qualities and special skills.

Mid way through the final year of studies a Personal Suitability Interview may be offered – and prior to this, formal application forms are submitted, along with background checks regarding 'working with children', criminal records and health checks. Once the Personal Suitability Interview has been completed, the candidate can then seek an interim casual approval to teach.

In recent years a new level of accreditation has been introduced for those entering the teaching profession. In NSW, the NSW Institute of Teachers has established the Professional Teaching Standards.

The Professional Teaching Standards have been developed to assist in accreditation processes for teachers throughout their career. A four-stage framework has been identified: Graduate Teacher; Professional Competence; Professional Accomplishment; and Professional Leadership. The framework describes the benchmarks for identifying and describing effective teaching.



In terms of the logistics of obtaining employment with educational authorities, once a candidate is interviewed by the educational authority and their suitability to teach in schools is assessed and employment is offered, the employer, usually a Teacher Accreditation Authority, will accredit the teacher either provisionally or conditionally (based on their qualifications). The Teacher Accreditation Authority will then send the teacher's details to the Institute which will then issue an accreditation number and send out an information package. 

(For further information directly applicable to your state or territory please go to www.graduatecareers.com.au>>What Job For You>>Career Profiles>>Teaching>>More Information and look under 'Recruitment Processes and Accreditation')

Casual Teaching

Casual teaching can be a great starting point for your career, or can be an excellent source of income for those who are not offered full-time work immediately.

- You can make a career out of casual and temporary teaching as there are many opportunities available, particularly in rural or regional areas.
- Casual teachers are engaged on a day-to-day basis to cover the absences of other teachers.
- Temporary teachers may teach in blocks; from four consecutive weeks to several terms or even the whole year, and have access on a pro rata basis to most of the conditions of permanent teachers, including sick and long service leave.
- In NSW, time spent as a casual or temporary teacher accelerates your priority date for permanent employment through the Teacher Employment Priority Scheme (TEPS), and can increase your starting salary when you are appointed permanently. Through TEPS each 50 days of casual employment accelerates your priority date by up to 18 months, dependent on the location of the school.

(Source: www.det.nsw.edu.au/employment/recruit/casualteachers/teps.htm). 

...be good at what you do,
no matter what the job is
because there is nothing
better than knowing you
have done a job well and
that it has helped someone.

Troy Heise, Diploma in Teaching People with Disabilities

(For further information directly applicable to your state or territory please go to www.graduatecareers.com.au>>What Job For You>>Career Profiles>>Teaching>>More Information and look under 'Recruitment Processes and Accreditation')

National and International Demand for Teachers

Three major factors impact on the demand for qualified teachers – **demographics, economics and politics**.

With the average age of teachers listed as anywhere between 45 and 49 (depending upon what state you are in), it is clear that there are significantly more teachers currently employed who are in their 50s and 60s, and much smaller numbers in their 20s and 30s. This means large numbers of teachers are now approaching retirement. In recent years university teacher education course enrolments have not jumped significantly (if at all), and so there are more teachers leaving education than entering.

Besides these demographics, the economy has had an impact in recent years. Our strong Australian economy has seen 'wastage' rates increase. 'Wastage' is what work force planners refer to as those who leave the system, and we have seen more leave to take up new areas of employment in a buoyant labour market, either at the end of their studies or after a number of years in the teaching profession.

These same factors have also impacted internationally, and there are tremendous opportunities for Australian-trained teachers to obtain teaching roles in the UK, Asia (in places such as Taiwan, Korea, Japan and China) and North America. As a result, a whole industry of support companies exists and they will assist Australian-trained teachers to secure work overseas.

It is important to note that the factors which influence supply and demand are fluid, and as such over time the dynamics will shift. However, at the time of writing this booklet, employment prospects for both Primary and Secondary Teachers were considered to be good.

(Source: <https://jobsearch.gov.au/joboutlook>)

What Are the Rewards?

When analysing what a potential career choice might offer you, it is worthwhile considering both the *extrinsic* rewards and the *intrinsic* rewards.

Extrinsic rewards include such factors as:

- annual leave arrangements
- hours of work
- potential for travel – across town, across the state or across the globe
- rates of pay
- status of the role within the community.

Intrinsic rewards include such factors as knowing that:

- you will be able to work collaboratively with others
- you will be provided with variety and stimulation and have outlets or opportunities to be creative
- your work contributes to the development of individuals and the wider society.

The Highs

“It is great when ex-students come back to say ‘Hi’ years later, and say how much they learnt and enjoyed the class. Year 7 camps are terrific – having students challenge themselves in activities such as high ropes, abseiling and canoeing. I also love to see students succeed in my subject area when many believe they wouldn’t, and being able to measure that success.” – Andrew

“Through my limited teaching experience I have helped young people ‘strive to greater heights’ by being aware of individual differences, interests and capabilities, by setting high, yet realistic expectations for them, giving encouragement and positive reinforcement and challenging students by inspiring, motivating, providing direction, caring and supporting them.” – Melissa

“The best highs have been outside of school, years after you have taught a child – when shopping or some such thing and someone remembers you from three or four years ago, and they tell you and their friends that you were their favourite teacher or you were the one that gave them a go. That’s when you know that what you do is worthwhile!” – Beatrice



GRADUATE PROFILES

Colette Bond

– Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Teaching

Everything I learnt [at ACU]... has equipped me with the valuable tools...needed to become an effective teacher and a lifelong learner.

Upon completion of my studies at Australian Catholic University I graduated with a Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Teaching. Everything I learnt during my time at ACU has equipped me with the valuable tools and the framework needed to become an effective teacher and a lifelong learner. I came to realise that teaching is not just a 'job', it is a vocation.

Finding a teaching position upon the completion of my degree was a relatively simple process due to the excellent reputation of the university. I commenced my first full-time employment as a teacher at Mater Christi College, a Catholic secondary college for girls located in Belgrave, Victoria. Currently I am teaching Years 7-10 in the areas of English, Religious Education and Humanities, as well as being responsible for a homegroup. This has been an incredible learning experience with its highs and lows, yet all I learnt during my time at ACU together with the ongoing encouragement, support and guidance of my colleagues, means that I am well equipped to deal with each new challenge.

Life at Mater Christi College is never dull, each day spent in the classroom brings new experiences as you encounter a huge variety of individuals, both staff and students, each with their own needs, challenges and ideas; these are the people who inspire me each and every day with their passion and enthusiasm to be the best teacher that I can be.

Contributing factors to obtaining full-time employment include: where you are willing to work... academic performance, performance in practical teacher placements...and special skills.

Fiona Messer

– Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood Education



Country teaching was a real eye opener as I had never experienced such a small class, let alone a composite one.

I studied teaching at the University of Notre Dame in Fremantle WA. Being a student of teaching at Notre Dame enabled me to experience more practical hands-on experience in the classroom as over the term of my course, I had 32 weeks of teaching practicums in four different schools. I am forever grateful for this extra experience as I was not only able to experience what it was like to work a full term, but it also allowed me to work in a variety of classroom settings over a 10-week period and get a real feel for teaching.

Going to a Catholic university, I decided that I would prefer to pursue a career in a Catholic Primary School, however I left my options open and applied for jobs in Catholic schools and government schools in both the city and the country. I was prepared to go to the country if it meant that I could get a job as I knew that it was hard to get a job as a graduate in the city.

I was lucky enough to secure my first teaching position at St Mary's School in the small country town of Northampton, with a school size of 64, teaching a Year 2/3 class of 16 students. Country teaching was a real eye opener as I had never experienced such a small class, let alone a composite one. I found teaching in the country was difficult due to lack of resources, but it was a very rewarding experience.

After 12 months in Northampton I was able to secure a position in the city. I accepted a six-month maternity replacement contract, teaching Year 6 at Yidarra Catholic Primary School. This was a scary challenge for me being ECE trained and never having worked in a classroom setting above Year 3, but one that I thought I could handle – after all it was only six months! I enjoyed it so much that I happily re-signed my contract to see out the remainder of the year.

I am still at Yidarra but am back in junior primary, teaching Year 3. While at times, teaching is tiring with all the programming, repetition, report writing and extracurricular activities that are involved, I would not change careers for the world. I love the children's curiosity and eagerness to learn. I thrive on the fact that I provide the stepping stones to helping the children learn and, while doing this, I can have an impact on and make a difference in the life of a child.

Troy Heise

– Diploma in Teaching People with Disabilities



I found work experience invaluable as it helped me cement my ideal career and confirmed for me that I was on the right career path.

When I began study I decided I wanted to be a teacher. I started with a Diploma in Teaching People with Disabilities thinking that I specifically wanted to teach those who had mental and physical disabilities. After two years of study and the completion of my diploma, I was told that, in order to become a teacher, I needed to do another three

years of study which did not suit me. I'd had enough of tertiary education and wanted a new pathway, so I went to work.

While studying, I worked as a teacher's aide which gave me an insight into my possible future career path. I found work experience invaluable as it helped me cement my ideal career and confirmed for me that I was on the right career path. Once I had completed my study I continued to work as a teacher's aide and then made the move to London. I continued to work as a teacher's aide (alongside some bar work) and enjoyed working with people.

When I returned to Queensland I continued along the same career path, working with adults with disabilities, specifically for the Cerebral Palsy League of Queensland and loved it. I then changed career paths into youth work, and from there on to another dream of becoming an Ambulance Officer (or Paramedic).

This has taken me back to studying, including a number of short courses in First Aid, CPR and Communication (including non-verbal communication, reading body language and sign language), and I am now completing a Diploma in Pre-Hospital and Emergency Care. The biggest thing that I have found is that a lot of the skills I learned in my initial diploma have carried through to the jobs I have since done and into my new career path. I still work with those that need my help, but rather than teaching, I am caring for them medically. I need to find that mix between a caring nature and leadership skills and be able to communicate with people from all walks of life, from the rich to the poor and the homeless to the elderly.

"People do not ring an emergency number such as 000 because they want to have a chat; it is because they need help. Being able to help people makes the job worth while. I also do not know what the day or night will bring; it's a constant challenge."

While I may have changed my career path from the initial plan to be a teacher, I am still getting to utilise the skills I learned on a daily basis. I have discovered a new love which I say is important for a career because you spend a long time working. Above all else, I say it is important to be good at what you do, no matter what the job is because there is nothing better than knowing you have done a job well and that it has helped someone.

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This booklet is one of a series produced by GCA and intended for use by Careers Advisory Services in Higher Education in Australia. The booklets will also be of interest to secondary students and others considering further study.

A full list of titles is available on the GCA website – www.graduatecareers.com.au>>What Job for You>>Career Profiles. Selected booklets are also available online.

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