

Finding Observation / Experience in Schools

Thinking about becoming a teacher? Then getting **relevant observation and work experience** will be top of your list of things to sort out. It is a great way to check you are sure about your career choice. It also provides evidence for your enthusiasm about the profession and enables you to pick up important skills. All of this will be useful when making your applications and going for interviews

So what are your options?

Get started with information from The National College for Teaching and Leadership The National College for Teaching and Leadership (previously The Teaching Agency and National College for Leadership) is a fantastic source of information and support for anyone considering becoming a teacher. There is even a programme designed to help you get an insight into what it is like to be a teacher called the 'School Experience Programme'. They are keen to attract students and professionals who are considering entering or re-entering teaching and can offer you relevant advice. You can chat on line to ask specific questions, you can call the helpline and you can find them on Facebook and Twitter. You can find their website [here](#). You can register with the site to receive advice and information.

Approaching individual schools for volunteering

Approaching schools yourself is a good way to find opportunities in an area which is convenient to you. If you are from the area why not try the schools that you attended?

Alternatively research local schools – a full list is available on the **Edubase website**. When writing a letter or email remember to ask

For 'observation' which means you probably won't need a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service)(previously CRB ,Criminal Records Bureau) check to start with. Volunteering opportunities can also sometimes lead to part-time work as a teaching assistant. Remember though if you want to continue on to complete your Teaching Training, you will need a minimum of two weeks experience in a school (not the school you attended as a child and not one where you have been employed).

In the Careers Service you will find the Secondary Schools Directory, the Independent Schools Directory and Special Education Needs Schools Directory which provide lists of schools in the local area and across the UK.

After school clubs / breakfast clubs / play workers

Paid or volunteering work at after or before school clubs is often available. Check **JobOnline** and local authority job websites for positions in state schools e.g. www.hounslow.gov.uk

Summer play schemes and kids camps

In the autumn, summer camps in UK and America start recruiting students to work during the summer. You can often specialise in arts / drama / sports and it's a great way to get experience managing large groups of children in a range of ages. Some starting points are: **CCUSA, Camp America, Bunac, Camp Beaumont, PGL**

Tutoring

Often quite well paid, one to one tutoring can be a good way of gaining knowledge of the school curriculum and learn-

ing how to engage children of different ages. Tutoring agencies can often be found advertising on **JobOnline**; however, tutoring does not replace the need for some experience in a classroom setting too.

Other Volunteer Opportunities with Children

Reading schemes, mentoring, befriender, session delivery in schools, scout/ guides/ cubs/ brownies leader. All these and more are ways of gaining volunteering experience with children. You can search on **JobOnline** and **www.do-it.org** for lots of opportunities near you.

General Volunteering

The Careers Service has lots of ways of helping you gain volunteering experience and databases that you can search. So, if you just want to volunteer to build your skills and experience then come and see us. Remember that you will need to get school experience as well.

How we can help

Your Careers Service is open Monday to Friday with resources, information and one to one support available. Please contact us on 020 8240 4055, **careers@stmarys.ac.uk** or by dropping in to J3 to talk to a Careers Consultant. We also have books and take away materials about becoming a teacher. If you are considering a PGCE we would also encourage you to attend the St Mary's open events run by the School of Education which tell you all you need to know about the PGCE.

This material can be provided in alternate formats. Please ask a member of the Careers team. The Careers Service believes all material published here to be accurate at the time of publication. June 2016 © The Careers Group, University of London.