

## 1) Gaining Experience

Having had time out of the classroom, there are two things you will want to show a prospective employer: recent classroom experience, or up to date subject and pedagogical knowledge (or both!)

### **Recent Classroom Experience**

Ideally, you want to do some teaching, but observing other teachers in your chosen phase will be useful. Think about having some time in other year groups or key stages to give you an insight into pupils' academic journeys and offer you some much needed experience to talk about at interview.

With the current shortage of teachers, forward-thinking schools will (hopefully) be open to proactive professionals contacting them. However, don't expect all schools to offer you time in the classroom straight away. You may need to meet the Headteacher, have a visit to the school and/or observe some teaching first.

Why not read [Dawn Stow's experience](#) of volunteering in a local school whilst on maternity leave, and how it transformed her teaching career?

Here are some tips that might help you get started:

- Sign up for a classroom experience through the [OTSA School Experience Programme](#)
- Contact your old school/s
- Ask teacher friends if they can help
- Ask the teachers/Headteacher at your children's school
- Do you know any school Governors who could help?
- Contact local schools or school in the area you wish to work
- Contact your local Teaching School or Multi Academy Trusts – a Google search will probably be the best way to find out who these are if you are not sure
- Ask to speak to the Principal's PA when you phone through to school receptions
- Contact the [Return to Teaching](#) Government website and register with them
- Prepare a CV and covering letter, then visit the school in person – this is a much more direct approach and does need a little more prep, but may get better results
- Be clear about what you want from the school, where you are willing to compromise, and how you are going to articulate this to Headteachers and administration staff who act as the gatekeepers to SLT members

### **Developing Subject and Pedagogical Knowledge**

As well as lack of recent classroom experience, out-dated subject knowledge has also been identified as a barrier to returning teachers. Whilst the core of good instruction and effective relationship building with students remains timeless, curricula, exam board expectations and preferred teaching styles change quickly in education.



Demonstrating that you have been keeping up to date, therefore, will help to convince a prospective employer that you are the expert that they want for their students.

You'll observe some of this updated practice if you're able to volunteer in a school, but if childcare, current work commitments or a lack of positive response from schools prevents you from visiting, consider the following options:

- Exam marking is an excellent way to gain incredibly valuable subject knowledge that will be highly desirable to departments around the country
- Attending local and national conferences in your subject area, or attending workshops on specific pedagogies can get you up to speed. Here are just a few to explore – Google can help you further!
  - [WomenEd \(@WomenEd\)](#)
  - [Oxfordshire Women Leading in Education #OWLIE](#)
  - Primary Rocks Live
  - [National Association for Teachers of English](#)
  - [The Festival of Education](#)
  - Royal Society of Chemistry Teachers
  - [ResearchEd](#)
- [The MTPT Project's website](#) features a range of CPD opportunities that can fit around your current work or family commitments
- The MTPT Project offer a free two-module [Accreditation](#) process for teachers on parental leave, or for teachers who have taken time out of school to care for their families. Their flexible Accreditation is underpinned by coaching sessions and is designed to fit around the demands of your families, and personalised to your needs
- Facebook and Twitter have groups and hashtags dedicated to sharing lesson ideas and debating the latest educational trends