



Applying to ITT: Tips for secondary candidates

Having decided to apply to an initial teacher training (ITT) course, you will need to submit a written application and attend an interview. An ITT assessment interview will be awarded on the quality of your application, an extremely important element of which is your personal statement.

What is a personal statement?

It is your opportunity to stand out from all other applicants. It is important that you convey **why** you want to teach, **what** you can offer, and **why** you will make a good teacher. You will need to explain **how** you know that teaching is right for you, and **in what way** the school-based experience you have had confirms this.

Your personal statement must demonstrate that you have:

- A strong commitment to becoming a teacher
 - Be enthusiastic about your subject and show that you want to share this enthusiasm with pupils
 - Identify specific reasons for wanting to become a teacher
 - Demonstrate a desire to work with young people
- A good understanding of what life as a teacher is really like
 - Recent experience of a secondary school, including observing a lessons, ideally in the subject area you wish to teach.
 - Ability to analyse the teaching you have observed and describe what you have gained from the experience.
 - Understanding of what life as a teacher is really like
 - Understanding of the skills needed to be a teacher and work with young people
- Appropriate personal qualities and values, for example:
 - Ability to work and interact with others
 - Ability to think on your feet
 - Good communication skills

A five-paragraph suggested structure

1. Why teaching and why you?
2. Relevance of and reflections upon your school-based work experience
3. Why your chosen subject?
4. Any additional factors in support of your application
5. Conclusion

Practicalities

Word process your draft personal statement so you can check it for spelling and grammatical errors before copying and pasting it into the ITT application form. You must be concise in describing your potential to be a successful teacher – for a Graduate Teacher Training Registry (GTTR) application you have only 47 lines (4,000 characters) in which to persuade the ITT providers to offer you an interview!

The Interview

Each ITT provider will run the interview in slightly different ways, but they will be looking for the same sorts of things as you have described in your personal statement – but in more detail. It's a good idea to print out your personal statement and read it through before your interview, as you are likely to be questioned on specific things that you've written. The ITT provider will also be looking to make a judgement about your subject knowledge – remember, they will be most interested in your knowledge of secondary school, not your degree level.

Finally, remember you are talking to education professionals who are passionate about their field and can tell when a candidate is exaggerating. Be yourself, take your time, and think carefully about what you say.