

The do's and don'ts of job hunting

ATL receives a lot of calls from members who have decided to move on in their careers. This factsheet is intended to answer some of the common queries about job hunting.

The application

- Check newspapers such as the *Times educational supplement* (Fridays) and the *Guardian* (Tuesdays) to see what jobs are available.
- Send off for some application packs and get an idea of the specifications for the type of post(s) you are interested in.
- Note any buzz words and phrases, eg coordinate, motivate, lead, and incorporate them into your CV/application form/covering letter.
- Give brief details of skills, experience and achievements.
- Resist any temptation to elaborate. (You can do this at interview.)
- Remember, your application gives a flavour of who you are. You should strive to come across as organised, up to date, enthusiastic and committed.

Note: New entrants to the profession can download the ATL publication *Apply yourself!*, which offers helpful guidance on getting that first teaching post at www.new2teaching.org.uk.

The personal specification

If you do not meet the person spec then you will not get an interview. Be sure to demonstrate how you meet each point with a practical example from your own experience.

The interview

Do be aware that there is no statutory right to time off to attend a job interview, unless you are being made redundant. Whilst most employers allow reasonable time off to attend job interviews, problems may arise if these clash with the needs of the school. Members should also clarify with the employer whether the time off will be on a paid or unpaid basis.

Prepare yourself. Check the job specification and try to anticipate any questions/concerns the prospective employer might have. Make sure you have visited the school/college website and are aware of any ongoing initiatives. Polish your interview skills. Prepare some questions and ask a friend/relative/colleague to conduct a mock interview. Ask for constructive feedback to the following questions:

- Did I look and sound confident and approachable?
- Did my body language complement this image or detract from it?
- Did I establish eye contact with everyone on the interview panel?
- Did I answer questions clearly and concisely?

Finally, do ensure that you get to the interview in good time.

The offer

Congratulations – you’ve been offered the post. Remember, a contract is established once you have *accepted* a job offer. (The paperwork that follows is the written confirmation of the contract together with its terms and conditions.) It is crucial to remember this. If, for example, you accept a post then accept another post afterwards, you could be sued for breach of contract if you try to back out of the original post. Remember also that the job offer is subject to a satisfactory reference, possibly a medical examination and a Criminal Records Bureau check. If either, some or all of these are unsatisfactory then the offer could be withdrawn.

The resignation dates

In the maintained sector the resignation dates for teachers are as follows:

- 2 months’ notice to be received by 28 February to leave by 30 April
- 3 months’ notice to be received by 31 May to leave by 31 August
- 2 months’ notice to be received by 31 October to leave by 31 December.

Resignation dates in the independent sector should be detailed in your written terms and conditions, as they should for support staff.

The letter of resignation

There is no formal template but members may find the following example a useful point of reference.

Dear (name of head/principal)

I am writing to submit my resignation with effect from (see dates above). In doing so I would like to thank you and my colleagues for your continued support during the past ...years/months I have taught at (name of school/college). Finally, I would like to wish both staff and pupils continued success for the future.

Yours sincerely

.....

CC Chair of governors

Do put the actual end date, eg 31 December, rather than 'the end of term'. This will ensure that you are paid for the full term, including the holiday period.

Members may occasionally be tempted to sign off their letter of resignation with a complaint about their treatment by colleagues/senior management. However, members should resist this temptation if using the head as a future reference. Remember, there is no statutory right to a reference and it is for the prospective referee to decide whether to grant such a request.

Good luck in your applications and do contact ATL if we can be of any further assistance (see details below).



Need advice?

Your first point of contact is your ATL rep in your school or college. Your local ATL branch is also available to help with queries, or you can contact ATL's member advisers on **020 7930 6441**, email: **info@atl.org.uk** or write to 7 Northumberland Street, London WC2N 5RD. Don't forget you can also get lots of help and advice, as well as download copies of other ATL advice sheets, on our website at **www.atl.org.uk**

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