

Association of Teachers and Lecturers

Press Release



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New teachers already demotivated about teaching at the start of their careers

Three-quarters (73%) of trainee and student and newly qualified teachers (NQTs) say they have already considered leaving the teaching profession, according to a survey by the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL).

Almost 80% (76%) say they have considered leaving teaching because their workload is too high and 26% said it is because of the increasing expectation to take part in out-of-school hours activities. Thirty per cent said it was due to 'teacher bashing' in the press and a lack of respect for the profession; 25% said they were fed up with constant attacks on teachers' terms and conditions, and a further 25% said challenging pupil behaviour has made them consider leaving teaching.

Over half (54%) said they did not think they would still be teaching in ten years' time and almost a quarter (24%) said they did not think they would be teaching in five years' time.

A trainee in his third year at a primary school in Bedfordshire said: "My peers and I are often told to be prepared to be disappointed, stressed, and to quit. There is very little positivity in the profession at the moment. Teachers feel undermined and unappreciated. I think teachers are concerned for those coming into the profession as they don't wish for others to be as stressed and disillusioned as they are."

Unsurprisingly, workload was what they disliked most about teaching, cited by 87%. Sixty-three per cent dislike the impact of Ofsted on their school, 57% dislike the constant changes in teaching, and almost 50% (48%) are not happy about the pressures of high-stakes exams and assessments. Fifty-six per cent dislike marking, 53% the lack of time to reflect on practice and 48% dislike challenging pupil behaviour.

An NQT in a secondary school said: "Planning takes all weekend and I spend hours marking. Although there are wonderful 'light bulb' moments, there are not usually enough of these to wipe out the downsides. At the start of my second term as a NQ I am exhausted and starting to be demoralised."

The things they enjoy most about being a teacher are when a pupil has a 'light-bulb' moment (79%), and helping pupils enjoy what they are learning (76%).

Eighty per cent of respondents wanted to become a teacher because they enjoy working with young people; 75% want to make a difference and 57% like the idea of variety with each day being different.

Eight-in-ten (79%) of respondents said they do not have a good work/life balance, with 81% stating they do not have enough time to participate in hobbies; 80% do not get enough time to relax; 76% are not able to see friends, and 68% do not get enough time to spend with their partner.

An NQT in a primary school said: "I saw this as a vocation, a lifelong dream following a successful, non-teaching career elsewhere. I now have no time to spend with family or even speak to them. I can't sleep, have no social life but still love 'teaching'; it's the rest of it that's unbearable."

Respondents said the changes that would most benefit their teaching are more time to plan, prepare and assess (83%), less marking and assessment (71%), more freedom in how they teach (47%), and spending less time focused on exams and tests (46%).

When asked what would improve their work/life balance, less work to do in the evenings, at weekends and during holidays was deemed most important, followed by less unnecessary paperwork, and more planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time.

During term time, over a quarter (28%) work more than ten hours a week at weekends and almost half (46%) work between six and ten hours at weekends.

An NQT in a secondary school said: "I enjoy the work and the challenge, but am shocked at how many hours I work at weekends and on my two "days off".

Dr Mary Bousted, general secretary of ATL, said: "New teachers, like their more experienced colleagues, are enthusiastic and caring professionals who want time to do their job well and have a reasonable work/life balance. It's incredibly sad to hear that so many are already disillusioned so early on in their careers, but it is understandable given the pressure and stress of a high workload.

"Unless the Government makes changes to address teachers' workloads, we fear thousands of great teachers will leave the profession.

"Our trainee and student and newly qualified members have told us they want the Government to improve the experience of teaching, with the majority saying they'd like ministers to consult meaningfully with the profession, allow teachers more autonomy over what and how they teach, and to also review the current inspection system. We only hope that ministers finally sit-up and listen and tackle the looming teacher shortage crisis before it is too late."

ENDS

Further information:

ATL surveyed 889 trainee and student teachers and newly qualified teachers who are training to work in or are working in primary and secondary schools and academies, sixth-form and FE colleges in England between November 2014 and January 2015.

Key survey results:

Why did you want to become a teacher? Marking all that apply. (858 responses)	
Great experience in my own education	29.8%
Poor experience in my own education	13.4%
Inspired by my teacher(s) at school	37.5%
Love of my subject	36.1%
Enjoy working with children and young people	80.5%
Want to make a difference	74.8%
Having longer holidays	19.8%
Avoiding having to use childcare if have or starting a family	9.6%
Variety - every day is different	56.9%
To have fun	32.5%
Limited career options after graduating	7.3%
Family members work in education	16.4%
Other (specified)	6.7%
What do you enjoy about being a teacher? Marking all that apply. (858 responses)	
Running my own classroom	56.5%
Working with children/young people	86.1%
Working with a subject I enjoy	45.3%
The variety of challenges within the job	45.5%
When pupils have their "light bulb" moment	79.4%
When pupils' ideas provide a new perspective; learning from the pupils	55.1%
Helping pupils to enjoy what they're learning	76.3%
Meeting and working with parents/families	27.3%
Working with other professionals; eg health, social care	13.6%
Developing my practice through CPD	26.3%
Working with colleagues in the classroom/school	45.8%
Not applicable	1.2%
Other (specified)	1.6%
What don't you enjoy about being a teacher? Marking all that apply. (858 responses)	
Workload	87.3%
Marking	55.5%
Challenging pupil behaviour	48.4%
Reduced time with other adults	23.7%
Impact of Ofsted on the school	62.5%
Insufficient time to reflect on my practice	53.1%
Report writing	31.7%
The subject I teach	0.9%
Teaching subjects outside my degree area	7.6%
Bullying culture within the school	15.2%
Unsupportive culture within the school	25.7%
Pressure of high-stakes exams/assessments	48.1%
Challenging parent behaviour	32.5%
Insufficient time for CPD	31.7%
Rigidity of national curriculum	27%
Constant changes in teaching	57.4%
Not applicable	1.2%
Other (please specify)	6.7%

What inspires you as a teacher? Ranked in order of importance. (711 responses)	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Making a difference to pupils' lives 2. Working with children and young people 3. Being creative in the classroom 4. Sharing ideas with colleagues 5. Understanding my own subject more 6. Joint staff learning 7. Reading research and practice from other schools 8. Participating in school-level research 	
Do you feel like you have a good work/life balance? (650 responses)	
Yes	12.9%
No	79%
Don't know	8%
Due to any difference between your contracted and actual hours do you have enough time to do the following? (650 responses)	
Spend time with partner	68.3%
Spend time with children	74.9%
Seeing friends	75.7%
Going out: for meals/to the cinema/theatre/gigs	77.5%
Participating in hobbies	81.5%
Playing sport or exercising	77.5%
Get enough sleep	74%
Relax/ alone time	79.9%
On average, how many hours per week do you work at weekends during term time? (650 responses)	
0 hours	1.6%
1-5 hours	23.3%
6-10 hours	46.4%
More than 10 hours	28.4%
What would improve your work/life balance? Ranked in order of importance. (588 responses)	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Less work to do in evenings/weekend/holidays 2. Less unnecessary paperwork 3. More PPA time 4. Smaller classes 5. Less pressure on inspection visits (HMIE/Education Scotland, Estyn, Ofsted etc) 6. Reduction of reporting demands 7. No more education changes eg curriculum 8. More opportunities to collaborate with colleagues - <i>joint 8th with:</i> 8. More use of TAs/Classroom Assistants in the classroom 9. Fewer school related activities to attend outside of normal working hours 	
What would have the most positive impact on your teaching? Marking all that apply. (588 responses)	
More time to plan, prepare and assess	83.3%
More autonomy/freedom to teach as I judge best	47.2%
Less time focusing on tests/ exams	46.4%
Access to externally sourced CPD	18.7%
Mentoring/coaching from experienced colleagues	42.6%
Access to research evidence around pedagogy	14.1%
More support from school/college leadership	30.2%
Clear and consistent behaviour policies implemented across the school	35.8%
Opportunities to reflect with colleagues	34.8%

Less marking/assessment	70.5%	
Consistency of expectations	45%	
Have you ever considered leaving the profession? (588 responses)		
Yes	73.1%	
No	26.8%	
If yes, why? Picking their top three. (588 responses)		
The amount of work	76%	
Challenging pupil behaviour	24.6%	
Too much time preparing reports	14.4%	
Unable to keep up with subject developments	5.4%	
Level of management support	19.7%	
Lack of opportunity to progress	7.4%	
The peer isolation aspect of the role	14.6%	
Attacks on teachers' terms and conditions	24.8%	
Academisation of my school	4.2%	
Limited number of permanent/long term jobs	6.4%	
A specific incident with a pupil/group of pupils	3.4%	
A specific incident with a pupil's/pupils' parents	2.7%	
A specific incident with a colleague/management	9.3%	
Changes to pay structure/rate of pay increases	21.2%	
'Teacher bashing' in press and lack of respect for profession	30.1%	
Increasing expectation to take part in out of hours activities	26.3%	
Reduction in support services from the Local authority	7.4%	
Other (specified)	24.4%	
Do you think you will still be working in teaching: (581 responses)		
	Yes	No
In 10 years' time	46.1%	53.8%
In five years' time	75.5%	24.4%
Don't know	65%	34.9%
What would you like the Government to do to improve the experience of teaching? Ranked in order. (542 responses)		
1. Consult meaningfully with the profession		
2. Review the current inspection system - <i>joint 2nd with:</i>		
2. Not introduce lots of different changes at the same time		
3. Allow teachers more autonomy over what and how they teach		
4. Restore national pay and conditions		
5. Take reform (more) slowly		
6. Reduce the amount of tests and exams		
7. Provide more funding for CPD		
8. Abolish school league tables		

Note to editors:

- ATL will be holding an invite-only pre-election debate - *Meeting the learning needs of future generations - is CPD for teachers an entitlement, requirement, necessity or just a distant dream?* - on Tuesday 27 January which will look at professionalism in education and will debate the role of CPD in teachers' working lives and how we ensure that teachers are inspired and prepared to meet the learning needs of our future generations. Follow the debate at #ShapeEducation
- [ATL's manifesto](#) calls for teachers to maintain their skills and knowledge through a contractual right to CPD with some control over its content, dedicated time to research their subject, to learn with expert colleagues and to feel free to innovate – all to the benefit of their students.

- The Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) is an independent, registered trade union and professional association, representing approximately 170,000 teachers, headteachers, lecturers and support staff in maintained and independent nurseries, schools, sixth form, further and higher education colleges and universities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- ATL exists to help members, as their careers develop, through first rate research, advice, information and legal advice, and to work with government and employers to defend its members' pay, conditions and career development.
- ATL is affiliated to the Trades Union Congress (TUC), Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) and Education International (EI). ATL is not affiliated to any political party and seeks to work constructively with all the main political parties.