



National College for
Teaching & Leadership

School Experience Programme

Information for schools

September 2016

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Introduction

This information note aims to support schools in the delivery of the School Experience Programme (SEP).

School experience is important to candidates looking to enter initial teacher training (ITT), as many ITT providers, School Centred Initial Teacher Training providers (SCITTs) and School Direct lead schools now ask for a minimum amount of experience working with young people prior to application. Candidates are expected to show that they have a good understanding of the role of a teacher, give examples of creative and innovative teaching styles they have observed and discuss how they may tailor lessons to cater for students with different abilities and backgrounds. They are also often tested on their knowledge of the national curriculum for their subject, and general teaching pedagogy. A good quality school experience placement prior to application can help them evidence this.

SEP continues to be an important marketing and recruitment tool. It enables schools to offer candidates a taste of school life, they can promote opportunities available in their school and it provides a unique means of finding out more about prospective applicants.

Background and history

The School Experience Programme has been in operation from September 2011. It was developed to provide a centralised point of access to school experience for prospective ITT candidates in priority subject areas . This was so that they could make a strong application to ITT that evidenced having worked with children and young people in a school environment.

The introduction of the School Experience Programme portal in September 2012 allowed the scheme to be managed and administered through a central database. In the 2014/15 academic year alone, the programme catered for over 5000 candidates and 12,000 placement days.

The overwhelming success of the programme has allowed for further developments, and from September 2014, the School Experience Programme portal also allowed schools to offer placement days in non-priority subjects. In September 2015, the School Experience Programme was expanded to allow primary schools to join the programme and offer primary placement days. In 2015/16 academic year, over 7000 candidates and more than 16000 placement days were accommodated by the programme.

From September 2016, we are aligning the way in which SEP operates across all primary and secondary subjects. This means that we will continue to offer the online SEP portal to candidates and schools, but schools will no longer be able to invoice for SEP placements and DBS payments.

It is at a school's discretion if they wish to levy a charge for attendance to a candidate. This must be stated upfront in the public notes section note of the portal.

Eligibility

Registration for the School Experience Programme (SEP) is open to all of the below, on the condition that they are not in special measures:

- All mainstream secondary schools
- Maintained secondary special schools
- Secondary Academies
- Sixth Form Colleges
- Secondary Pupil Referral Units
- Secondary Free schools
- Primary schools

Please note that many training providers expect candidates to evidence experience across secondary and primary. If your school cannot offer this, it should be made clear in your placement notes and candidates should be advised to check with their chosen provider prior to booking a place with you.

Schools that do not offer placements within a 6 month period will be marked on the SEP portal system as 'Dormant'. 'Dormant' schools will need to contact the SEP team on **0800 085 0962** to re-activate their registration if they wish to offer further placement dates.

Access

All candidates accessing the programme will, as a minimum, have told us that they:

- Intend to apply for initial teacher training this year (for 2016/2017 entry).
- Want to teach secondary and / or primary subjects.
- Have had less than 10 days school experience in an English state school in the past 12 months.

Schools are invited to offer SEP in all subjects.

Programme structure

The School Experience Programme will facilitate the matching of schools and candidates for the first day of their placement within a school.

- The portal will allow for a matching on the initial day placement only schools will be expected to discuss individual requirements with each candidate, and the further days are for the school and candidate to negotiate
- There is no requirement as to how schools structure placement dates – you may wish to run block placements or a more flexible system.
- It will be up to your school to decide how many candidates it can offer a positive placement experience to, and you may wish to offer placements to more than one candidate at a time. (Schools and candidates have fed back that offering more than 1 placement at a time provides peer benefits and we would welcome schools offering this).
- If there is a restriction on the number of additional days your school will be able to offer on any placement, you should state this up front in your public placement notes in order to set an appropriate expectation for the candidate.
- If after your first day with a candidate you are unable to offer further days through unforeseen circumstances, or you feel it is not appropriate to do so, you should inform the participant.

Public facing notes

On the School Experience Programme portal, schools are able to enter notes at both school and placement level.

School notes should contain information on things such as:

- School status (e.g. are you an Academy, Voluntary Aided, etc).
- Any engagement with Initial Teacher Training that you have (e.g. are you a School Direct lead or partner school, or do you offer placements for a mainstream Initial Teacher Training programme).
- Links to latest Ofsted reports and your school website, or any other information you would like candidates to read about your school as a whole.

Placement notes should include:

- What time candidates should turn up for their placement day, and where and to whom they should report?
- What candidates need to bring with them (eg proof of identification or necessary paperwork for DBS checks).
- If there are any limitations in terms of the number of further days on offer.
- If you only offer experience within 1 Key Stage, in which case candidates need to be advised to check with their chosen provider on suitability prior to booking.
- If there is any charge for the programme and how this should be paid.
- Any other details on school experience placements can be recorded as 'General'.

Please note that a link to the placement notes that you write will be included in the candidate's booking confirmation email, and the more comprehensive these are, the less likely it is that a candidate will need to phone the school in advance of the placement for information.

Thank you for your interest in the School Experience Programme, we wish you every success in your delivery. For more information on how to access and use the School Experience Portal please contact the School Experience Programme team on: 0800 085 0962 or email schoolexperience@ta-recruit.education.gov.uk.

Good practice

Through our evaluation and review of the School Experience Programme over previous years, we have gathered valuable feedback from candidates and schools on what makes for a successful school experience from both perspectives.

Here are some key points that have arisen from candidates who have attended SEP, on what makes for a beneficial experience that can support application for an ITT

- Arrange opportunities for discussion with teachers so that the candidate can ask questions.
- Make sure the day has structure and is planned and organised in advance.
- Ensure the host teachers are fully aware of the visit, are prepared and are on board with hosting SEP placements to ensure the experience is positive for the candidate.
- Remember that the candidate is interviewing the school too, which is particularly important for School Direct schools.
- Try and allow the candidate to observe a variety of lessons, age ranges and ability groups.
- Give the candidate the opportunity to interact with students and participate in lessons where appropriate.
- Be prepared to confirm in writing that the candidate has undertaken school experience at your school.
- If possible, allow the candidate to be exposed to other areas of teaching outside the classroom (e.g. lesson planning, departmental meetings, etc.).

Contact us

If you have any queries or are interested in joining the programme please contact the SEP team to register on 0800 085 0962 or email schoolexperience@ta-recruit.education.gov.uk

If you experience any complaints relating to the School Experience Programme please contact: NCTL.SEP@education.gsi.gov.uk.

If at any stage of your engagement with the School Experience Programme you would be interested in showcasing the work of your school through a case study please contact the SEP team on 0800 085 0962 or email schoolexperience@ta-recruit.education.gov.uk and they will pass your details on to the relevant team within the Department for Education.



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