

Resources and support for potential teachers with a disability

Those with disabilities are under-represented in the teaching profession. Teacher training providers have a responsibility to ensure equality of access, whilst at the same time ensuring that trainees have the health and physical capacity to teach. Many assess this by requiring that applicants complete a medical questionnaire or occupational health report as part of the admissions process. Support and advice is available from the organisations listed below, and the links to case studies that follow may provide inspiration. Every individual will have different circumstances and needs and so it is impossible to generalise about the likely impact of a disability on a potential teaching career. For this reason it is important that you get in touch with training providers early on in the process to discuss any special arrangements you may need, and to explore your options.

We'd like to keep this document as accurate as possible – please report any broken links to abby.evans@careers.ox.ac.uk. We'd also love to hear of any other resources you have found useful.

- **National Bureau for Students with Disabilities**
<http://www.skill.org.uk/>
 Includes a selection of video and written case studies of teachers with disabilities (currently covering dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, hearing impairment, visual impairment, cerebral palsy and physical disability).(Note, however, that the Into Teaching section of this website has no dates later than 2011).
- **Association of Blind and Partially Sighted Teachers and Students**
<http://www.abapstas.org.uk/>
 Minimal webpage, but they do give a contact number and offer quarterly newsletters.
- **The Dyslexic Teachers' Association**
<http://thedta.tripod.com/>
- **Disabled Teachers Network**
<http://disabledteachersnetwork.weebly.com/>
 A US-based site, but with some UK content too – links to resources, discussion forums and a newsletter.
- **TES Connect Forums**
<https://community.tes.co.uk/>
 Several threads cover training to teach with a disability, a good place to ask for advice and learn from the experience of others.
- **Disability Rights UK**
<http://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/>

Extensive information, including Access to Work and Careers factsheets and a public helpline.

- **Action on Disability & Work UK**

- <http://www.adwuk.org/>

- Information and advice on accessing employment generally.

Articles and case studies

- <http://www.educ.cam.ac.uk/courses/pgce/profiles/profile20.html>

- Profile of a student with hearing impairment on the Primary PGCE course at Cambridge University.

- <http://www.theguardian.com/education/2012/nov/12/disabled-not-encouraged-teacher-training-costs>

- Article featuring a teacher who is profoundly deaf.

- http://www.research.ed.ac.uk/portal/files/14504782/Experiences_of_disabled_students_in_initial_teacher_education.pdf

- Responses from more than 100 students with a disability or long-term medical condition describing their experiences of initial teacher training in Scotland.

- <http://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/2012/aug/29/pgce-teacher-training-dyslexia>

- A teacher with dyslexia offers tips for getting through teacher training.

- <http://www.in2teaching.org.uk/Blogspot/View/828Beingdyslexic.aspx>

- Blog featuring a dyslexic primary school teacher working in Scotland.

- <https://www.tes.co.uk/article.aspx?storycode=6167525>

- Article on hidden disabilities.

- <https://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/equality-and-diversity/320153-disability-and-mental-health-diversity-matters>

- AGCAS Diversity Matters: Disability and mental health publication on the TARGETjobs website. Information on disclosing your disability and your rights around disability and mental health.

Appendix A: Department for Education documentation

The following extracts are taken from:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/355575/itt-criteria-supporting-advice.pdf

Initial teacher training criteria supporting advice - Information for accredited initial teacher training providers NCTL, September 2014

C1.3 That all entrants, as part of the provider's selection procedures, have taken part in a rigorous selection process designed to assess their suitability to teach.

Scope (p.9)

The aim of this criterion is to ensure that, before anyone is admitted to an ITT programme, they have been deemed suitable to become a teacher. This will help to protect children and young people from trainee teachers who might put them at risk of harm because their previous conduct shows that they are unsuitable for teaching. ITT partnerships will conduct interviews, run background checks, and assess if an applicant has the appropriate intellectual and academic capabilities and personal qualities, attitudes, ethics and values to meet the standards for QTS. Providers should consider a wide range of evidence to judge applicants' suitability to teach, for example: information from application forms, referees' reports, advice from schools, results of any entry tests or tasks, applicants' portfolios, and interviews.

Equality (p.10)

To comply with equality legislation, providers must ensure that interview procedures promote equality of opportunity and avoid discrimination. The 2010 Equality Act and 2001 Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) require providers to ensure they are not discriminating against applicants with disabilities or special educational needs (SEN). Applicants/trainees with disabilities are under no obligation to disclose their disabilities. Providers must ensure that their provision does not place applicants/trainees with disabilities at a disadvantage. Providers must also consider making anticipatory adjustments to promote positively equality of access for disabled applicants, including access to benefits, facilities and services. They should provide as many opportunities as possible for applicants to identify any special arrangements they may require, for example when inviting them for interview or making arrangements for any entrance tests.

Health & Physical Capacity (p.11)

Health and physical capacity to teach Providers have a responsibility to ensure that trainees have the health and physical capacity to teach and will not put children and young people at risk of harm. Many people with disabilities or chronic illnesses may have the capacity to teach, just as those without disabilities or medical conditions may be unsuitable to teach. Providers are responsible for ensuring that only trainees who have the capacity to teach remain on the programme. Successful applicants offered a place on an ITT programme may have completed a fitness questionnaire prior to commencing the programme. ITT providers should not ask all-encompassing health questions but should ensure that they only ask targeted and relevant health-related questions which are necessary to ensure that a person can carry out an intrinsic function of the work of a teacher." (p.11)