Myths and Misconceptions about teaching

Teacher training takes years

Myth: Some people think that teacher training takes many years and is a long, drawn-out process.
Reality: Most routes into teaching in the UK take a relatively short time. Gaining Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and a PGCE (Postgraduate Certificate in Education) or postgraduate Apprenticeship can typically be completed in one year for full-time students. There are options for part-time study too, and undergraduate qualifications which can extend the time frame.

Teacher training Is too expensive

Myth: Some applicants worry that teacher training will be too costly or that they won't be able to afford the tuition fees.
Reality: There are financial supports in place for teacher training in the UK. Depending on the route you choose, you might be eligible for a tax-free training bursary (up to £31,000 for certain subjects) or loans. Additionally, undergraduate, and postgraduate Apprenticeship routes enable trainees to earn a salary whilst learning, along with no or reduced training fees.

You need to be extremely experienced before becoming a teacher

Myth: Some assume you need years of experience in a subject or industry to become a teacher.
Reality: While experience can help, many successful teachers enter the profession directly after completing their undergraduate degree. Trainee teachers often have training placements in schools, where they gain practical experience under supervision. There are also multiple routes into teaching for those with different levels of experience.

Teacher training Is only for young graduates

Myth: There's a belief that teaching is only for younger people or recent university graduates.
Reality: The teaching profession in the UK is open to people of all ages, backgrounds, and career stages. Many individuals choose to train to teach later in life, especially those looking to switch careers. Programmes encourage a wide range of applicants, including career changers and individuals with prior professional experience.

You need to have been a perfect student to be a good teacher

Myth: There's a misconception that only students who excelled in school themselves can be good teachers.
Reality: While academic achievement is important, being a great teacher involves more than just being a high-achieving student. Qualities like empathy, communication skills, problem-solving, and the ability to engage and inspire others, in addition to sound subject knowledge, are crucial. Many excellent teachers weren't necessarily the top students but have developed the ability to connect with and support their students' learning journeys.

You need to have teaching experience before you can start training

Myth: Some believe you need prior teaching experience to apply for a teacher training programme.
Reality: You don't. While it can help, it's not essential. *All* teacher training programmes are designed to equip you with the necessary classroom experience during the course itself. Schools and universities often look for example, for enthusiasm, passion, subject knowledge, qualifications, personality, ability to effectively communicate, and not necessarily previous teaching experience.

The application process is very complicated and time-consuming

Myth: The application process is often thought to complicated and difficult to navigate.
Reality: While applying for teacher training does require attention to detail, it is generally not more complicated than applying for other university or postgraduate courses or roles in the private sector. The main application platform, DfE Apply, allows you to easily apply to multiple providers, programmes, and schools. It is a structured process with clear steps, including submitting your qualifications, a personal statement, and attending interviews.

You need to be perfectly prepared before applying

Myth: Some applicants feel they need to have everything figured out—perfect teaching plans, behaviour strategies, and subject knowledge—before applying.
Reality: While it's helpful to have a clear idea of why you want to teach and the subjects you want to teach, you don't need to have everything in place before you apply. The training programmes themselves, will equip you with the necessary tools, strategies, and knowledge to become an effective teacher. Teacher training is a learning process, and providers understand that applicants are in the process of becoming fully prepared.

You have to wait a long time for an interview

Myth: Many applicants fear they'll experience a long waiting period before they can interview or hear back about their application.
Reality: Once you've applied, teacher training providers hold interviews relatively quickly, and you often hear back within a week and often interview within a two-week window.

Teaching is just about delivering lessons

Myth: Teaching is often thought of as merely delivering content, lecture-style, for students to learn.
Reality: Teaching involves much more. Teachers need to plan lessons to meet individual student needs, capture their interest, challenge them to think hard, assess learning and progress, offer feedback, and adapt their approaches mid-teaching, as necessary. They also play key roles in student welfare, behaviour management, motivation, and fostering a positive classroom culture.

The focus in teaching Is always on academic achievement

Myth: People often assume teaching focuses solely on academic success and exam results.
Reality: While academic achievement is important, a teacher's role also involves supporting the social, emotional, and personal development of students. Teachers help nurture important employability skills like critical thinking, creativity, teamwork, problem-solving and resilience, which go far beyond just exam scores.

You only teach and don't have any other responsibilities

Myth: Many believe that teachers only work during lesson hours and during term time are only responsible for teaching.
Reality: Teachers have significant additional responsibilities. These include lesson planning, marking and feedback, attending meetings, supervising extra-curricular activities, undertaking the role of the Form Tutor, break duties and managing student behaviour. Teachers also spend time developing

their professional skills, engaging with parents, and dealing with pastoral care. Teaching can involve long hours, often extending beyond the school day and into the holiday periods.

Teachers have a lot of freedom in what they teach

Myth: Some believe that teachers can choose exactly what to teach in their classrooms.
Reality: In many cases, teachers must follow a national curriculum or specific guidelines set by their school, Trust or educational authority. While there is room for creativity and innovation for *how* teachers decide to teach, teachers must ensure their lessons align with set objectives, standards, curriculums and exam specifications.