



Department
for Education

Teacher Reference Group

Information pack for applicants

November 2025

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The Department for Education and the Teacher Reference Group

Thank you for your interest in applying to join the Teacher Reference Group (TRG).

The Department for Education (DfE) is committed to engaging teachers in national education policy. The Teacher Reference Group acts as a confidential sounding board, advising on the potential impact of policies on the school system, including any barriers to implementation.

The Teacher Reference Group supports policy development and implementation across DfE by contributing views, offering valuable challenge and advice, and providing feedback to ministers and officials.

The Group is not representative and has **no power of veto** over policy decisions.

Information on the Department can be found at [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk). Further information on the Teacher Reference Group is also available.

The role of Teacher Reference Group members

Members will be expected to:

- Maintain confidentiality;
- Work constructively, making points in an appropriate manner, listening to the views of others, ensuring everyone has the opportunity to contribute;
- Be open-minded and consider the whole picture, not seeking to promote sectional or subject interests;
- Be prepared to provide high quality constructive and relevant contributions to DfE policy development through participation in group meetings, email or in response to policy commissions; and
- Attend and prepare for four meetings spread over the year. Two of these will be full-day meetings in London, and two will be shorter online meetings towards the end of the school day. Meeting dates are provided in advance for the full academic year to enable members to arrange appropriate cover.

Eligibility for the role

To be considered eligible for membership of the Teacher Reference Group, you must meet **all of the criteria** below:

1. You are employed in a teacher role in a primary and/or secondary school where: you have a teaching timetable of at least 60% **and**
2. You are **not** on a senior leadership team **and**
3. You do not hold a DfE public appointment¹ or serve on a current DfE advisory group (other than the current Teacher Reference Group)

You will be asked to confirm your eligibility when completing your application form.

You **must also** have the agreement of your headteacher to join the group.

Person Specification

To be considered for membership of the Teacher Reference Group you must be able to demonstrate that you have the relevant skills and experience as set out below.

We would expect you to demonstrate that you:

1. Have supported your school in helping every child thrive and to break down the barriers to opportunity;
2. Have supported your school to deliver high standards, improve outcomes for a range of learners and used evidence to influence change; and
3. Have supported other staff and/or your school with the implementation of national policy changes.

For those candidates selected for interview, we will also assess ability to fulfil the wider requirements of the role, including:

- Working constructively, listening to the views of others; and
- Thinking strategically and considering the bigger picture.

We would particularly encourage applications from:

- Candidates with experience of challenging contexts;
- Candidates from LA-maintained schools, special schools, alternative provision, free schools and faith schools; and
- Ethnic minority groups.
- A wide range of locations including urban and rural areas

We welcome applications from all people irrespective of their race; gender; religious belief; disability; age; sexual orientation; or whether they are unmarried, married or in a

civil partnership; or whether they have undergone or are undergoing or intend to undergo gender reassignment.

Terms and conditions

Remuneration

This is a voluntary, unpaid post. Standard travel expenses will be reimbursed after each meeting. Supply cover costs can also be claimed. Travel expenses and supply cover cost claims must be claimed **within one month** of the meeting date.

Period of Appointment

Membership of the Group is limited to **one year initially**, with the potential to extend up to three years.

Should the Teacher Reference Group be dissolved, restructured or wound up during the period of your appointment, your appointment would cease with effect from that event, or such other date as is specified in any relevant decision letter or legislation.

Time commitment

Our Teacher Reference Group meets four times per academic year, during term time. Members will be expected to attend **all four meetings**; preparation time will also be required.

Two of these will be full-day meetings in London, and two will be shorter online meetings scheduled towards the end of the school day. Meeting dates are provided in advance for the full academic year to enable members to arrange appropriate cover. We do our best to ensure meetings are spread evenly over the course of the year.

In addition to attending meetings, members may be requested to support policy development by responding to commissions via email or participating in workshops or focus groups.

Standards in public life

You will be expected to demonstrate high standards of corporate and personal conduct and follow the standards of probity required by public appointees outlined in the “Seven Principles of Public Life”, set out by the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

You may be removed from office before the end of the term of appointment if you:

- Have received a prison sentence or suspended sentence at any time in respect of a conviction which is not spent for the purposes of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974;

- Are the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order;
- Have had an earlier term of appointment terminated due to misconduct or performance issues;
- Are under a disqualification order under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986;
- Have been removed from trusteeship of a charity;
- Are subject to disciplinary/investigation for allegations of misconduct by a regulatory, governmental or professional body;
- Have been found guilty of misconduct by a regulatory, governmental or professional body; or
- Breach the expectations of Group members as set out in the Terms of Reference.

Conflict of Interest

You should note the requirement to declare any conflict of interest that arises in the course of Department business and the need to declare any relevant business interests, positions of authority or other connections with organisations relevant to the business of the DfE.

Your personal information

Your personal information will be held in accordance with Data Protection legislation. You will not receive unsolicited paper or electronic mail as a result of sending us any personal information. No personal information will be passed on to third parties for commercial purposes¹. The monitoring information you provide is not used in the selection process and will not be shared with the selection panel assessing your application. Information that you provide may be used for statistical analysis by the DfE but it will not be used in a way that enables you to be identified.

¹ For more information about the standards you can expect from DfE in how we hold your personal data, please see the DfE's personal information charter:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education/about/personal-information-charter>

The application process

Application questions

As part of your application, you will be asked to submit responses to the following **three questions**:

1. Demonstrate how you have used and promoted effective teaching methods to improve educational outcomes for all of your pupils and supported breaking down barriers to opportunity. (300 words max)
2. Demonstrate when you have used evidence in your school to influence change. (300 words max)
3. Demonstrate how you have implemented changes in national policy within your own classroom, department or school. (300 words max)

Recruitment timeline

This section provides an overview of the recruitment process and how your CV and application form will be considered.

Your CV and application forms must be submitted to the department using the form linked on the [Teacher Reference Group](#) Gov.uk page. Please note we **will not** accept applications submitted via email.

The deadline for applications is **23:59 Monday 8th December**, this is subject to change in exceptional circumstances. Applicants will receive a confirmation message on screen once their form has been submitted; this will be followed by an email from the department within 5 working days of the deadline above, confirming your application has been received and providing details on the next steps in the recruitment process.

Stage 1

Your application will be subject to a sift and will be assessed against the published criteria. In the event of a large number of applications, **we may sift and make judgements based on your answer to the first question**. Those unsuccessful at the first stage will be informed. Those selected to move to Stage 2 will be invited for interview, which will take place online.

Stage 2

Applicants successful at sift will be contacted by officials to arrange interviews and will be informed of the format and assessment criteria. Where a candidate is unable to attend an interview on the set date then an alternative date will be offered where possible. We will seek to offer as much flexibility as possible to ensure applicants can attend.

*Please note, interviews will commence no earlier than **January 2026**, when schools return for the spring term.*

Stage 3

At interview the panel will ask you about your experiences and expertise based-upon the requirements of the post. If the interview panel determine that you are suitable for the post they will make a recommendation to the Minister of State for Schools, who will then review the recommendation and make the final decision on appointments to the Teacher Reference Group.

Stage 4

Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their interview and appointments made, subject to references.

Successful applicants will join the next Teacher Reference Group after the recruitment process is completed. Members will attend an online group induction, with the first formal meeting scheduled to take place in **Spring 2026**, likely after the Easter break.

Questions and feedback

For general queries, or if you are unhappy with any aspect of this recruitment exercise, please contact referencegroup.recruitment@education.gov.uk

Please note that we are only available to provide feedback if you have an interview.

Annex - The seven principles of public life

All applicants for public appointments are expected to demonstrate a commitment to, and an understanding of, the value and importance of the principles of public service. The seven principles of public life are:

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.

Integrity

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands it.

Honesty

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

