



# Employment Guide for Teacher Candidates

## INTRODUCTION

Understanding the many facets of the teacher employment process is very important as one begins his or her job search. Even in a very tight job market, thousands of teachers are hired each year. Teacher candidates who understand the job-search process and properly prepare themselves will be more confident and successful in their efforts to locate and secure teaching positions than candidates who make false assumptions or simply rely on luck. By utilizing the information in this guide, you should be thoroughly prepared to conduct an effective job search.

The effort to secure a position is one that will take an investment of both time and money, but the payoff is significant. At the beginning of your senior year, or when you begin your search for a new position, you should register with Miami University Career Services. Registering on Career Services Miami CAREERlink at the beginning of the fall semester preceding your graduation accomplishes three objectives:

1. You are eligible to take advantage of all on-campus interviews for which you may be qualified.
2. Employers have access to your resume and information about your area(s) of career interest.
3. You have access to job and internship listings of employers who may not come to campus to recruit.

Registering will also enable you to take advantage of other services including career advising and job-search workshops. If you have not secured a teaching position upon graduation, you should consider regular review of Miami CAREERlink, our primary means of communicating job vacancies. These listings are located on our Web site.

## AN OVERVIEW OF THE SELECTION PROCESS

The following sequence of events is designed to illustrate the typical selection process that a school system follows to identify, screen and employ teachers.

The selection process for a teaching vacancy usually starts with a retirement, a resignation, or an increase in enrollment. As a school system identifies a need to select a new teacher, selection criteria and guidelines are established by the school system and a vacancy notice is posted on Miami CAREERlink under *Jobs* for the teacher candidate's consideration.

The next step for qualified candidates in the selection process is to send a letter of inquiry or introduction to the school system and ask for an application. This initial letter

of interest is very important, since it is the first impression the school system has of you. A poorly written letter could eliminate you from further consideration. We suggest that you also send a personal resume and a sheet that lists your professional references. Providing a professional reference sheet makes it very convenient for the school system to contact your references by phone or to request written recommendations from you. Examples of each of these can be found in the final section of this guide.

You will normally be required to complete an application for each school system to which you apply. Many schools now use an online application process. Take time to complete each application thoroughly and neatly. If your application contains errors or is unattractive compared to the others received by the school system, it will detract from your chances of being further considered.

The interview is the next stage in the selection process. This is where you must be prepared to present yourself as the best candidate for the position. Most of the detailed decision-making takes place in the interview situation. If you have made it this far in the process, you qualify "on paper" for the position and you have presented yourself in a professional manner. Now you must make an excellent impression "in person" and highlight your strengths, versatility, self-confidence, and ability to effectively manage the responsibilities of the teaching position. You will probably meet with two or more administrators, including the Superintendent or Personnel Director and a building Principal.

Next, the school system administrators will evaluate your status with respect to the position, and rank you among all the candidates being considered. This is usually a joint decision by several administrators.

Ultimately, a selection decision is made and, hopefully, you will be offered the position. If you accept the position, please notify Career Services as soon as possible.

## WHEN AND HOW TO MAKE CONTACTS

The number of school systems visiting campus has been increasing over the past few years, and we encourage you to take advantage of the convenience of on-campus interviewing. However, it would be an unfortunate error in judgment to restrict your job search exclusively to on-campus interviewing opportunities. Rather, make as many direct contacts with various school systems as possible. This direct approach, with careful follow-up, has great potential.

Most teachers are hired in the summer months.

However, you will need to prepare for and begin your job search much earlier in the year. If your “paperwork” is ready, including your cover letter, resume, and a sheet listing your references, you may start contacting school systems as early as January. Simply indicate that you will be graduating in a few months and that you are interested in their school system and would like to have an opportunity to discuss your qualifications. If you are a candidate in the hard-to-fill areas of mathematics, science, foreign language, or special education, you should consider making employer contacts early.

As indicated previously, teaching vacancies are published online on Miami CAREERlink. All teacher candidates are encouraged to check this resource or visit the Career Resource Center within Career Services on a regular basis to stay informed of teaching vacancies. The Career Resource Center has up-to-date listings of current and anticipated vacancies from school systems throughout Ohio and various other states. You should also be sure to make full use of the contacts your friends, family, associates, faculty and other teachers may be able to provide. Be assertive! Do not wait for offers to come your way. Seek them out!

In addition, check with Career Services to determine which school systems will be interviewing on campus. Plan to actively interview during the spring semester and also attend our annual Teacher Job Fair. Most on-campus interviewing for teaching positions begins in late February each year and continues through April.

If you will be graduating in December, you should contact school systems in late October and November. Obviously, only a few teachers are hired in mid-year. However, you may wish to consider applying for substitute positions as well as any full-time vacancies school systems may anticipate. (If you wish to take advantage of on-campus recruiting during the spring following your December graduation, you will need to register with Career Services prior to graduation.)

### **FOLLOW-UP**

Since you will probably be contacting many school systems prior to the actual announcement of specific vacancies, it is important that you follow up your correspondence with a telephone call to ensure that school systems continue their interest in you. While you will want to avoid being a pest, be sure that you receive replies to your inquiries concerning possible teaching positions with school systems you have contacted. The need for good record-keeping is imperative and will

help immeasurably in conducting a well-organized job search. Keep track of when and to whom you write or speak, as well as the status of your inquiry or application. At a minimum, retain copies of your correspondence to school systems for future reference. As with other aspects of your job search, an organized record of all correspondence and contacts will eliminate the “guesswork” when following up on job prospects, interviews, and offers.

### **CREDENTIAL FILE / INTERFOLIO**

School systems will usually ask to review your letters of recommendation as one of the final steps in the employment process. Therefore, if you plan to have non-confidential letters, it is extremely important for you to establish and maintain an up-to-date personal file that should include the original copies of your letters of recommendation. If you choose to have confidential letters, you will need to establish and maintain an up-to-date credential file. Career Services recommends the online service, Interfolio (<http://www.interfolio.com/signup>) to store your confidential credential files. In either case, your file should contain your student teaching evaluation(s) and two to four letters of recommendation. Although your student teaching evaluation is probably your most powerful reference at this point in your career, careful attention should be given to obtaining additional reference letters that will provide meaningful support to your candidacy as a teacher. Letters of recommendation should normally be requested from professors, previous employers, and others who can write about your teaching ability.

### **CREDENTIAL FILE OPTIONS**

As noted previously, teacher candidates have the option of establishing either a non-confidential credential file or a confidential credential file. We hope the following information will assist you in making your decision about which kind of credential file to establish.

#### NON-CONFIDENTIAL FILE OPTION

By choosing the non-confidential file option, you will maintain your own credential file. Maintaining your own credential file offers the following advantages:

- You have control over the contents of your file (letters, evaluations, transcripts, certificates, licenses, etc.).
- You will receive recommendation letters directly from your references.
- You can send letters when desired, as opposed to providing Interfolio with a written request and potentially taking up to one business day before

letters are sent.

- You can keep copies of letters with you and ready for distribution as you interact with potential employers.
- You will avoid the service charge of using Interfolio for maintaining your confidential file.

#### *Suggestions for Maintaining Your Non-Confidential File*

As a courtesy to the writer, offer to pick up the letter of recommendation in person or provide a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Upon receipt of your original letters of recommendation, keep them in a folder or file located in a safe place and immediately make several photocopies of each to have on hand. Make sure you organize all documents in your file in a logical and orderly fashion. We recommend that you keep a record of each time you send your file to potential employers or graduate schools.

#### *Suggestions for What to Include When Sending a Copy of Your Non-Confidential File*

1. Cover Letter. If you are mailing your non-confidential credential file separately from other materials, be sure to include a brief cover letter as the first page of your file. If you are mailing your file along with other materials, then write a general cover letter for everything.
2. A copy of your resume, as appropriate.
3. A photocopy of your student teaching evaluation(s).
4. A photocopy of your recommendation letters. (A minimum of three are recommended.)
5. Miscellaneous information such as copies of your transcript, certificate or license, Praxis scores, and other relevant items, at your discretion.

#### CONFIDENTIAL FILE OPTION

If you choose to have a confidential file, Interfolio will maintain your confidential letters of recommendation, along with your student teaching evaluation(s). In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, Interfolio follows strict guidelines for receiving and mailing all closed letters of recommendation to ensure confidential documents remain private. Account holders are notified upon receipt of letters of recommendation and may select confidential letters for mailing to a potential employer. Interfolio clients may not, however, view the document at any time.

As you can see, a confidential file provides greater

security, but at greater cost, while a non-confidential file gives you greater flexibility at reduced cost.

If you would like further information about credential files, please stop by or call our Credentials Office at (513) 529-3834.

#### **RESOURCE MATERIALS**

The Career Resource Center has many resources to assist you in your job-search efforts. The following materials are available for use in the Career Resource Center:

- *QED's State School Guides for Georgia, Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan* are directories of all public and non-public K-12 schools for these states, school addresses, administrative personnel, enrollment of each school building, and size of each school's teaching staff.
- *Patterson's American Education* and *Patterson's Elementary Education* are annual national directories of school systems to assist with an out-of-state job search.
- The *AAEE Job Search Handbook*, an annual publication of the American Association for Employment in Education, is distributed to teacher candidates who attend our education workshops and events. This publication contains helpful information to assist you in your search for a teaching position.
- *Career Opportunities in Education* provides job descriptions and requirements, employment and advancement prospects, and salaries for entry-level posts in the field of education.
- *How to Get the Teaching Job You Want* was written by two experienced school administrators. It provides job seekers with a step-by-step program for taking charge of their teaching careers.
- Other helpful resources available in our Career Resource Center include:

*Expert Resumes for Teachers and Educators*  
*The ISS Directory of International Schools*  
*Teacher Certification Requirements in All Fifty States*

- Check our Web site under “Teacher Candidates” for further important resources and services for prospective educators.
- Our Web site also provides links to other sites listing school systems by geographic location, including schools in the major metropolitan areas of Ohio.

In addition, the following resource materials are available for pick-up in our Career Resource Center and on our Web site under “Career Development Series”:

**RESUME PREPARATION**—See the *Resume Preparation* guide for additional information on writing resumes.

**JOB-SEARCH CORRESPONDENCE**—See the guide on *Cover Letters and Other Job-Search Correspondence* for information on writing job-search letters. Don’t forget to sign your letters!

**INTERVIEWING**—See the *Interviewing* guide for information on the interview process and sample interview questions.

And finally, be sure to attend our two-part workshop series on Job-Search Basics for Teacher Candidates offered each semester. Separate workshops are conducted on “Resumes & Cover Letters” and “Making Employer Contacts & Interviewing.”

## **TEACHING CONTRACTS**

The final stage of your job search will involve the careful consideration and execution of a formal teaching contract. A contract is a legal agreement, and all teachers will be asked to sign a contract with a school system to confirm their employment. A teacher enters a contractual agreement with a school system to provide instructional services. In exchange, the school system agrees to compensate the teacher by paying a salary and providing benefits such as life and health insurance, etc. A teaching contract is usually limited to classroom responsibilities only. If coaching or extracurricular activities are also assigned, a supplemental contract outlining those responsibilities will usually be issued separately.

Teaching contracts typically refer to a “master contract,” or “master agreement,” since individual contracts do not specify all the items that are negotiated

between the board of education and the teachers within a school system. This document typically includes information such as the number of working days, evaluation procedures, benefits, sick leave and personal leave policies, contract renewal and termination policies, and a complete salary schedule.

## **DECIDING ON JOB OFFERS**

When a school system makes a job offer, you must consider many factors in deciding whether to sign a contract. These include evaluating the grade level, support services, buildings and facilities, and overall school system in which you will teach. You must also consider the community, available housing, medical and professional services, and opportunities for leisure activities. Is this the right place for you? Only you can answer that question.

If the first offer you receive does not represent your top choice, you may want to contact other school systems where you have interviewed and feel you may be a top candidate. It is worth calling the interviewers from the preferred school system and indicating that you have received an offer but would prefer teaching in their school system. Ask them when a selection decision might be made. This information will allow you to evaluate your options and make your decision within the first employer’s time frame.

## **NEED HELP?**

This guide was written to assist you in conducting a successful search for a teaching position. As you go about the job-search process, we encourage you to take advantage of the services, workshops, and resources available to you from Career Services. If you need additional assistance, make an appointment with a Career Services staff member. The better you use the resources available to you, the more successful you will be in your search for a teaching position.

GOOD LUCK!

## **CAREER SERVICES WEB SITE**

For additional resources for teacher candidates, please refer to our Web site at:

[www.muohio.edu/careers](http://www.muohio.edu/careers)

For assistance in using the Web site, check with our Career Resource Librarian in 205 Hoyt Hall.

**Mary T. Miami**

2310 N. College Avenue  
Oxford, OH 45056  
(513) 523-9000  
miamimt@muohio.edu

After May X, 20XX:  
3333 Forest Road  
Atlanta, GA 44111  
(404) 555-6000

**CAREER OBJECTIVE**  
An early childhood education teaching position, preferably in grades PreK-3.

**EDUCATION**  
**MIAMI UNIVERSITY**, Oxford, Ohio  
Bachelor of Science in Education, May 20XX  
Major: Early Childhood Education Overall GPA: 3.4/4.0 GPA in Major: 3.6/4.0  
Ohio Licensure: Early Childhood Education PK-3; Georgia certification pending

**HONORS**  
Kappa Delta Pi, Education Honor Society  
Dean's List, three semesters

**TEACHING EXPERIENCE**  
**STUDENT TEACHER**, Grades PreK-3, Fall 20XX.  
Colerain Elementary School, Northwest Local Schools, Cincinnati, Ohio.  
Responsible for teaching all subject areas. Developed two new units in science, and organized a field trip for 90 students to the Cincinnati Art Museum. Also assisted with supervision of the cafeteria, the playground, and after-school activities. Received excellent appraisals from my Cooperating Teacher.

**OTHER EXPERIENCE**  
**SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER**, Primary Level (6-8 year olds), 20XX-Present.  
First United Methodist Church, Ross, Ohio. Volunteered to teach classes during the school year. Also assisted with the Christmas program and bible school.

**LIFEGUARD**, Atlanta City Pool, Atlanta, Georgia, Summers 20XX and 20XX.  
Responsible for pool supervision, organization of swim lessons, and pool maintenance. Participated in the training of new lifeguards.

**SALES CLERK**, J.C. Penney Department Store, Atlanta, Georgia, Summer 20XX.  
Worked in Housewares Department. Responsible for customer relations, merchandise inventory records, and cash drawer.

**CAMPUS ACTIVITIES**  
**RESIDENT ASSISTANT**, School years 20XX-XX and 20XX-XX.  
Created a positive living/learning environment in the residence hall. Also provided individual counseling and coordinated educational and social programs.

**TOUR GUIDE**, Office of Admission, School year 20XX-XX.  
Conducted tours of the campus for students and parents, and assisted with special events conducted by the Office of Admission.

**REFERENCES**  
Available upon request.

**MICHAEL M. MCGUFFEY**

Campus Address:  
1320 S. Poplar, Apt. C  
Oxford, Ohio 45056  
(513) 523-1111  
mcguffmm@muohio.edu

After May XX, 20XX:  
2299 Maryland Drive  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45230  
(513) 231-1111  
mcguffey@hotmail.com

**OBJECTIVE**  
A high school teaching position in mathematics which might also provide opportunities for coaching and/or supervision of extracurricular activities.

**EDUCATION**  
**Miami University**, Oxford, Ohio  
Bachelor of Science in Education, May 20XX  
Ohio Licensure: Integrated Mathematics  
Overall GPA: 3.3/4.0 Minor: Coaching  
Dean's List, three semesters

**TEACHING EXPERIENCE**  
Fairfield City Schools, Fairfield, Ohio, Spring Semester 20XX.  
**Student Teacher**, Fairfield High School, Grades 9-12  

- instructed classes in Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II
- initiated and developed math club for high achievers
- volunteered to assist with varsity baseball team

  
Talawanda City Schools, Oxford, Ohio, School Year 20XX-XX.  
**Volunteer Tutor**, Talawanda High School, Grades 9-12  

- tutored six students in remedial math three days per week
- developed individual lesson plans and instructional materials for each student

**OTHER WORK EXPERIENCE**  
**Miami University**, Oxford, Ohio, School Years 20XX-XX.  
**Sports Official**, Office of Recreational Sports  

- officiated intramural volleyball, softball, and water polo
- received "Official of the Year" award in 20XX

  
**Applebee's Neighborhood Grill & Bar**, Cincinnati, Ohio, Summers 20XX-XX  
**Assistant Manager, Food Server**  

- promoted from food server to assistant manager over the period of three summers
- maintained positive customer and employee relations
- supervised twelve part-time workers

**CAMPUS ACTIVITIES**  
Association for Childhood Education, 20XX-Present  
Alpha Beta Delta Fraternity, 20XX-Present  

- Social Chairperson, 20XX-XX
- Treasurer, 20XX-XX

  
Intramural softball, volleyball, and water polo

**INTERESTS**  
Coaching, physical fitness, backpacking

**REFERENCES**  
Available upon request.

**Mary T. Miami**

2310 N. College Avenue  
Oxford, OH 45056  
(513) 523-9000  
miamimt@muohio.edu

After May XX, 20XX:  
3333 Forest Road  
Atlanta, GA 44111  
(404) 555-6000

**PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES**

- Name of reference
- Position or job title of reference
- Place of business
- Address
- City, State, Zip code
- Area code/Telephone number
- E-mail
  
- Name of reference
- Position or job title of reference
- Place of business
- Address
- City, State, Zip code
- Area code/Telephone number
- E-mail
  
- Name of reference
- Position or job title of reference
- Place of business
- Address
- City, State, Zip code
- Area code/Telephone number
- E-mail

**LETTER OF INQUIRY OR INTRODUCTION**

2310 N. College Ave.  
Oxford, OH 45056  
miamimt@muohio.edu  
April 15, 20XX

Ms. June J. Jarvis  
Assistant Superintendent, Personnel  
River City Schools  
P.O. Box 1000  
River City, GA 38210

Dear Ms. Jarvis:

I am interested in being considered for any elementary teaching vacancies which may develop in the River City Schools for this upcoming school year. I will graduate from Miami University in May with a Bachelor of Science degree in Education. I have lived in the Atlanta area for most of my life and am very interested in returning to begin my teaching career. In fact, I have recently applied for teaching certification in the state of Georgia and anticipate receiving it soon. Since I am from the Atlanta area, I am aware of the fine reputation of River City Schools.

As you will note in the enclosed resume, I had an excellent student teaching experience and have taught Sunday School the past three years. The combination of my educational background, teaching skills, and sincere interest in a teaching career in the Atlanta area will enable me to make a positive contribution to River City Schools.

I would be pleased to complete an application or any other appropriate materials so I can become an active candidate. I will contact your office in a couple of weeks to ensure that you have received my resume and to check on any necessary application procedures.

Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

*Mary T. Miami*

Mary T. Miami

Enclosure

LETTER IN RESPONSE TO A LISTED VACANCY

1320 S. Poplar, Apt. C  
Oxford, OH 45056  
mcguffmm@muohio.edu  
April 15, 20XX

Dr. D. E. Harris  
Superintendent  
Great Local Schools  
P. O. Box 675  
Big Rapids, OH 45371

Dear Dr. Harris:

I am interested in being considered for the high school mathematics teaching position listed recently on Miami University's Career Services Web site. I will be graduating from Miami in May with a Bachelor of Science degree in Education and will be licensed to teach mathematics in grades 7-12.

As you will note in the enclosed resume, I am currently completing my student teaching with the Fairfield City Schools. In addition, I have had other work experience and been involved in various campus activities that have enabled me to further develop my teaching skills. The combination of these skills, my educational background, and my sincere interest in teaching will allow me to contribute to the ongoing success of Great Local Schools.

I will contact your office in 10-14 days to confirm receipt of the enclosed materials, and would be pleased to provide any additional documentation you may require. In the meantime, I look forward to having the opportunity to further discuss my qualifications with you and hope to hear from you soon. Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

*Michael M. McGuffey*

Michael M. McGuffey

Enclosure

POST-INTERVIEW THANK-YOU LETTER

1320 S. Poplar, Apt. C  
Oxford, OH 45056  
mcguffmm@muohio.edu  
April 15, 20XX

Dr. G. R. Smith  
Personnel Director  
Downtown City Schools  
P. O. Box 1000  
Downtown, OH 47831

Dear Dr. Smith:

Thank you for the opportunity to meet with you during your recent visit to Miami University. I enjoyed our interview very much. The teaching opportunities and learning environment at Main Street High School sound exciting and challenging. The position we discussed certainly seems to have many of the features I am seeking as I begin my teaching career. Moreover, I am confident that I can make a positive contribution to the school and community.

The application you gave me is enclosed. Of course, I would be happy to provide any additional information you may need.

Thank you again for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Very truly yours,

*Michael*

Michael M. McGuffey

Enclosure

## SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEACHER CANDIDATES

Describe the courses you most enjoyed at Miami University, and explain why.

Why do you want to be a teacher?

Why have you chosen to interview with our school system?

What is your philosophy of education?

Describe your previous work experience and how it will relate to your work as a teacher.

Describe your theory of curriculum development and how you would implement a new curriculum.

What is your philosophy of classroom management?

How would you evaluate your performance in the classroom?

How would you like your students to describe you at the end of the school year?

How would you like your teaching colleagues to describe you at the end of the school year?

What is the greatest asset you will bring to your classroom and to your profession?

What extracurricular activities do you feel you could supervise in our school system?

What skills do you think an excellent teacher should possess?

In addition to becoming a successful teacher, what are your other goals?

How would you organize your classroom in order to teach the entire class, yet provide individualized instruction?

How would you approach the problem of students who have not mastered basic reading or writing skills?

What have you done recently to overcome one of your weaknesses?

What are your interests and hobbies outside the school setting?

What are the primary professional associations for your field?

What are your plans for future professional growth and development?

What are some of the current issues in regard to teaching and education?

How would you respond to a parent who is upset with your teaching methods or with your treatment of his or her child?

How would you describe the “ideal” principal? What assets should he or she have that will help your performance as a teacher?

How much do you intend to involve the administration with regard to problems, conflicts, and/or suggestions in the classroom?

Why should I give you further consideration as opposed to other candidates?

What would you like to add to this information that will help me remember you as a teaching candidate?

Do you have a portfolio of some of your lesson plans, activities, projects, etc. that I may see?