

Marketing toolkit:

a guide to promoting your
School Direct or Initial Teacher
Training programme



Why use this guide?

As recruitment for trainee teachers becomes increasingly challenging, it's ever more important that – as a teacher training provider – you use every opportunity to promote yourself and your training courses.

While the Government spends millions on advertising teaching as a career, it's down to your school or partnership to convince potential candidates that your training route is the best option for them.

And given the variety of teacher training routes available, it's important that you provide accurate and enticing information using a variety of marketing channels to reach the right candidates.



This guide will help you to develop your own marketing strategy and provide you with an overview of the different channels you can use.

It will cover:

- Branding communications and messaging
- Using imagery in your marketing
- Different types of marketing
- Events best practice
- Planning and evaluating your campaigns
- Tracking your success

Clear and effective **branding and communications**

Effective branding

A key part of ensuring your marketing is successful is having a consistent brand. Brand is really just another word for reputation, so your school's brand is everything that staff, pupils, parents and prospective trainees think of when they hear or read about your school.

Your school or partnership's name, logo and mission statement underpins your brand, so it's important to use these consistently across your marketing. This is particularly important if you have multiple schools or people involved in your teacher training provision to avoid causing potential candidates any confusion.

Consistent communication and messaging

Having a clear brand will strengthen your communications and make it easier for people to recognise your school. It's important to make sure that all of your materials have a consistent call to action (e.g. register today) and communicate the unique selling points (USPs) of your programme. Your target audience should know:

1. Why they should choose you
2. What they need to do next
3. Where they can go for more information

Top tip: every form of communication should have purpose. Finding the balance between reinforcing your message and over-communicating is key.

Not all teacher training is the same, so it's vital to showcase how yours works, highlighting the strengths or differences of your provision. Applicants will think beyond their training year so it's important to mention employment rates and career progression opportunities. Talk up your school or partnership's achievements, mentioning your Ofsted rating and other feats that will encourage interest. With so many routes and schools to choose from, applicants will want to know why they should apply to your programme over others.

Being consistent with your communication not only means covering these key topics, but also means being consistent with the frequency and amount of contact you make with people once they've shown an interest in your programme.

Using imagery in your marketing

Using photography of past trainees in action is a great way to visually demonstrate your training and add authenticity to your marketing. Depending on your budget, this might not always be feasible, but there are stock images and some free images that you can use instead. If you're using a third-party image make sure you check for any copyright restrictions.

Top tip: know your audiences. Distinguishing between marketing to graduates and marketing to career changers can help you connect with both groups better. The benefits to each will be different and you will need to bear that in mind when you're putting your marketing together.



Marketing channels

When you're creating a marketing strategy it's important to use an integrated marketing mix. This simply means using a mixture of different marketing channels so that you can reach a good spread of people and maximise the impact of your message.

Mixing online channels such as Google adverts and social media with offline channels such as printed adverts and events, will ensure that you don't focus too much on one audience and help your marketing activities to complement one another.

Top tip: advertising can be expensive. Payments don't necessarily need to be financial; you could write a feature in a newspaper, let a journalist interview staff or offer the hire of your school building/ facilities in exchange for some promotion in their publication. These are often called contra deals.



Types of **offline** marketing

Print advertising

Print advertising refers to printed adverts placed in newspapers or magazines. These can help you to reach a wide number of people and while they can cost more than other channels, they shouldn't be discounted.

Print adverts come in various sizes but the most common are quarter, half and full page adverts, with the choice of full colour or black and white. A publisher will usually have a rate card that lists the price of an advert but you can often pay less, in a similar way that hotels have room rates but often offer them at a lower, more attractive price. You can improve your bargaining power by booking a package or multiple adverts.

What should you include on a print advert?

A print advert should convey the benefits of your programme in a clear and simple way:

- Text should generally cover no more than 20% of the advert and focus on key reasons why someone should choose your school or partnership
- The headline is one of the most important parts of your advert. A reader will often decide within seconds whether to continue reading based on the headline alone
- Remember to use your school or partnership branding in the advert so that it's consistent with your other marketing
- If you're promoting an event or open day make sure it has the time, date and location details on it
- Think about what action you want someone to do after they've read your advert. Include contact details or a website link alongside a strong call to action

Your recruitment advertisements should include a statement about your school or partnership's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and reference the need for the successful applicant to undertake an Enhanced DBS check. This can be included on your website rather than your advert, though.

Leaflets, prospectuses and flyers

Having printed materials such as leaflets, flyers or prospectuses will ensure that you can provide the interested potential teachers you meet with all the information they need. Printed materials will be particularly useful at events but can also be left in school reception areas, job centres or local shops.

Press releases

You can use press releases to encourage news and media to provide editorial coverage of significant news or events at your school or partnership. Issue them on your website and send them to local newspapers and radio stations to see if they'll cover your story.

They're much more likely to use the piece if it has a particularly interesting angle such as new or different statistics (e.g. record number of applications) or has a human element to it (e.g. a story on your first completed trainee). If your local newspaper has an education section send the press release directly to them.

Press coverage can be a great way to reach a lot of people for free, but remember that you lose the ability to control what it says once it's published and the journalist or presenter has no obligation to consult you before publishing, so make sure you're comfortable with the information being released.

Top tip: journalists like to hear the story from the horse's mouth. They're likely to favour an interview or case study from an existing or graduated trainee teacher along with the press release. They'll also be more receptive if you have images to go with the story or you give them the opportunity to speak to pupils or the headteacher about the impact.

Direct mail, email and newsletters

Direct mail, email and newsletters are a great way of building relationships with prospective trainees and providing information on events, application deadlines or tips to specific groups.

You can send direct mails and emails yourself using an opted-in contact list that you've built or you can pay an external provider, such as UCAS, who will send an email to their contact list on your behalf.

Email is often more cost effective as you can reach a wider audience and also link to further information (such as your website) easily.

You may be familiar with platforms such as ParentMail that are used to contact parents. These could also be used to communicate details about recruitment and events so long as you have the correct marketing permissions.

If you're sending out email or direct mail yourself, make sure that everyone on your mailing list has agreed to be on it and has given you their permission to be sent marketing materials. As of 25 May 2018, new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) comes into force that will govern how organisations like schools handle data. You can find out more about how GDPR will affect your school by visiting **[tes.com/gdpr](https://www.tes.com/gdpr)**

Online advertising

Online advertising is becoming an increasingly useful, cost effective tool for reaching people through the internet. Online advertising generally refers to Google Adverts and social media advertising. Unlike print advertising, you often only pay for the engagement that you receive through the advert, which is usually defined by the number of clicks.

Paid search

Also known as pay-per-click (PPC), paid search is when you pay for your website to be displayed more prominently in search results. The most common form of paid search is Google Ads, which allows your message to be seen at the very moment that someone is searching for the things you offer and you only pay when they click to visit your website. Paid search works best in tandem with natural Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) which we'll cover in the section on websites.

When you're setting up a paid search campaign you'll need to think about what words people type (keywords) when they're searching for you or courses that you offer. Longer keyword phrases may work better than shorter, more popular ones (such as 'teaching', which will bring up huge volumes of unwanted traffic). If you only want to target people in your local area you can use 'geo-targeting' to restrict reach. This means your ad will only appear for people in your city or region.

Top tip: you can tailor your Google Ads campaign to your specific budget so that you don't overspend. Test the waters with a small budget first as you can always add to it. If it's not working for you, you can cancel the campaign at any time.

Display advertising

Display advertising is a type of online advertising found on many websites. It can be seen in a wide range of different formats and contains items such as text, images, GIF, flash or video.

Common types of display adverts include:

- ♦ Skyscraper/vertical tower – these are long, vertical adverts that appear on the left or right side of a webpage
- ♦ Leaderboard – these are horizontal and usually appear at the top of a page
- ♦ Button – these are usually small images or GIFs that can appear anywhere on a page

A display advert has limited space and you should try not to fit too much information onto one. It should be visually appealing as it will have to compete with other information or adverts on a webpage. To combat 'banner blindness' you should make sure you choose an image that stands out and the text should be concise and enticing enough to make someone click your advert.

Top tip: make sure you have an up-to-date website to link the online adverts to. The webpage should relate to the advert and have a clear call to action so the visitor knows what to do to find out more.

Social media

There are a variety of social media platforms available to use to promote your school or partnership and your training routes, many of which cost nothing to have a page or profile on. These include Facebook, Twitter, Google +, LinkedIn and YouTube. While it can seem daunting trying to maintain multiple pages there are free tools available to manage them all so that you can keep them all up-to-date.

Setting up social media pages

Your school probably already has a Facebook or Twitter account that you use for communicating with parents and pupils. But consider setting up a specific one for teacher training if you plan on posting regularly. Again, branding is important here so that anyone searching on social media can easily recognise you.

Make sure that your posts or tweets are focused and relevant to your audience. Just because your page has posted something doesn't guarantee that all of your followers will see it and increasingly social media channels will encourage you to pay to boost or promote content to wider audiences.

Follow Tes Institute on **Facebook.com/Institute.Tes** and **Twitter: @Tes_Institute** for all the latest teacher training and development news.

Advertising opportunities on social media

Advertising on social media works in a similar way to paid search, but instead you pay to promote a post, tweet or page. Social media channels offer a plethora of advertising opportunities and can prove to be quite cost effective if your messaging and audience target is lean and focused.

Promoted posts or tweets are generally better for generating enquiries, whereas page or account promotion is better for building awareness of your school or partnership.

Top tip: social media is about conversations and is generally quite informal. To be good at engaging in a conversation you also have to be good at listening. If you're new to social media spend a few weeks listening to the conversations on the key topic that you're interested in and the topics you think your target audience will be interested in before you start engaging. This will give you a better understanding of what works for your target audience and should influence what you post. The more relevant your posts are for your target audience the more engagement you should see on your page.

Website

The focal point of your marketing strategy should be your school or partnership website. If you have multiple websites across a partnership make sure that they're all kept up-to-date and that they have links to the other schools within the partnership. If an applicant isn't suitable for your particular school they may fit one of the other schools in your group.

Your marketing activities should drive people to your website, which should clearly direct people to further information about your training routes.

Things to remember when maintaining your website:

- ♦ Is the information you're providing right for your audience?
- ♦ Is it up-to-date, relevant and easy to find?
- ♦ Is the information accessible to all and is it concise and easy to understand?
- ♦ Do you direct interested candidates to relevant websites such as the NCTL and UCAS so they can get more information?
- ♦ Are you outlining the benefits of studying with you?
- ♦ Are there enough contact details?
- ♦ Are the named contacts able to help with queries?

Optimising your website

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) can be quite complex but in its simplest terms it's based on ensuring that your website appears as high up as possible in search results when certain keywords are typed in to the search bar in the search engine. As around 80% of people seek information via search engines it's important to get this right.

You can improve the chance of ranking high in search results by:

- ♦ Having high quality content. Search engines reward websites that deliver relevant and useful content to viewers and have advanced beyond ranking pages by the number of site visits
- ♦ Including keywords from your list carefully within the content and page titles
- ♦ Linking to external trusted pages like the NCTL or UCAS
- ♦ Encouraging trusted websites (other schools in your partnership) to link to your website

If your website is designed by a web agency they should be able to help you with this.

Top tip: in addition to keeping your website up to date, ensure that all your online profiles, such as UCAS and any other local listing sites, are correct.

Events and open days

Events and open days are great ways for you to meet with people interested in teaching and for them to ask you questions. They're the perfect opportunity for potential trainees to meet current trainees and teachers at your school and find out more about the environment they could be training in. You could also host seminars or online webinars on topics such as how to write a strong application or tips on interviewing.

Top tip: make sure people are aware of what they're opting in for when they provide you with their contact details. This is a legal obligation and if you use their contact data to send emails or direct mail you must provide a way for them to unsubscribe at any time. You can find out more about this here: <https://www.gov.uk/marketing-advertising-law>

Hosting your own events

Your school is an ideal place to host an open day or evening to allow people to get a feel for teaching and meet trainees and teachers, for very little cost. Make sure your events are well-staffed and you've got plenty of information to give to people.

Attending fairs and NCTL events

There are often local graduate fairs that you can exhibit at to promote your programme and school or partnership. Some shows or fairs will charge a fee to exhibit and some are free. The NCTL put on national and local Train to Teach Roadshows around England that you can apply to attend. You can find out more about these at traintoteach.education.gov.uk/

Best practice at events

You should make use of your marketing channels to promote your in-school events or attendance at roadshows or exhibitions. Make sure you have information to give to people, whether it's a leaflet or prospectus or even some freebies such as branded pens, sweets or bags.

If you have a stand at an exhibition make sure there are enough people there to help answer questions. Try not to sit behind a table and make sure you look approachable. Pop-up banners are a good way to make your stand more attractive and can convey the benefits of your school and training programme in a clear way.

When you speak to people at events make sure you capture their contact details to follow up with them afterwards. You can do this with a simple questionnaire, signup sheet or iPad/tablet (if your school already has them).

Planning your marketing

Given the wide range of marketing channels available, it's important to choose a mix that's right for your school and the audience that you want to attract. If you're targeting graduates, you should choose marketing channels that they're likely to respond to. Remember, you don't need to use all the available marketing channels but make sure you have a good mix.

Putting your marketing into practice

Once you've decided on the different types of marketing you'd like to use, it's important to plan when you want to use them. Think about what time of year you want to start receiving applications and allow enough time to promote your programme or events. If you're booking adverts, make sure that they're evenly spread so you can manage the volume of enquiries without being overwhelmed at any point.

Creating a marketing calendar can help you to plan your strategy and ensure that you don't overspend on marketing.

Tracking the success of a campaign

Your marketing campaigns should have a start date, an end date and a target (usually a minimum number of enquiries) to help you decide how successful they've been. When you receive an enquiry, try to find out how they heard about your school or programme. This will help you to assess which marketing channels are most effective.

If you're able to calculate the number of enquiries you need to generate one potential trainee, this will help you plan the amount of marketing you need to do. The better you are at tracking enquiries, the easier this will be.



For first steps.
For opportunity.
For big, scary leaps.

Tes. For teaching

Tes Institute

Contact us for further information and advice

tes.com/institute

+44 (0)20 3194 3200

tes.com

This marketing guide was written by Tes Institute using information from sources believed to be reliable. It's designed to help schools and partnerships promote their own teacher training programmes. The information should be used as a guide only to help and inspire the users own marketing. The accuracy, completeness, timeliness or correct sequencing of the information, however, is not guaranteed by Tes Institute, and Tes Institute reserves the right to make changes without notice. Information from Tes Institute is provided to the users "as is." Tes Institute will not be liable to any user or anyone else for any interruption, inaccuracy, error or omission, regardless of cause, in information from Tes Institute or for any damages (whether direct or indirect, consequential, punitive or exemplary) resulting therefrom. Some information and guidance was taken from resources provided by the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) marketing guide. To view the NCTL guide visit: gov.uk/guidance/initial-teacher-training-marketing-and-recruitment-guide