



Career Focus - TEACHING PROFESSION

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Dear students

If you're hoping for a career through which you can contribute to society and want to make a difference in the world, then teaching might just be the right profession for you! This edition will help you learn the steps and key information on becoming a teacher.

- *Martina*

HOW TO BECOME A TEACHER AND TYPE OF TEACHERS



The specific nature of teachers' work will depend on the age of the children they teach and the nature of the training they received. Prospective teachers can be trained for foundation phase or pre-primary, primary or secondary education. Specialist education includes special needs schools such as those for epileptics and for children with hearing, visual, mental or physical disabilities.

- **Foundation phase school teachers** play a vital role in the early development of children. What children learn and experience during their early years can shape their views of themselves and the world and determine their later success or failure.
- **Pre-primary teachers** lead children in activities which are designed to facilitate their language development, develop their physical abilities, communication skills and to interpersonal relationships. They need to be acutely aware of the emotional development of small children and organise and supervise activities and games that promote self-confidence and social interaction with other children. They try to keep a balance of activities while also ensuring that children have adequate rest periods. At times, they need to attend to sick children and those in need of first-aid; comfort children who are hurt or distressed and assist children with their toilet training and other personal matters. They teach from Grade R (reception) through to Grade 3. They usually teach all of the subjects in the curriculum to the learners.
- **Intermediate Phase – Grades 4 to 6:** teachers give pupils the basic concepts of mathematics, languages and sciences. It is their responsibility to pave the way forward, encouraging young learners to enjoy the learning phase of their lives.
- **Senior phase – Grades 7 to 9:** These teachers have versatile tasks which include, amongst others, the facilitating of learning, supplying information regarding many other choices children have to make, giving supportive counselling when necessary and setting an example regarding correct manners and behaviour.

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- At senior school level, teachers have usually graduated in a specific field and follow the syllabus laid down by the relevant department and curriculum in order to prepare students for examinations. Besides the formal education given in the classroom, the teacher is also expected to plan and organise extracurricular activities such as sporting events, cultural activities, tours, weekend camps and outings to places of interest. Through involvement with the child on this level the teacher gets to know the child better, and values such as a sense of responsibility, punctuality, respect, friendship and trust are nurtured. Teachers are also required to do administrative work which includes tasks such as setting examination papers, marking answer sheets, marking homework, the completion of registers, drawing up of schedules and the writing of reports.
- **FET (Further Education and Training):** Those students who continue through Grades 10 to 12 are then prepared for this final phase of schooling. This, therefore, is a very important phase of their schooling and requires learners to make mature decisions - most importantly, to have properly trained teachers who will be able to guide them through this process.
- **Special Education:** The teacher working in the field of special education works with children with speech and hearing disabilities, learning disabilities, blindness, deafness, hardness of hearing, weak-sightedness, epilepsy and mental and physical handicaps. These children require specialised attention and are taught through specially developed apparatus and techniques. The teacher works as part of a multi-professional team consisting of physiotherapists, occupational therapists, occupational counsellors, psychologists and medical personnel.

Teachers' working hours may be irregular and depend on factors such as the amount of special classes they arrange, administrative work, and the number of extramural activities they are involved in.

Teaching is the profession that teaches all the other professions. Author Unknown



REQUIREMENTS

Secondary Education

Possession of at least a **HIGCSE/IGCSE** Grade 12, or equivalent qualification, is required to be admitted to teacher training colleges. **UNAM** further requires a minimum of 25 points on the UNAM point evaluation scale, as well as passes in five subjects.

Compulsory subject

Depends on the subject(s) the candidate would like to teach.

Tertiary Education

Degree: there are different ways of obtaining a teaching degree:

One of the more flexible options is to first complete a bachelor degree at a university of either 3 or 4 years, depending on the course concerned, followed by a one year PGCE (Post Graduate Certificate in Education) for Grades 7 to 12. The bachelor degree must include as major subject (s), those that you wish to teach, (a major subject is a subject taken for the full term of the degree programme).

Note: Every institution will have its own subject requirements to qualify for acceptance. It is advisable to contact the institution at which you wish to study before making a final choice of subjects.

UNAM offers a four-year Bachelor of Education (B. Ed.) degree as well as a Master's degree in Education (M. Ed.). Furthermore a Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) and a Specialized Postgraduate Diploma in Special Education can be obtained from UNAM.

Undergraduate programs are offered on six different campuses (including the Southern Campus) across the country and at all Centre for External Studies facilities. All satellite campuses offer the BEd degree in Pre- and Lower Primary Education, preparing teachers to teach in grades 0 – 3, children between the ages of 5 - 9 years old. The curriculum focuses on the effective teaching of literacy and numeracy acquisition in the early grades, as well as on innovative education practices in the children's own environments.

The Main Campus in Windhoek, as well as the Hifikipunye Pohamba (HP) Campus offer a BEd degree in secondary school teaching. At the HP campus students are trained in the teaching of Science school subjects, i.e. Mathematics, Chemistry and Physics education. The Main campus offers all the combinations of secondary school subjects in the country. Additionally, programs in Adult Education and Community Development, an Advanced Diploma in Educational Management and Leadership, and a Professional Diploma in Education are also offered at Main Campus. The latter diploma allows students with first degrees from other faculties and degree granting institutions, to become qualified teachers in their undergraduate subject specialization.

Personality

The prospective teacher should be a mature, tactful, disciplined and tolerant individual. Good communication skills and a sense of responsibility are further characteristics of the competent teacher.

Work Opportunities

Teachers are employed by private and public schools. Experienced teachers can offer private classes. Job prospects are very good, especially for English, Mathematics, Science and Computer Science teachers.

ASSESS YOUR INTERESTS AND TALENTS

To know if education is really the right career path for you, make sure you have an understanding of what makes a good teacher and that you have the skills and characteristics compatible with teaching. To be a good teacher, you must enjoy being around other people and interacting with them, especially young people. Teaching is a social job that involves constant interaction with others.



Good teachers are also patient. If you lose your temper easily, a school setting may not be the right workplace for you. Teachers are flexible and good at quick decision making. They should be able to make adjustments when things don't go exactly as planned (because they often don't). Teachers must be strict to an extent and able to enforce rules, but they also need to pick their battles.

Most importantly of all, teachers care. They care about their students and student success. Without this characteristic, being a teacher will become a chore after a while. If you feel passionate about a particular content area or about learning in general and you truly care about others, you have the potential to become a great teacher.



We're on the web:
www.tucsin.org as well as
 on Facebook
 Tel #: 061 224840
Williams@tucsin.org

References : Namibia Careers & Pace careers

Previous newsletters can be found on the TUCSIN website:

<http://www.tucsin.org/index.php/en/project/documents-for-students/career-prospect>.