



Applying to ITT: Tips for chemistry candidates

Having decided to apply to an initial teacher training (ITT) course, you will need to submit a written application and attend an interview. An ITT assessment interview will be awarded on the quality of your application, an extremely important element of which is your personal statement.

What is a personal statement?

It is your opportunity to stand out from all other maths applicants. It is important that you convey **why** you want to teach maths, **what** you can offer, and **why** you will make a good maths teacher. You will need to explain **how** you know that teaching is right for you, and **in what way** the school-based experience you have had confirms this.

What the Royal Society of Chemistry says:

- *Have you participated in outreach events with a chemistry focus where you have explained complex chemistry to school children? Explain how you did this and what you liked about it*
- *Talk about your school-based experience from a chemistry perspective – did you learn anything about how chemistry is taught? Perhaps you may have found the way a certain topic is presented theoretically and practically particularly interesting.*

Your personal statement must demonstrate that you have:

- A strong commitment to becoming a chemistry teacher
 - Be enthusiastic about chemistry and show that you want to share this enthusiasm with pupils
 - Identify specific reasons for wanting to become a chemistry teacher
 - Demonstrate a desire to work with young people

What the Royal Society of Chemistry says:

Why were you interested in studying chemistry? How would you try to pass your knowledge and enthusiasm on to students? Perhaps it may be how chemistry is related to a certain real life application that you have worked on in your studies or job.

- A good understanding of what life as a chemistry teacher is really like
 - Recent experience of a secondary school, including observing a science, ideally chemistry, being taught.
 - Ability to analyse the teaching you have observed and describe what you have gained from the experience.
 - Understanding of what life as a chemistry teacher is really like
 - Understanding of the skills needed to be a teacher and work with young people

What the Royal Society of Chemistry says:

The best chemistry teachers are those who can explain theoretical concepts in a simple yet accurate way and often use class practicals to introduce or reinforce ideas. The management of class practicals is a skill that chemistry teachers must master to become effective teachers. What have you learnt from observing class practicals in schools?

- Appropriate personal qualities and values, for example:
 - Ability to work and interact with others
 - Ability to think on your feet
 - Good communication skills

What the Royal Society of Chemistry says:

A chemistry teacher needs to have:

- 1. Good organisation skills, these are essential when planning and being responsible for a practical class.*
- 2. Good practical skills themselves which they are able to demonstrate clearly to the students.*
- 3. Knowledge about Health and Safety issues - what would you do if a particular situation arose?*

A five-paragraph suggested structure

1. Why teaching and why you?
2. Relevance of and reflections upon your school-based work experience
3. Why chemistry?
4. Any additional factors in support of your application
5. Conclusion

Practicalities

Word process your draft personal statement so you can check it for spelling and grammatical errors before copying and pasting it into the ITT application form. You must be concise in describing your potential to be a successful teacher – for a Graduate Teacher Training Registry (GTTR) application you have only 47 lines (4,000 characters) in which to persuade the ITT providers to offer you an interview!

The Interview

Each ITT provider will run the interview in slightly different ways, but they will be looking for the same sorts of things as you have described in your personal statement – but in more detail. It's a good idea to print out your personal statement and read it through before your interview, as you are likely to be questioned on specific things that you've written. The ITT provider will also be looking to make a judgement about your subject knowledge – remember, they will be most interested in your knowledge of secondary school chemistry, *not* degree level chemistry.

Finally, remember you are talking to education professionals who are passionate about their field and can tell when a candidate is exaggerating. Be yourself, take your time, and think carefully about what you say.