

Psychology Teachers in Scotland – Information for Schools

Scotland now has its first group of newly registered teachers of psychology. They have a PGDE teaching qualification thanks to a new course at the University of Strathclyde, and will be fully registered in psychology with GTC Scotland.

Psychology is a popular subject, but most schools and local authorities where it is offered will probably never have advertised a teaching post in this subject. So why should you consider such a possibility, what benefits could it bring to your school, and how could it be afforded?

Psychology Teachers – how can they help my school?

Currently, there are 17 probationer teachers of psychology who will complete their Teacher Induction Scheme in a few months' time. A further nine are student teachers this year. Here are some reasons to consider offering a post in psychology:

An Attractive Subject Choice – psychology is a popular subject where it's offered; it will enhance the attractiveness of your subject choices, especially in the senior stages as Nat 5 and Higher SQA options are available, and large numbers go on to study it at college or university; it is also very popular as an element of the Broad General Education (BGE) phase.



Addressing Subject Shortages – many 'volunteer' non-specialist staff currently teach psychology; employing teachers who are fully registered in the subject could relieve staff of this commitment and allow them to be redeployed to their own subject.

Psychology teachers can deliver relevant parts of PSHE (all year groups) and RME courses (BGE phase), releasing volunteer staff back to their own subject to address subject shortages.

Potential Savings – in some situations, senior pupils are taught at college or are visited by college staff; the possibility of bringing psychology in house may allow savings to be made if payment to colleges is currently required.

Health and Wellbeing – the Curriculum for Excellence entitlement to health and wellbeing can be ably supported by psychology teachers working with the Pupil Support team and Educational Psychologists; our students and probationers have dealt with topics such as sleep, resilience, bullying, peer pressure, addiction, and the mental health of young people.

Cross-curricular and IDL – psychology teachers can also contribute to appropriate modules in science, social subjects, business education and English; they will also have taken units on non-verbal communication and stress management; they are well placed for IDL

Additional Support Needs – making a contribution to additional support for learning is a skill area which psychology teachers have due to their previous studies in fields such as memory, thought processes, attention and autism.

Study Skills – psychology teachers can play a significant part in a school's learning and study skills activities and materials.

Entry Point to the Sciences – psychology can provide a gateway to other STEM subjects.

Employing a Psychology Teacher

If you calculate any savings you could make in payments to colleges, identify any boost to departmental or faculty staffing by releasing volunteer staff back to their own subjects, and have a high uptake in psychology as a subject choice, you may well be able to fund a full-time psychology post.

If this is not possible, then sharing a psychology teacher across several secondary schools, where practical, may provide a way of part-funding a post.

Further Information

For more information, contact the specialist tutor in Psychology at the University of Strathclyde:

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Contact any of the schools who have had psychology students or probationers.

Contact the British Psychological Society (www.bps.org.uk).