

Casual relief teaching

Casual relief teachers (CRTs) play a critical role in education by being available at very short notice to ensure that schools are able to provide continuity of teaching when regular staff members are absent from their school. Valuable experience can be gained in casual or short-term teaching positions. This type of employment may suit your lifestyle needs or allow you to determine if teaching at a particular location suits you.

Qualifications required

- All CRTs need to have a recognized degree, Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration, a criminal records check and a Working with Children Check.
- Disciplines aren't the focus in CRT work, but would be considered for long term employment, especially in secondary schools.

Skills and experience required

A strong resume is essential as it is often your first point of contact. Occasionally a relief school may require a specific skills set. Generally, preferred CRTs have:

- experience in the class room
- the ability to utilise available resources and be creative
- IT skills
- flexibility and adaptability
- professionalism
- enthusiasm and a sense of humour
- common sense.

Current recruitment practices

Agencies

Most schools contact a casual relief teaching agency when a position is available and the agency arranges for a placement.

- Be aware of the agency's fees, and whether a 'release fee' needs to be paid by a deadline to obtain work.
- Most agencies will not reject applicants providing they have appropriate qualifications; whether or not a CRT receives work from that agency depends on other factors.
- Agencies may also have a formal recruitment interview to select candidates, or an informal interview to explain how the agency runs.

Schools

- To register with a school, you can apply online or in writing.
- Principals often request by name previous relief teachers that made a good impression.

Department of Education

- Lodge your details in the job seekers' register (talent pool) through Recruitment Online www.education.vic.gov.au/careers/teaching/jobs/casualrelief.htm. Your resume can then be accessed by principals of Victorian government schools searching for staff.

Identifying suitable casual relief teachers

Personality is central - how CRTs relate in the classroom is important for receiving regular work. If there are any concerns the agency deals with them when they arise.

What sets one candidate apart from another

- Extra qualifications such as First Aid or a Bus License (particularly for PE teachers).
- Hobbies/interests outside of their teaching area.
- Knowledge about student wellbeing – mandatory reporting, basic student counselling.
- Community involvement – paid or voluntary.
- Experience – in teaching and outside the class room such as Scout leader, camp facilitator, sports coach
- Overseas teaching experience is looked upon highly.
- Experience in a variety of schools.

Tips for seeking CRT positions

- Casual work can open the door to short-term or permanent contracts.
- Whatever you do, always be enthusiastic and proactive.
- Be informed about current requirements such as VIT registration and police checks.
- You need to be passionate and committed about teaching.
- Use your teaching practicums to source employment opportunities.
- Get as much experience as possible – volunteer!
- Network – meet as many people as possible, attend conferences, ask questions.
- When applying for work, research the school/agency beforehand.
- Don't be afraid to get in there and have a go, especially on rounds.
- Apply for jobs – any experience is worth it.
- It's great to have new and refreshing ideas, but remember there are people that have been there and done that – you don't have to reinvent the wheel.

Professional development and support

- The Victorian Institute of Teaching provides professional development for relief teachers with a seminar program and online professional development materials. www.vit.vic.edu.au
- Some agencies may also provide professional development seminars or resources for their relief teachers registered with them, or a 'Getting back to teaching' course for returning and overseas teachers.
- The Australian Education Union Victoria has a [CRT Association](http://www.aeuvic.asn.au/crt) and provides information on work conditions for CRTs. www.aeuvic.asn.au/crt