



Teacher Portfolio & Preparation Series

Some Things To Consider When Choosing A Place To Work

THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE MOVING TO A NEW LOCATION

- Are you interested in its culture?
- Are you interested in other aspects besides the culture?
- How do you like its climate?
- What is its current/recent political climate?
- What sociopolitical issues are prevalent there (e.g., gender, race issues)?
- Within the area or country, where do you want to live? (In the city? Which city? In the countryside?)
- How near do you want to be to entertainment and cultural opportunities?
- How long do you think you want to live there?
- How long do you honestly plan to stay in this place (i.e., if you really are only going to stay a year and they are asking for a 3-year commitment, maybe it's not a good place to apply)?
- Cost of living?
- Housing availability & costs?
- Transportation (including access to an airport)?
- Is it possible to get dependent (or other) visas for members of your family that you want to have live with you?
- Will the school/organization help your spouse/partner find work?
- What kinds of schools are available for your children? (Do you want your children to study in the host language or in your native language?)
- How excited is your family about moving to this other country?
- Other family considerations?

THINGS TO CONSIDER ABOUT SPECIFIC JOBS

Job-related

- Salary
- Location
- Length of contract—renewable or nonrenewable, tenured or non-tenured? Job security?
- Contract or job requirements (e.g., research, teaching, service ratios; office hours, contact hours, committee hours, extracurricular duties)?
- Opportunities for advancement or promotion
- Budgetary constraints
- Will you need to travel as part of the position (how often? costs? airport proximity?)?
- How useful is this position for building your CV (if you're not planning on a long-term stay)?

Benefits-related

- Vacation/sick leave days per year (time off when you have no vacation but aren't teaching?)
- Insurance (medical, dental, vision, life, disability, etc.)
- Pension/retirement system
- Is there a union? Is membership mandatory or optional? To what degree are they involved in contract negotiation, job disputes, insurance opportunities, and so forth?

Institution/program-related

- Faculty/colleagues you'd potentially be working with (background, professional interests, number, diversity)
- Do they have an office environment or organization culture that would be conducive to your working there?
- Private vs. shared office space
- Size of the organization
- Dress code
- Student population (demographics, diversity, etc.)
- Teacher-student ratio (overall, and broken down by skill area or other type of class)
- What is the school's teaching philosophy, and how do they implement that philosophy (e.g., do they say they believe in communicative language learning yet have materials and classes that tell a different story)?
- What is the school's mission statement?
- How long has the institution/program been in existence?
- What is the reputation of the institution in the community? In the language professional community?

Support & resources

- Transportation allowance (assistance with move?)
- Research allowance & opportunities
- Book & publications allowance
- Are there opportunities and support for professional development?
- Do they provide administrative support?
- Do they have a good instructional technology infrastructure (e.g., computer, Internet, email, and other tech support)?
- Office support (e.g., free photocopying, etc.?)
- What kind of library resources do they have? What kind of budget is there for purchases for the library (e.g., journals in your field)?
- Availability of other materials/resources

PRIORITIZING AND COMING TO TERMS WITH WHAT MATTERS MOST TO YOU WHEN MAKING DECISIONS

Once you've considered these things, you may want to prioritize them into your **core needs** (your “must haves” or “deal breakers”) and your **negotiable needs** (your “nice to haves” but not necessarily required). Such a list can help you determine if you’d ultimately be happy with a particular job and whether it is worth your time to pursue an application. Keep in mind that certain decisions might affect the job opportunities you have available. For example, if the most important thing for you is to live in a certain place, then that automatically limits your choices in other areas, such as the types of jobs you may be qualified for. Likewise, if the type of job is your most important consideration, that could limit locations where you are able to look for work. Additionally, your core needs and negotiable needs may also shift depending on whether the position you are considering is **long term** versus **short term**.