

Toughing it out – It's a marathon, not a sprint!

We understand that many candidates are getting little or no response from applications they make to schools, and right now it may seem like all the applications you are sending out are going into a massive void, never to be seen again. Don't worry! Almost every job-hunting international educator tells that same story. The internet has made it possible for huge numbers of applications to be submitted, and this has resulted in it becoming the "new normal" for schools not to reply to candidates, especially in the pre-January period of the recruiting year.

We know it's frustrating, but perhaps it would help to see it from the recruiters' perspective. From the schools' side, online applications are coming in literally in the hundreds (and thousands for the more popular destinations). It takes an incredible amount of time and work to sift through Search profiles, the CVs, references, and experiences of applicants – then to find the right match with things such as extra-curricular activities, sports coaching, gender, diversity, age or family balance on the staff. Your applications are not falling on deaf ears!

In the international recruiting cycle, measured by new jobs obtained to date for next August, we are probably only a third of the way through the year. At the early stage, schools tend to be super-selective – knowing that there is a long way to go, and they can afford to take their time to ensure they find the right candidates. This is the norm from October to December. Some schools may be waiting for the job fairs, and some might not even know which staff are leaving so not sure of who they need yet (particularly in Europe, as per EU labour law the resignation dates are usually in the spring). Some are forced by national legislation to advertise and interview “in country” before they are allowed to go to international hires. Others are prepared to hire online and have early resignation dates built into contracts.

Some schools have well-oiled HR departments and IT systems generating automatic messages to applicants letting them know that only those shortlisted will be contacted. Others may not! In the meantime – there are schools to run and children to teach – not to mention the winter holidays....recruiters need a break too!

In today's competitive market, the recruiting year seems to have stretched out so that some schools are constantly searching, researching, interviewing, and checking referees. The general pattern is that we start to see a trickle of candidates accepting jobs in late October, increasing to a slight stream in November and December. There is always a lull over Christmas and New Year and then a tidal wave in January and February. Late February seems to be when the tide turns, and schools become more proactive in their pursuit of teachers. From March onwards, the pace of gaining of new jobs begins to slow down again until the end of the school year, with still a few new jobs being confirmed right up to the start of the new school year. Even then, Search Associates is contacted by schools to help fill emergency positions.

Bottom line: recruiters are extraordinarily busy right now. So don't be disheartened and try not to get too frustrated! We know it's hard... but never stop applying – persist, persist, persist in the months (yes, months) ahead. The more applications you have out there, and the longer you continue to apply, the more interviews you could receive, and the more practice you have with online interviews, the greater your chances of success in securing a new position at a new school.

Regarding the contacting of schools, if they are using APLi, please ONLY apply once. There is no need to write again or follow up as all your information has been collected and sorted into the position listing on the school's APLi records. Schools are purposely switching to APLi to avoid the barrage of email communication and applications (in other words, don't frustrate them).

If the school is not using APLi, we believe that the best approach is to email the school firstly through our Search email system (Contact School button on the Search posting). One to two weeks later, and only if you do not get a response, then email through your own email account, putting in the subject heading "Search Associates candidate for XX position" and re-send your inquiry. This way, you have covered all the bases.

Let me know if you have any questions. Good luck. Be patient, be persistent, and persevere!