

What is an independent school?

An independent school is a school that receives no national or local government funds for its operation and is instead sustained by tuition charges, gifts, and perhaps the investment yield of an endowment. Private day schools, boarding schools, and parochial/religiously affiliated schools are all types of independent schools.

What does this mean for me as a teacher?

In terms of **credentialing**, independent schools do not require that teachers be state certified. In terms of **pedagogy**, independent schools are not bound by state or federal requirements. They have more freedom to develop course offerings outside of the state-mandated curriculum; they also do not teach to standardized tests. In terms of **compensation**, independent schools typically pay teachers less than public schools do, as their budgets are not supported by government funds. Independent school teachers often sacrifice pay in order to exercise more creativity and flexibility in running their classrooms.

What do the schools expect of teachers, as far as extracurricular activities are concerned?

While all schools, both public and independent, value the extracurricular contributions of teachers, independent schools expect teachers to provide service to the school community outside the classroom. This typically means coaching a sport or supervising a club. If you are a new teacher at a boarding school, you will be required to live in the dorms. Consequently, when you apply for positions at independent schools, your athletic skills and personal interests can become as compelling to a hiring committee as your teaching experiences and academic/content knowledge. It is important to keep this in mind as you build your resume.

Will independent schools be interested in hiring applicants with a graduate degree?

Yes. Independent schools routinely hire applicants who have a master's or doctoral degree, even though they also hire some teachers straight out of college. But it still will be important for you to communicate to schools how your graduate training has made you a more capable teacher, and why you want to work at an independent school.

How do I search for teaching opportunities at independent schools?

There are several approaches you should pursue:

- **Apply** to independent school *placement agencies* which connect candidates with opportunities.
- **Network** with and seek career advice from Penn alumni and others who teach at independent schools; search *QuakerNet* and *LinkedIn* alumni groups to help identify potential contacts.
- **Monitor** job postings on the websites of specific independent schools of interest to you; also check the job listings on more general sites like the *National Association of Independent Schools*.
- **Participate** in the independent school *resume drops* via On-Campus Recruiting at Career Services.

For more information, visit <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/careerfields/k12education.php>