

# Application Preparation Guide

2017 NYC Teaching Fellows Program



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## NYCTF Application Process

We are thrilled that you are exploring the process of becoming a NYC Teaching Fellow! Because great teachers are the key to student success, our program is highly selective. Our interview process helps us learn about your background, experience, and skills, but it also will help you understand the unique challenges you may face in the classroom and help you determine if our program is a good fit for you.

Our 2017 application process has three stages – the Online Application, Phone Interview, and Selection Day. In this document, you will find an overview of our application process, as well as tips to help you effectively prepare for each stage.



\*Some candidates may skip the phone interview and move directly to Selection Day if sufficient evidence has been collected through the review of their online application.

NYCTF has a self-paced online application and rolling admissions process. Applications are reviewed as soon as they are received, and the entire application process takes from six to ten weeks. You can review sample timelines for admission based on our 2017 deadlines [here](#).

### What We Look For

We know a broad range of individuals can succeed in our program. However, we know that individuals who demonstrate the following characteristics are likely to succeed in the application process and during summer pre-service training:

- ✓ Candidates who can apply feedback to improve quickly in new situations
- ✓ Candidates who connect their prior experience to their desire to teach
- ✓ Candidates who demonstrate the ability to succeed at challenges
- ✓ Candidates who think on their feet and quickly devise solutions
- ✓ Candidates who can break down complex topics in a concise and logical manner
- ✓ Candidates who prioritize student learning and hold high expectations for all students

## Our Vision for Excellent Instruction

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Students need exceptional teachers who deliver effective instruction in order to be well prepared for college and career. Throughout the application process, we will be asking you questions about why you believe that you will be an effective teacher in a high need school. Our *Vision for Excellent Instruction* outlines what we believe effective teaching looks like, and what we want all Fellows to be able to do when they enter the classroom.

This vision, outlined below, includes evidence-based best practices for increasing student achievement in the classroom. We ask that you reflect on these tenets and consider them as you put together your application and consider the NYC Teaching Fellows program. In all subject areas, we strive to prepare students for college and career by building their critical thinking, analysis, speaking, and writing skills.

### **Mathematics**

In rigorous math classrooms, we strive to build mathematically proficient students prepared to meet the demands of college and career. All students build on what they already know and learn to apply mathematics principles to the real world. Students do the thinking and problem-solving in order to gain deeper conceptual understanding of math content.

### **Literacy**

In literacy classrooms, we strive to build readers, writers, and communicators prepared to meet the demands of college and career and to engage as productive citizens of the world. In order to meet these demands, teachers ensure all students have access to high quality, meaningful, and complex texts. Teachers provide students with the space to think critically about what they've read and to ground daily writing and discussion in text-based evidence.

### **Science**

In science classrooms, we strive to build scientifically proficient students prepared to meet the demands of college and career and to engage as productive citizens of the world. This means that students regularly “do” science—they apply theories and test hypotheses in a hands-on way. Students apply strong literacy skills to learning and communicating about science so they are able to convey what they know effectively and apply scientific principles to the world around them.

### **Special Education**

In special education settings, we strive to support students in building the skills they need to meet the demands of college and career and to engage as productive citizens of the world. In addition to fulfilling Our Vision for Excellent Instruction for all core content areas, all students in our special education classrooms learn the foundational skills they need to engage in rigorous, grade-level content. Teachers create an environment where students receive the supports they need in class. In order to ensure all students learn and achieve, teachers act as advocates for their students' academic, social, and emotional needs.

## Stage 1: Your Online Application

### Program Requirements

Before beginning your online application, please make sure that you meet our basic program requirements. All applicants must have:

- A bachelor’s degree (or be on track to complete one before training begins)
- U.S. citizenship or permanent residency with a valid green card.
  - *In compliance with federal law, all persons hired will be required to verify identity and eligibility to work in the United States and to complete the required employment eligibility I-9 form upon hire. All NYCDOE employment requires a background clearance, including fingerprinting.*
- Fluency in English.
- Never been certified to teach (or held a teaching certificate in any state)
- Never previously completed a teacher preparation program

For more information about your eligibility for our program and GPA requirements, please review the graphic below:

You are ineligible if:

- You do not have a bachelor’s degree.
- You have a degree in Education.\*
- You participated in and/or completed a teacher preparation program.
- You are not a U.S. citizen or permanent resident.
- You are already certified to teach full-time, or were previously certified in another state.
- You previously benefitted from a NYC DOE tuition assistance program (other than paraprofessional training).

You are eligible if:

- You have a bachelor’s degree before the start of training.\*\*
- You have U.S. citizenship or permanent residency with a valid green card.
- Fluency in English.
- You have never been certified to teach (or held a certificate in any state).
- You never previously completed a teacher preparation program.
- You have an undergraduate GPA of at least a 3.0.\*\*\*

\* We will accept candidates with bachelor’s degrees in Art Education, Music Education, Early Childhood Education and Minors in Education. We will accept candidates with bachelor’s or master’s degrees in Education Administration, Education Policy, Education Theory, Education Studies, Music Education, Art Education, Early Childhood Education and Higher Education, as well as Minors in Education. We will also accept candidates with a Certificate in TESOL or TEFL obtained over a two to three-month period. We will not accept candidates who are in the process of getting a Master’s degree in any of the subject areas we certify.

\*\*If you are a senior in college about to graduate, you will need to have your degree conferred by the beginning of June 2017.

\*\*\*You have an undergraduate cumulative GPA between 2.5 and 3.0. We review these applications holistically, and take GPA statements, essays, accomplishments, and demonstrations of leadership into consideration.

## Sections of the Online Application

In your online application, we are looking for evidence that demonstrates your professionalism, ability to think critically, and commitment to holding high expectations for all students. The sections you will complete as you move through the application are outlined below. We recommend that you get started on your application in advance of any deadlines so that you have time to produce a thoughtful, complete, and proofread submission. Keep in mind you are able to move around in the application and do not necessarily have to complete the sections in order.

**Personal Information:** You will be asked to provide basic personal information in this section; please make sure to use your legal name on your profile in your online application and all application materials. Any demographic information provided will not impact your candidacy and will be used for statistical purposes only.

**Program Requirements:** Our eligibility requirements for the program are on [page 4](#). You must meet these baseline requirements in order to be considered for the 2017 program.

**Educational Background:** In this section, you will be asked to provide information about the educational institutions that you attended. Please note that all applicants with a GPA between 2.5 and 3.0 will be asked to provide a GPA statement as a part of their application. This statement should explain your low undergraduate coursework GPA as well as the reasons you believe you will be successful in a rigorous master's degree program. Like the rest of your application, this statement should be in professional language as this statement may be shared with university partners. More information about this section, including instructions for how to upload transcripts, can be found on [page 6](#).

**Subject Area Preferences:** The information that you provide in this section will be used to determine the subject areas you prefer to teach. More information on completing this section can be found on [page 7](#).

**Resume:** You will be asked to upload a copy of your resume. Make sure to highlight academic, work and volunteer achievements, and explain any past performance issues or time not accounted for on your resume. Further tips for writing and updating your resume can be found on [page 8](#).

**Short Answer Questions:** In this section, you will have the opportunity to tell us why you want to become a Fellow and why you will be an excellent teacher. More information on this section, including the questions that you will be asked to answer, can be found on [pages 9-10](#).

**Survey:** We ask that you complete a short survey that includes questions about how you heard about the NYC Teaching Fellows program. Your answers to these questions will not impact your candidacy.

**Submit:** At the last stage of your application, you will be asked to confirm that all of your information is correct and submit your application for review.

## Uploading Your Transcripts

You are required to upload transcripts from all completed degree pathways, including your bachelor's degree conferring university and any transfer credits from other institutions in order for us to determine which subject areas you are eligible to teach in New York City. You will need to obtain your transcript from your college(s) and upload electronically to your online application. **Please note that all transcripts must be submitted electronically; unofficial transcripts are acceptable at this stage of the application process.**



### Obtaining Your Transcript:

1. Check with your institution to determine if they can provide an electronic unofficial copy of your transcript, or log into your college online portal and take a screenshot of your coursework.
2. If your institution does not provide electronic copies, request a hard copy of an unofficial transcript. Ensure this hard copy is delivered to your home address as no copies will be accepted at the NYC Teaching Fellows office. Scan or take a picture of the hard copy transcripts and upload to your online application. You can save the scan or picture in any of the formats named in the Transcript Checklist below.



### Uploading Your Transcript:

1. Sign in to your application and return to the [Education](#) page. Click 'Choose File' in the transcript section at the top of the page. A screen will pop up that allows you to select a file.
2. Once you select a file, click 'Open.' You will see available files appear next to 'Choose File'.
3. Your transcript is now in the system and you will be able to complete the rest of the page. Scroll to the bottom of the Education page and click 'Save' to hold your work or select 'Save and Next' if you are ready to move forward.

## Transcript Checklist

**Before submitting your application, use the checklist below to ensure that your education information is complete:**

- Your transcript file size is not larger than 3MB. If it is larger, please separate the large file into multiple pages.
- The document is saved with one of these extensions: .doc, .docx, .PDF, .RFT, .TXT, or .jpeg.
- You have uploaded transcripts from the institution(s) where you earned your bachelor's degree.
  - o If you earned your bachelor's degree in a Non-U.S. Institution, you understand that you will be required to have your degree evaluated for U.S. equivalency by World Education Services ([www.wes.org](http://www.wes.org)) prior to receiving an invitation to interview with NYCTF. Please review our [WES evaluation guidelines](#) for more information.
- You have uploaded documents from any other undergraduate institutions (other than study abroad) that you attended, if these transfer credits do not appear on your main transcript.
- You have included transcripts from any graduate work that you have completed.

## Subject Area Preferences

For the current list of subject areas in which NYC Teaching Fellows is recruiting for our 2017 program, please visit the [subject area eligibility page of our website](#).

Since NYC Teaching Fellows train to teach in the highest need subject areas and schools in New York City, our subject area programs vary from year to year and are subject to change based on the needs of the NYCDOE.

Rather than applying to a specific subject area, you will be asked to provide information about your subject area preferences in this section of the online application. Our program staff will look at your application to figure out what you are eligible for based on university and New York State eligibility requirements, and assign you to a subject area that you preference that has the highest need in the NYCDOE. Please indicate your preference for all of the subject areas you are interested in teaching. In order for NYC Teaching Fellows to best determine which subject areas you are eligible to teach, you must submit all postsecondary transcripts with your application. To review our subject area eligibility information, please [click here](#). Be sure to click on each subject title for more information about what it looks like to teach that subject in New York City.



**After submitting your application, you will not have another opportunity to edit or change your subject area preferences.** We recommend that you think carefully about the subject area(s) that you would like to teach before completing this page of the application. You will receive a tentative subject area assignment should you advance to Selection Day. This tentative subject area assignment may not be your final assigned subject area in the program but will provide you with a subject to construct your sample lesson around for Selection Day.

Ultimately, we ask that you remain flexible regarding your subject area, since our mission as a program is to provide teachers to the students who need them most. Students are at the center of our work and we want our Fellows to teach in the schools and subject areas where they can best support them. If you are accepted to NYC Teaching Fellows, you will engage in content support during our training to ensure you are ready for the classroom in your subject area. Our Math and Science Immersion programs will also provide additional content support for Fellows teaching those subjects from our university partners. Please understand that if your subject area changes during the interview process, it is due to a greater need for qualified teachers in that subject.

## Preparing Your Resume

**A strong resume tells a clear story about you.** When looking at your resume, we should be able to easily follow the path of your career or education and quickly understand why your accomplishments and activities make you a good match for our program.

### Tips for What to Emphasize:

- Any volunteer or work experience in underserved communities or with populations with special needs
- Specific, concrete accomplishments in each role you have held, using quantitative data where possible
- Leadership roles that you have held, even if they do not directly relate to education
- Any work with school-aged children, or other teaching and/or mentoring experience you have
- Your ability to problem solve, collaborate, and achieve results, no matter the industry or field

### Resume Checklist

**Before submitting your application, use the checklist below to ensure that your resume is ready:**

- Is your resume an **appropriate length?** (one page; two pages for applicants with 10+ years' work experience)
- Did you **list the month and year** for every position you have held and institution you have attended?
- Is your work history **ordered chronologically**, with the **most recent position at the top?**
- Is your resume organized into **sections with clear headings?** (Work History, Education, Skills, etc.)
- Is the formatting of your resume **consistent?** (font, date format, work information, etc.)
- Does this resume **highlight what is important for NYC Teaching Fellows** to know about your accomplishments?
- Did you **explain any gaps** or periods of time when you were neither employed nor in school?

## Short Answer Questions

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Please see below for a preview of this year's short answer questions. We suggest preparing your answers to these questions in advance on a word processor so that you can copy and paste your answers in and complete the online application in one sitting.

### Section 1

Why do you want to teach in New York City? Based on the subject areas we offer, which is your first preference and why do you want to teach that subject? (150 words)

Do you believe you will be successful in raising student academic achievement in this subject area? Describe the skills or experiences you have that will help ensure academic achievement for your students. (200 words)

### Section 2

Teachers in a city as diverse as NYC educate students from a variety of backgrounds and abilities. How do you define academic success for students in high-need schools and communities? How does a student's socio-economic status, family background, and previous experience with schooling impact their potential for academic success? (150 words)

Do you believe you will be successful in ensuring high academic achievement for all students you will teach? Why or why not? Describe any experience (including experience working with low-income or special needs populations) and/or skills that will help you improve student outcomes. (200 words)

### Section 3 (scenario)

*Three weeks into the school year, you notice that one of your eighth grade students is consistently disengaged during lessons. She rarely answers questions, and when you call on her, she typically shrugs her shoulders and says, "I don't know." Even when other students are engaged, you often find her listening to music, engaging in off-topic conversation, or putting her head down on her desk. Your assessments show that the student is well below grade level in reading and mathematics. Answer both of the questions below.*

What are some likely causes of the off task behavior and what action steps would you take to determine these causes? (150 words)

Explain two ways you would address the student's low academic performance. To what extent do you believe these strategies will be successful? (150-200 words)

## Tips for Completing the Short Answer Questions

The short answer questions in our application enable us to get a clear picture of your background, experiences, and character. Please use this opportunity to help us understand why you are applying to the NYC Teaching Fellows program as your pathway into teaching. We encourage you to read our [Vision for Excellent Instruction \(page 4\)](#), and [our glossary of common terms \(page 14\)](#), prior to writing your responses.

### In the short answer responses, we are looking for you to:

- Highlight why you feel you would be an effective teacher in a high-need public school in New York City
- Use your own voice to share your passion for education
- Be concise, and adhere to the word count guidelines provided for each question
- Cite your experiences both inside and outside of classrooms
- Use specific examples from your own experiences and how they have prepared you for the classroom and working with students

### Short Answer Checklist

**Before submitting your application, use the checklist below to ensure that your short answer responses are complete:**

- Did you review and edit your essays?
- Have you carefully read the directions and answered **all parts** of each question?
- Did you adhere to the word count minimums and/or maximums?
- Is your writing clear? Do you need to elaborate or provide more context in any of your responses?
- Is it concise? Is every sentence integral to the answer?



## Stage 2: Phone Interview

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During the phone interview, you will speak one-on-one with a New York City public school teacher. The interview will last for approximately 30 minutes. All phone interviews take place on weekday evenings and Saturday mornings. If you are invited to the phone interview stage, you will have the opportunity to sign up for a time slot that works for you, and your interviewer will call you at the number that you provide. If you are living internationally, be sure to provide your country code when submitting your application.

We encourage you to view the phone interview as a chance to demonstrate your commitment to educational equality and the mission of the NYC Teaching Fellows program. You can expect to answer questions about your interest in teaching, and how you would handle scenarios involving typical challenges that a teacher would face in their classroom.

Please note that some candidates may skip the phone interview and move directly to Selection Day if sufficient evidence has been collected through the review of their online application.

### How to Prepare for Your Phone Interview

While there is no one way to prepare for your phone interview, please keep the following things in mind:

**We do not expect you to know everything about education.**

Our questions do not require any special knowledge of the educational system in NYC. What we are most interested in is your ability to think on your feet and overcome challenges. During the interview, be prepared to answer questions about classroom scenarios and share how you will apply your own professional skills in education-related settings.

**Think about how you have approached challenges in other situations.**

You were selected for a phone interview because you have shown you can get results in situations where you have faced an obstacle. Think through the steps you took to overcome it. Look for patterns in your approach, and imagine how these skills might benefit you in the classroom.

**Reflect on how your own educational philosophy aligns with the NYC Teaching Fellows core values and mission.**

We want Fellows who are committed to educational excellence for all students and who believe in the transformative power of teaching. Visit our website and consider how your answers can reflect the components of our mission that resonate most strongly with you.

## Stage 3: Selection Day

Selection Day events are in-person interviews that take place in New York City and are offered on weekday evenings and Saturday mornings. Events last approximately three to three and a half hours.

At Selection Day, you will be expected to teach a five-minute sample lesson to your two interviewers and the five to nine other candidates in your group. You will receive resources to help you prepare your lesson should you advance to the Selection Day stage, but please know that we do not expect you to teach a perfect lesson. We will be looking for your comfort level and **presence in front of the room**, your ability to **break down complex concepts** to your students, and your ability to **present content in a clear and engaging way**.

In addition to the teaching sample, you will have the opportunity to learn a fundamental teaching technique from a member of the selection staff and practice it with other candidates in your group. The technique you learn will be taught during the Fellow summer pre-service training and will help you determine if our training model is the right fit for you.

At the end of the practice session, you will receive feedback from a member of the selection staff and incorporate that feedback into your teaching sample, which you will have the opportunity to deliver again.

*"Selection Day was a great experience. Everyone in attendance, including both candidates and selectors, were positive, intelligent and passionate about teaching. I loved the environment and the atmosphere."*

- NYCTF candidate, after attending Selection Day



## Glossary of Terms

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In our glossary we have provided some of the key terms that you might hear during the application process. We suggest that you familiarize yourself with this page before completing your short answer questions, and while preparing for each stage of the application process.

**Assessment** - a way for a teacher to gain evidence of student learning. Assessments are often delivered as written or verbal tests, and are used to determine student academic achievement as compared to learning goals and/or standards.

**Equity** - the quality of being fair and just. Equity is not the same as equality; rather, equity means providing students the supports needed to level the playing field and ensure all students from all backgrounds have the chance to be academically successful. Excellent teachers drive equity in education through high expectations and comprehensive support for students.

**Free or Reduced-Price Lunch (FRPL)** - if a student's family income is below a specified level, the student is eligible to receive school meals at either a reduced price or for free. The enrollments of students in FRPL programs are often used to determine if schools have high proportions of low-income students and are eligible for supplemental federal/state funding and/or targeted programs.

**High-Need School** - there are various characteristics that we identify in order to classify a school as high-need. These characteristics include (but are not limited to):

- a large percentage of the student population is living in poverty
- the student body contains a larger than average proportion of students with special needs (including students with disabilities and English Language Learners)
- the school has been historically hard to staff and often faces teacher shortages
- the school poses geographical challenges for staff (may be far away from public transportation, have limited or no parking)
- the school is facing funding shortages or major budget cuts
- the school faces issues related to safety, discipline, and/or very large student/teacher ratios

**Low-Income** - refers to students or families living at or below the federal poverty level. Low-income communities are ones that have high proportions of low-income families, and often face barriers to accessing resources (such as effective schools, childcare, transportation, and healthcare).

**Special Needs** - this term is used to describe students who require assistance for disabilities that may be medical, physical, or psychological. These students often need additional classroom accommodations, including one-on-one lessons, individualized education plans, or accessible materials. Students with special needs may have mild, moderate, or severe disabilities and varying levels of need related to accommodations.

**Student Academic Achievement** - academic achievement measures can be subjective and may look different for every student and every teacher. Academic achievement itself, however, is always related to student learning. We encourage you to craft your own definition of student academic achievement, tying it to student learning, with an emphasis on college and career success.