

Helen Young, Geography Teacher

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Helen Young is a Geography Teacher at The Friary School in Staffordshire. She was awarded Chartered Geographer status in 2008. Here's what she says about being a Chartered Geographer (Teacher)....

Why did you decide to apply to become a Chartered Geographer (Teacher)?

I decided to become a Chartered Geographer because I really enjoy my subject. I felt that I was doing so much more than was expected of me in my role as a teacher that some formal recognition would be a lovely thing to have. There was a sense of challenge involved too – was I good enough to get CGeog?

How did you find the application process?

The application process was really straightforward. It was much easier for me as I'd recently been applying for a new job, so my CV and professional development record was already organised. I imagine that this is the hardest bit for most people.

What sort of experience and activities did you include in your professional self evaluation report?

I had been working in a Humanities Specialist school so I had lots of examples of innovative work within Geography, particularly the use of ICT and GIS. Outside of this, I used outreach, examples of fieldwork implementation, introduction of revision programmes and associated exam results, involvement in ITT and the GA. I also used examples from outside of school, such as carrying out AEGIS 3 training, the development of my geographygeek website, working for Boardworks and the consultancy work that I do for the BBC.

How have you benefited personally from gaining the accreditation?

The accreditation has given me formal recognition of all of the work that I do in Geography. I have relocated and moved schools twice in the last few years and each time the interview panel have been impressed with my Chartered Geographer status. I think the greatest benefit to me has been in my own professional development. Each year I request that one of my performance management targets is to maintain my Chartered Geographer status, and this has enabled me to attend and carry out all kinds of inset that I might otherwise not have been able to go to.

How have your department and school benefited from you gaining the accreditation?

My department has benefited from my Chartered Geographer status through the networks and contacts that I have built up. This allows for new ideas and up to date thinking to filter through to all staff. I give out lots of resources and in return I get given lots; this benefits those working with me and the school as a whole.

How have your Headteacher and senior management team responded to you gaining the accreditation?

When I was going through the application procedure, my Headteacher and SLT link were really supportive. They ensured that I had access to all of the information that I needed and the school paid the fees for the application from the inset budget. They really valued the fact that I was taking control of my own development.

As the CGeog (Teacher) network grows, what would you like to see happen / be available to you?

I would like to see more networks. I think that localised networks are much more valuable as it's often difficult to travel a long way to get to schools that are further a field. As Chartered Geographers we all have many and varied skills so I think there's mileage for greater training of one another.

Any words of advice for aspiring Chartered Geographer (Teachers)?

It's definitely worthwhile doing, but you do need to have a really sound record of professional development. I don't think this is a bad thing at all; any accreditation worth having has got to be earned.