



Guidance for Trainee EPs: Working as Locums

The AEP preferred position for Trainee Educational Psychologists in Years 2 & 3 is that they should be employed on the Soulbury scale for Trainee Educational Psychologists. However, many local authorities continue to utilise the bursary scheme, which is a significantly lower rate and causes financial challenges for many. We have learned that, on occasions, TEPs are supplementing their financial situation at the expense of their structured learning by making themselves available to local authorities, sometimes via agencies, to undertake work within the statutory framework.

Whilst we do understand the financial challenges that being a TEP brings, the AEP does not recommend this as a way to gain either experience or extra income to supplement a bursary or salary. There are several reasons for this.

Firstly, the three-year doctorate is a full-time course. It is expected that any time away from the course – whether it is through annual leave, or breaks between terms – is used to recover, recharge and rest. UK employment regulations stipulate that workers should not exceed 48 hours per week. The demands of the course, particularly in Years 2 and 3, mean that undertaking additional work within the placement authority or elsewhere is likely to put the TEP in jeopardy of not meeting course requirements and put their health at risk.

TEPs are only permitted to use the title ‘Trainee Educational Psychologist’ when they are undertaking work that is part of their course requirements, or for the employer which is providing the supported placement. The title should not be used if the Trainee is undertaking any other work. Using this title to undertake work outside of the course and course approved placement/s may breach HCPC standards of conduct and BPS training standards and thereby put course progression/completion, and future HCPC registration and fitness to practice at risk.

The British Psychological Society (BPS) is the organisation responsible for accrediting the courses. There would be concerns that Trainee Educational Psychologists supplementing their structured learning by making themselves available to local authorities, via agencies, and working within the statutory framework when combined with attending a full-time course, would have potential to endanger the continued accreditation of the course.

TEPs who are on a contract of employment (rather than a bursary) should also check their contract and any associated policies from their employer, who may also require written consent before undertaking any work outside their employment.