

Louise Ellis, Head of Geography

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Louise Ellis is Head of Geography at Stopsley High School in Luton. In December 2006 she was one of the first teachers to be awarded Chartered Geographer status within the new Chartered Geographer (Teacher) strand (launched by the Action Plan for Geography). 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 apply for Chartered Geographer (Teacher) as I am always looking towards my own personal development and the development of my department. I felt that the accreditation would demonstrate recognition of the work undertaken by my department. I did consider that this was important in encouraging my young team members to become involved in the development of the subject.

How did you find the application process?

The application process was very straight forward and not particularly time consuming. It certainly gave me the opportunity to sit and reflect on my contribution to the development of the subject. It was an opportunity to present my Headteacher with details of work that I have carried out that supports the development of the subject.

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

I looked back throughout my career and considered the work that I have undertaken with the development of my department, for example inviting Margaret Roberts to a local Curriculum Network Meeting. I reflected on activities completed outside the department such as involvement with GA working parties including 'Spatially Speaking'.

How have you benefited personally from gaining the accreditation?

Achievement of this status makes me feel that the work I have undertaken is recognised and valued. This in turn will encourage me to continue in supporting the development of geography nationally.

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

I am hoping that the department will gain from this accreditation when applying for the Secondary Geography Quality Mark.

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

My Headteacher commented on how impressive my professional self-evaluation appeared. I was congratulated on receiving the accreditation.

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

In the future it would be good to meet with other Chartered Geographers and share experiences.

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

It is an opportunity to stop and reflect on the contribution we are making to geographical education and for others within our establishments to become aware of what we do. It can prove helpful to discuss with team members details for the professional self-evaluation as often they will highlight areas that you have not thought of.