

Rebecca Kitchen, Head of Geography

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Rebecca Kitchen, Head of Geography at Aylesbury High School in Buckinghamshire, was awarded Chartered Geographer (Teacher) status in 2007. Here's what she has to say about Chartered Geographer (Teacher).....

Why did you decide to apply to become a Chartered Geographer?

A colleague mentioned it and when I looked into it further I realised that I met all of the criteria and decided that I would put together an application. I felt it was important to be professionally recognised for the work I was doing, both for myself and for the department. I wasn't convinced that I had enough experience, as the example professional self-evaluation which I read sounded much more far reaching and exciting than mine!

How did you find the application process?

The application process was relatively painless. It probably took me about 4 or 5 hours to produce my professional self-evaluation and I already had a draft CV which I tweaked to make more detailed. I also submitted an article which I had written for 'Teaching Geography' as evidence to back up my application. I found it a really useful and positive experience as when I wrote down the things I had done I realised that I had actually achieved quite a lot! The hardest thing was structuring my professional self-evaluation which I ended up doing chronologically.

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

I included information about the fieldtrips in the UK which I have led as well as a World Challenge expedition to Madagascar which I took part in. I also wrote about my involvement in the Geography Ambassador scheme and the subsequent article I had published in the journal 'Teaching Geography'. I have also been an examiner for the Edexcel A AS exams and regularly mentor trainee teachers in my role as Head of Geography.

How have you benefited personally from gaining the accreditation?

It has given me the opportunity to become involved in things which I may not have become involved in without the C.Geog accreditation, particularly as budgets for CPD are tight. For example, I have applied to go on an Advanced Google Earth training course which is free for C.Geogs, which I might not have applied for previously. Also, I hope to become involved in the second phase of the Action Plan for Geography which is something which really interests me but which I wouldn't have had the confidence to put myself forward for before gaining the accreditation.

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

I have applied for the Geographical Association Secondary Geography Quality Mark for the department and included the fact that I had the C.Geog accreditation on my application for that. I'm also hoping that by getting involved in the Action Plan for Geography and by attending courses, such as the Advanced Google Earth training, I can produce a number of high quality resources which will be useful for the department.

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

Really well! The Headteacher put a notice in the staff bulletin to congratulate me and sent me a copy of the TES magazine which had a list of new C.Geogs in it, so I think they're quite pleased!

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

As a fairly new C.Geog I'm still amazed at the opportunities which are available to me now that I have the accreditation. Personally, I would like to be given the opportunity to help write and review resources which is part of the remit for the second phase of the Action Plan for Geography.

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

Set aside a day to put your application together and do it!