

Some advice before you 'separate' from the Department

Kim Jackson

1. Make sure you tick the box for casual employment

You may not want to work back in the classroom immediately, but you may find that after a year or so away from schools you may be interested in some part time consulting work. This can be easily done at the casual teacher rate.

Even if you only work a few days, this will get you back onto the Department's intranet – you will be 'back on the books' and back onto the network. In addition, although your current Departmental email access is cut off fairly quickly after you 'separate from the Department', you will be issued with a new email account as a casual teacher. All of your old messages are archived and not accessible (not that you probably would want to look at them anyhow).

The teacher casual rate is significantly less than the pro rata Principal's rate, but this employment option gives you a chance to capitalise on your knowledge in an area with which you are familiar. You may also be happy to be affirmed for your expertise and appreciate the mental stimulation and social aspects of schools, where you can manage your working hours to suit the many other things in your life and where you can pick and choose what you do.

Be mindful that this means you will also have money going into a new First State Super account unless you direct the Department to send it elsewhere. Always get financial advice if you are intent upon doing a lot of additional work but have retired prior to turning 60. The tax implications are quite different.

From 2018 you will also need to pay your NESA registration fee. It is a lot easier to keep everything current rather than let it go and later decide that you would like to do some work in schools, and then have to do the paperwork with the Department. This has provided some challenges for former colleagues.

2. Register for an Australian Business Number (ABN)

You should register for an ABN if you want to do consulting work both outside and inside the Department. The process is easy and not complicated. Having an ABN does not mean that you have to charge GST but obviously you will have to file a business tax return at the end of the financial year. Talk with your accountant about this.

You can complete the ABN application online as a contractor/sole trader.

You should create a business card and a letterhead to be used for your invoicing. All of this can be done on your home computer unless you want to go to the expense of designing a corporate logo and a business trading name, rather than using your own name as a sole trader. You can check online to see if the business name that you want to use is available.

You also need to apply for a Department supplier number to be on the current financial management system. This can be done through the school in which you are planning to work. The Principal needs to complete a supplier application for you, which is then signed off by the local Director of Schools. Then you can be placed on the system. Please note that as a contractor, you need to manage your invoicing. The remittances from the Department take 30 days, unlike being on the casual payroll where you are paid fortnightly.

You also need to make sure that when you are establishing a price for your contracted expertise you include a component for superannuation. Do not contract yourself at the casual teacher daily pay rate without adding the superannuation component as a minimum. You can choose whether you pay any into superannuation or not. Again, seek financial advice, depending upon your personal circumstances.

As a small business, you also have different tax concessions. Talk with your accountant about this. Just make sure that you keep good financial accounts to make tax time less stressful.

Updating your technology and virus protection software may be a tax deduction.

3. What are you really worth? (Addendum: Chris Bonnor)

You may become involved in work which is quite separate from the familiar rates and remuneration created by the Department. This might include working for philanthropy, the corporate sector, professional organisations and the tertiary sector. A colleague has told me he works for anything from zero to around \$1000 per day, depending on who is paying and where their money comes from. He usually enjoys what he does, so commonly charges around half that plus costs such as air fares, accommodation, meals etc.

You owe it to both yourself and your colleagues not to undervalue the expertise that you have, the work you do and the positive impact you might have on others and their organisation. You know that the remuneration for speakers at conferences might easily run into the thousands. Be careful to test the market but don't hold back if a higher than expected amount is the industry norm.

Contributor details

Kim Jackson (email knjackson@me.com) 1/12/17



Kim was Principal at Killarney Heights High School from 2008-2015. Since retiring she has been consulting with a number of schools and working part time at the University of Sydney training pre-service teachers.