

# Status of Teachers in the Russian Federation

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The status of a teacher may be defined according to a number of different factors, including special guarantees, teaching requirements, employment conditions, and relationships to governmental services. These characteristics are determined by the government, forming a set of features unique to Russia.

Starting with the existing categories of teachers in Russia, it is worth mentioning that teachers are not divided according to the institutions they work for, but rather according to their work experience and the significance of their contributions in science and education. In other words, teachers have special titles granted to them by the federal, regional or local government. For instance, two of the most significant titles are “Honoured teacher of the Russian Federation” and “People’s teacher of the Russian Federation”.

In order to become an Honoured teacher of the Russian Federation, a teacher has to show outstanding results in his or her pedagogical and educational activities. One must employ creativity and innovative pedagogical methods to achieve effective educational outcomes. Another condition for getting such a title is a minimum of 15 years of work experience in the teaching sphere. A teacher can also become a People’s teacher of the Russian Federation, which requires at least 20 years of experience as a teacher, but cannot happen within 5 years after gaining the title of an Honoured teacher. People’s teachers of the Russian Federation are those teachers who have made special contributions to the national educational system and whose achievements in this sphere have received wide public recognition. The qualifications for these awards are written in broad language, which may lead to a subjective application of the titles.

All of these awards are granted to teachers by the Federal Ministry of Education and Science. Apart from the titles of Honoured teacher of the Russian Federation and People’s teacher of the Russian Federation, the Ministry of Education and Science also grants the following awards for teachers: “Honorary worker of General education of the Russian Federation”, “Honorary worker of primary vocational education of the Russian Federation”, “Honorary worker of secondary vocational education of the Russian Federation”, “Honorary worker of higher vocational education of the Russian Federation”, a medal for mercy and charity, and a Honorary diploma of the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation.

There is also a special award for teachers called K.D. Ushinsky’s medal. It is granted to the teachers who have achieved highly in the development of pedagogical sciences. This is a rather old award, implemented in 1946, but it is still popular in Russia today. There are additional titles granted to teachers by institutions other than the Ministry of Education. For example, the title “Teacher of the year” is awarded by regional authorities. Russia also has the prize of the President of the Russian Federation and the title “An outstanding worker of National Education”.

In addition, it is important to consider qualifications required for people who want to become a teacher. Generally speaking, there is no strict division between categories of teachers in Russia. As a result, all the teachers have similar employment requirements. As prescribed by the Federal legislation, in order to become a teacher, one must have secondary vocational or higher education in pedagogy, or a degree in the subject one will teach, or any other secondary education followed by in-service trainings on the specific subject that one will teach. It is worth mentioning that teachers must regularly undergo in-

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service trainings; any school, as an employer, is obliged to provide such trainings for teachers. Recently the government established a new requirement for teachers, which states that teachers cannot have a criminal record or previous convictions.

As for the employment of teachers, it should be said that in Russia they are not civil servants, they are employees with private contracts. Teachers' employment conditions are regulated by federal labour legislation, as contracts are between a teacher and a school according to the rules laid out in the Russian Labour Code. Thus, the employer in these relationships is always a school or another educational institution. Schools are established by the urban municipal districts and rural municipal districts, sometimes by regions, and also by federal executive authorities. Therefore, teachers' salaries are paid from school funds, which are formed from public budgets. Teachers' wages consist of three parts: payment in accordance with the number of lessons per week or the number of students taught, including bonuses for work experience; compensation for overtime or for work in difficult conditions; and incentive payments for good student results. Teachers can also be compensated by their employer. The systems of compensation are individual in every school.

As mentioned before, employment conditions for teachers are determined similarly to workers in other fields. This means that hiring and termination is conducted for teachers in absolutely the same way as for other employees, and there are no special procedures for hiring teachers, such as competitions or appointments. Additionally, in most cases teachers are hired permanently. They have temporary contracts in some exceptional cases, for instance, in order to replace a temporarily-absent woman on maternity leave.

Furthermore, all teachers have opportunities for professional growth. Teachers may be promoted within the institution they work for, for instance, to become a headmaster, or within the whole educational system, for example, to become a civil servant of the municipal educational administration or the head of the body managing education in the region.

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Concerning the general conditions of employment of teachers, a teacher cannot be transferred to another job without his or her consent. The only exception from this rule is natural disasters or other exceptional events threatening the lives and health of people. Besides, teachers can work part-time and can combine teaching with any other paid activity. In addition, a leave of absence of up to 14 days is available for teachers with the consent of the school principal.

Regarding disciplinary liabilities, teachers may be dismissed from work for immoral behavior or for the use of physical and/or psychological violence. There is also another kind of liability for teachers, namely administrative. For instance, teachers may be fined for the willful distortion of state attestation results. Disciplinary measures for violations take the form of a warning, reprimand, or dismissal from work. There are no special legal acts on teachers' ethics in Russia.

To conclude, the Russian government is going to reform legislation on teachers' status in order to improve working conditions for teachers and attract new people to the profession. For example, the Government has already adopted a program that prescribes increasing teachers' average wages. Furthermore, they also plan to implement a so-called "effective contract", according to which all the conditions of teachers' work and systems of bonuses will be described in detail in these contracts. The government believes that new conditions will help not only to enhance working conditions for current teachers but also to maintain interest in the teaching profession amongst young specialists.