

# Becoming an education consultant

A young woman with blonde hair in a ponytail, wearing a white school shirt and a blue tie with orange stripes, is smiling and looking towards a woman with dark hair, also in a white shirt. They are in a classroom setting with other students and a blackboard in the background. The image is overlaid with an orange banner at the top and bottom, and a semi-transparent orange circle containing text.

Your guide to joining the  
Propelo Associate Network

propelo 

# Welcome to Propelo

Launching your career as an education consultant opens up a new world of exciting professional opportunities.

From making a positive change to your work-life balance, to refocusing on a key area of expertise – joining the Propelo Associate Network gives you the platform to reshape **how** and **when** you work.

- ▶ Flexibility – part-time, full-time, certain times of the year – you're in control.
- ▶ Personal & professional development – broaden your experience and challenge yourself – or specialise in a specific area of expertise.
- ▶ Lifelong learning – work with new people, tackle new challenges – enjoy the experience of making a difference where it matters most.
- ▶ Rewarding – competitive daily rates and a professional partner that takes care of the important things (contract negotiation, invoicing etc.).

*“Joining the Propelo Associate Network has helped me rapidly grow my portfolio of consultancy work. It's been exciting and challenging, and I've been introduced to lots of clients I wouldn't have otherwise connected with. The team really took the time to understand my skillset and what I can offer”.*

*Adrian Anderson, Senior Associate – Leadership, behaviour & attendance*



# What kind of opportunities are there?

Propelo Associates work nationwide, supporting schools, multi academy trusts and local authorities.

Our teams provide short-term leadership, boost capacity at times of need, or bring specific technical expertise to target areas of concern.

Whatever the project – all our work delivers change and positive impact for children and young people.

## Some example projects

- ▶ **Interim School Leadership** – stepping in as a Headteacher or senior leader for a term or two – whether that’s additional capacity or covering a staff absence. Resilience, emotional intelligence and capacity to commit time to a project are crucial. Opportunities available in secondary, primary, early years and special schools.
- ▶ **School Improvement** – helping to accelerate improvements by providing strategic challenge and support, delivering targeted interventions, or reviewing practice. We look for a proven track record of impact.
- ▶ **SEND** – providing technical expertise at a strategic or operational level. Propelo Associates might be asked to lead in a special school setting, support with assessment, or provide services as a SENDCO. Knowledge of the statutory framework is essential.
- ▶ **Support and Operations** – opportunities for Finance, HR and operations professionals to work with multi academy trusts. Ability to hit the ground running is key, often in a change or transformation context (e.g. rapidly growing trust).

A photograph showing three students in school uniforms wearing orange and white VR headsets. They are looking forward, engaged in a virtual reality experience. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a classroom or school setting.

*“If you’re passionate about making a difference, Propelo are without a doubt the best consultancy network to be part of. They have a real passion for what they do, ensuring that they connect clients with consultants who can work in strong partnership to deliver the best outcomes.”*

**Kate Whittlesey,  
Senior Associate – SEND**

# How does it work?

Once you've decided to explore the opportunities available in consultancy and interim work – we make joining the Propelo Associate Network as easy as possible.

You'll be well-advised, supported, and have clarity about your options. And we'll always take the time to get to know you and what you can offer.

In return, we'll ask for openness and transparency when discussing your career profile. Our clients expect the highest quality, so we'll want to explore your track record of success and understand how you have made a personal impact.

## Process

**Talk to us** – our experienced team will chat with you about your career and aspirations. We'll want to understand your motivations and interests – as well as personal preferences for how and where you'd like to work.



**Registration** – we'll need some further information from you to complete our due diligence. This includes referencing, DBS and other safer recruitment checks.



**Stay connected** – once registered, our job is to stay in touch and match your skills to exciting opportunities. We'll always give you an honest briefing on a project, with clarity around expectations and deliverables.



*“Our aim is to make the whole process of registration as pain-free as possible – so you can expect an efficient and friendly experience! We take our role in safeguarding the welfare of children and young people seriously – so our processes are straightforward but robust, guided by the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education”.*

**Charlie Wiffen, Senior Business Systems Coordinator**

### Three things every CV should have:

- A full career history with gaps accounted for – factual & honest
- Impact – a few points to note your key achievements in recent posts
  - A short summary – an overview describing your experience, specialism(s) and skills



## On assignment

When working on an assignment with Propelo, you'll enjoy the support and backing of our experienced central team.

That means someone on the end of the phone whenever you need them – or access to additional technical expertise at short notice.

It also means getting the basics right. Contract paperwork, rate negotiations, payments on time – we'll ensure it all goes as smoothly as possible, with minimal fuss.

Consultancy can be lonely if things are not going quite to plan – but by working as part of the Propelo Associate Network you'll never feel isolated. Support is only ever a phone call away.

- ▶ **Details** – we'll sort your contract and terms, with a competitive daily rate and practical arrangements made on your behalf.
- ▶ **Support** – we'll keep in touch and make sure you're happy with the project and have everything you need to make it a success.
- ▶ **Feedback** – we'll review the impact of your work and ensure we gather client testimonials that can enhance your professional profile.



*“Associates tell us they value our personable, professional approach. There are other consultancies out there, but we're proud of the loyalty we've earned from our Associate Network. We think the right partnership is the secret to success – honesty, doing what you say you'll do, and being proactive counts for a lot”*

*Adam Brett, Director*



## Frequently asked questions

- **I'm currently in a permanent role – how do I make the switch to consultancy?**

If you're currently employed it can be tricky to decide when to leave and how to plan your entry into consultancy. Our team have worked closely with hundreds of professionals to help them manage this transition. Get in touch and we can talk through your own circumstances and advise accordingly.

- **What kind of experience/career background do you look for?**

Propelo supports a wide range of education providers, from individual schools to the country's largest academy trusts. Our Associate Network includes 500+ sector professionals – with depth and breadth across many specialisms. This includes: school and trust leadership, SLT & middle leadership, early years, SEND, alternative provision, HR, Finance, operations & governance. We look for passion, commitment and a proven track record of success.

- **I've heard of IR35 – will it affect me?**

It might – but that depends on the role you'll be doing. IR35 requires you to have tax deducted at source for certain roles (typically interim roles where you're standing in for a permanent member of staff). In such cases, you'll usually work through our umbrella partner Paystream – you'll get a monthly payslip and all the necessary taxes will be deducted, just like if you were an employee. Our team can advise further if you'd like to learn more.

- **How do I get paid?**

It depends on the contract, but usually you'll be paid monthly. You'll either invoice us for your time or (if you're paying tax at source) be paid through our umbrella partner. Expenses are either included or charged on top. Remember, you'll only be paid when you are working, so it's worth factoring that into your calculations.

- **I'm interested in registering – what do I do next?**

Just drop us a line to [associates@propelo.co.uk](mailto:associates@propelo.co.uk) or give us a call on **0330 430 3333**. One of our team will be delighted to arrange a time to chat with you and explain things in more detail.

- **How do I become an interim Headteacher?**

Interim Headteachers provide short term leadership of a school – typically for one or two terms. It's a unique and hugely rewarding role that suits those looking for a challenge and who can commit 3-5 days per week. More often than not, the school will be on an improvement journey and looking for a leader who can hit the ground running and make a quick impact.

- **How does working as a consultant affect my pension?**

Unlike a permanent role, you won't usually receive payments into your pension. You will however benefit from a competitive daily rate. Associates usually find the rates offset the difference, plus the freedoms of working as a consultant provide wider benefits. Our team can help you consider the options and decide if it's right for you.

- **Do I need to provide referees?**

Yes. Safer recruitment is paramount, and we take our responsibilities around safeguarding very seriously. We'll need referencing history over the last five years and prospective associates should be prepared to be asked questions about your career, impact and reason for leaving roles. Our checks will also include an up-to-date DBS.

- **How do I make a success of being a consultant?**

To join the Propelo Associate Network your track record will need to speak for itself. But there are things you can do to open up more opportunities. If you can work full-time, in different parts of the country, and are relaxed about the level you work at – chances are you'll find more opportunities present themselves. We'd be happy to talk more about this with you during the registration process.



Contact the team  
on 0330 430 3333 or  
[associates@propelo.co.uk](mailto:associates@propelo.co.uk)



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E. associates@propelo.co.uk  
T. 0330 430 3333