Teaching English as a Foreign Language

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www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/startingpoints
Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)

Some frequently asked questions on this attractive option for living and working abroad.

What is TEFL?

TEFL is a qualification which enables you to teach English to those whose first language is not English in commercial language schools and institutions of further education both oversees and in the UK. TEFL gives you the opportunity to see the world, experience a different culture and is a great way of gaining valuable experience.

You may also see this work referred to as TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of other Languages) or more generally as ELT (English Language Teaching). In reality these acronyms are used interchangeably often referring to the same thing.

Where are most of the jobs?

English is the international language of commerce and culture; therefore TEFL teachers are in high demand. It is estimated that more than 1 billion people are learning English worldwide and demand is likely to increase.

Demand for TEFL teachers is currently high in Japan, Korea and Taiwan. The ease of finding work varies considerably according to the location.

The vast majority of TEFL teachers work overseas yet qualified TEFL teachers are still needed in the UK. However in the UK there is a lot of competition for long-term permanent posts.

What qualifications do I need?

TEFL qualifications are open to graduates in any discipline; however the following subjects may increase your chances: English, Modern European Languages, Modern Non-European Languages; Linguistics and Education.

Although TEFL is increasingly graduate-orientated, a degree is not always essential. Entry to commercial language school work is sometimes possible for those with good basic education and an excellent command of English.

What Training is desirable?

You can train for a TEFL qualification at various levels, in a large number of language schools and colleges in the UK and abroad. They vary from short introductory courses lasting only couple of days to intensive certificate courses lasting around five to six weeks.

For those who are only interested in short term TEFL work, and don’t want to make it their career, studying a shorter, often cheaper course may be the most suitable option. Most employers tend to favour courses of a minimum 100 hours, which include teaching practice. For those intending to spend a year or more teaching abroad a certificate course such as CELTA (Certificate in English Language Teaching Adults) is desirable if not essential. Some countries may require you to have Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and often up to two years general classroom experience.
See the following websites for further information on training:

- Cambridge Assessment: [www.cambridgeesol.org](http://www.cambridgeesol.org)
- Trinity College: [www.trinitycollege.co.uk](http://www.trinitycollege.co.uk)

**What will the work be like?**

Teaching abroad does not follow a typical nine-five routine, classes are often run on evenings or weekends when the students are not working or studying. Class size varies between locations ranging from four to twenty pupils depending on age. Classes are usually taught entirely in English; even at beginner level therefore knowledge of a foreign language is useful but not always essential.

The ability to entertain and dramatise are useful as lessons tend to be practical and functional rather than just concentrating on theory and grammar. You will encourage students to communicate with each other and improve their listening, reading, speaking and writing skills.

Whilst abroad you may also be expected to take part in extra curricular activities on evenings and during weekends especially if teaching on summer courses for young people.

**How much will I earn?**

Salary levels vary depending on the location, the type of employer you work for, the terms and conditions of employment, as well as your level of qualification and experience. With a reputable employer you should earn enough to get by comfortably in local terms.

Salaries vary widely between countries and across organisations. If you are teaching abroad expect to be paid around £20,000 per year. For teaching in the UK between £13,000 and £30,000. Generally the better paid jobs are available in countries such as Japan, Taiwan Korea and parts of the Middle East. Private schools may also offer higher salaries and teaching English to professionals is likely to pay more.

Although it may be tempting, do not apply for work in a particular country just because it offers high salaries. The wages may be high because the location is particularly expensive to live in. When making your applications you should carefully consider:

- The cost of living (accommodation, food, travel costs etc.) Many positions include free accommodation- your will need to check this out with your employer.
- Will you have to pay for your initial flights or will you employer?
- Will you need a work permit?
- What is the rate of national and local tax?
- How will you be paid, monthly, weekly or hourly?
- Are you guaranteed a minimum salary/number of teaching hours per month?
- Are there opportunities to work overtime?
- Does the employer pay sick leave/holiday pay?
- Will you be entitled to maternity leave?
- Does the employer cover the cost of medical insurance?
- Will you feel safe and happy living in that particular location?
- Is the country’s political and economic situation stable?
- Remember to research the Language school fully before accepting a position of employment.
Is TEFL a long term career option?

Most graduates going into TEFL will probably do so for a few years as it is a great way to work and travel. However for those really interested in the work there are opportunities to make it into a long term career moving into developing materials, managing and teaching staff or even setting up your own TEFL school.

To pursue a long term career a higher level qualification such as diploma is usually necessary, for example the Cambridge Diploma in English Language teaching to adults (DELTA). Qualifications such as this combined with at least two years experience can make you more successful in applying for more senior positions.

Where can I look for courses?

There is a wide range of courses available at different levels and costs. Courses are available at further education colleges, select universities as well as through private organisations. It is important to note that doing a course offering a Cambridge certificate (CELTA) or a Trinity certificate in TESOL will put you in a stronger position when applying for jobs abroad.

Learn Direct has a searchable database of courses in the UK:
www.learndirect.co.uk

Where can I look for job opportunities?

- **British Council:**
  [www.britishcouncil.org/teacherrecruitment.htm](http://www.britishcouncil.org/teacherrecruitment.htm)
- **Cactus TEFL:**
  [www.cactustefl.com](http://www.cactustefl.com)
- **English UK:**
  [www.englishuk.com](http://www.englishuk.com)
- **Edufind:**
  [www.jobs.edufind.com](http://www.jobs.edufind.com)
- **El Gazette:**
  [www.elgazette.com](http://www.elgazette.com)
- **Eslbase:**
  [www.eslbase.com](http://www.eslbase.com)
- **Esl café:**
  [www.eslcafe.com](http://www.eslcafe.com)
- **Hunt Esl:**
  [www.huntesl.com](http://www.huntesl.com)
- **Tefl.com:**
  [www.tefl.com](http://www.tefl.com)
- **Tefl England**
  [www.teflengland.co.uk](http://www.teflengland.co.uk)
Resource list

Websites:

- **Occupational profiles:** ‘English as a foreign language teacher’, ‘English as a second language teacher’ and ‘English for specific purposes teacher’, are available on www.prospects.ac.uk/types_of_jobs_education.htm
- **Council on International Educational Exchange:**
  Provides quality programmes and services for individuals, employers and educational institutions.
  www.ciee.org
- **European Council of International Schools (ECIS):**
  Promoting ideals and best practice in international education
  www.ecis.org
- **Guardian Educational Supplement:**
  Provides news and links about teaching English abroad.
  www.guardian.co.uk/education/tefl
- **International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL).**
  Linking, developing and supporting English language teachers worldwide.
  www.iatefl.org
- **Inlingua:**
  One of the Worlds leading language training organisations.
  www.inlingua.com
- **International House World Organisations:**
  One of the largest groups of language schools worldwide
  www.ihworld.com
- **Linguarama:**
  Provides professional language training to businesses and professional people.
  www.linguarama.com

Books available in the Careers Library

- Teaching English Abroad, Vacation Work Publication, Susan Griffiths,
- Guide to English Teaching, Modern English Publishing

Other resources:

- You may find it useful to look at our starting point sheets on ‘Careers using Languages’ and ‘Working Oversees’ both of which can be found in the Careers Library or online at www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/startingpoints
- You can find information on teaching and working abroad in general in the international work and study section of the Careers Library.
English Language Teaching

The qualifications surrounding English language teaching can be confusing. Here is an explanation of some common acronyms.

CELT A Certificate of English Language Teaching to Adults Accredited by Cambridge University.

CELTYL Certificate in Teaching English to Young Learners. Accredited by Cambridge University.

DELTA Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults Accredited by Cambridge University.

EAP English for Academic purposes i.e. University Entrance Exams.

ESP English for Specific Purposes for example Business, tourism or medicine.

ESOL English for speakers of other languages.

TEFL Teaching English as a Foreign Language (Generally for Teaching in countries where English is not spoken).

TESOL Teaching English to speakers of other languages.

TRINITY Cert TESOL Certificate of English Language Teaching to Adults Accredited by Cambridge University.
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