

Guide to...

Teaching English

to speakers of

another

language (TESOL)



INTRODUCTION

- **TEFL (EFL):** 'Teaching English as a Foreign Language', typically in the home country of learners.
- **TESL (ESL):** 'Teaching English as a Second Language', typically in English-speaking countries to non-native speakers.
- **TESOL:** 'Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages'. Often the broad field of English language teaching. The term TESOL is used within this guide.



WHY TESOL?

Consider your initial reason(s) to work in TESOL;

- Develop your teaching skills?
- Take the first step to a career as a TESOL teacher?
- Develop a deeper understanding of English language and support others in their learning?
- Earn money working/travelling abroad?
- Immerse yourself in a different culture abroad?
- Enhance your future employability by developing transferable skills?
- Develop personal attributes important to employers (e.g. independence, motivation, adaptability)?

DECISION MAKING

WHY DO YOU WANT TO TEACH ENGLISH LANGUAGE?

Think about what you want to achieve from the experience. What skills and qualities are needed to teach TESOL (see [Prospects TESOL Career Profile](#)) and do you feel confident that you possess them? Those you are teaching expect to make progress as a result of your ability to teach. You need to be confident in your English grammar and language as well as organized, adaptable and creative. Consider speaking to others who have taught TESOL or contact local language schools and ask if you could observe a lesson.

WHAT TYPE OF TEACHING CONTRACT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?

Types of contracts vary and fixed-term contracts and freelance working are common. In developing countries, some TESOL roles are advertised as volunteer positions, where you pay a fee to participant in a short-term 'volunteer work placement'.

WHERE DO YOU WANT TO TEACH?

Opportunities exist in the UK and abroad. In the UK and other English-speaking countries, opportunities may be more common in larger towns and cities when there is greater need. In non-English speaking countries, opportunities may exist in both urban and rural areas.

WHO DO YOU WANT TO TEACH?

Teaching children might involve teaching as part of: a community project; summer school; a state school; or a private school. Teaching adults might involve: young adults preparing for university; refugee and asylum seekers; or teaching business English to a company's employees.

HOW WILL YOU PREPARE FOR LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL ISSUES?

As a teacher in the UK, consider the language and culture of those you are teaching and how you might adopt your teaching style. In looking for opportunities abroad, consider how you might prepare for language barriers and culture shock in your day-to-day living. Taking a short language course or researching cultural norms can help you feel prepared before arrival.

QUALIFICATIONS

There is not a professional body that regulates TESOL qualifications worldwide.

This means:

- Some opportunities are available without a TESOL qualification.
- Various organisations offer qualifications and courses for those who are keen to take one. They can be online or in-person and be anything from a 20-hour short course to a postgraduate masters.
- Different countries have different qualification requirements. Some require a TESOL qualification, but others may require candidates to just possess a degree in any subject.

BENEFITS OF TESOL QUALIFICATIONS:

- Ability to refresh your understanding of key grammar structures in the English language.
- Enables you to develop the skills and confidence to teach effectively.
- Enhances your understanding of teaching techniques to assist learners.
- Provision of teaching materials and resources that can assist you in future roles.
- Potential to practise teaching in a classroom setting, with feedback from tutors.
- Strengthen your job applications (even if a qualification isn't necessarily required for the role).
- Networking opportunities with course peers and tutors.
- Supports your future career goals if you want to establish a career in TESOL.

TYPES OF QUALIFICATIONS

The Cambridge CELTA and Trinity CertTESOL are both centre-based intensive courses offering supervised teaching practice alongside theoretical learning for new learners. They are widely recognised in the sector. For those with TESOL experience, both providers also offer higher level diploma qualifications.

Some universities, such as Bath Spa University, offer postgraduate level qualifications.

Postgraduate qualifications will also incorporate observed teaching practice alongside theoretical learning.

- [Cambridge CELTA \(Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages\)](#)
- [Trinity CertTESOL \(Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages\)](#)
- [FindaMasters](#) – to search postgraduate university courses.

In addition, a Google search demonstrates just how many organisations offer TESOL courses!

When researching TESOL course providers, consider asking:

- Is the course accredited by an external body and if so, who accredits it?
- Are there any entry requirements for the course?
- How are you assessed? For example, does the course include actual observed teaching practice?
- Would the course be acceptable for the type of opportunity you want to apply for?
- How is the course taught (by distance learning or classroom based)?
- How many other course participants might be on the course?
- How long is the course – how many contact hours and additional independent study hours?
- Can you speak to others who have done the course?

TEACHING TESOL IN THE UK

TYPES OF OPPORTUNITIES

With increased global mobility and immigration, there is demand for English language teachers in the UK. TESOL in the UK can be broadly classified into four key areas.

FURTHER EDUCATION COLLEGES AND HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Further Education colleges often offer TESOL classes to adults. Such courses may be formal qualifications and/or government funded. Some universities run summer schools for young people on cultural exchange programmes or offer summer language schools to international students preparing for degree or masters courses.

BUSINESSES

Large multi-national businesses sometimes offer or outsource TESOL classes to international staff working in the UK. Tutoring may focus on teaching specific business language relevant to the company's sector.

PRIVATE LANGUAGE SCHOOLS

Private language schools exist in many UK cities, typically aimed at adults who might wish to: improve their level of English; prepare for English language examination (e.g. university entry); or enhance their business English.

ADULT LEARNING CENTRES

These may be regional learning providers or council services with their own adult learning teams, often offering government funded TESOL courses.

JOB SEARCHING IN THE UK

Building contacts and networks can support you in finding opportunities, but example job websites include:

- [Further Education Jobs](#)
- [University Jobs](#)
- [Eteach Schools Jobs](#)
- [English UK \(National Association for English schools\)](#) - see member directory
- [British Council Centre](#) – list of UK English language centres accredited by the British Council
- [LGJobs \(Local Government Jobs\)](#)
- [TES \(Times Education Supplement\) Jobs](#)

TEACHING TESOL ABROAD

TYPES OF OPPORTUNITIES

For an overview, [TEFL Uncovered: How to Teach Your Way Abroad by i-to-i](#) contains useful content. Teaching abroad can be broadly classified into four areas.

PRIVATE LANGUAGE SCHOOLS

Private language schools for children and young adults exist in a number of countries abroad. They are particularly common in Asian countries with an emphasis on English to boost educational prospects. Other language schools, particularly in Europe, may cater for young and older adults wishing to improve their general English and/or business English skills. Opportunities will be paid and some contracts may include accommodation and flights. Working and teaching hours vary and may involve evening or weekend work.

GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

State-funded or government schools offer young people English classes as part of their school curriculum. Opportunities are paid and some contracts may include accommodation and flights. Working and teaching is within school hours. Example schemes:

- **EPIK (SOUTH KOREA)** A graduate scheme teaching in government schools and established since 1995 and supported by the Korean Ministry of Education.

- **JET (JAPAN)** Established in 1987 and supported by the Japanese Government, JET is a graduate scheme in government schools working as an Assistant Language Teacher (ALT) to team-teach and support Japanese teachers of English teaching.
- **PAGODA PROJECTS (CHINA)** Government-sponsored programme, established in 2015, and aimed at graduates teaching in state schools.

COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Some teaching opportunities, particularly those in developing countries, may be offered as part of community based projects, either as paid or unpaid volunteer roles (for which applicants typically pay a fee). These may involve teaching children and/or adults. Opportunities are often advertised by UK organisations, with links to local projects. Take time to understand how your contribution is supporting the local community.

BRITISH COUNCIL OPPORTUNITIES

British Council teaching centres deliver English tuition to adults and young learners across the world and also run schemes for those wanting to apply for Language Assistant posts. For information: [English Language Assistant scheme](#).

JOB SEARCHING ABROAD

Building contacts and networks can support you in finding opportunities, but example job websites include:

- [EPIK Graduate Scheme \(South Korea\)](#)
- [JET Graduate Scheme \(Japan\)](#)
- [Pagoda Projects Graduate Scheme \(China\)](#)
- [Opportunity China Graduate Scheme \(China\)](#)
- [British Council English Language Assistant Scheme](#)
- [ESL Café Jobs Board](#)
- [International Association of TEFL \(IATEFL\) Jobs Board](#)
- [CIEE Teach Abroad](#)
- [AIESEC Teaching Opportunities](#)
- [i-to-i Teach and Travel](#)
- [Guardian TEFL Jobs](#)
- [TEFL](#)
- [TEFL Search](#)

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS: WORKING ABROAD

VISAS AND PASSPORTS

Visa requirements vary between countries, so check before you start applying for opportunities. For information on country immigration websites see the [Direct Gov Foreign Travel Advice](#) pages. Many countries require your passport to be valid for a minimum period of time, with UK Citizens able to check country requirements on [Direct Gov Foreign Travel Advice](#).

VACCINATIONS

You may need vaccinations for some countries. Go to [NHS Travel Vaccinations](#) webpage and check individual country requirements on [Fit for Travel NHS](#).

ACCOMMODATION AND LIVING COSTS

Typical living costs include: accommodation, bills, food, travel and spending money, as well as flights to get you to your destination. Compare UK living costs with the country you intend to work in at [Numbeo Living Database](#).

HEALTH CARE AND TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel and medical insurance is essential, but some employers may assist with insurance cover.

FINANCIAL

Check with HMRC (HM Revenue and Customs) to understand any tax or National Insurance implications while you are out of the country. You may also need to pay tax in the country you are working in or be eligible for a tax rebate at the end of your work period.

PERSONAL SAFETY

The [Foreign and Commonwealth Office \(FCO\)](#) give travel and safety advice.



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