



Your future in... **TEFL**

Introduction

TEFL can form the core of a summer job or gap year in the UK or abroad, or can be rewarding volunteer work, helping you to gain valuable skills and experience. It can also be a career in itself, teaching overseas in British Council schools, or in the UK in the Further Education and Lifelong Learning sectors.

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) generally means teaching English overseas as a foreign language. Opportunities exist all over the world to teach a range of ages and stages, such as primary school, secondary school, and in adult education, as well as specialisms such as business English.

TESOL (teaching English to speakers of other languages) and TESL (teaching English as a second language) generally refer to teaching within the UK. Sometimes the terminology is used interchangeably.

Do I need a TEFL qualification?

If you simply want a summer or gap year job it's possible to find work **without any relevant experience or qualifications**, where you'll be trained on the job. This can be an inexpensive way to broaden your horizons through travel.

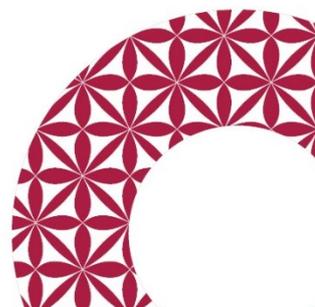
Many volunteering programmes are open to people without a qualification, and combine an element of training with practical experience. Some may pay your expenses but others will require you to pay towards the cost of your experience.

If you want more responsibility, or are intending to make a career in TEFL, then taking a course to gain a qualification will be necessary. Opportunities in the more developed countries are more likely to require a TEFL qualification.

Doing a TEFL course is great as you'll have an adventure, boost your confidence, improve your language skills and get an insight into a culture different from yours.

UK graduates tend to make attractive candidates for English teaching positions, given that they are well educated, articulate, can express themselves clearly, are confident and motivated. They have great communication skills and tend to make good English teachers.

Richard, Course Director of TEFL Iberia





Choosing a course

Less intensive (and cheaper) training courses, accredited by bodies such as the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), are offered by various organisations. Some budget TEFL courses may be unaccredited and may offer little support, so be sure you know what you're getting.

The Trinity Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TrinityCertTESOL) and the Cambridge English Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (CELTA) are the globally -recognised basic TEFL

qualifications. They are accredited by the British Council, accepted by employers worldwide and are a requirement for TEFL posts in English-speaking countries and in British Council schools. These courses have a higher cost (around £1300) and time commitment (up to 4 weeks full time or 12 weeks part-time), but are a valuable basis for a longer term TEFL experience.

Scholarships towards the cost of a course are sometimes offered by the training provider. Check the Resources section of MyCareerHub for details of some of these scholarships and funded training or work experience programmes.

Find links to TEFL course providers on our website.

Course choice checklist:

- **How much support is given by the provider?**
- **Is it accredited? By whom?**
- **Is teaching practice included as well as theory?**
- **What exactly does the course fee cover?**

Skills development

Enthusiasm, energy and the ability to motivate learners are key attributes for this role, whatever context you're working in.

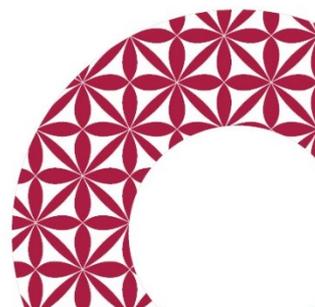
Having evidence of time management and organisational skills is important – you'll need them for lesson planning.

A thorough knowledge of English grammar is important. You may also need to share knowledge of UK lifestyle and culture.

If you are studying a course now with a view to making a career in TESOL, getting experience of working with learners while you are studying will be useful. Volunteering opportunities in the Edinburgh area are advertised by EUSA Volunteering, which also offers advice and support.

Job hunting

- Paid and overseas voluntary opportunities are advertised on MyCareerHub. These include jobs and placements with large organisations (see





Applications, below, for examples) and with smaller enterprises such as private language schools.

- Language schools offering TEFL courses often have their own jobs noticeboards – ask about this when researching course providers. Use the resources on the Careers Service website to find details of language schools.
- Casual work can often be found once you are in the country of your choice, but is difficult to arrange in advance. It's often found through networking, adverts in shops, word of mouth, or applying speculatively. Look out, too, for adverts in newspapers and magazines produced for expat communities, e.g. FUSAC www.fusac.fr/en)
- Meet TEFL recruiters on campus. Check the events section on MyCareerHub for details.

Applications

- Vacancies in language schools overseas may be advertised anytime from **October to August** depending on the school and length of contract, but we advise you to **research & apply as early as possible** to avoid disappointment.
- Language schools in the UK, and less formal *summer language camps* for children, usually advertise during Semester 2. Seasonal work here tends to be during **vacations** when many overseas students come to the UK to study English.
- *Jet Scheme (Japanese Exchange Teaching)* is advertised early in Semester 1, with a closing date of **late November**.
- *IST Plus Teach in China* closes in **mid-December** (February start) and **mid-June** (August start); the Thailand programme closes around **mid-March** (May start) and **end August** (October start).
- The *British Council* closes applications for Language Assistant posts around the end of **March** (check this date well in advance to ensure you don't miss any changes).
- *Teaching Projects Abroad* - no closing date as projects are ongoing year round, but they require 2-3 months' notice before you join a project.

Find out more

Our TEFL pages include links to all the essential sites, including those mentioned above, with detailed job profiles and advice about courses and opportunities.

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/careers/your-future/options/time-out/teach-abroad> - TEFL as a gap-year or short-term option

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/careers/your-future/options/occupations/education/tefl> - making a career in TEFL

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