



The University of Edinburgh

Careers Service

Where do I start?

Teaching English as a Foreign Language

Introduction

English language teaching (ELT) has become a huge industry worth billions globally, with many opportunities for teachers. Teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) is taken to imply teaching English overseas as a foreign language. It may also be referred to as TESOL – teaching English to speakers of other languages, when students are in the UK. Closely related to this is TESL – teaching English as a second language, which refers specifically to teaching English in the UK to immigrants for whom English isn't their first language.

TEFL can help fund travel, form the core of a summer job or gap year in the UK or abroad, or can be rewarding volunteer work. It can also provide useful teaching experience for those thinking of a career in lecturing or school-teaching. It can also be a long-term, full-time career – e.g. teaching in the FE/Lifelong Learning sector.

Finding out about...

Web

Our website links to many useful TEFL websites, including some that contain vacancies. Use the *Education/Teaching English as a Foreign Language* section at:

www.ed.ac.uk/careers/occupations

Newspapers

- *TES – Times Educational Supplement (Friday)* – has a TEFL section.

Information folders:

- Green folder (*A4 Teaching English as a Foreign/Second Language*) gives an insight into the profession, including profiles of the job, case studies, articles etc.
- Yellow folders *TEFL Courses* – introduction to the main UK qualifications and where/how to find courses, plus prospectuses and course details – including courses in Edinburgh.

Reference books (The brackets refer to which Careers Service office holds them)

- *Guide to English Language Teaching* (C & KB)
- *Teaching English Abroad* (C & KB)

Journals

- *EL Gazette (monthly)* – principal UK English language teaching newspaper with teacher training supplement and worldwide jobs section.

How to find a job

- All vacancies notified to the Careers Service can be found on MyCareerHub, accessed via our website.
- Additional hard-copy information is filed in the **Purple Teaching Abroad folder** in the blue Employment Overseas section (at our Central Area office).
- The **journals/newspapers** listed above also advertise opportunities, as do the **reference books**.
- **Language schools** which offer TEFL courses often have their own **jobs noticeboards** – ask about this when researching course providers. Details of language schools themselves can be found in the reference books and journals at the Careers Service, and through the web - see *Finding Out About ...* section above.
- **Casual work** can often be found once you are in the country of your choice, but is difficult to arrange in advance. It is often found through networking, adverts in shops, word of mouth, applying speculatively or cold-calling likely employers. Look out for adverts in newspapers/magazines produced for ex-pat communities, e.g. FUSAC (www.fusac.fr/en/).
- The **British Council** is an international organisation promoting UK educational opportunities and cultural relations and is the UK's biggest employer of qualified TEFL teachers. If you are unqualified they offer many language assistant posts too. Vacancies are advertised on their website.

- To teach for a **Charity** have a look in the blue *Voluntary Work* section – many projects are open to students and graduates, including *i-to-i International Projects*, *Teaching Projects Abroad* and *VSO*.
- **China:** there are several providers in this potentially huge market, in particular *IST Plus Ltd*, who also offer a programme in Thailand.
- **Japan: JET Scheme** – run by the Japanese government, they recruit large numbers of language assistants each year to provide support to Japanese high school teachers by giving listening and speaking practice in classrooms. Usually give a presentation on campus in Semester 1.
- **Germany:** the *Cambridge Institut* is a Munich-based language school, which also gives a presentation on campus each year in Semester 1.

Times & dates

- For those wanting to teach abroad in language schools, posts 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.
- Seasonal work in the **UK** tends to be during **vacations** when many overseas students come to the UK to study English (which means for those wanting to work overseas in language schools the vacations often aren't the best time). Language schools and less formal *summer language camps* for children recruit through *MyCareerHub* during **Semester 2**.
- *Jet Scheme* is advertised during the autumn term with a closing date of **late November**.
- *IST Plus Teach* in China closes in **mid-December**; the Thailand programme closes around **Easter**.
- The many voluntary teaching programmes often don't have closing dates but are full 'when they are full' so again, apply early!
- *Teaching Projects Abroad* – no closing date as projects are ongoing year round, but they require 2-3 months notice before you join a project.
- *The British Council* recruits on an ongoing basis for qualified teachers, as/when vacancies occur. Language Assistant posts have a closing date of **30 March** (but you are advised to check this well in advance).

Considerations

- **Who would you like to teach?**

Opportunities exist to teach a range of ages and stages, such as primary school, secondary school, college/university, adult education, as well as specialisms, e.g. business English.

- **Where would you like to teach?**

Although fewer, there are opportunities in the UK as well as overseas. If you want to go abroad, as a rough 'rule of thumb', the more developed the country the greater the requirement for formal TEFL qualifications.

- **What role/level of responsibility do you want?**

You may want to be a class teacher, but if you prefer to work as a language assistant under the direction of a local teacher, a TEFL qualification may not be necessary.

- **Can you afford it?**

Both the financial expense (up to £1300) and time (up to 4 weeks F/T; 12 weeks P/T) of a TEFL certificate are considerable. Equally, can you afford not to – will you be reliant on TEFL as a way to earn money? Are you considering a location where qualifications will be necessary?

- **How long-term is it?**

Are you hoping for several years of 'TEFLing' – or even a career – or is it simply a summer or gap-year activity? This may influence how much you are willing to invest in training.

Remember - If you need any help, just ask at the helpdesk. You can also book an appointment with a Careers Consultant to discuss options.

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