Considering… Teaching English as a Foreign Language

Introduction
Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) involves working with learners whose first or main language is not English, either in the UK or overseas. The term TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) may be used when the learners are living in the UK.

Is this the right sector for me?
- Think about the personal qualities and skills needed to teach, e.g. good communication skills, patience, creativity, etc. Do you possess these? How can you improve or develop these? How is your own spelling, punctuation and grammar? Are you interested in helping people understand the culture of an English speaking country, as well as its language?
- Consider your motivation. Is it to provide a means of earning a living while travelling or are you considering this as a longer term career? (This will affect the type of qualification needed).

Researching the sector
- What are the typical work activities? What would be your responsibilities? Useful websites include [www.prospects.ac.uk/english_as_a_foreign_language_teacher_job_description.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/english_as_a_foreign_language_teacher_job_description.htm) and [https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/planning/jobprofiles/Pages/eflteacher.aspx](https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/planning/jobprofiles/Pages/eflteacher.aspx)
- Attend Careers events on campus about education and teaching [www.york.ac.uk/careers/events](http://www.york.ac.uk/careers/events)
- Talk to current practitioners to find out more. Think about what parts of the job would appeal to you and which may not.

Work experience and developing skills
- Voluntary work as a classroom assistant in this country may be a useful way to build relevant experience. York Students in Schools (YSIS) is a volunteer programme that places York students into local schools for half a day a week during a term [www.york.ac.uk/careers/ysis](http://www.york.ac.uk/careers/ysis). Alternatively, try contacting your own old school/college or schools in your home area for experience during vacations
- Private language schools may also take on assistants during their summer season to help with general activities
- Any contact with people whose first language is not English is valuable, as is an awareness of different cultures.

Note: some internships offered in this sector may be unpaid. Before starting an internship you should be clear about the length of the internship, pay and conditions, what you will be expected to do, and what you will gain from the experience.

Routes into the sector
- If you want to teach on a short-term basis, a short course (e.g. weekend or distance learning), may be enough. If you want to teach for a year or more, a certificate course may be more appropriate. For a longer term career a diploma or MA is necessary. The country or type of organisation you wish to teach in will also be important when deciding what qualification to aim for. See [http://www.trinitycollege.com](http://www.trinitycollege.com), [www.cambridgeenglish.org/teaching-english/](http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/teaching-english/) or [www.britishcouncil.org](http://www.britishcouncil.org) for lists of recognised courses and providers. The Trinity College TESOL and the Cambridge CELTA courses can be studied full or part time in the UK or in many other countries. There are also Cambridge and Trinity qualifications designed specifically for teaching children.
The Centre for English Language Teaching (CELT) offers the Trinity College London accredited Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages in June and September, and offers discounted rates to University of York students.

Look at the range of opportunities abroad. You might consider schemes such as the British Council Language Assistant programme [www.britishcouncil.org/language-assistants](http://www.britishcouncil.org/language-assistants) or the JET programme [www.jet-uk.org](http://www.jet-uk.org) amongst others. You can research other opportunities using websites such as [www.tefltime.com](http://www.tefltime.com), [www.eslemployment.com](http://www.eslemployment.com), [www.onlinetefl.com](http://www.onlinetefl.com) or the ELGazette [www.elgazette.com](http://www.elgazette.com). [www.TEFL.com](http://www.TEFL.com) has a large database and also publishes a ‘blacklist’. Rates of pay and conditions vary from country to country.

Find out all you can about potential employers. Use our checklist at the end of this information sheet.

Opportunities for giving private tuition may exist and can be a way of supplementing income.

Check the deadlines of major employers, e.g. JET deadline is November for travel in the following August.

If you want to teach in this country there are opportunities in private language schools (who would normally require the CELTA or TESOL qualifications – often at Diploma level). Work can be seasonal.

Colleges of further education or adult/community education employ teachers for speakers of other languages, i.e. for people who live/work in this country, but for whom English is not their first language, e.g. migrant workers; asylum seekers; etc. Additional qualifications are usually needed – e.g. Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills status and Level 4/5 subject specialism. For further information and website links see [https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/planning/jobprofiles/Pages/skillsforlifeteacher.aspx](https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/planning/jobprofiles/Pages/skillsforlifeteacher.aspx) - Skills for Life Teacher.

Useful resources

**Reference books and journals in Careers**

- Teaching English Abroad – Susan Griffiths
- TEFL Uncovered – Jenkin/Scally
- International work & study reference books
- Gap year reference books

**Careers websites**

- [Job sectors](http://www.york.ac.uk/careers/sectors) pages (introductory information about working in the sector, including training, employment and useful links) – [www.york.ac.uk/careers/sectors](http://www.york.ac.uk/careers/sectors) and select ‘Education - teaching’
- York Profiles (search Education under the Job sector heading) – [www.york.ac.uk/careers/profiles](http://www.york.ac.uk/careers/profiles)
- [www.gvi.co.uk/volunteer-abroad](http://www.gvi.co.uk/volunteer-abroad) - examples of voluntary opportunities abroad
- [www.goabroad.com/teach-abroad](http://www.goabroad.com/teach-abroad) - examples of organisations with many different opportunities
- [www.teachingenglish.org.uk](http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk) - lots of information, including teaching resources
- [www.i-to-i.com](http://www.i-to-i.com) - voluntary opportunities
- [www.iatefl.org](http://www.iatefl.org) – International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language
- [http://teflsearch.com](http://teflsearch.com) - TEFL job board
- [http://teflgraduate.com](http://teflgraduate.com) - Courses and jobs board

**Social media**


**Teaching English abroad checklist:** (issues to consider when applying for jobs/schemes, particularly overseas)
Qualifications
- What qualifications should you acquire before leaving?
- Will those qualifications be ‘fit for purpose’? Check that qualifications offered by an organisation / school will give you the necessary skills. Will they give you the flexibility to change employers should you want?

Personal:
- Are you confident in your level of English and able to explain its structure?
- Are you resilient and culturally adaptable?
- Are you organised, good at planning?
- Are you confident with a range of people and age groups?

Conditions and costs
- What expenses (travel, accommodation, meals, etc) will be paid by the organisation and what by you? Are there any ‘hidden costs’ (e.g. cost of compulsory training prior to departure, etc)?
- What sort of insurance is required and is it included in the scheme?
- What are the arrangements for health care and are there costs involved?
- What will your pay be?

Support structure
- What sort of support will be available to you once you are in post? For resolving practical / domestic issues? For providing teaching support, materials, advice etc?
- Will there be a regional / local representative who you can contact with any problems?
- Will you be the only TEFL teacher in the area or will there be others nearby?
- What support / help is there in the case of an emergency?

Surroundings
- What sort of school(s) will you be teaching in? How big / small is the school? What age groups attend? Where is the school based? In a small town / village or a city / large town?
- What will your duties be? Are there compulsory extra-curricular duties (such as running an English club, etc)?
- Where will you live? Will you be living alone or sharing accommodation?

Extras:
- Do you get any spare time and a chance to travel, socialise and experience the country’s culture? Are there organised activities or do you have to arrange activities yourself?

Please note: The websites listed here are not intended to represent a comprehensive list. Careers cannot be held responsible for the content of external websites.

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