TEACHING ENGLISH ABROAD

WHAT QUALIFICATIONS DO YOU NEED?

If you are planning to teach English abroad, you should be aware that qualifications and preparation vary widely. In some cases, your BA in English is sufficient, but in other cases, employers may require additional training, such as completion of a TESOL certificate (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages -- also referred to as a TESL, TEFL, or ESL certification) or a master's degree in TESOL, English, linguistics, or a related area of study. Qualifications will be different in different areas of the world, and they will also vary by the type of institution. For example, some private language academies require less preparation, while colleges, universities, and international schools will usually require more. Market trends will also determine what a potential employer will ask of a competitive applicant.

A MATESOL degree (Master's in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) is the best preparation, and if you are planning to establish a career teaching abroad, this is the most sensible route. The UW English Department offers a two year MATESOL program, as do other universities. Click here to learn how to prepare for making application to a MATESOL program while you're still an undergraduate.

If you are hoping to teach abroad for just a few years while you travel, however, you can often secure a job without the master's degree. Below is a list of local training programs that offer TESOL courses, certificates, and degrees.

Experience in teaching or tutoring English Language Learners (ELL) is also very helpful. If you have an opportunity to tutor ELL students, intern in a classroom, volunteer at a community organization, or work at one of the local private language academies, you will strengthen your application.

Some places to begin to gain experience are volunteer opportunities with the UW International and English Language Programs (housed on the 13th floor of the UW Tower, but with classes held across campus), with the UW's Language Exchange Program, with English language programs at most local community colleges, and with many public K-12 schools. There are also many private language schools and academies where undergraduates are sometimes employed as tutors or teachers (do an internet search for "esl classes seattle"). In addition, there may be volunteer opportunities with ESL courses and resources offered by local non profit and community organizations such as Casa Latina, El Centro de la Raza, the Refugee Women’s Alliance, the Seattle Public Library, the YMCA, The Literacy Source, the Saint James ESL Program, Horn of Africa Services, University Presbyterian ESL Program, and others.

GEOGRAPHY MATTERS.

In some regions, there are many teaching jobs, while in other areas there are very few. Salaries also range widely. A third consideration is the availability of work visas in a particular country. In general, jobs are plentiful in Asia and in some parts of the Middle East, whereas paid jobs in Western Europe, Africa, and Latin America are relatively sparse.

In the case of Europe (especially Western Europe), a work visa can be difficult to secure. In addition, many Europeans already speak English, so there is less demand for English teachers from abroad. The most commonly available jobs will be with private language academies, especially those geared for business people.

Paying jobs in Africa, Eastern Europe, and Latin America are scarce owing to economic factors. There are sometimes jobs in major cities, but far fewer in rural areas outside international non profit opportunities through such organizations as the Peace Corps or World Teach, or through educational/grant organizations
such as the Fulbright English Teaching Fellowships, the English Language Fellows Program with the U.S. Department of State, and other international and governmental fellowship organizations.

There are a number structured programs that recruit new graduates for teaching positions abroad, and many provide orientations, training, and other support. Here is a sample (please note that the UW does not endorse particular programs):

Here is a great place for students to subscribe to teaching English abroad [https://www.ciee.org/go-abroad/work/teach-english-abroad/programs](https://www.ciee.org/go-abroad/work/teach-english-abroad/programs)

- Japanese Exchange and Teaching Programme (JET Programme)
- English Program in Korea (EPIK)
- Hess International Education Organization
- Princeton In Asia
- AIPT Teach International
- American-Scandinavian Foundation
- Czech Republic Ministry of Education
- Chilean Ministry of Education's "English Opens Doors" program
- AIPT Teach Lebanon
- Peace Corps
- LanguageCorps - 23 locations worldwide
- World Teach
- English Language Fellows Program with the U.S. Department of State
- Central European Teaching Program
- AEON Japan
- French Cultural Exchange through the French Ministry of Education
- Serendipity Russia Program
- Austrian-American Educational Commission

These positions typically cover living expenses and often offer a modest stipend. As you investigate programs, make a note of application deadlines. Whenever possible, make contact with alumni of these programs to ask them about their experiences. You may be able to connect with some of them through the UW Career Center.

**INFORMATIONAL RESOURCES**


- [Transitions Abroad](#): Available from many libraries and international newsstands: this magazine often carries articles on the TEFL job market as well as on other topics relating to overseas work, life and travel. The January/February issue each year concentrates on TEFL.

- [Dave's ESL Café](#): Run by Dave Sperling, this is the biggest and best website for EFL teachers. The Job Center section contains many useful pages including: Jobs Offered, Job Discussion Forum, Job Information Journal and Teacher Training Discussion Forum.

- [TeachAbroad.com](#): Directory for teaching positions around the world -- educational opportunities, paid and volunteer international teaching positions, searchable by country.

- [ESL.net](#): Distributor of ESL (English as a Second Language), GED, and foreign language training software, videos, audio, handheld translation devices, and textbooks. They also have a list of ESL resources.

- [Teaching English in Asia](#): List of resources and opportunities in Asia.

- [GoOverseas](#): Lists ELL/ESL teaching jobs and other resources.

**SOME LOCAL TRAINING PROGRAMS**

- [University of Washington MATESOL Program](#)
Please note: This information is a guide. It is not a complete list nor is it a listing of endorsed or recommended programs. Please be sure to be thorough in your research before committing yourself to any program.