

# Career Development Centre, NUI Maynooth

Information Sheet:

## TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language)

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) is teaching English to students whose first language is not English. This can also be called TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) or ELT (English Language Teaching). As an English speaker, you can take a training course enabling you to teach English to speakers of other languages. There are 2 main types of training, each with advantages over the other:

### **Recognised TEFL Qualifications:**

#### **"I want to be able to work as a TEFL teacher in a school in Ireland & abroad."**

ACELS is the organisation which coordinates and accredits English language services in Ireland. In other words, numerous specialised schools throughout Ireland exist to deliver English language training to speakers of other languages, and if you wish to work in one of these schools as a TEFL teacher, then you must complete the appropriate training and gain an ELT certificate recognised by ACELS. These training courses are called 'CELT courses.' There are currently (1/Nov/13) 16 CELT course providers in Ireland. View the list here: <http://acels.ie/SchoolList1.aspx>

**Cost?** Prices vary between schools (see link above), and range between €900 - €1500

### **Details of ACELS recognised courses:**

No less than 4 weeks (usually 5 in practice), with no less than 120 hours of study for each trainee (i.e. 100 hours of course input, 20 hours of reflective learning). Training should involve least 6 hours of classroom practice per trainee as well as 6 hours of observation of professional teachers. 35 hours are dedicated to language analysis. If applicable, check with the individual course providers to see if they run part time programmes. Interested to see what's on the course? Details of course content can be found here: <http://www.acels.ie/docs/CELTANNEX1.doc>

What is 'CELTA', and is it different to 'CELT'? While reading about TEFL courses you will likely see references to this: Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults. It differs only slightly to CELT: <http://alphatefl.com/celt-celta/>

### **Application process:**

Apply directly to the school / course provider you wish to enrol with. It is your responsibility to check all necessary details before you accept a place on a programme. Some course providers may enforce a minimum age limit of 20 years of age.

### **Seeking employment:**

Same as any other job search: 1). Identify a list of potential employers (e.g. <http://www.acels.ie/search.htm> or a school outside of Ireland), 2). Create a tailored CV and cover letter, 3). Send your CV and cover letter to your target employer. Ask in the Career Development Centre for help with your application!

The minimum criteria needed to gain employment:

- 1). Hold a minimum of a level 7 qualification
- 2). Hold an ELT (CELT / CELTA) Certificate.

NOTE: **If you are a PME student, or a qualified teacher** you are eligible to undertake a slightly different course: "Preparatory ELT Qualification: Certificate in English Language Teaching to Secondary Level Students (awarded to State Qualified Teachers)." Full details are found here: <http://www.acels.ie/acelselt.htm#2> A list of course providers are found here: <http://acels.ie/SchoolList2.aspx>

For any further information visit this link: <http://www.acels.ie/acelselt.htm> You may also need to phone the school or ACELS directly.

### **ACELS Advantages:**

- More involved training course, which includes practice.
- Government recognised certificate which allows you to work in Ireland
- ACELS certificates travel well and are internationally recognised

### **ACELS Disadvantages:**

- Takes more time to complete (up to 5 weeks)
- Is more expensive than other TEFL options
- Training providers offer no help finding work upon completion of the course.

### **Private TEFL training providers.**

#### **"I want to go abroad and work as a TEFL teacher."**

As an alternative to the ACELS accredited training courses, which enable you to teach English to speakers of other languages in recognised schools in Ireland, there are numerous private organisations that exist to train people to teach English to speakers of other languages in order to gain work in schools outside of Ireland (eg in countries where English is not the native language). A quick google search for "TEFL" will reveal a few million hits for these types of companies, consisting mostly of ads for TEFL courses being offered by private training providers. Therefore, choosing between them can be daunting!

### **What are these companies and what are their TEFL certificates/courses like?**

These are businesses which you pay to teach you how to 'teach English as a foreign language'. The certificates that you gain from completing one of these courses is not ACELS accredited, so you cannot work in recognised school in Ireland.

However, these certificates can help you gain work abroad. It is worth considering one of these certificates if you intend to go abroad and work as a TEFL teacher. Each training company runs their own course, and so they vary greatly.

Most, however do offer a choice of courses ranging from 20hours – 140hours in length. The longer the course, the more training you get, therefore the more attractive you would appear to an employer (eg a school abroad). A large portion of each of these courses is delivered online, and so do not usually contain any integrated teaching practice.

**Cost?** Prices vary greatly, but guide figures are €150 - €400. The price is usually related to the length (hours) of the course on offer, and the additional benefits that company can offer (eg an interview with an employer, access to job opportunities, useful travel/destination information, 'get-home-quick' help etc).

### There are many TEFL providers. How do I pick a good one?

Choosing a suitable company can prove to be a tricky task! Initially, you must decide which country you wish to work in. Most companies have connections in a number of countries so that they can help you find an employer. Eg. If you wish to work in south America, you must find a TEFL training provider that has contacts with, e.g. schools in south America. Do your research first! Phone the company, ask them about their TEFL teacher training course(s). Example questions to ask these companies:

- Is there any teaching practice included in their course(s)?
- Do they have contact/relations/networks with employers (eg. Schools / institutions / universities) and can you have access to that information?
- After finishing the course, is it up to you to find your own work, or, what help do they offer in securing a job?
- Do they guarantee you an interview in a country of your choice?
- What support structures are in place for you going abroad using their qualification?

Advantages:

- Shorter than ACELS courses
- Cheaper than ACELS course
- Can help you find work, set you up with an interview abroad
- Can provide additional supports for TEFL workers

Disadvantages:

- Shorter than ACELS courses
- No placement
- No official recognition of the certificate (eg can't work in Ireland)
- Beware of scams!

### General information:

Remember, when going abroad you don't always need an ACELS recognised CELT qualification, or a certificate from a private training provider. It can even happen that you may land a job entirely on the basis that you are a native English speaker. However, it does help to have one, and employers are increasingly looking for TEFL teachers with as

much training as they can get. You can source your own employment through the internet or cold calling an employer.

**Pay:** It is not possible to include a guide on TEFL pay scales in this information sheet as pay varies dramatically between country and employer. However, it is possible for people to make a living wage and accumulate modest savings after being abroad working as a TEFL teacher. Be aware that some countries generally pay higher than others. Keep this in mind if you are considering which TEFL provider to go with. Do your research! Ask the training provider if they are taking a cut of your pay if they set you up with an interview in a school! If you think that low pay is on offer relative to the local economy, you may be wise to look elsewhere.

See below for a sample list of some well know TEFL providers:

<http://www.onlinetefl.com/>

<http://www.i-to-i.com/>

<http://www.teflireland.com/>

<http://www.cactustefl.com/>

### Some additional, 3<sup>rd</sup> party resources that are worth looking at if considering TEFL:

Find possible employers, learn about different locations, find out what it's like to work as a TEFL teacher, and more by using the following websites:

Search for English Language courses in the country you are looking for. Keep in mind that this database is not comprehensive, so there may be more employers in your search location that don't show up on this search: <http://eaquals.org/network/>

ESL Cafe: <http://www.eslcafe.com/>

This is resource for people who are abroad teaching English, or who are thinking about it. Search for jobs, TEFL resources, read up on news and events from areas you may consider working, read reviews of employers in particular areas. Visit the discussion forum tabs for further information and lots of opinion. Note: as with any internet forum, do not make a decision based on advice from the internet unless you fully research it yourself and are fully prepared to take responsibility for any subsequent actions you take.

<http://www.eslbase.com/>

Country guides, TEFL resources, find jobs and more

<http://www.eslteachersboard.com/>

Same type of website as the above 2: Country guides, TEFL resources, find jobs, advice and guidance and more

TEFL jobs board. <http://www.onlinetefl.com/tefl-jobs-abroad/tefl-jobs-board/>

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