

CERTESL: English Language Teacher Qualifications Manual

What You Need to Know for Employment in Canada and Abroad

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Overview of CERTESL's Professional Recognition Status

Welcome to the CERTESL program (Certificate in Teaching English as a Second Language), and to this special information guide for students and prospective applicants interested in English language teaching careers. Please read this manual carefully in order to make sure that you choose a training path that meets your own professional needs.

The University of Saskatchewan originally established CERTESL in order to meet the training needs of people seeking reputable distance-delivered training for careers in the English language teaching field. The TESL professional organizations that provide teacher accreditation services in Canada (TESL Canada, TESL Ontario, and TESL Saskatchewan) recognize CERTESL as a training program that meets or exceeds their standards. However, you may need to pursue particular paths of study within CERTESL in order to ensure that you are qualified to teach ESL in particular jurisdictions.

English language teacher credentialing is a complex topic, in no small part because of the variety of terms and their differing shades of meanings across our large and diverse country. Some provinces use the term “professional certification” with regard to professional adult and Kindergarten to grade 12 (K-12) teacher credentialing. Others reserve the term “certification” for K-12 school systems and apply “professional accreditation” to credentialing in the adult education market. The term “professional licensure” is used only with reference to K-12 credentialing requirements established by law or provincial government regulations in most provinces for all K-12 teachers, although “professional certification” is also used in some provinces for the same concept.

This manual begins with an overview of CERTESL in relation to the teaching of children and teens within publicly-mandated school systems in Canada, proceeds to an overview of TESL Canada’s three levels of certification, then continues through the accreditation/certification standards of Ontario (TESL Ontario and the Ontario College of Teachers, OCT), and Saskatchewan (TESL Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Professional Teachers Registration Board, SPTRB). We then conclude with an overview of the international TEFL context.

Ability to Teach in Canada Without a Bachelor’s Degree

All of the Canada-based teacher accreditation standards discussed below require that accreditation applicants have completed not only TESL training, but also a university degree. If you wish to obtain a paid English language instructional position in Canada but do not have a degree, then you will generally be limited to using your skills as a tutor or educational assistant. TESL Saskatchewan has established a recommended standard for ESL/EAL tutors and educational assistants, discussed in the TESL Saskatchewan section below. However, the recommended standard includes a degree, and such standards have not been as formally established in other provinces.

A small number of people who do not have university degrees may be found in adult teaching positions in Canada, but usually these people will have either entered the field before formal accreditation standards were established, or are working in rural college locations where no instructors who have university degrees and appropriate skills in TESL are available.

EAL Credentialing for Elementary and Secondary Schools in Canada

If you are interested in teaching EAL (English as an Additional Language) or ELD (English Language Development or English as a Second Dialect) as the teacher in charge of classes from pre-K-12, in most cases you will be seeking positions in schools that are governed by provincial teacher licensure/certification regulations.

Throughout Canada, a permanent teaching certificate or license for K-12 teachers usually requires completion of a B.Ed. degree or a postgraduate program in Education. CERTESL constitutes neither a B.Ed. nor a postgraduate diploma or degree in Education.

In Saskatchewan, CERTESL completed after a B.Ed. can count towards an Additional Qualification Certificate as a TEAL specialist but is gradually being replaced by the new Post-Degree Certificate in EAL Education (PDCEAL) for K-12 purposes (see the Saskatchewan section for details). If you do not yet have a provincial K-12 teaching license or certificate, but want to teach the English language to school-aged children or teens in a province other than Saskatchewan or Ontario, we hope that you enjoy your Education degree or postgraduate diploma studies and encourage you to pursue the PDCEAL after you have completed these requirements.

Because CERTESL or PDCEAL courses can help you in your K-12 teaching of EAL, some school boards in several provinces will allow teachers educational leave or tuition funding to pursue CERTESL or PDCEAL courses. For tuition funding or educational leave purposes, make sure you consult your employing school board about conditions for approval of funding or educational leave before you make any program application decisions. In order to receive funding, you may need to enroll only in degree-stream courses. The remaining non-degree credit courses (TESL 32, TESL 36, and TESL 43) are expected to be re-categorized Spring 2019; however, these particular courses are adult-oriented, and the PDCEAL provides more suitable alternatives for working with learners of the English language placed in pre-K-12 classrooms.

Prospective CERTESL students who hold or plan to complete B.Ed. degrees and wish to teach EAL in Saskatchewan's K-12 context should read the Saskatchewan K-12 section of this manual and consult the CERTESL academic coordinator or the PDCEAL academic program lead before choosing a training path. Depending on your exact credentials and career plan, you may be advised to register as a student in the PDCEAL rather than in CERTESL. The two programs overlap, but the PDCEAL is better-tailored to K-12 teaching needs in Saskatchewan, whereas CERTESL is somewhat better-oriented to other teaching contexts.

If you want to teach K-12 ESL in Ontario's public or Catholic school systems, please visit www.oct.ca for information about the ESL I, II and Specialist courses mandated by the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) as a K-12 Additional Qualification. OCT will consider recognition of degree-stream TESL curriculum courses taken outside of Ontario. If you haven't started your training yet, you may find it more efficient to go straight into OCT's officially mandated program. If you would prefer to start your training at a distance through the University of Saskatchewan, you definitely need to discuss your needs with an OCT advisor to ensure your course choices will be acceptable to OCT. The CERTESL or PDCEAL programs will make detailed course syllabi available to OCT on request.

K-12 teachers from other provinces who wish to earn Additional Qualification credit through distance-delivered TESL courses should consult their own K-12 teacher certification service as well as the CERTESL Academic Coordinator before enrolling in CERTESL.

If you decide to take CERTESL courses concurrently with your Education degree or postgraduate studies in Education, you may want to shorten the length of your postsecondary study time by getting some of your CERTESL courses counted towards your degree. On the other hand, you may want to qualify for an Additional Qualification Certificate in EAL Education in order to move upwards in your province's pay grid for K-12 teachers. For Additional Qualification purposes, your TESL coursework would need to be done in addition to, rather than as part of, your degree. Therefore, please consult your degree program's academic advisor in advance to find out whether any degree-credit CERTESL courses can be recognized for inclusion in your degree program by the university that will grant your degree. If they cannot be accepted as part of your degree, consult your provincial K-12 certification or licensure body to determine whether they can be accepted as part of an Additional Qualification.

If you would like the option of working in a K-12 school as an educational assistant rather than as a classroom teacher, you may find CERTESL useful without a degree. Check with the school board that may employ you with regard to preferred qualifications. If you plan to work as an educational assistant in Saskatchewan, refer to the Saskatchewan section of this manual relevant to education assistants and tutors.

Adult Credentialing in Canada

No common standard for adult educators in any field is mandated across Canada, and there are even large variations within provincial boundaries. However, TESL educators in Canada are usually expected to meet some basic requirements, and it is becoming much more common for adult English language training programs in Canada to look to TESL Canada (www.tesl.ca), TESL Saskatchewan (teslsask.com) or TESL Ontario (www.teslontario.org) for assurance of teaching standards.

In many programs and locations, mandatory qualifications have been established. For instance, to teach in most LINC (adult Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada) programs in Ontario, teachers must qualify for TESL Ontario accreditation or TESL Canada Standard 2 certification or the program may lose its eligibility for federal funding. In Saskatchewan, provincially-funded programs have needed to require either TESL Saskatchewan accreditation or TESL Canada certification eligibility for ESL classroom teachers since March 2016. Federally funded programs in other parts of Canada are generally under increasing pressure to meet at least TESL Canada Standard 1 expectations, and as skill needs increase, many have begun to look for TESL Canada Standard 2. Therefore, a prospective teacher who does not meet these standards is unlikely to be hired.

In order to teach in private or college-based institutions that have been accredited by Languages Canada (the national association of public and private institutions that provide language training outside of LINC, found online at www.languagescanada.ca), teachers need to have training that at minimum matches the expectations of TESL Canada or one of the provincial accreditation bodies. If teachers are not qualified in the eyes of Languages Canada, their employing institution will be in danger of losing its Languages Canada accreditation and hence many of its students. Again, someone who does not meet these standards is unlikely to be hired.

In general, you must have a university degree in order to find nontechnical adult teaching positions in Canada. In order to qualify for certification or accreditation by any TESL professional association, both a degree and reputable TESL training are required. Some non-degreed CERTESL graduates are working effectively in the ESL field in Canada, but usually they have roles as educational assistants, tutors, or settlement workers rather than as teachers in charge of ESL classrooms, or already had tenure in teaching positions when standards changed.

In general, a degree attests to a range of academic skills and orientations that are needed in a teaching environment. Success in earning a degree really does contribute to the ability to teach effectively, regardless of the degree type, although, of course, a degree in either Education or Linguistics has particular advantages.

On the rare occasions when CERTESL has received complaints about the skills of graduates working in Canadian locations, we have usually discovered that these graduates are non-degreed people who have been hired for challenging classroom teaching positions by employers who have chosen not to treat a university degree as a job requirement. Non-degreed CERTESL graduates who are filling such positions effectively are usually exceptional individuals who took on the positions when no other credible candidates were available, and in many cases have completed at least foundational coursework in Education. As mentioned previously, these individuals should be taken as exceptions rather than examples of potential career opportunities.

If English is not your first language and you wish to seek accreditation or certification as English language teachers in Canada, you should expect to provide proof of appropriate levels of English language proficiency from an accepted testing body in support of accreditation or certification applications. The professional association may

expect a higher level of English language skill than is required for initial entry into a degree or TESL training program.

CERTESL for TESL Canada Certification

TESL Canada certifies many teachers who plan to teach ESL in adult programs in Canada. It is the standard most commonly expected by adult ESL programs in B.C., Alberta, Manitoba, and the Atlantic provinces, and it is looked on favourably by employers in other provinces with the exception of Ontario. Even in Ontario, some adult programs that belong to Languages Canada will accept applicants who qualify for TESL Canada certification at either the Standard 1 or 2 levels, although some expect TESL Ontario credentials. Complete information about the TESL Canada certification standards is online at www.tesl.ca

In addition to appropriate TESL training, a TESL Canada certification candidate must be able to demonstrate completion of at least a three-year university degree as defined in Canada. Candidates who are not first-language speaker of English must also provide proof of appropriate English language proficiency. At the time of writing, this proof must consist of either successful completion of at least three years of high school in an English-language institution with a minimum of 70% in Grade 12 English; completion of an undergraduate degree from a university accepted by TESL Canada as effectively using English as the medium of instruction; a score of at least 7.0 in the IELTS-Academic, with at least 7.0 in each skill area; or a score of at least 101 in the TOEFL-ibT, with a minimum of 23 in Listening, 24 in Reading, 27 in Speaking, and 27 in Writing.

Each TESL Canada Standard has Interim and Permanent categories, distinguished by documented successful adult ESL classroom teaching experience. For this reason, whenever you have a paid adult ESL teaching position, **please document your experiential hours carefully**. If you leave a position, ask your supervisor to prepare a formal letter stating the number of total hours you were the teacher in charge of ESL or EFL classrooms of at least five adult students. Also ensure that your supervisors carry out periodic performance reviews, and keep signed copies of these in your own files.

Standard 1 Certification

TESL Canada Standard 1 is an entry level certification and as such, its expectations are not exceptionally high. A TESL Canada certification candidate is eligible for Standard 1 accreditation if they have completed a program of training that TESL Canada has explicitly approved. Such a program must be at least 120 hours in length (equivalent to no more than three one-term university courses, but not necessarily delivered at a university degree-credit level of depth and rigor), incorporating at least 100 academic contact hours of formal training (in face-to-face mode, this does not include assignment or reading time) and a supervised adult teaching practicum of at least 20 hours (10 teaching, 10 observation). Naturally, many of the most reputable ESL delivery sites prefer to hire teachers who have more extensive qualifications even though Standard 1 may be the minimum requirement that a funding agency or Languages Canada will enforce.

A candidate may be certified on an Interim basis at the Standard 1 level without paid teaching experience. Permanent Standard 1 status requires documentation of at least 1000 hours of successful adult ESL classroom teaching.

CERTESL's core program provides 220 academic contact hours and 30 supervised practicum hours with 20 hours of observation and 10 hours of supervised teaching, a total of 250 training hours. This constitutes more than double the basic TESL Canada Professional Standard 1 requirements, and is delivered at a degree-credit level of depth and rigor. CERTESL graduates must include TESL 442.3 (Supervised Practicum) in their program and must carry it out in an adult ESL/EFL setting, unless they can document at least 1000 hours of successful adult ESL teaching experience.

In such cases, CERTESL students may receive special permission to complete TESL 43 – Professional Project as their final or “capstone” course rather than TESL 442.3 – Supervised Practicum.

Standard 2 Certification

A CERTESL graduate must take one additional course (40 academic contact hours) and the Practicum Additional Hours Module, comprised of 10 guided observation and 10 supervised practice teaching hours, to qualify for TESL Canada’s Standard 2 level of certification. Standard 2 requires 250 academic contact hours, 30 guided observation hours, and 20 supervised practice teaching hours.

Candidates for Standard 2 may select their additional CERTESL course from among TESL 32 – Materials and Assessment, 36 – Literacy in TESL/TESD, and 43 – Professional Project. They may also choose to complete a relevant seventh course within another program or relevant specialization; a degree credit course in Linguistics that is related directly to teaching needs, for instance, may be accepted as the seventh course for Standard 2. If you believe you have completed both CERTESL’s core program and a non-CERTESL course that may qualify you for Standard 2, contact the CERTESL Academic Coordinator for advising and a letter of support.

If you already have TESL Ontario accreditation, you can obtain TESL Canada Standard 2 certification through a discounted and more streamlined process than other Standard 2 applicants must follow. Therefore, if you live in Ontario but are planning to move to another province, you should apply for TESL Ontario accreditation first and apply for TESL Canada Standard 2 certification only after you have received your TESL Ontario accreditation document.

Interim Standard 2 certification may be awarded without paid teaching experience. Permanent Standard 2 status requires at least 1500 hours of successful relevant paid experience, of which at least 1000 hours must be adult ESL classroom teaching and the rest may be made up of adult ESL classroom teaching, ESL program administration, teacher training, or other senior roles in the field.

Standard 3 Certification

TESL Canada Professional Standard 3 status requires completion of foundational theoretical and methodological content at least equivalent to Standard 1, with a preference for Standard 2, plus a Master’s degree that is clearly relevant to ESL instruction. A Standard 2 adult practicum is also an expectation.

Interim Standard 3 certification may be awarded without paid teaching experience. Permanent Standard 3 status requires at least 2000 hours of successful relevant paid experience, of which at least 1000 hours must be adult ESL classroom teaching and the rest may consist of adult ESL classroom teaching, ESL program administration, teacher training, or other senior roles in the field.

CERTESL is not a Master’s program, so its graduates qualify for Standard 3 only if they have also completed a Master’s in the TESL field.

TESL Canada Practicum Requirements

TESL Canada certification normally requires that candidates carry out a supervised practicum within an approved training program. The practicum must meet specified minimum standards and take place in an adult ESL education setting.

To meet current TESL Canada expectations, during the Standard 1 practicum candidates must complete at least 10 hours of guided observations, and the supervised teaching component must consist of at least 10 hours of teaching that the candidate has both planned and been the teacher in charge of the class during the teaching component. The class must consist of at least five ESL students, aged 18 and older, and must be primarily an English language class although some element of content-based instruction may be present in the curriculum.

For Standards 2 and 3, at least 30 hours of guided observation and 20 hours of supervised practice teaching are necessary.

The practicum must be carried out under the supervision of both a practicum instructor employed by the academic training program and a Local Supervisor/Sponsor Teacher who will be responsible for overseeing and providing guidance on the student-teacher's classroom work. The Local Supervisors/Sponsor Teachers must themselves meet or exceed TESL Canada Standard 1 certification requirements in terms of academic preparation, unless the student-teacher plans to qualify for Standard 2 in which case the Local Supervisor must also meet Standard 2 expectations. TESL Canada also requires that the Local Supervisor/Sponsor Teacher have at least 2000 hours of ESL classroom teaching experience, of which at least 1000 hours must be with classes of adult learners.

In CERTESL, we strongly prefer that the nominated Local Supervisor/Sponsor Teacher meet CERTESL's own completion standard of at least 250 training hours/18 credit units. A potential Local Supervisor who only meets Standard 1 requirements is acceptable only if he or she comes very well recommended and if no other Local Supervisor with more extensive training is available. CERTESL also strongly prefers that the Local Supervisor/Sponsor Teacher have at least three years (2400 hours) of language teaching experience, although we may accept the TESL Canada minimum requirement if the nominated Local Supervisor comes very well recommended.

CERTESL students exceed TESL Canada's Standard 1 practicum requirement as CERTESL requires a total of 20 hours of classroom observations: 10 prior to TESL 442.3 – Supervised Practicum registration, and 10 during the practicum. The additional observation and teaching hours for Standard 2 are available in CERTESL through a Practicum Additional Hours Module. As a CERTESL student, you will need to register for the Practicum Additional Hours Module at the same time that you register for TESL 442.3, using the appropriate form provided in the Current Students area of the CERTESL website.

TESL Canada Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)

From the Spring of 2006 to the Spring of 2014, the former University of Saskatchewan Centre for Continuing and Distance Education (CCDE) was responsible for carrying out Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) of TESL credentials earned at institutions other than those on TESL Canada's approved programs list. In 2014, TESL Canada assumed responsibility for adjudicating PLAR within its own office.

If you have already completed reputable training in the field of English language teaching that you believe may approximate or exceed one of TESL Canada's three recognized training standards, please consult the TESL Canada office to learn whether you might be eligible for TESL Canada PLAR. A PLAR adjudication may require you to complete a whole recognized program, or just some particular pieces of a recognized program in order to become eligible for TESL Canada certification.

You will find TESL Canada's current contact information at www.tesl.ca

If you intend to teach adults in Ontario and believe you may be eligible for TESL Ontario accreditation via PLAR, you should investigate TESL Ontario accreditation requirements before considering TESL Canada, as TESL Ontario standards are accepted by a larger number of Ontario employers. (See the Ontario section below.)

If you have TESL training from an academically reputable institution or training program but it covers less than half the academic content that TESL Canada expects for Standard 1, you will not be eligible for TESL Canada PLAR. In that case, you may wish to explore the possibility of transfer credit eligibility with the CERTESL Academic Coordinator. Note that only coursework in the areas of second language teaching and applied linguistics for teaching purposes will be considered for transfer of credit.

Programs that do not have credible practica, academic assessment processes that are meaningfully rigorous and academic contact hours defined in an academically appropriate manner are not accepted as the basis for PLAR assessments.

CERTESL for Alberta TESL Accreditation

Prior to Spring 2014, Alberta TESL accredited ESL teachers on the basis of completion of a university undergraduate degree and at least six degree credit courses/18 credit units in the TESL field, or completion of a degree plus the same amount of TESL-specific training in a non-degree program that demonstrated proof of a degree credit standard of depth and rigour. CERTESL graduates with undergraduate degrees met this standard.

TESL Alberta no longer provides its own accreditation services. As of this manual's date of publication in July 2018, new ESL teachers in Alberta are advised to contact TESL Canada at www.tesl.ca to obtain TESL Canada certification.

CERTESL for Teaching in Ontario

Ontario has a complex TESL environment with many teacher training programs competing for registrants. Both the Ontario College of Teachers (which sets licensure and Additional Qualification standards for K-12 teachers employed by school boards) and TESL Ontario (which influences employment standards in most adult ESL programs, including but not only in federally funded LINC and ELT programs) have established accreditation standards for teachers of ESL. Because the TESL Ontario and Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) sets of standards differ in some key respects, an Ontario teacher must consider his or her TESL training path carefully.

K to 12 ESL Credentialing: the Ontario College of Teachers

ESL Additional Qualifications

As indicated earlier, CERTESL does not qualify its graduates for the teaching of children or adolescents in Ontario's publicly funded schools. However, CERTESL does include course options that have been used as the basis for receiving the K-12 ESL Part I Additional Qualification (AQ).

The Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) has mandated a specific postgraduate ESL Additional Qualification program comprised of the courses ESL Part I, ESL Part II and ESL Specialist. This 375-hour program (one full academic year of after-degree university study) is offered to elementary and secondary teachers at a number of Ontario universities. Information about these and other Additional Qualification options for Ontario K-12 teachers can be located at OCT's website, www.oct.ca

A combination of three CERTESL degree-credit courses (ECUR 291.3, 391.3 and 393.3) has, in previous years, been accepted by OCT in lieu of ESL Part I. However, because OCT's expectations are revised periodically, each application is assessed independently, rather than being accepted on the basis of precedent.

With the launch of the University of Saskatchewan’s Post-Degree Certificate in EAL Education (PDCEAL) in 2017, it may be possible to obtain OCT’s ESL Part 2 Additional Qualification on the basis of ECUR 291.3, 391.3, 393.3, 415.3, 490.3, and 492.3. However, this possibility has not yet been tested by applicants.

Any Ontario K-12 teacher who wishes to pursue an OCT Additional Qualification certificate endorsement should consult an OCT advisor before deciding to register in any course not officially mandated by OCT. If the OCT-mandated ESL Parts I, II, and Specialist courses are offered by a university in your area, that may prove a more suitable choice for you as a K-12 teacher in Ontario in terms of both OCT policy and in terms of completion timelines than the part-time distance schedule available at the University of Saskatchewan. In some years, it is also possible to complete distance-delivered versions of ESL Parts I and II through Queen’s University in Kingston.

The OCT – TESL Ontario Interface

ESL Parts I and II provide the same number of academic contact hours (250) that TESL Ontario requires. However, TESL Ontario accreditation is directed wholly at the adult ESL market. As ESL Parts I and II are oriented to K-12 instruction rather than adult education, trainee teachers who want to work with adult learners but have completed ESL Parts I and II rather than CERTESSL or another TESL Ontario-approved program need to go through the additional process of Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR). Information about TESL Ontario PLAR can be found below.

Should ECUR 291.3, 391.3 and 393.3, with their balance between adult and K-12 focus, continue to remain acceptable to OCT for the ESL Part I endorsement for elementary/secondary education by OCT, they have the added advantage of being accepted by TESL Ontario for adult ESL education. The PDCEAL’s ECUR 415.3, 490.3 and 492.3, however, are not suitable for TESL Ontario because they focus exclusively on learners integrated into K-12 institutional and curricular settings.

Adult ESL Credentialing: TESL Ontario

If you are interested in teaching in Ontario-based LINC, ELT, and many other adult ESL programs, we strongly advise you to meet the accreditation requirements of TESL Ontario’s OCELT professional designation, which can be found at www.teslontario.org

It is essential that Ontario-based training candidates study TESL Ontario’s complete description of standards and list of recognized programs before selecting a training path. Their website provides detailed information about the skills and knowledge that must be covered before a particular TESL training program can receive recognition. In general, training must be carried out in a program that has been formally recognized by TESL Ontario, although some provisions exist for Prior Learning Assessment Recognition (PLAR) of formal training and workplace-based learning obtained in other program contexts. TESL Ontario PLAR is discussed in more depth below.

TESL Ontario accreditation requires completion of a university degree and, for additional-language speakers of English, proof of an English proficiency standard of at least 7.0 in all bands on the IELTS – Academic, or the equivalent on another measure of academic English proficiency acceptable to TESL Ontario as listed on their website.

TESL Ontario accreditants must renew their accreditation annually, on the basis of continued professional learning.

Some venues in Ontario may engage ESL teachers who do not meet TESL Ontario’s standards. Some of these programs are Languages Canada members (www.languagescanada.ca) and therefore require teachers who have training at least equivalent to TESL Canada Standard 1. Some are high-stakes programs, either private or college based, and if they do not insist on TESL Ontario accreditation, they at least insist on TESL Canada Standard 2 if the

local supply of well-trained ESL instructors allows them to be that ambitious. TESL Ontario has invested decades of hard work in promoting high standards for English Language teaching, so in most parts of the province, funder and employer expectations are high.

Should you be offered a language teaching position at an Ontario venue that does not require even the absolute minimum level of training required for TESL Canada Standard 1 certification, we recommend that you check it out very carefully for your own protection. If employers are willing to compromise on the potential quality of instructors, they may lack other professional standards and ethics as well.

CERTESL graduates must meet particular specifications during training in order to receive TESL Ontario certification at the completion of their studies. These specifications are described in the following sections.

Academic Contact and Practicum Hours

CERTESL's current core program consists of 220 academic contact hours in TESL theory and methodology; 20 hours of guided classroom observation; and 10 hours of supervised practicum teaching. Ten of the guided classroom observation hours must be carried out prior to practicum enrollment. The rest of the observation and all of the supervised practice teaching takes place in the course TESL 442.3, which consists of 20 academic contact hours, 10 guided classroom observation hours and 10 supervised teaching hours. This is not quite enough for TESL Ontario purposes; our students must complete some additional requirements within CERTESL to qualify for TESL Ontario accreditation.

The TESL Ontario training rubric specifies that a program must consist of at least 250 hours of academic contact hours in TESL theory and methodology; 30 hours of classroom observation in an adult English language learning context; and 20 hours of practicum teaching in an adult TESL classroom under the supervision of a qualified teacher of ESL (these qualifications are described below). At least half of the practicum teaching time must occur in a Canadian location.

TESL Ontario accreditation candidates in CERTESL must therefore complete seven CERTESL courses (one more than CERTESL completion requires), including the Practicum (TESL 442.3) and the Practicum Additional Hours Module (see below).

To maintain accredited status, TESL Ontario – OCELT instructors must document annual inservice.

Path of Study

TESL Ontario accreditation candidates in CERTESL must pass the following seven courses:

1. ECUR 291.3 – Introduction to TESL/TEAL
2. TESL 333.3 – English Language Structure for Language Teachers
3. ECUR 391.3 – Theory and Methods of Skills Development in TESL/TEAL
4. TESL 32/332.3 – Materials and Assessment in TESL
5. ECUR 393.3 – Approaches to Second/Additional Language Teaching
6. TESL 442.3 – Supervised Practicum
7. Choice of either TESL 43/443.3 – Professional Project, or TESL 36/336.3 – Literacy in TESL/TESD

CERTESL students must also take the following module in order to meet Ontario's practicum hours requirements:

8. Practicum Additional Hours Module (to be completed concurrently with TESL 442.3, and in the same host program).

Registration for the Practicum Additional Hours Module is carried out through the CERTESL Program Office rather than through the central University of Saskatchewan registration system as it is regarded as a non-credit additional training component.

Assignment Adaptations

The CERTESL assignments of TESL Ontario accreditation candidates must be based on adult learning situations, using LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada), ELT, adult ESL literacy, EAP (Academic Purposes) or employment-related ESL program settings. Interviews and observations carried out in ECUR 291.3 and ECUR 391.3 should be based on adult non-credit ESL, EAP, LINC or ELT settings.

TESL Ontario Practicum Requirements

As noted above, TESL Ontario requires more substantial classroom observation and teaching than those of the CERTESL practicum course, TESL 442.3, which was originally designed to conform with TESL Canada Standard 1 parameters. CERTESL's Ontario students therefore complete not only TESL 442.3 but must also concurrently complete a Practicum Additional Hours Module for which a separate registration process is required.

CERTESL students must complete 10 hours of classroom observations before applying to register in TESL 442.3; these 10 hours are an integral part of the total practicum. TESL Ontario requires that these hours take place in at least two different types of adult ESL training venues, in the classrooms of teachers whose training approximates TESL Ontario accreditation standards. If most hours take place in a LINC context, for instance, a number of hours need to occur in another program such as an English for Academic Purposes, community-based, private ESL, or overseas adult ESL program.

At least half of the supervised teaching hours in a practicum for TESL Ontario must be located within Canada, so if future Ontario teachers in CERTESL are working overseas and can find well-trained teachers to observe, the pre-practicum portion of the observations may be carried out in their classrooms. Under TESL Ontario terms, it is also possible to carry out half of the teaching hours in such a venue; however, CERTESL's 13-week term structure does not work well with such a split of locations so this is discouraged.

During your enrollment in TESL 442.3 and Practicum Additional Hours, your observations and teaching must take place under the guidance of a Local Supervisor/Sponsor Teacher who meets TESL Ontario's training and university degree standards and has at least three years (2400 hours) of ESL classroom teaching experience, or who has a university degree and was accredited by TESL Ontario under "grandfathering" provisions which were in place until June 30, 2002. The Local Supervisor does not necessarily need TESL Ontario accreditation, but his or her training must be equal to or greater than the amount TESL Ontario now requires for accreditation. If no suitably trained candidate with three years of experience is available, we may compromise to the extent of accepting only 2000 hours of experience, provided the nominated teacher comes well-recommended.

Please note that some teachers who earned TESL Ontario accreditation during the "grandfathering" period do not have university degrees. Such **non-degreed individuals are not able to serve as Local Supervisors**.

If you wish to carry out your practicum for TESL Ontario accreditation purposes, you should discuss your proposed supervision and placement option in advance with the CERTESL Academic Coordinator. If your supervision and placement proposal does not meet TESL Ontario's usual expectations, you will need to make a different choice.

TESL Ontario accreditation candidates must register formally for the Practicum Additional Hours Module at the same time as they submit their Supervisor Approval Form for TESL 442.3. The teacher you nominate as Local Practicum Supervisor must complete and sign both the TESL 442.3 Supervisor Approval Form and the Practicum Additional Hours Module Form. You may nominate two teachers if they work together in the same program. In that case, one will submit the two reports and receive the honorarium for TESL 442.3 and the other will submit the single report and receive the honorarium for Practicum Additional Hours.

To register for TESL 442.3, you will follow normal CERTESL registration procedures using the PAWS system, but you will register for Additional Hours Module by submitting the appropriate form (found online at certesl.usask.ca) and fee payment directly to the CERTESL Program.

If you have completed the mandatory additional practicum observation and teaching hours in another TESL program, under conditions similar to those specified above, you may be exempt from having to complete the Additional Hours Module within CERTESL. The Practicum Additional Hours Module may also be omitted if the student-teacher can document at least 500 hours of successful adult ESL teaching experience.

Please consult the CERTESL Academic Coordinator if you have completed practicum or professional teaching hours that you believe might be eligible for the Practicum Additional Hours waiver. If the hours were completed with learners who were not adults, or in EFL courses delivered for university or high school credit, the hours will not be acceptable to TESL Ontario; however, hours completed with adult ESL/EFL learners may prove acceptable as long as standards approximate those set by TESL Ontario.

TESL 43: Professional Project or TESL 36: Literacy in TESL/TESD

For TESL Ontario purposes, you have two choices within CERTESL for your seventh course in the program: TESL 43 (Professional Project) and TESL 36 (Literacy in TESL/TESD).

TESL 36 (Literacy in TESL/TESD) is probably the most suitable elective choice for people planning to work with lower-level learners in LINC or pre-LINC programs. This course was developed as a direct response to needs expressed by instructors and CERTESL students who observed, volunteered, and taught in LINC and other second/additional language programs with learners who lacked literacy and numeracy skills in their first languages. The course was created with financial assistance from Human Resources and Social Development Canada and Saskatchewan Intergovernmental Affairs, as both agencies regard literacy as an essential tool in the adaptation of immigrants and refugees to Canadian society. For the same reasons, TESL Ontario encourages provincial accreditation candidates in CERTESL to select TESL 36. If you register in TESL 36 for TESL Ontario accreditation purposes, make sure that you focus your assignments on adult English language learning contexts.

TESL 43 (Professional Project) is also acceptable to TESL Ontario provided the CERTESL student selects a focus that will be useful in Ontario adult contexts. TESL 43 allows students to create curriculum or do research while enabling them to meet specific real needs of present or future students. Research projects should deal with an issue of practical significance in an ESL learning environment, and can focus either on relevant literature or on field-based investigation. Curriculum projects should be grounded in classroom-based needs assessment. For TESL Ontario purposes, the Project (like the Supervised Practicum) should be directed at particular contexts and themes relevant to adults learning English in Canada, especially those in a LINC or employment-related context, with specific reference to the TESL Ontario training rubric. Generally speaking, the Professional Project works best for students with teaching experience who have a strong interest in particular research or curriculum development because of some real-life challenge they have encountered. Genuine inspiration is the best precondition for a successful project.

Projects created by TESL Ontario accreditation candidates should incorporate one or more of the following areas of interest related to language learning:

- Literacy learning in TESL
- Barriers to success of immigrants or refugees in English language learning
- Barriers to participation by immigrants or refugees in Canadian society
- The immigrant learner and cultural pluralism in Canadian society
- Equality issues and the immigrant or refugee learner
- Influences of culture of origin on language learning
- Applications of the Canadian Language Benchmarks and Portfolio Based Language Assessment to immigrant or refugee learner needs
- LINC curriculum
- Language and the Workplace
- Topics related to adult English for Academic Purposes learners planning to attend regular postsecondary programs in Canada.

Note that some types of research projects dealing with human subjects require formal ethics approval, either through the University's Ethics Approval system, through the institution at which the research is taking place, or both. As the Professional Project takes place over a single 13-week term, you may not be able to obtain such approval(s) within the timeframe available. Please consult your instructor as early as possible in case your idea requires such approval, and be ready to adjust it if the ethics approval you may need will require more time than you have.

Instructors of TESL 43 have experience as researchers and curriculum developers. Therefore, they are well able to provide guidance to you as you decide on your topic and develop your Professional Project.

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition in Ontario

If you are an adult TESL educator who has already obtained reputable TESL/TEFL training outside of a TESL Ontario-approved training program, and if you are now considering additional training in order to meet TESL Ontario requirements, please consult the CERTESL Academic Coordinator or TESL Ontario's Accreditation Services office before making any decisions about program enrolment. You may find that you are eligible to be referred by TESL Ontario for Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR).

A PLAR process can be time consuming, but not as potentially time-consuming or expensive as repeating a whole program of study unnecessarily. If the PLAR adjudication reveals specific gaps between the adjudicant's training and TESL Ontario's precise requirements, the adjudication report will recommend specific additional training that can be completed in order to qualify for accreditation. The PLAR adjudicant will not have to complete a whole approved program, only the particular required pieces that his or her original training program, combined with other courses, professional development, and workplace-based learning, did not cover.

To be eligible for PLAR, a candidate must be able to document at least 150 academic contact hours of reputable training in the TESL field.

Information on TESL Ontario PLAR can be found online at www.teslontario.org/accreditation.

CERTESL for Teaching In Saskatchewan

CERTESL is accepted by two accrediting bodies in Saskatchewan: TESL Saskatchewan (Teachers of English as a Subsequent Language of Saskatchewan, formerly known as SCENES), the provincial association of ESL/EAL/ELD educators, and the Saskatchewan Professional Teachers Regulatory Board (SPTRB), the body which controls standards of teacher certification for the Public and Separate K-12 school systems. The University of Saskatchewan offers a Postdegree Certificate in EAL Education (PDCEAL) that overlaps with CERTESL, is also accepted by SPTRB and will eventually replace the current extended 10-course AQC version of CERTESL that allows K-12 teachers in Saskatchewan to move up on their provincial salary grid.

K to 12: SPTRB (Saskatchewan Professional Teachers Regulatory Board)

Decisions about the eligibility of a K-12 teacher for provincial K-12 certification, and the level of such certification, are made by SPTRB (sptrb.sk.ca). In order to qualify for a permanent certificate to teach in Saskatchewan K-12 schools, a teacher must have a Bachelor's degree or postgraduate-level credential in Education. If the teacher's B.Ed. was earned in a K-12 jurisdiction other than Saskatchewan, he or she may be required by SPTRB to complete some additional coursework within a Saskatchewan-based B.Ed. program in order to meet the provincial K-12 standard. For instance, teachers moving to Saskatchewan from other provinces must often take one or two additional courses in Saskatchewan educational administration and/or supplemental curriculum courses. Teachers entering Saskatchewan from other countries may need to complete considerably more, depending on the extent of differences between teacher training in Saskatchewan and teacher training in the candidate's home jurisdiction.

Once SPTRB requirements have been satisfied, a B.Ed. degree by itself places a Saskatchewan teacher in Class 4 of the six-step provincial K-12 salary grid. In order to advance to Class 5, a teacher may complete a B.A. or B.Sc. degree, or take 30 credits (ten 3-credit courses, or one academic year) of approved courses in a single specialization area that will qualify him or her for an Additional Qualification Certificate (AQC).

Advancement from Class 5 to Class 6, the highest level of the salary grid, requires 30 credit hours of postgraduate credit study (in Western Canada, usually courses with numbers in the 600, 800 or 900 ranges, although the 400-level final year of a B.A. Honours degree will also be accepted for Class 6 if the major is in a teachable area such as English or Mathematics). Someone who has achieved Class 5 on the basis of 30 postgraduate credits (for instance, courses in a Master's program) or on the basis of a B.A. Honours can move to Class 6 with an AQC composed of upper-year undergraduate or 500-level courses. However, note that two AQC's made up of upper-year or 500-level courses do **not** qualify a Saskatchewan K-12 teacher for Class 6.

With an approved four-course extension that boosts CERTESL to a 10-course/30 credit program, CERTESL graduates with B.Ed. degrees are eligible for the Additional Qualification Certificate, **provided the candidate started his or her training with ECUR 291.3, ECUR 391.3, and ECUR 393.3 rather than the previously offered non-degree TESL 21, 31, and 35.**

At the University of Saskatchewan, two paths are possible to complete the AQC in Teaching English as an Additional Language:

1. Pure TEAL Focus (10 approved courses in addition to the B.Ed.)

AQC candidates who began their CERTESL studies prior to September 2016 may take the following courses:

Option 1A - 10-Course Extended CERTESL

1. ECUR 291.3 – Introduction to TESL
2. ECUR 391.3 – Theory and Methods of Skills Development
3. ECUR 393.3 – Advanced Methods in Second Language Teaching
4. ECUR 415.3 – Issues in EAL Education (with PDCEAL permission) (TESL 32 is allowed as an alternative **only** for those who completed it prior to May 2017)
5. TESL 333.3 – English Language Structure for Language Teachers
6. ECUR 375.3 – English Language Development for Indigenous Learners, or ECUR 490.3 – Content and Language for EAL Learners (with PDCEAL permission)
7. TESL 36 – Literacy in TESL/TESD
8. TESL 442.3 – Supervised Practicum
9. ECUR 493.3 – Professional Project (with PDCEAL permission)
10. One additional upper-year or postgraduate course related to the needs of the candidate's ESL/EAL/ELD students, approved by the Academic Coordinator of CERTESL (with relevant departmental permission).

As noted previously, this path is being phased out in favour of the new Post-Degree Certificate in EAL Education (PDCEAL), which consists of the following:

Option 1B - 10-Course PDCEAL

1. ECUR 291.3 – Introduction to TESL
2. ECUR 391.3 – Theory and Methods of Skills Development
3. ECUR 393.3 – Advanced Methods in Second Language Teaching
4. ECUR 415.3 – Issues in EAL Education
5. ECUR 490.3 – Content and Language for EAL Learners
6. ECUR 492.3 – Assessment with EAL Learners
7. ECUR 493.3 – Professional Project
8. Three credits in the learning of a second language other than English
9. One elective approved by the Department of Curriculum Studies*
10. One elective approved by the Department of Curriculum Studies*

* The approved list of electives for the PDCEAL includes TESL 333.3 – English Language Structure for Language Teachers, and ECUR 375.3 – English Language Development for Indigenous Learners. On a case-by-case basis, TESL 336.3 may occasionally be permitted as an elective to high school teachers working with less-literate older teens who are bridging to employment rather than to postsecondary studies.

2. Integrated Program Component in TEAL

The Integrated Program Component option requires special approval to be obtained *in advance* from both the candidate's Board of Education and the SPTRB.

An candidate whose plan has been approved will take six CERTESL /PDCEAL courses that serve as the Integrated Program Component (IPC):

1. ECUR 291.3 – Introduction to TESL
2. ECUR 391.3 – Theory and Methods of Skills Development
3. ECUR 393.3 – Advanced Methods in Second Language Teaching
4. ECUR 415.3 or ECUR 375.3 or TESL 36/336.3 (TESL 32 is allowed only for those who started the IPC prior to May 2017)

5. TESL 333.3 – English Language Structure for Language Teachers
6. TESL 442.3 or ECUR 493.3 (TESL 43 is allowed only for those who started the IPC prior to September 2018)

The IPC candidate will then take four additional upper-year (300 or 400 level) postgraduate (500 or higher) courses in another subject area or areas that his or her employing Board of Education has agreed are a fitting complement for his or her TEAL training and that will be useful to the school division.

Possible secondary concentrations for the Integrated Program Component AQC can include courses in topics such as the teaching of other languages, intercultural education, Indigenous education, global education, special education, or linguistics. Other secondary focuses, with approval from the employing school division, may also be possible.

Within both the full AQC and Integrated Program Component paths, some course substitution options may exist. However, these must be approved in advance by the Academic Coordinator of CERTESL (Option 1A – CERTESL), the Department Head of Curriculum Studies (Option 1B – PDCEAL), or with SPTRB and the employing school division (Option 2 – Integrated Program Component). Substitutions to the Integrated Program Component's six courses must also be explicitly degree-stream TEAL/TESL courses that the Academic Coordinator or Department Head agrees to transfer for credit into CERTESL or PDCEAL in lieu of a CERTESL or PDCEAL course.

Students wishing to complete a full 10-course AQC in TESL who did not start CERTESL prior to September 2016 are expected to apply for admission into the PDCEAL, not in CERTESL. Please contact eal.inquiries@usask.ca for PDCEAL application information.

Students who took ECUR 291.3, 391.3 and/or 415.3 as part of their B.Ed. degrees but now wish to complete an Additional Qualification in TEAL should consult the PDCEAL academic lead with regard to the IPC option, combining the remaining ECUR-TEAL courses with a second subject area acceptable to their school division and SPTRB.

TESL Saskatchewan: TESL/TEAL Accreditation for Adult and K to 12 Teachers

TESL Saskatchewan accredits teachers of ESL/EAL, in both adult and in K-12 education, who have university degrees and significant postsecondary training relevant to TESL/TEAL.

TESL Saskatchewan accreditants must re-apply for accreditation every five years on the basis of at least 25 documented hours of inservice learning relevant to the TESL field.

Prior to May 1, 2018, TESL Saskatchewan allowed teachers to apply for accreditation either on the basis of six TESL-specific courses (240 academic contact hours), or on the basis of a combination of at least three TESL-specific courses and up to three courses in related areas of study. Practica were not required. However, significant changes were made in 2018 to bring TESL Saskatchewan more in line with TESL Canada and TESL Ontario expectations, without compromising Saskatchewan's emphasis on degree-credit levels of depth and rigor.

The current TESL Saskatchewan standards are detailed at www.teslsask.com

TESL Saskatchewan is more flexible than TESL Canada and TESL Ontario in three ways:

1. TESL Saskatchewan accreditation does not distinguish between adult or K-12 training and experience; and
2. TESL Saskatchewan accreditation does not approve candidates on the basis of specific programs of study; instead, each case is examined individually.
3. TESL Saskatchewan's content expectations are more general than TESL Ontario's; teachers are expected to have a balance of theoretical, methodological and English language structural skill and knowledge.

TESL Saskatchewan is less flexible than TESL Canada and TESL Ontario in two ways:

1. To be accepted for TESL Saskatchewan accreditation, candidates must be able to demonstrate that the coursework they have completed matches degree-credit standards of depth and rigor.
2. Unlike TESL Canada, TESL Saskatchewan requires that either the practicum or substantial experience must take place in a Canadian program setting.

Courses do not necessarily have to be from degree programs for accreditation at TESL Saskatchewan Level 1 (Introductory) or Level 2 (Competency), but it is necessary to demonstrate that non-degree studies are just as rigorous as degree studies.

TESL Saskatchewan Standard 1: Introductory

The introductory level of TESL Saskatchewan accreditation consists of at least three courses/nine credit units/120 hours of training in TESL theory, methodology, and knowledge of language structure including a practicum consisting of at least 20 hours (10 guided observation, 10 teaching) in a Canadian venue, or being able to document at least 1000 verifiable successful hours as the teacher in charge of an ESL classroom. Training must take place in a venue that meets degree-credit expectations of depth and rigour.

In the Saskatchewan context, the Introductory level of accreditation is suitable only for education assistants or tutors working under the advisement or supervision of teachers who meet or exceed Standard 2 expectations, or for K-12 content area teachers who have B.Ed. degrees and work with EAL learners integrated into mainstream classrooms.

To achieve the Introductory level, CERTESL students must complete the following: ECUR 291.3, 391.3, 333.3, and 442.3, or document 1000 hours of successful ESL teaching experience.

TESL Saskatchewan Standard 2: Competency

TESL Saskatchewan's new Standard 2 level requires 250 hours of academic training from an appropriate postsecondary institution, at a degree-credit level of depth and rigor and balancing TESL theory, methodology and knowledge of language structure. *In addition*, accreditation candidates must either complete a practicum of at least 30 guided observation and 20 supervised practice teaching hours, or document at least 1000 hours of successful experience as the teacher in charge of an ESL classroom. The practicum or documented experience must take place in Canada.

Standard 2 has two subcategories: Basic and Senior. The Basic category allows accreditation immediately upon completion of training but requires that the teacher be able to verify at least 750 classroom teaching hours within each five year period, as well as 25 inservice learning hours, in order to maintain Standard 2 status. Teachers accredited at the Standard 2 level can receive Senior status if they have taught successfully for at least 2000 verifiable hours, and thereafter need only meet the requirement of 25 inservice learning hours during each five year period to maintain their Standard 2 Senior status.

TESL Saskatchewan recommends the Competency level as a suitable minimum level of training for ESL/EAL classroom teachers.

For Competency, CERTESL students must complete seven academic courses including the practicum: ECUR 291.3, 391.3, 393.3, TESL 32/332.3, TESL 333.3, a choice of either TESL 36/336.3 or TESL 43/443.3, and TESL 442.3 with the Practicum Additional Hours Module. The academic coursework of the PDCEAL is also accepted for

Competency, but PDCEAL completers must also either complete a practicum, or document 1000 hours of successful ESL/EAL classroom teaching experience in lieu of practicum.

TESL Saskatchewan Standard 3: Mastery

Mastery accreditation requires more than a Master's degree in the TESL field. The Master's or PhD must be completed in addition to the Competency baseline of 250 academic hours and 50 practicum hours, and must provide at least 30 credits of study in or closely related to the TESL field including a research component.

If the Master's program is the only training completed, or if it is a purely course-based Master's without a research course and thesis or substantial capstone project, it may not meet the requirements of the Mastery standard. Mastery also requires at least 3500 verifiable hours of successful experience as the teacher in charge of ESL classrooms.

The Mastery level is strongly encouraged for those who want to serve as leaders in the TESL/TEAL field, such as senior program leaders, curriculum specialists, teacher trainers, or researchers.

Full information about these standards is posted on the website www.teslsask.com.

To achieve the Introductory level, CERTESL students must complete the following: ECUR 291.3, 391.3, 333.3, and 442.3.

For Mastery, CERTESL and PDCEAL students must go on to complete a TESL Master's program with thesis or project as well as accumulating substantial professional experience.

CERTESL for Teaching Internationally

Every market has its own expectations for training, education, and experience. In the field of English Language Teaching, as a rule of thumb, the more well-off the country, the higher the expectations of employers and professional associations for professional training of English language teachers.

You need to research the levels of training required either legally or by the market in your destination country before you leave Canada. You also need to research employers and common legal issues associated with the English Language Teaching trade in your destination country. If you can avoid irresponsible or actively abusive employers, and if you feel confident in your own training, you will be more likely to have a positive overseas experience.

You are advised to ensure that your employment status is legal prior to international travel or risk varying legal ramifications outside of Canadian jurisdiction. Some countries, such as Japan, will allow teaching-class employment visas to be issued within the country for teaching jobs found after arrival in the country, but research this before you leave Canada.

Training

Because there is a large market for English language learning around the world, a large number of training programs have sprung up for prospective teachers. Some of these programs have the main objective of ensuring that English language learners are taught well. Unfortunately, others have the main objective of making a lot of money with no regard for ethics. When seeking training, therefore, the prospective trainee needs to do some research before picking a program. The same split of objectives exists among employers of English language

teachers – desire to teach well, versus desire to make lots of money – so job seekers also need to do some due diligence when deciding where and for whom they want to work.

Although some TEFL/TESL training programs claim internationally “recognized” status, there is no single certification standard that is “recognized” around the world. In fact, if you encounter a TESL training program that claims some form of internationally accredited or recognized status, you should look very carefully at the institution and its program before making any decision about registration. In particular, do careful research before paying tuition to programs that claim to qualify people for positions in English-speaking countries. Some of these will prove to be good programs, but some of them will not. If you want to teach in Canada after taking one of them, you will need to prove their real value to the relevant accrediting body. In the case of TESL Canada or TESL Ontario, this means investing time and money in Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition, with no guarantee of success. In the case of TESL Saskatchewan, this means ensuring that the depth and rigor of the program meet degree-credit standards and that you will be able to acquire documentation that will demonstrate the depth and rigor to the accreditation committee.

Quite a few people choose to put their training dollars into short seminar programs that are very expensive for the limited content they provide, or they may be attracted to cheap online programs that rely on quick read-and-click activities that do not establish deep skills or genuine understanding. These programs may be acceptable for a short overseas adventure; the better ones at least give their customers some assurance that they won't mess up hopelessly during their first weeks of overseas teaching employment. However, they are almost useless for finding positions in Canada, and getting more useless all the time as Canadian employers and funders become more educated about teaching standards and learner needs.

Visa Eligibility

In addition to learning about professional training standards, you must also be aware of visa requirements for foreign language teachers before you seek work in any country of which you are not a citizen. Many people have had good experiences in countries where they were teaching without the appropriate visa; however, many others have not. Teaching illegally adds to the stress of working abroad. If you accept a position without an appropriate visa, you may be subject to fines, deportation, confiscation of assets, and in some places even jail time. You may not be caught, but you just as certainly could be and would then have to face any consequences.

Contract Issues

Review the terms of the contract you are offered carefully before you sign it. Ideally, you should receive the contract in both English and the local language. If you are not working with a reputable recruiter, you should have both versions reviewed by some bilingual person whom you trust in order to ensure they are the same. If there are inconsistencies in meaning between the two, the version in the local language will be the one the courts of the country regard as binding. Differences between English and local language versions sometimes creep in inadvertently, but deliberate differences have also been known to occur and all discrepancies in meaning need to be investigated and eliminated.

Be careful of vague contractual provisions such as “moral turpitude” clauses. These may be used by an employer as an excuse to interfere unduly in your life outside of work, or as an excuse to terminate your contract early. If the employer will not offer you a contract that does not include such a vague clause, request that a written definition of the term be inserted or added as a signed codicil or supplementary page to the agreement.

Tax Issues

If you are a Canadian citizen or permanent resident of Canada, you should contact the Canada Revenue Agency in order to find out details of tax treaties between Canada and your destination country. In some locations, employers have been known to deduct more tax than appropriate during the first year of employment, when most Canadians should still be paying income tax to Canada. The employer may be making an honest mistake, in which case you can ask the local government for a refund. On the other hand, some employers are fully aware of regulations and may be pocketing money of yours when you may think it is going to the local taxation authority.

Although in Canada, both provincial and national income taxes are administered through one federally-operated revenue agency, in other countries national, state, and/or municipal income taxes may be handled by separate agencies. Find out how many separate parties are expecting your income taxes, and ensure that you know when each type of tax takes effect.

Make sure you know your rights and responsibilities with regard to both Canadian and local income taxes, and do your own math on payday. If you find your employer's calculation confusing, ask respectfully-phrased and non-judgmental clarification questions, such as "sorry to trouble you, but..." A responsible employer should be more than willing to answer any questions you may have about this and other conditions of your employment.

United States

Before applying for teaching positions in most U.S. states, please consult the state's Department of Education regarding government-mandated requirements, regardless of whether you plan to teach in adult or K-12 programs. Most states require that you have a degree in Education, especially for K-12 positions, and some states require that this degree be a postgraduate-level credential. Some state education departments will accept CERTESL as an Additional Qualification, but other state departments will not because some CERTESL courses delivered prior to May 2019 have not had formal degree-credit status.

If you plan to register in CERTESL but are concerned about your status in any U.S. state, please take only courses that have formal degree credit status. This may mean delaying completion of TESL 32, 36 and 43, which will not achieve formal degree status as TESL 332.3, 336.3 and 443.3 until January or May 2019. The depth and rigor will not change, but many state licensure bodies will not compromise on the matter of formal status.

You may have heard that many non-U.S. citizens who do not have valid U.S. work permits are employed in the United States. These people are not usually employed as ESL teachers, and they are breaking U.S. law. Please do not try to "buck" the U.S. immigration system for the sake of a teaching position. ESL teachers are far more visible than the migrant labourers or domestic workers whom they may teach. For your own protection, make sure that your status in the U.S. is legal.

Other Countries

Many people succeed in finding and holding overseas teaching jobs without appropriate work visas. This can and has worked in some locations, but as noted above, those who do it may be risking fines, deportation, loss of possessions or investments, and/or jail time. Because legal sanctions can be serious, an illegal teacher is also open to abuse by some of the less ethical employers. If you are going to risk trouble, you need to know what kinds of trouble you should expect. Even if you plan to work legally, an internet search is useful; not all overseas employers are trustworthy. Skim sites for overseas teachers such as Dave's ESL Café (www.eslcafe.com) where you will find shared experiences and other resources to help you check out ESL teaching conditions in countries that interest you.

Japan, Korea and most other developed nations require that applicants for teaching visas have university degrees. Other countries, such as Thailand, prefer degreed visa applicants, but may compromise if a non-degreed person with a reputable TESL/TEFL credential is available, if that person is vouched for by an employer who has a good relationship with the immigration department, or if the position is in a location where few qualified speakers of English are available to teach. Also, Thailand will often allow an individual with no degree to accept a short-term position on the basis of a three-month tourist visa, renewable no more than twice.

Less-developed nations are more likely than developed nations to allow non-degreed candidates to teach, especially if a candidate has reputable TESL-specific training. They may also have a less-developed system of work permissions in general. However, check each country individually. Just because a country is less-developed in the economic sense does not mean it will be unambitious for its people, and a country committed to human development needs will be less likely to compromise on credentialing of foreign workers.

Policies, and the application of policies, within a country may differ between geographic regions, depending on such factors as the local economy and local need. For instance, although China officially has degree and experience requirements, in practice it is possible for a non-degreed person to work without interference outside of the rich coastal cities and away from Beijing. This may change at any time, however, at the discretion of local officialdom.

Many countries will not issue teaching visas even to well-qualified candidates unless no equally qualified citizen of the country is available to accept the job. In countries belonging to the European Union (EU), such preferred status is extended to citizens of all EU member countries. Canadians who do not qualify as EU citizens may be able to find legal positions in the EU, but only if their credentials are better than those of locally available citizens of the United Kingdom who are native speakers of English and often well-trained as ESL/EFL teachers, and an employer will need to be motivated to sponsor and support the visa applications of a Canadian. Fortunately, CERTESL provides more than double the training of many well-known British-based credentials, and this may motivate visa sponsorship.

If you do not obtain your work permit before you arrive, some countries will require you to leave for a few days because of regulations that restrict you to applying for your teaching visa from outside of the country. Research such particulars before leaving Canada. Ensure that you have access to an acceptable and secure local means of payment, such as travellers' cheques or pre-paid credit cards, to cover these and other normal expenses of initial settlement, such as deposit fees on apartments. Some employers may assist with providing or organizing local accommodations, particularly if you are hired before you leave Canada and have signed a contract for at least one year.

Preferred TEFL Qualifications

As noted previously, there is no such thing as an internationally sanctioned professional standard for EFL teachers. However, if an applicant can provide evidence that he or she has trained in a reputable program, especially from a charter university, most of the better employers will consider that applicant favourably.

Unfortunately for the reputation of the profession, many employers are not particular about these qualifications. Sometimes this is because too few verifiably qualified teachers exist to fill local needs; employers and students have to do the best they can with the educational resources available to them.

However, there are employers who hire according to criteria other than credentials, such as whether they think they will be able to take unfair advantage of the applicant, or whether the person's age, physical appearance, and entertainment ability are likely to attract profit. In general, the better places to work are those that give credentials priority over youth, blondeness, or gullibility. Consider it a blessing if your application is turned down by a "school" staffed largely by naïve and underqualified Caucasians in their twenties. Three questions you might want to ask during an interview are:

1. “What is the average amount of English language teacher training that your foreign teachers have?”
2. “What is the average age and demographic of your foreign teachers?”
3. “Do foreign teachers stay with you for an average of two years or more?”

Occasionally, you will encounter a responsible employer who is reluctant to accept a credential from an online or other distance-delivered training program. This is an unfortunate result of those commercial online programs mentioned previously that will happily take your money in return for a piece of paper that says “certificate” after you do a set of read-and-click exercises on the internet. If you graduate from CERTESL, you do not need to worry overly much about this prejudice. Your transcript will come from a recognized university, you have learned at least as much as a graduate of on-campus programs that claim the same number of academic contact hours, and your prospective employers will be able to confirm CERTESL’s status and reputation very easily via online verification processes. If they are still reluctant, please feel free to give them the CERTESL Academic Coordinator’s email address. She will be happy to explain the difference between read-and-click commercial programming and academically rigorous distance design.

Often an overseas employer will want to know how CERTESL compares to CELTA (Cambridge English’s Certificate in English Language Teaching) or the Trinity TESOL certificate, two good UK-based credentials that are well known because they are licensed for delivery in many locations internationally. Basically, completion of CERTESL’s six courses means that you have more than twice as much academic training as a CELTA or Trinity certificate completer, and in the case of CELTA, a longer supervised teaching practicum.

At the high end of the preferred credentials scale are the wealthy countries of the Persian Gulf, most notably Saudi Arabia, Dubai, and Qatar. Many positions in these countries go to individuals with relevant Master’s degrees because local employers can afford to be very picky. Elsewhere, however, a language teacher with a degree and CERTESL is well-qualified, and even the Persian Gulf countries are becoming more open to candidates with TESL training and B.Ed. degrees rather than Master’s degrees for positions outside of university environments.

Ability to Teach Outside of North America without a Bachelor’s Degree

Generally speaking, if you have no university degree but travel on your own to a place such as Mexico, Costa Rica, or the interior of China where visa regulations around English teaching are either loose or loosely enforced and English language teachers are desperately needed, you will be able to find work if you are at all presentable and can prove you know something about teaching English. If you go to a country and then start looking for jobs, rather than accepting a position that you are unable to check out while still in Canada, you will also be in a better position to judge whether the position is one you would be wise to accept.

CERTESL without a degree works very well in this type of context because it is so easily verifiable, as noted previously.

As in Canada, you may find positions as a teaching assistant or tutor in developed countries to which degree provisions do not apply. Some of these positions can be very satisfying ones, although they are unlikely to pay as well by local standards as teaching positions.

If you are under a particular cutoff age that varies from country to country, a working holiday visa may allow you to accept some types of temporary EFL-related employment (i.e. for individual tutoring, in conversation lounges, or as an au pair). Some countries also allow holders of study visas to engage in a limited amount of paid employment, either under the label of “employment” or as part of a “scholarship program” such as South Korea’s government-sponsored TALK program, but make sure you research this carefully.

Note that you are very unlikely to receive financial assistance with transportation to or from the country if you accept a position of less than one year or a position that does not require a degree, although homestay-type accommodation may be made available. The situation can vary greatly depending on the country and its current needs. Transportation subsidies are also much more common for positions that require a university degree.

Finding Work

Although many ESL teachers enjoy the challenge of looking for employment after they have arrived in a country that interests them, many others prefer the security of having a job waiting for them when they arrive. Degreed people who are not particular about their destinations can easily find jobs through an internet search for “EFL/ESL jobs and the name of the country” or a quick cruise through postings at Dave’s ESL Café (eslcafe.com) and other sites for travelling English teachers.

Checking out the reputations of prospective international employers who advertise online can be a challenge. If possible, you should obtain references for potential employers, preferably from someone who has worked for that employer in the past and who is no longer beholden to that employer for visa sponsorship or other forms of security.

One solution is to find a reputable recruiting service based in your own country and rely on that service to help you find a position that will work well for you. Recruitment services are one solution to the challenge of finding reputable employers, but you need to be careful about these as well. When deciding on a recruitment service, you should check out a few key characteristics of the service. Most reputable recruiters for paid positions do not provide teacher recruitment services for non-degreed people, and give strong preference to people with relevant experience, reputable academic background in TESL/TEFL, and, if the position is with children or teens, a B.Ed. degree.

Of course recruiters for voluntary agencies (that is, positions that are unpaid or provide only living expenses) may be less particular. Some very interesting volunteer positions can be found at www.goabroad.com and other sites for the globally responsible traveler.

Reputable recruiters will be pleased to provide as references the names of teachers they have placed in the past who are no longer beholden in any way to the recruiter. Good recruiters provide follow-up services, such as mediation and legal support if your employer does not give you the kind of assignment or compensation specified in the contract. Also, good recruiters will not send future recruits to institutions in which such problems recur. Recruiters should check in at some set time after your teaching position starts to ensure that the placement is working well for both you and your employer. If you decide to seek work through a recruiter, ask careful questions about the follow-up that they provide.

Do not pay any recruitment service for placing you in a paid teaching position. Reputable recruiters are paid by the employing institution. They are not paid by the teacher who is being placed. If the recruiter requires money from you, please look elsewhere for your own protection.