

# **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 students 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 professional needs.

The University of Saskatchewan originally established CERTESL in order to meet the training needs of people seeking reputable distance-delivered training for a variety of career paths in the English language teaching field. Each of the TESL professional organizations in Canada that provides teacher accreditation services, i.e., TESL Canada, TESL Ontario, and TESL Saskatchewan, recognize CERTESL as a training program that meets their standards, but particular paths of study within CERTESL may be needed 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 this 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 regulation in most provinces for all K-12 teachers, although “professional certification” is also used in some provinces for the same concept.

This manual starts with an overview of CERTESL in relation to the teaching of children and teens in Canada within publicly-mandated school systems, proceeds to an overview of TESL Canada’s three levels of certification, then proceeds through the accreditation/certification standards of Ontario (TESL Ontario), and Saskatchewan (TESL Saskatchewan and BTEC). It ends with an overview of the international TEFL context.

## If You Have No Degree and Want to Teach in Canada

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 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, but this has not been done as formally in other provinces.

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

## K to 12 EAL Credentialing 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 kindergarten to grade 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, although in Saskatchewan it can count towards a post-B.Ed. K-12 Additional

Qualification Certificate (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 classes of school-aged children or teens in a province other than Ontario, we hope that you enjoy your Education degree or postgraduate diploma studies and look forward to seeing you in CERTESL later.

Because CERTESL courses can help you in your K-12 teaching of EAL or ELD, some school boards in several provinces will allow teachers educational leave or tuition funding to pursue CERTESL 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. For prospective CERTESL students, this means including within CERTESL the College of Education distance courses ECUR 291.3, 391.3 and 393.3 instead of their identical twins TESL 21, 31, and 35. The classes are exactly the same regardless of the stream that you select, but credit designation is a delicate and awkward subject, and many universities and teaching licensure bodies are very particular about ensuring that credit is given only for classes that are clearly in a degree credit stream.

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 advisor before choosing a training path. Depending on your exact credentials and career plan, you may be advised to register as a student in the Postdegree Certificate in EAL Education rather than in CERTESL.

If you want to teach K-12 ESL in Ontario's public or Catholic school systems, please visit [www.oct.ca](http://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, but if you haven't started your training yet, you may find it more efficient to go straight into Ontario'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 the CERTESL Academic Coordinator to ensure your course choices will be acceptable to OCT.

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, please find out in advance if they are recognized for inclusion in your degree program by your university or accepted for professional certification or accreditation by your provincial TESL accrediting body. You may need to register in College of Education equivalent courses rather than their CERTESL twins for them to be counted as part of your degree.

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, read the part of the Saskatchewan section 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](http://www.tesl.ca)), TESL Saskatchewan or TESL Ontario for assurance of teaching standards.

In particular 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 certification ([www.teslontario.org](http://www.teslontario.org)) or the program may lose its eligibility for federal funding. In Saskatchewan, provincially-funded programs will need to require either TESL Saskatchewan accreditation or TESL Canada certification eligibility for ESL classroom teachers as of March 2016. Federally funded programs in other parts of Canada are generally under increasing pressure to meet at least TESL Canada Standard I expectations.

In order to teach in private or college-based institutions that have been approved by Languages Canada (i.e., the national association of public and private institutions that provides language training [www.languagescanada.ca](http://www.languagescanada.ca)), teachers need to meet the expectations of either 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 recognition and hence many of its students.

In general, you must have some 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 TESL training from reputable institutions are required. Non-degreed CERTESL completers are working effectively in the ESL field in Canada, but in general they have roles as educational assistants, tutors or settlement workers rather than as teachers in charge of ESL classrooms.

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, usually we have discovered that these graduates are non-degreed people who have been hired for challenging classroom teaching positions by employers who chose not to treat a degree as mandatory. Some non-degreed CERTESL graduates are filling such positions effectively, but they 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.

Non-native speakers of English will also be expected to provide proof of appropriate levels of English language skill.

## **CERTESL for TESL Canada Certification**

TESL Canada certifies teachers who plan to teach ESL in adult programs in Canada. It is the standard most commonly applied 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 accreditation (although some, more ambitious, expect TESL Ontario credentials). Complete information about the TESL Canada certification standards is online at [www.tesl.ca](http://www.tesl.ca)

A TESL Canada certification candidate is eligible for Standard I (entry level) 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, incorporating at least 100 academic contact hours of formal training and a supervised adult teaching practicum of at least 20 hours (10 teaching, 10 observation). A TESL Canada certification candidate must also be able to demonstrate completion of at least a three-year university degree. The candidate must also provide proof of appropriate English language proficiency. At the time of writing, this proof must consist of either successful completion of high school in an English-language institution with a minimum of 70% in grade 12 English; or completion of an undergraduate degree from a university that uses English as the medium of instruction; or a

score of at least 7.0 in the IELTS-Academic, with at least 7 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.

### **Standard I Certification**

TESL Canada's Standard I expectations are not very high (120 hours equal no more than three one-term university courses) so naturally, many of the most reputable ESL delivery sites prefer to hire teachers who have more extensive qualifications even though Standard I may be all that a funding agency or Languages Canada will enforce.

A candidate may be certified on an Interim basis at the Standard I level without paid teaching experience. Permanent Standard I 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 (20 observation, 10 teaching), a total of 250 training hours. This is more than double the basic TESL Canada Professional Standard I requirements. CERTESL completers must include TESL 42 (Practicum) in their program and must carry it out in an adult ESL/EFL setting.

### **Standard II Certification**

A CERTESL completer must take one additional course (40 academic contact hours) to qualify for TESL Canada's Standard II level of certification, often preferred by selective employers. After August 2017, Standard II candidates will also need to register in the Practicum Additional Hours module. Candidates for Standard II in CERTESL may select their additional course from among TESL 32, 34, 36, and 43. They may also choose to complete a relevant seventh course within another program and even another relevant specialization; degree credit courses in Linguistics, for instance, may be accepted as the seventh course for Standard II. If you believe you have completed both CERTESL's core program and a non-CERTESL course that may qualify you for Standard II, 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 II certification through a cheaper streamlined process than must be followed by other Standard II applications. Therefore, you should apply for TESL Ontario accreditation first if you live in Ontario, and if you are going to another province, apply for TESL Canada Standard II certification only after you have received your TESL Ontario accreditation document.

Interim Standard II certification may be awarded without paid teaching experience. Permanent Standard II 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 either adult ESL classroom teaching or a variety of ESL program administration, teacher training or other senior roles in the field.

### **Standard III Certification**

TESL Canada Professional Standard III status requires completion of foundational content at least equivalent to Standard I, plus a Master's degree that is clearly relevant to ESL instruction. Permanent TESL Canada certification status depends on hours of professional teaching of ESL to adults, or a combination of ESL teaching and program administration experience.

Interim Standard III certification may be awarded without paid teaching experience. Permanent Standard III 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 be either adult ESL classroom teaching or a variety of ESL program administration, teacher training or other senior roles in the field.

**Please document your experiential hours carefully.** Each time you leave a position, ask your supervisor to prepare a formal letter stating how many hours in total you were the teacher in charge of ESL or EFL classrooms of at least five students. Also ensure that your supervisors carry out periodic performance reviews, and keep signed copies of these in your files.

## TESL Canada Practicum Requirements

TESL Canada certification through the usual Recognized Program completion path 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 practicum candidates must complete at least ten hours of guided observations. The supervised teaching component must consist of at least ten hours of teaching that the candidate has planned, and the candidate must be 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.

The practicum must be carried out under the supervision of both a practicum instructor employed by the 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 Supervisor/Sponsor Teacher must meet or exceed TESL Canada Standard I certification requirement in terms of academic preparation. 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 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. Someone who just meets Standard I requirements is acceptable only if he or she comes very well recommended and if no-one 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 will compromise downwards to the TESL Canada minimum requirement if the nominated local supervisor comes very well recommended.

Currently, all three levels of TESL Canada certification require a practicum that includes at least 10 guided classroom observation hours and 10 supervised practice teaching hours. For Standards II and III, this will change in September 2017. Standard I will continue to require 10 observation and 10 teaching hours, but Standards II and III will require 30 observation and 20 teaching hours.

CERTESL students complete more than TESL Canada's current minimum practicum requirement because a total of 20 hours of classroom observations are required: 10 prior to TESL 42 – Supervised Practicum registration, and 10 during the practicum. The additional observation and teaching hours that will be required after August 2017 are available in CERTESL through a Practicum Additional Hours module that all of CERTESL's Ontario students are already required to complete (see TESL Ontario below). If you plan to seek TESL Canada Standard II certification after August 2017, you should register for the Practicum Additional Hours Module at the same time that you register for TESL 42.

## TESL Canada Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)

From the spring of 2006 to the spring of 2014, the 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, when the Centre for Continuing and Distance Education was in the process of being disestablished, 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 TESL Canada's recognized training standards, please consult the TESL Canada office to learn whether you might be eligible for TESL Canada PLAR. A PLAR adjudication will tell you whether you need to complete a whole recognized program, or just some particular pieces in order to become eligible for TESL Canada certification.

You will find TESL Canada's current contact information at [www.tesl.ca](http://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 some TESL training from a reputable source but it clearly covers no more than half the academic content that TESL Canada or TESL Ontario expect, you will not be eligible for PLAR. In that case, you may wish to explore the possibility of transfer credit eligibility with the CERTESL academic advisor. Note that only coursework in the areas of second language teaching and applied linguistics for teaching purposes can be considered for transfer of credit.

## 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 nondegree program that could provide proof of a university credit standard of depth and rigour. CERTESL graduates with degrees met this standard.

TESL Alberta no longer provides its own accreditation services. New teachers in Alberta are advised to contact TESL Canada at [www.tesl.ca](http://www.tesl.ca) to obtain TESL Canada certification.

## CERTESL for Teaching in Ontario

Ontario is a complex TESL environment with many 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 but CERTESL does include course options that can be used for K-12 additional qualifications (AQs).

The Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) has mandated a specific postgraduate ESL Specialist program comprised of the courses ESL I, II and Specialist. The program is offered at a number of Ontario universities as an Additional Qualification for teachers of ESL at the K-12 level. Together, these three courses comprise one year of university credit study. Information about these and other Additional Qualifications options for Ontario K-12 teachers can be located at the OCT's website, [www.oct.ca](http://www.oct.ca)

The distance-delivered degree-stream sections of three CERTESL courses (ECUR 291.3, 391.3 and 393.3) can be accepted by OCT in lieu of ESL I. Starting in the Fall of 2017, it will also be possible to complete distance coursework at the University of Saskatchewan that will accrue to ESL Part II, with the launch of the new distance courses ECUR 490.3 – Content and Language in EAL and ECUR 492.3 – Assessment in EAL; the degree-credit transformation of our current course TESL 43 – Professional Project into ECUR 493 – Professional Project in EAL Education; and the distance transformation of the course ECUR 415 – Issues in EAL Education into a distance-delivered format.

However, any interested Ontario K-12 teacher who wants credit towards the Additional Qualification 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 be a more efficient choice than the part-time distance schedule available at the University of Saskatchewan. Distance-delivered versions of both ESL I and II are available through Queen's University in Kingston.

### **The OCT – TESL Ontario Interface**

ESL I and II provide the same amount of academic training that TESL Ontario requires. However, TESL Ontario accreditation is directed wholly at the adult ESL market. Because ESL 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 I and II rather than CERTESL or another TESL Ontario-approved program need to go through an additional process of Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR). Information about TESL Ontario PLAR can be found below.

### **Adult ESL Credentialing: TESL Ontario**

If you are interested in teaching in Ontario-based LINC, ELT, and many other adult ESL programs, we advise you to meet the accreditation requirements of TESL Ontario which can be found at [www.teslontario.net](http://www.teslontario.net)

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 non-native speakers, proof of an English proficiency standard of at least 4.5 in all bands of the CanTEST; at least 7 in all bands on the IELTS; 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 engage ESL teachers who do not meet TESL Ontario's standards. Some of these are Languages Canada members ([www.languagescanada.ca](http://www.languagescanada.ca)) and therefore require teachers who have training at least equivalent to TESL Canada Standard I. Some are high-stakes programs, either private or college based, and if they do not insist on TESL Ontario accreditation they do insist on TESL Canada Standard II if the local market in teachers allows them to be that ambitious (and most do, thanks to decades of hard work by TESL Ontario in promoting high standards for English Language teaching). If you are offered a position at an Ontario venue that does not require even the absolute minimum level of training required for TESL Canada Standard I certification, check it out very carefully for your own protection. If employers are willing to compromise on the quality of instructors, they may lack other ethics as well.

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

## Academic Contact and Practicum Hours

CERTESL's core program is not quite enough for TESL Ontario purposes; our students must complete some additional requirements within CERTESL to qualify for TESL Ontario accreditation.

CERTESL's 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 42, which consists of 20 academic contact hours, 10 guided classroom observation hours and 10 supervised teaching hours.

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 42) and the Practicum Additional Hours Module (see below).

## Path of Study

TESL Ontario certification candidates must pass the following seven courses:

1. TESL 21/ECUR 291 Overview of TESL
2. TESL 31/ECUR 391 Theory and Methods of Skills Development in TESL
3. TESL 32 Materials Selection and Development
4. TESL 33 Grammar and Phonology

5. TESL 35/ECUR 393 Approaches to Second Language Teaching
6. TESL 42 Supervised Practicum
7. Choice of either TESL 43 - Professional Project, or TESL 36 - 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 during TESL 42).

Registration for the Practicum Additional Hours module is carried out through the CERTESL Program Office rather than through the central University registration system because it is regarded as a noncredit training component.

### **Assignment Adaptations**

The CERTESL assignments of TESL Ontario certification 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 TESL 21/ECUR 291 and TESL 31/ECUR 391 should be based on adult noncredit 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 42, which was designed to conform with TESL Canada Standard I parameters. CERTESL's Ontario students therefore complete not only TESL 42 but must also complete, concurrently, a Practicum Additional Hours module for which a separate registration process is required.

CERTESL students must complete ten hours of classroom observations before applying to register in TESL 42. In the case of TESL Canada, these ten hours are in addition to the TESL Canada Standard I basic requirements. For TESL Ontario, these ten 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. If most hours take place in a LINC context, for instance, at least a couple 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 hours in a practicum for TESL Ontario must be located within Canada.

During the practicum and 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 from early 2000 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 certification 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 certification candidates must register formally for Practicum Additional Hours at the same time as they submit their Supervisor Approval Form for TESL 42. The teacher you nominate as Local Practicum Supervisor must complete and sign both the TESL 42 Supervisor Approval Form and the Practicum Additional Hours Module Form.

To register for TESL 42, you will follow normal CERTESL registration procedures using the PAWS system, but you will register for Additional Hours by submitting the form (found online at [certesl.usask.ca](http://certesl.usask.ca)) with payment made directly to the CERTESL Program.

If you have completed the mandatory additional practicum observation and teaching hours in some other TESL program, under conditions similar to those specified above, you may be exempt from having to complete Additional Hours within CERTESL. The Practicum Additional Hours module may 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 make you 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 and final 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 seventh course for people planning to work with lower-level learners in LINC or pre-LINC programs. TESL 36 was developed as a direct response to needs expressed by instructors and CERTESL students who have observed, volunteered and taught in LINC and other second language/ second dialect programs with learners who lack functional 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 because both regard literacy training as an essential tool in the adaptation of immigrant and refugees to Canadian society. For the same reasons, TESL Ontario is encouraging provincial certification candidates in CERTESL to select TESL 36. If you take TESL 36 for TESL Ontario accreditation purposes, make sure that you focus your assignments on adult ESL 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 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 Project works best for people with teaching experience who have a strong interest in particular research or curriculum development because of some real-life challenge the candidate has 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
- Participation of immigrant learners in education, employment or business in Canada

- 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 to immigrant or refugee learner needs
- 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 or through the institution at which the research is taking place (or both). Because the Project takes place over a single 13-week term, you may not be able to obtain such approval 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.

Project instructors must 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 some 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 time-consuming or expensive as repeating a whole program of study. 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, in other words, just the particular required pieces that his or her original training program, combined with other courses, professional development and workplace-based learning, did not cover.

Information on TESL Ontario PLAR can be found online at [www.teslontario.net/accreditation](http://www.teslontario.net/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 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)**

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 need to take 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 additional courses in Saskatchewan educational administration and/or supplemental curriculum courses.

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 (600, 800 or 900-level courses). 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 four-year B.A. Honours rather than a three-year B.A. can move to Class 6 with an AQC composed of upper-year undergraduate or 500-level courses. However, two AQC’s made up of upper-year or 500-level courses do not qualify a person for Class 6.

With an approved four-course extension that boosts CERTESL to a ten-course/30 credit program, CERTESL completers with B.Ed. degrees are eligible for the Additional Qualification Certificate, **provided the candidate starts his or her training with the ECUR courses, ECUR 291.3, ECUR 391.3 and ECUR 393.3 (twins of TESL 21, 31 and 35).**

**Two paths are possible to complete this AQC in Teaching English as an Additional Language:**

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

Currently, the AQC candidate takes the following courses:

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. TESL 32 – Materials Selection and Development (may be replaced by a relevant elective approved by the Academic Coordinator of CERTESL)
5. TESL 33 – Grammar and Phonology for TESL
6. TESL 34 – TESL/TESD for Aboriginal Learners
7. TESL 36 – Literacy in TESL/TESD
8. TESL 42 – Supervised Practicum
9. TESL 43 – Professional Project
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.

**As noted above, this path is in the early stages of being phased out in favour of the new Post-Degree Certificate in EAL Education (PDCEAL), which will consist of the following:**

1. ECUR 291.3
2. ECUR 391.3
3. ECUR 393.3
4. ECUR 415.3 (currently face-to-face only, but will be offered in distance mode after the 2016-17 academic year)
5. ECUR 490.3 –Language and Content: Instructional Approaches for EAL (a new K-12 specific course, to be launched in fall 2017-18 in distance mode)

6. ECUR 492.3 – Approaches to Assessment with EAL Learners (also a new K-12 specific course, to be launched in 2017-18 in distance mode)
7. ECUR 493.3 – Individual Project (a degree-credit recasting of TESL 43, available in January 2017)
8. Three credits in the learning of a second language other than English (this must be done in face-to-face mode at the U of S or another university)
9. Elective approved by the Department of Curriculum Studies
10. Elective approved by the Department of Curriculum Studies

The new courses ECUR 490.3, 492.3 and 493.3 will be made available to students on the original AQC path who do not plan to complete their AQCs prior to the launches of the new courses.

All of the courses in CERTESL will be recast as degree credit during the 2016-17 academic year, and some, though not all, will be allowable as electives for PDCEAL. Most important among these will be the degree-credit recastings of TESL 33 – Grammar and Phonology and TESL 34 – TESL/TESD for Aboriginal Learners. TESL 34's recasting will include an ECUR course name and number.

**2. Integrated Program Component in TESL** The Integrated Program Component option requires special approval obtained *in advance* from the candidate's Board of Education and also from SPTRB.

The candidate will take six CERTESL courses that serve as the Integrated Program Component:

1. ECUR 291
2. ECUR 391
3. ECUR 393
4. TESL 32, 34, or 36 (NOTE: TESL 32 will shortly be removed from this list)
5. TESL 33
6. TESL 42 or TESL 43

By the 2017-18 academic year, ECUR 415, 490 and 492 will be available as options in this list.

The candidate will then take four additional upper-year (300 or 400 level) or after-degree (500 or higher) courses in another subject area or areas that his or her employing Board of Education has agreed are a good 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; Indian education; global education; special education; or linguistics. Other secondary focuses may also be possible if the school division agrees.

Within both the full AQC and Integrated Program Component paths, some course substitution options exist. However, these must be cleared in advance with the Academic Coordinator of CERTESL or the Head of the Curriculum Studies Department in the case of the pure TEAL path, or with SPTRB and the employing school division in the case of the Integrated Program Component path. Substitutions to the Integrated Program Component's six courses must be explicitly degree-stream TEAL/TESL courses that the Academic Coordinator or Curriculum Studies Department Head agrees to transfer for credit into CERTESL or the PDCEAL in lieu of a CERTESL or PDCEAL course.

## **TESL Saskatchewan: Accreditation for Adult and K to 12 Teachers**

TESL Saskatchewan accredits teachers of ESL/EAL and ESD, both to adults and in K-12, who have university degrees and at least 240 hours (18 credit units) of postsecondary training relevant to TESL/TEAL/TESD. TESL Saskatchewan accreditants have interim accredited status until they can document at least 1000 hours of professional classroom

teaching experience in the ESL/EAL/ESD teaching field with some allowance for volunteer hours. At that point, full accredited status will be conferred.

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.

CERTESL's 250 hours slightly exceed the training specifications required by TESL Sask., detailed at [www.teslsask.com](http://www.teslsask.com)

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

1. TESL SK does not distinguish between students who complete a teaching practicum or a professional project, because the 1000 hour experiential requirement for full status ensures that the person has proven his or her teaching ability;
2. TESL SK accreditation does not distinguish between TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language), TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language), or TELD (Teaching English Language Development), or between adult or K-12 training and experience; and
3. A wider range of course options may be included in the candidate's training history.

All 240 hours may be TESL-specific coursework, and this is preferred. However, other types of relevant university-based courses may also be considered in accordance with the following ratio between TESL/TEFL/TELD and related topics:

- At least 120 hours (9 credit units) in TESL/language acquisition theory, TESL/language acquisition methods and grammar/linguistics
- Up to 80 hours (6 credit units) in education, adult education or counseling
- Up to 40 hours (3 credit units) in second language acquisition in a language other than English, or in relevant fields that include but are not limited to psychology, special education, Indian education, intercultural education, anthropology, human geography or sociology, provided these hours address language and/or cultural issues.

Therefore, although TESL SK accreditation candidates must have more academic training in TESL theory and methodology than the hundred hours required for TESL Canada Standard I, they may have a more eclectic overall mix of relevant background. As a result, some CERTESL participants, particularly though not only teachers with Education or Linguistics degrees, are able to receive TESL SK accreditation before they have finished the whole CERTESL program.

## **TESL Saskatchewan: Endorsement for Tutors and Education Assistants**

Many programs for both adult and K-12 learners in Saskatchewan are not yet able to hire fully-trained ESL teachers with both degrees and substantial specialised training. Also, many programs need not only classroom teachers, but also tutors who can work with individual learners or small groups, or education assistants (EA's) who can provide a full range of in-class and other learning support services for EAL students.

TESL Saskatchewan has established accreditation standards for non-degreed people who are working with ESL/EAL learners as tutors and education assistants rather than as classroom teachers. The standard provides for interim and full status at three different levels of training, with a maximum range of appropriate responsibilities recommended for tutors and EA's at each level.



Completion of CERTESL meets the TESL training portion of the requirement for Stage III status. Completion of half of CERTESL meets the TESL training portion of the requirement for Stage II status.

Full information about these standards is posted on the website [www.teslsask.com](http://www.teslsask.com) .

## **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 richer 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, you will be more likely to have a positive overseas experience.

### **Training**

Because there is a large market for English language learning around the world, naturally a lot 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 for investors. When seeking training, therefore, the prospective trainee teacher 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 hunters 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, in fact 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 any English-speaking countries. Some of these will prove to be good programs, but some of them won't. 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.

Quite a few people choose to put their training dollars into short "seminar" programs that are very expensive for the limited content they really provide, or they may be attracted to cheaper "online" programs that rely on quick read-and-click activities that don't establish deep skills or genuine understanding. These programs may be fine 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 maybe you will be.

### **Contract Issues**

Review the terms of the contract you are offered carefully before you sign. 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 differences 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.

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 to the agreement.

### **Tax Issues**

If you are Canadian, 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 are pocketing money of yours that you may think 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 make sure 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 questions (respectfully and preceding the request with "sorry to trouble you", but do ask). A responsible employer will be pleased 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 CERTESL courses are delivered within the context of a professional certificate program rather than a degree-stream or postgraduate program.

If you plan to register in CERTESL but are concerned about your status in any U.S. state, please start CERTESL with ECUR 291, 391 and 393, rather than taking TESL 21, 31 and 35. These two sets of courses are identical twins in

terms of content, expectations and rigour, but licensing bodies are sometimes more interested in counting degree credits than in the particular content or difficulty of the coursework completed.

Either path to completion of CERTESL is useful for finding positions in many adult education programs in the United States, provided the applicant also has a degree. However, even in such programs, CERTESL is more likely to be counted towards salary increases if you start it in the degree credit stream.

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 job. 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 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. Before you take any chances with legal status, visit [www.efl-law.com](http://www.efl-law.com) and also do a Google search using this keyword combination: efl/esl + jobs + blacklist/greylist + the name of the country in which you are interested. If you’re going to risk trouble, you need to know what kinds of trouble you should expect. Even if you plan to work legally, such a web check is useful; not all overseas employers are trustworthy, and sites such as EFL Law do a great service in flagging the patterns of employer problems that emerge in particular countries.

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 native speakers are available to teach English. 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 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 (an employer will have to be motivated to sponsor and support their visa applications). Fortunately, CERTESL provides more than double the training of many well-known British-based credentials, and this may motivate sponsorship.

If you do not have some form of 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. Check such things out before leaving home, and make sure you bring with you a special stash of travellers' cheques to cover this and other normal expenses of setting yourself up in your new location, such as deposit fees on apartments.

### **Preferred TEFL Qualifications**

As noted above, 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 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 talent available.

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 20's. Three questions you might want to ask during an interview are "What average amounts of English language teacher training do your foreign teachers have?", "What is the average age of your foreign teachers?", and "Do foreign teachers stay here for an average of at least two years?"

Occasionally, you will encounter a responsible employer who is reluctant to accept a credential from a "distance" or "online" program. This is an unfortunate result of those commercial online programs mentioned above 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 don't need to worry too much about this prejudice. Your transcript will come from a university; your Certificate of Successful Completion will ensure that you have learned at least as much as a completer 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 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. Most positions in these countries go to individuals with relevant Master's degrees because local employers can afford to be very picky. Elsewhere, however, someone with a degree and CERTESL is well-qualified, and even the Persian Gulf countries are becoming more open to candidates with TESL training and a B.Ed. degree rather than a Master's for positions outside of university environments.

## **If You Have No Degree and Want to Teach Outside of North America**

Generally speaking, if you have no 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 job 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 works very well in this kind of context because it is so easy to check out, as noted above.

As in Canada, you may find positions as a teaching assistant or tutor 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 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, 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 aren’t particular about their destinations can easily find jobs through an internet search (EFL/ESL + jobs + the name of the country, or a quick cruise through postings at [www.eslcafe.com/](http://www.eslcafe.com/) which is the famed Dave’s ESL Café).

Checking out the reputations of prospective 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, someone 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/or 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](http://www.goabroad.com) and other sites for the globally responsible traveler.

Reputable recruiters will be pleased to provide as references the names of former teachers 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 job starts to make sure that the placement is working well for both you and your employer.

**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 wants money from you, please look elsewhere for your own protection.