

Teaching English Abroad Without Certification: Where to Start

There are multiple opportunities to teach English abroad without a teaching certification. Teaching possibilities also exist for those with knowledge of special fields such as business, health, math or science (such as the Peace Corps). The main focus for individuals without certification should be on familiarity with the English Language. In fact, proficiency in the local language is rarely a requirement for obtaining a position. The “credential” of being a native speaking and a bachelor’s degree may be the only requirements needed to obtain a job and a work permit in areas such as Asia and Eastern Europe. See [Work Permit Visas](#) [1] for more information on how to work abroad with a work permit visa.

Teaching English as a Foreign Language

In addition to native fluency in English, many programs are now requesting experience in Teaching English as a Foreign (or second) Language. TEFL can be gained in a one-month course. The certification could open doors in extremely competitive areas such as Western Europe. Those with a Master's in TEFL can teach virtually anywhere.

U-M's [English Language Institute](#) [2] offers winter and summer courses in TESL. For more Ann Arbor programs, see below. Search for other programs using acronyms including:

- TEFL= Teaching English as a Foreign Language
- EFL= English as a Foreign Language
- TESL= Teaching English as a Second Language
- ESL= English as a Second Language
- TESOL= Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

Goals for the Experience: Determine what you hope to gain from your overseas experience. Are your goals to experience a different culture? Gain language proficiency? Try out teaching as a career? How important is money?

Student loans: Educational loans can sometimes be deferred during volunteer work; check with your lender for options, requirements, and procedures.

Earnings: You should not expect to make a lot of money. Although teaching positions in a few countries (examples include Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan) may pay relatively well, in most cases you will find that pay may be high by local standards but not sufficient for savings or that teaching opportunities are primarily offered through volunteer organizations. You may even find that the experience costs more than what you can earn, although this cost will usually be far less than the cost of studying or travelling

abroad.

Location: Narrow down geographic preferences from the entire world to a few countries or regions. Would a cross-cultural experience in any country be okay? Is there a preference for a certain region or set of countries (such as the Francophone world)? Do you hope to tie your experience to career objectives? How does this affect the money issue?

A note about Western Europe: It can be difficult or impossible for Americans to obtain English teaching positions in Western Europe because British and Irish teachers do not need work permits as members of the European Union. This does not, however, apply to countries with official placement programs, such as Austria, France, Germany, and Spain.

Recommendations

About a year before teaching abroad, think about getting TEFL experience or a certificate. While not strictly required by many international teaching organizations, it will be excellent preparation for the first time you face a classroom thousands of miles from home. Opportunities are available as a literacy volunteer or through local ESL programs for international students or refugees offered by colleges, schools and religious organizations almost everywhere.

In Ann Arbor, organizations which offer volunteer TEFL tutoring experience are:

- [U-M English Language Institute](#) [2]
- [Michigan Language Center](#) [3]
- [Washtenaw Literacy](#) [4]
- [Go Abroad TEFL Courses](#) [5]

Source URL: <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/abroad/swt/work/teaching-english-abroad>

Links

[1] <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/abroad/swt/work/work-permit-visas>

[2] <https://lsa.umich.edu/eli>

[3] <https://www.englishclasses.com/>

[4] <https://washtenawliteracy.org/>

[5] <https://www.goabroad.com/tefl-courses>