

Teaching overseas

When to apply

The best time to apply for teaching opportunities overseas will vary from region to region:

- European recruitment - peak periods for recruitment are October to January. Recruitment can start in September and January is often very busy once students have finished their course and/or teachers have completed previous teaching contracts.
- In Asia, recruitment is generally in either full-time or flexi-(part) time fractions. March, April and May are the highest recruitment periods for Asian recruitment companies. However, many recruit throughout the whole year.

Skills, qualifications and experience required

To teach in a classroom in Europe you are required to hold a teaching degree and at least 6 – 12 months experience is required.

To teach English as a Second Language full-time in Asia, you must hold a degree, but not all organisations require a teaching degree. However, a teaching degree, Masters degree in any discipline, or specific ESL and TESOL qualifications usually receive extra pay.

Asian recruitment agencies have found that applicants from a non-teaching background can be more flexible. For some part-time positions, the applicant doesn't need a completed degree but must have completed at least one year of tertiary education. Children's classes are increasingly popular in Asian countries. Priority is placed on recruiting those who are experienced in working with children.

- Flexibility and willingness to get involved
- Positive attitude
- Ability to present a clear and concise CV -international schools need to be able to easily see important details such as disciplines, year levels taught, amount of experience, responsibilities held
- A people person
- Patience and tolerance, particularly when dealing with language barriers and different cultures
- ESL experience and/ or English grammar skills
- Expression when speaking - facial expression, intonation and gestures (particularly important when teaching in a non-English speaking country)
- Creativity

Where to find the position

- Newspapers -national, state and local
- Mail outs -mainly to attract interest to public information seminars
- Website postings
- University and public seminars
- University careers fairs

Application Process

To be accepted by a recruitment agency, applicants need to go through an in-depth process. This process may include all of, or some of the following:

- Detailed application form and resume

- Interview/s: May be phone, video conference, one-on-one, group, panel, and/or Risk analysis interviews
- Reference and experience check
- English grammar and knowledge test
- Extensive documentation including academic transcripts, police checks, immigration checks.

There may be a number of interviews before a successful candidate leaves and once they arrive at their destination. Most organisations also offer a pre-departure information session where applicants meet other teachers. On arrival at the overseas destination, agencies may offer either a full orientation course; provide a list of agency contacts, library resource access and informal tours of the new city and ongoing support.

What sets one candidate apart from another for teaching overseas

- Interview skills and personal presentation are important - when you are interviewed overseas you are not only representing yourself but also your recruitment agency. The ability to highlight your strengths in an interview.
- A candidate's attitude must be positive
- Experience - it varies between agencies, for example, 2 - 3 years is seen by the UK as an advantage
- Memberships with subject associations
- For Asian agencies, experience working with children is increasingly important
- Experience other than teaching, such as customer service. This experience shows an ability to communicate and is important for agencies recruiting teachers in non-English speaking countries
- Any extras on a resume can be viewed positively

Advice for students seeking to teach overseas

- Your CV is extremely important - spend time on it and make sure your referees' details are correct
- There are numerous opportunities out there, look for them
- Consider utilising the recruitment agencies before you travel. It is much easier to organise documentation and background checks from here.
- Do your homework! - If you're interested in a recruitment agency, find out how they work and what fees they may charge
- Keep an open mind - particularly when being employed overseas -it is different to Australia. Be prepared to give anything a shot.
- When applying to recruitment agencies be aware that YOU are responsible for obtaining a Federal Police Clearance
- Show a positive attitude and be willing to ask for and accept feedback
- Update your English grammar skills if wanting to teach English in a non-English speaking country
- Check out the resources that the agencies have, here and overseas

©This information has been collated on the basis of interviews conducted with overseas teaching agencies in 2004/5 by Jobshop