

Course Content

The length of the course is 120 contact hours. In addition to this, Cambridge ESOL estimate that candidates will need to devote 120 hours to additional learning. This consists of completion of a Pre Course task, lesson planning and preparation of teaching materials, reading, research and writing of assignments.

The course covers the following syllabus:

- The Learner, the Teacher and the Learning/Teaching Context
- Language analysis and awareness
- Language skills: reading, listening, speaking and writing
- Planning and resources for different teaching contexts
- Developing teaching skills and professionalism.

Methodology sessions (Input sessions)

Input sessions focus on practical teaching techniques and the language knowledge required for teaching. These sessions include a variety of activities such as group work to develop language awareness, the completion of language analysis tasks, model lessons and teaching techniques demonstrated by tutors, observation and analysis of teaching videos or DVDs, peer teaching in groups to practise teaching techniques and mini lectures.

Teaching Practice (TP)

Teaching Practice starts on Day 3 of the course. There will be a maximum of 12 candidates on the course, divided for teaching practice into two groups of 6. Each candidate will have a total of 6 hours observed and assessed teaching practice, organized into 9 lessons at two different levels. You will teach classes of volunteer practice students. During post-teaching feedback sessions candidates will have the opportunity to reflect and discuss their teaching with colleagues and one of the tutors. You will receive detailed written feedback from your tutor after each lesson.

Tutorials and assessment

Progress is monitored and guided through a system of tutorials. Each candidate will have two individual tutorials with one of the tutors. Assessment of the course is continuous, integrated and based on meeting the course assessment criteria as laid down by Cambridge ESOL over TWO components – 6 hours of planning and teaching and four classroom-related written assignments. To be awarded the Certificate, both components must be completed successfully.

PRE-INTERVIEW INFORMATION

Full time course FAQs

Please read the following and decide whether you would like to ask for further clarification when you attend for interview.

Q I have heard that the course is very intensive - is that true?

A Yes!

If you are considering the full-time course, you should be prepared to devote five days a week (including long evenings) to the course, and to spend a considerable part of each weekend on course-related work. Here are some comments from former CELTA candidates: "A very challenging and stimulating experience" "A very steep learning curve" "A really demanding but rewarding course" "I've learnt more in the past four weeks than in 3 years at University" "The most intensive part-time course I've ever done"

Q Would I have to attend all the course hours?

A The Cambridge course handbook states: "Candidates are expected to attend the whole course. Candidates should be advised that CELTA is a course-based award and that absence/non-participation may jeopardise their chances of successfully meeting the assessment criteria. Candidates who know in advance that they cannot attend/participate in significant parts of the course must not be accepted." You would therefore put yourself at a serious disadvantage if you missed any of the course and may not be awarded the Certificate. It is also strongly advised that you have no other commitments outside the course during the four weeks of the full-time course.

Q What is the course timetable?

A The course is divided into methodology (input) sessions, preparation for teaching practice and teaching practice with feedback. On full-time courses a typical timetable is as follows 9.00 - 12.00 teaching practice and feedback 1.00 - 5.00 methodology and language analysis input sessions

Q What happens in the methodology sessions?

A A variety of activities such as: group work to develop language awareness by completing language analysis tasks; demonstration of model lessons and teaching techniques by tutors; observation and analysis of teaching videos or DVDs; preparation of teaching materials; peer teaching in groups; mini lectures. There is a high level of trainee participation, usually in pairs or small groups. There are up to 12 participants on a course. Please note that, although reference is made to language learning theory, the course is essentially practical in nature. It is an introductory course and those who intend to make a career of English Language teaching are encouraged to go on after some initial teaching experience to study for the Cambridge DELTA or similar diploma-level qualification.

Q When would I start teaching?

A This varies according to the number of trainees on the course but typically, on the second or third day of the full-time course.

Q Who would I be teaching?

A Mixed groups (up to 12 students per group) of adult students. They know that they are being taught by trainee teachers. They are generally supportive of trainee teachers because they can see that you are learning as well and they usually enjoy the classes.

Q What is “feedback”?

A Feedback refers to the time after teaching practice when you have the opportunity to reflect upon and discuss your teaching with your colleagues (there are four to six trainees in each teaching practice group) and one of the tutors. This part of the course is extremely important because it should help you to develop an increasing awareness of your strengths as a teacher and areas where further development is required.

Q What teaching methods would I be expected to use?

A No single ‘method’ is taught on the course: it is an introduction to the theory and practice of English Language Teaching (with a strong emphasis on the practical) and introduces trainees to a variety of current approaches and techniques.

Q What else would I be expected to do outside the timetabled hours?

A The Cambridge ESOL handbook states that the course includes “120 additional learning hours for pre-course preparation, reading, research, assignment writing, lesson preparation and record keeping.” You should expect to spend time:

- ☐ preparing for your teaching practice lessons: it is quite normal to spend about 3 hours, sometimes more, planning, preparing materials and researching language for each class
- ☐ liaising with colleagues in your teaching practice group
- ☐ working on written assignments: there are four written assignments (the requirements are that you write a minimum of 3000 words **in total** for these). The assignments are course-related and practical in nature. They are internally assessed and externally moderated.
- ☐ doing background reading to prepare for input sessions and assignments.

Q How would I be assessed on the course?

A Assessment on the course is continuous and integrated, taking into account teaching skills and written assignments, with each assessed component contributing to the overall grade. Candidates are given verbal and written feedback on their teaching and written feedback on assignments. Each candidate has at least two tutorials during the course at which they discuss their progress. All tutors working on the course discuss each candidate’s final grade. These grades are provisional until they have been confirmed by both the Cambridge assessor (who visits the course for one or two days) and by Cambridge ESOL.

Q What are the possible grades?

A Pass, Pass B and Pass A. A small number of candidates fail the course: they would be warned of this possibility at tutorial and would receive written guidance on areas to work on in order to pass. The majority achieve a Pass grade

Q How strict is the marking for the written assignments and what happens if I fail one?

A Assignments must meet strict Cambridge criteria in order to pass, with the result that pass standards may be higher than you are used to. Criteria are made clear to candidates at the outset and you will have one chance to resubmit each assignment. If after resubmission the assignment fails to meet the criteria, you **may** still pass the course. You may only fail one assignment.

Q What are the criteria for selection and what records do you keep of the interview process?

A Candidates must demonstrate an awareness or a potential awareness of how language works. They must also show that they will be able to meet the demands of the course in terms of level of writing skills. It is essential to have good team working and communication skills. We are looking for the potential to develop the necessary skills to become effective teachers. The interviewer takes notes on these points and these notes are kept on file so that the assessor can check our recruitment procedure when she visits.

Q I'm not a native speaker of English: is this course appropriate for me?

A The Cambridge handbook states that candidates must: "have an awareness of language and a competence in both written and spoken English, which will enable them to undertake the course and prepare for teaching a range of levels (The recommended candidate language level is C2 or high C1 on the CEFR.)" Written tasks completed at the application stage and on the day of interview are designed to help us assess whether candidates meet course requirements in this respect. If you have passed an English language exam at C1 or C2 level, please enclose a copy of your certificate with your application.

Q I'm a native speaker of English. Why do you want to know which other languages I speak?

A Candidates who speak another language will be in a stronger position when preparing for the teaching practice component of the course. In our experience, candidates with no prior language learning experience find it difficult to plan for teaching both language and skills development lessons. A lack of understanding of the language learning process may make it difficult to anticipate the problems their learners are likely to have with language and tasks. While we make every effort on the course to help candidates learn how to plan effectively, this cannot match the value of experiential learning provided by having been a language learner yourself.

Q I have a medical condition or personal circumstances that may affect my ability to cope with teaching practice and/or with the pressures of the course. What should I do?

A Under Swiss law, you are not obliged to disclose any such information. However, you may wish to declare this on your application form or, at the latest, at interview. SL&C operates an equal opportunities policy. In our experience, some conditions or circumstances can impact on a candidate's ability to complete the course. The centre therefore encourages confidential communication with the course tutors and administrators on this point. It is only through disclosure that efforts can be made to make reasonable adjustments to the course in order to accommodate any individual needs.

Q Why does the application form ask for written disclosure of personal medical information?

A Many candidates with special requirements have successfully completed the intensive CELTA course and all Cambridge CELTA training centres have an Equal Opportunities policy. Tutors need to check, however, that candidates will be able to cope with the intensive nature of the course, the practical demands of teaching practice and the written assignments. We also need to ensure that coping strategies exist or can be put in place when necessary. Cambridge regulations state: "In line with Cambridge ESOL's Equal Opportunities Policy, centres should make every effort to accommodate applicants with special requirements. Applicants with special requirements often have and will be able to confirm that they have the necessary strategies and/or the personal and technical support to enable them to complete the course successfully. Requests to Cambridge ESOL for special arrangements should be made before accepting the candidate onto the course. Application for additional time for completion of written assignments for candidates with specific learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexia) must be supported by a report that includes details of the effects of the learning difficulty and an assurance that the evidence of specific difficulties was obtained from the results of appropriate and recognised tests. The assessment must be completed and the report signed by an appropriately qualified person within two years before the start of the course. The status of the person must be specified. Other acceptable evidence may be considered. It may be helpful for applicants with special requirements to be given the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the role of the teacher and the demands of the classroom in the field of ELT before accepting a place on the course." We would therefore urge candidates who may have special requirements to disclose these so that we can assess the situation together and advise on whether the parttime CELTA or the new blended learning version (CELTA Online) might be more appropriate to their needs and situation.

Q If I am offered a place and something prevents me from taking it, can I defer to a later course?

A If you are not in a position to take up our initial offer of a place, you **may** be required to reapply and to go through the interview process again. You should let us know which course you would like to attend as soon as possible after our initial offer. We will then let you know whether you need to reapply.

Q If I pass the course, will I be able to find work easily?

A Generally, the answer here is 'yes'. The CELTA is a well-recognised qualification among private language schools in Switzerland. Many newly qualified teachers find work overseas, and at present the areas most in need of English teachers are Eastern Europe, China and South East Asia and South America. Towards the end of the course, you will be given some general advice on looking for work, together with websites you can use to find teaching posts.

Q I don't have a degree: will this be a problem?

A If you wish to teach English Language in a private language school in Switzerland, **a degree is not essential**. CELTA is well recognised in the private sector. In certain other countries, a degree is required in order to work as a teacher (e.g. Greece, Japan); in others, tertiary level qualifications such as SRN, HND, Cert. Ed **may** be acceptable. You are advised to consult individual Embassies for up-to-date information and advice.