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Guidance for
language centres

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About AccessTEFL

AccessTEFL is an on-the-job teacher training programme for English language teachers. Teachers who successfully complete the AccessTEFL programme will be qualified to teach at a British Council accredited centre in the UK.

The programme supports trainees to gain a knowledge and skills-based qualification while working at a language centre.

An AccessTEFL advisory group, created by English UK, will meet twice a year to review the effectiveness of the programme and make recommendations for any necessary changes.

This guide is for language centres supporting new teachers on the AccessTEFL programme.

Who awards the qualification?

AccessTEFL is awarded and certificated by English UK and accepted by Accreditation UK as a qualification suitable for working in British Council accredited centres.

Portfolios are moderated and approved by NILE, one of the leading specialist language teacher education institutes in the UK.

Programme timeframe

Trainees have a maximum of nine months to complete the portfolio. During this time, they can work with more than one language centre. They can request a formal break to allow them to pause and restart the programme later. In this case, they have a maximum of 18 months to complete the portfolio.

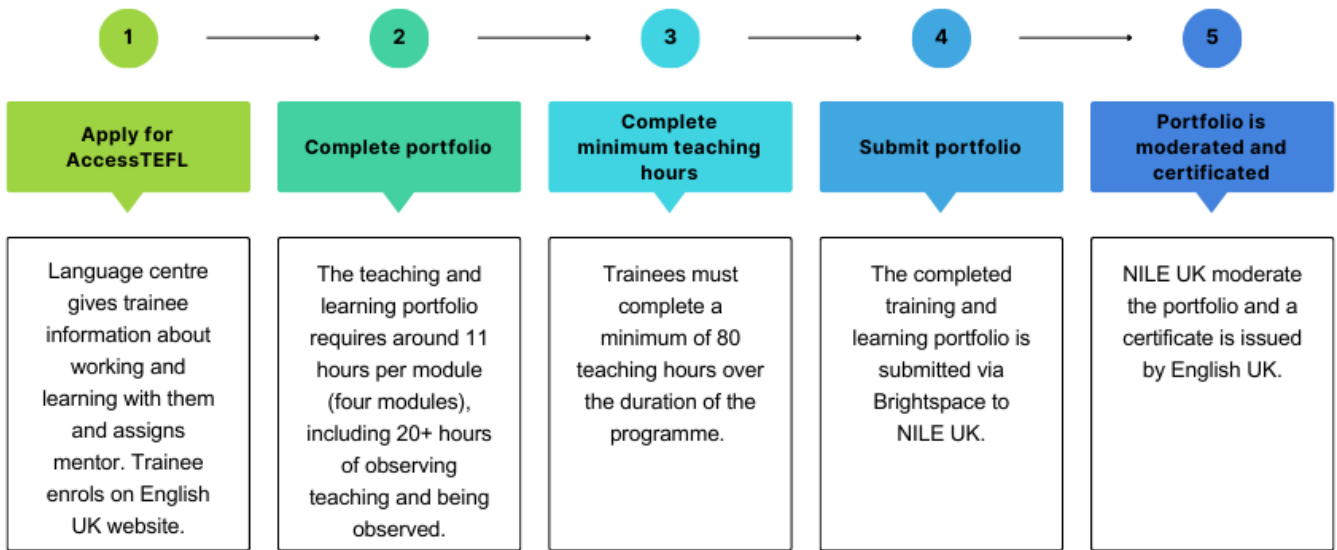
The portfolio tasks require a minimum of 44 hours overall (11 hours for each part).

Trainees also complete a minimum of 80 hours of teaching during the programme, which they must complete before they submit the portfolio.

AccessTEFL hours of study

Unsupervised teaching hours	80
Classroom observation of colleagues	14
Observed teaching (6 hours) and post-lesson feedback (4 hours)	10
Portfolio task completion	20
Total teacher learning hours	124

AccessTEFL process



Minimum requirements for trainees

Trainees are required to:

- Be aged 18 years or over.
- Have a Level 3 qualification, such as GCE A-levels, advanced apprenticeship, or an international equivalent. See gov.uk for more information.
- Evidence of a CEFR C1 level if English is not the trainee's L1.
- Have 30 hours minimum prior study of ELT (For example: an online introduction to TEFL course).

It is also useful (but not a requirement) for trainees to have evidence of basic classroom experience as a teacher, trainer or teaching assistant in an educational institution or relevant educational context.

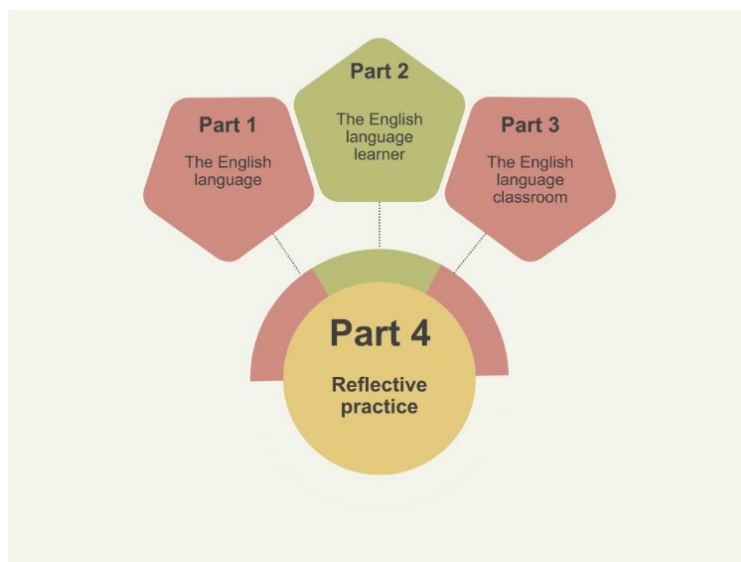
In addition, AccesTEFL trainees need:

- The support of a language centre. This support includes teaching classes, observations by TEFLQ-certified colleagues with three or more years' experience, access to observing classes taught by experienced colleagues, and the same induction and pastoral support offered to any new teacher. It is possible for a trainee to work with more than one language centre to complete their portfolio.
- The regular support of a mentor who is an ELT professional based at the language centre, with a TEFLQ diploma in ELT/ TESOL and three or more years' classroom experience, who understands the requirements of this qualification and is available to provide advice and guidance to the trainee. It is possible for a trainee to have more than one mentor based at different language centres.

The teaching and learning portfolio

Trainees build a teaching and learning portfolio with evidence of their professional learning and experience. The portfolio is divided in four parts, each with six tasks.

You'll find information about all the tasks and the documents required for the portfolio in the 'AccessTEFL Guidance for trainees' document.



Evidence for the portfolio

Trainees will collect different types of evidence on their learning and teaching for the portfolio. This will include:

- **Observation of colleagues:** trainees complete nine observations of colleagues, focusing on different aspects of teaching and learning.
- **Observation of teaching:** trainees are observed teaching for a minimum of six hours during the programme. The portfolio includes feedback and reflection forms.
- **Individual study and professional discussions:** Some tasks for the portfolio involve reading, research and discussion with colleagues related to specific aspects of teaching practice.
- **Classroom-based learning:** This involves applying ideas and approaches in practice and reflecting on experiences. Portfolio evidence includes, for example, lesson plans, or teaching and learning materials.
- **Reflective tasks:** reflective tasks are a key element throughout the portfolio.

AccessTEFL principles

There are four key principles underlying the AccessTEFL.

1. AccessTEFL is based on the principle that immersing new teachers in the daily practice of teaching English, with the support of experienced colleagues, is an effective approach to their training. This model enables new teachers to learn while they work.
2. AccessTEFL encourages autonomy. The trainee can work independently through the portfolio tasks in any order they choose (except for part 4, which must be done after parts 1 to 3 are complete).
3. Access TEFL promotes an ongoing dialogue about teaching and learning. This dialogue takes place between the trainee and the experienced colleagues they work with.
4. AccessTEFL is based on the principle of reflective practice, which involves learning through and from experience to gain insights and identify ways to improve teaching practice. The trainee's reflections on practice are a key element in the various forms of evidence that they must gather for their portfolio.

Guidance and training materials

The AccessTEFL guidance and training materials have been organised into three main documents:

- guidance for language centres
- guidance for trainees, and
- the teaching and language portfolio

Guidance for language centres (this document) explains the process of supporting each trainee and outlines what they need to have in place to help the trainees complete the portfolio while working. It also explains the role of the mentor and provides guidance for lesson observers about the lesson observation process for AccessTEFL.

Guidance for trainees gives an overview of the scheme and provides general guidance about lesson observations and portfolio tasks. It is then divided according to the four main parts of the portfolio.

The teaching and language portfolio, divided into four parts, provides detailed guidance about the tasks that need to be completed and the evidence that must then be submitted.

What is required of ELT centres?

Language centres wishing to support trainees on the AccessTEFL will need to provide the following:

- A mentor who is an experienced teacher based at the language centre, with a TEFLQ diploma in ELT/ TESOL, and who understands the requirements of this qualification. The mentor should provide regular advice and guidance for the trainee. It is possible for a trainee to have more than one mentor based at different language centres, if the trainee is teaching at different language centres during the timeframe for completing their portfolio.
- TEFLQ-qualified colleagues who can undertake lesson observations of the trainee's teaching. The trainee's mentor must undertake at least 50% of the required observations.
- Teaching hours for the trainee. Trainees must complete at least 80 hours of teaching before submitting their AccessTEFL portfolio. Trainees have a maximum of nine months to complete the portfolio (although they can request an intermission). They can work with more than one language centre during this period to reach the required number of teaching hours. They do not need to teach continuously at their supporting language centres provided the 80 teaching hours are completed within the timeframe.

Please note the Accreditation UK scheme criteria states "in no case is a class taught by a trainee teacher for all their lessons." In other words, an experienced teacher should teach (and can be observed teaching by the trainee) at least one lesson per class.

- The same support that would be given to any new teacher starting at an accredited language centre, including induction, job description, pastoral support, etc.

Language centres should be aware of the Accreditation UK inspection criteria regarding the deployment and support of less experienced and qualified teachers. Refer to the latest edition of the [Accreditation UK inspection criteria and requirements document](#), sections M27, P8, T4, T5, T7 and T10.

What does the mentor role involve?

AccessTEFL mentors must fulfil the following requirements:

- TEFLQ certification
- Be familiar with the training materials and understand the requirements of this qualification
- Be available to provide advice and guidance to the trainee on the following topics related to AccessTEFL:
 - Terminology for talking about language
 - English phonology, morphology, syntax and grammar
 - The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)
 - Learner motivation
 - SLA theory
 - Lesson planning
 - Classroom management
 - Language teaching methodologies
 - Teaching and learning materials
 - Reflective practice

The mentor has a key role in AccessTEFL as they provide the trainee with the regular advice they need to complete their portfolio tasks. This advice is provided throughout the time the trainee is working at the language centre (note that since it is possible for a trainee to use more than one language centre to complete the required number of teaching hours, it could be that the trainee has more than one mentor while working on completing their portfolio).

There is no prescriptive guidance for how often a mentor and trainee meet with each other or for how long each meeting should last. Interactions between the mentor and trainee will include formal (scheduled) meetings, which are required to complete portfolio tasks, as well as more informal and ad hoc interactions. Mentors need to read through the training materials carefully to be aware of all the different tasks a trainee must complete for their portfolio.

The mentor role requires the mentor to be a critical friend to the trainee. This includes encouraging the trainee to undertake the tasks for the portfolio to the best of their ability.

The observation process

Six hours (minimum) of observations of the trainee are undertaken during the AccessTEFL process (90 minutes for each part of the portfolio). The 90 minutes can be in a single lesson, or across several lessons. Observations for parts 1-3 of the portfolio can be done in any order but observations for part 4 must be done last as this part focuses on the trainee putting into practice concepts from the previous parts.

All the required observations must be undertaken by someone with a TEFLQ diploma in ELT/ TESOL. At least 50% of these observations must be undertaken by the trainee's mentor. (See [Example profiles of trainees and experienced colleagues](#) at the end of this handbook).

Each of these observations has its own observation form to be completed by the observer, in line with the focus for that observation and the part of the portfolio it is related to. All observations then follow the same three-stage process:

- **Pre-observation stage:** the intended focus for the lesson will be shared with the observer before the observation. Trainees also can indicate if they want feedback from the observer about any specific aspects of the lesson.
- **Observation:** the observer carries out the observation using the specific prompts in the form. There are also sections for the observer to record additional relevant feedback, such as good aspects of teaching practice.
- **Post-observation stage:** the observer and trainee meet to discuss the observation feedback. Key points from the discussion are agreed between the observer and trainee and these are recorded on the observation form.

Portfolio checklist

The teaching and language portfolio will be submitted electronically as a collection of digital documents. These documents can be in Microsoft Word or PDF formats.

	Part 1	Part 2	Part 3	Part 4
Task 1	Individual study: Glossary of language terms	Classroom based learning: Survey of student motivation	Classroom based learning: Design a lesson plan template	Self-assessment & reflection
Task 2	Observation of a colleague: Pronunciation and word formation	Observation of your teaching: Motivation to use target language	Observation of your teaching: Activating prior knowledge	Learner feedback: Collecting and reflecting on feedback
Task 3	Observation of your teaching: Building learners' knowledge of grammar	Individual study: Second Language Acquisition theories	Individual study and professional discussion: Promoting student talk time	Observation of your teaching: putting Parts 1-3 into practice
Task 4	Observation of a colleague: Low language proficiency	Observation of a colleague: Language learning opportunities	Observation of a colleague: Error correction	Critical incident reflection
Task 5	Classroom based learning: CEFR student needs analysis	Observation of a colleague: Influence of L1	Observation of a colleague: ELT methodologies	Action plan
Task 6	Observation of a colleague: CEFR subskills	Observation of a colleague: Emergent language	Observation of a colleague: Use of materials	Final mentor meeting Record of teaching hours

Resources and recommended reading

General resources

[Teaching English | British Council](#) Teaching English from the British Council has teaching resources, as well as materials for professional development

[One Stop English](#) Teaching and learning resources and articles from Macmillan Education

[Macmillan English Advancing Learning](#) Blog articles on a range of topics related to English language teaching

[Cambridge International Education Getting started with...](#) Guides that introduce and develop key areas of teaching practice

Useful books for AccessTEFL trainees:

- Jim Scrivener. *Learning Teaching*
- Jeremy Harmer. *The Practice of English Language Teaching*
- Penny Ur. *A Course in English Language Teaching*

Specific resources

Language awareness

[Grammar Monster](#) Grammar resources

[GrammarBytes](#) Here you can find a glossary of grammar terms

[Busting grammar myths](#) Advancing Learning blog article by Viv Lambert

[Teaching Pronunciation](#) A useful workshop by Adrian Underhill on the basics of teaching pronunciation

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)

[Council of Europe](#) Website with lots of CEFR resources

[The CEFR and Language Assessment](#) Article on the Teaching English website

[Understanding your English level](#) Article on the Teaching English website

Learner motivation

[How to conduct a needs analysis](#) Advancing Learning blog article by Ethan Mansur

[Motivating the students](#) Article on the Teaching English website

[Introduction to supporting and mentoring teachers](#) Article on the Teaching English website

SLA theory

[‘What is SLA research good for, anyway?’](#) Recording of the opening plenary at the IATEFL 2018 conference with Lourdes Ortega looks at the benefits of second language acquisition research

Lesson planning

[Building blocks of a good lesson](#) Advancing Learning blog article by Stephanie Hirschman

[Bringing lesson outcomes to life](#) Advancing Learning blog article by Kieran Donaghy

Classroom management

[Classroom Management](#) Article on the Teaching English website

[Classroom Management for young learners](#) Article on the Teaching English website

Language teaching methodologies

[The Communicative Approach](#) Article on the Teaching English website

[The Grammar Translation Method](#) Article on the One Stop English website

[Task Based Learning](#) Article on the Teaching English website

Teaching and learning materials

[Textbooks in ELT](#) Article on the Teaching English website

[Using Authentic Materials](#) Article on the Teaching English website

Reflective practice

[Ways to Develop Your Practice through Self-Reflection](#) Advancing Learning blog article by Kieran Donaghy by Jade Blue

[Getting started with reflective practice](#) Guide from Cambridge International Education

[Getting started with peer observation](#) Guide from Cambridge International Education

Example profiles of trainees and experienced colleagues

Example trainee profiles

One of the main aims of the AccessTEFL qualification route is to increase the accessibility to ELT in an accredited UK language centre. However, the AccessTEFL qualification does not override Accreditation UK requirements for staff qualifications, knowledge and skills in other areas. It should therefore mainly be considered as an alternative to the TEFLI qualification component of a teacher's profile. Trainees must have 30 hours minimum prior study of ELT (for example: An online Introduction to TEFL course). Other recruitment decisions about suitability for teaching in your context at an accredited centre lie with you as the employer/ recruiter.

The profiles below are examples of suitable trainees for the AccessTEFL qualification route.

Naseema has a BA in Education with a specialisation in Early Childhood Education. For the last five years she has been teaching in a primary school and although she has some literacy and EAL experience because of this, she has no prior ELT training or experience in the ELT sector. Her first languages are Urdu and English, and she has basic French and German from her school days.

Juan has an undergraduate degree in Computer Science from a university in Spain and has lived in the UK since 2012. He has settled status in the UK and would like to work in a language centre in the summer season. He has no formal English language qualification but self-assesses at CEFR C1 in Listening and Speaking, at C2 in Reading, and at B2 in Writing.

Mark has been teaching in a language centre in Laos for the last three years and has recently returned to the UK. His first language is English, and he has intermediate Lao and beginner French. He did a weekend Introduction to TEFL course before going to Southeast Asia and has taught a range of ages and levels in two different private language centres in Vientiane in recent years.

Kat is looking for a career change after returning to work from a career break. They have 'A' levels in History, English and Geography from a UK sixth-form college, but their career since then has been in building administration. Their first language is English. They have no ELT or language teaching-learning experience beyond their own schooling but have recently completed a 40-hour online Introduction to TEFL course.

Example 'mentor' and 'experienced colleague' profiles

The AccessTEFL qualification route requires each trainee to have a mentor with a TEFLQ diploma in ELT/ TESOL. The mentor will support the trainee's in-service development and observe at least 50% of the trainee's observed lessons.

Accreditation UK requirements for formal performance observations require all observers to have a TEFLQ diploma in ELT/ TESOL.

The trainee also has to undertake nine observations of 'experienced colleagues'. The AccessTEFL qualification recognises that experienced non-TEFLQ teachers may complement their TEFLQ colleagues in being models for trainees to learn from.

The profiles below are examples of suitable TEFLQ 'mentors' and non-TEFLQ 'experienced colleagues' to support trainees on the AccessTEFL qualification route.

Example 'mentor' profiles

Kasia is Assistant Director of Studies at the centre. She has four years of classroom experience in ELT in the UK, and five years prior to that in a language centre in Poland. She has a Trinity Diploma in TESOL and is responsible for teacher induction, onboarding and performance observation among other duties.

Johan is Academic Manager for Young Learners covering three branches of the centre, in different cities in the UK. They have a Cambridge CELTA qualification with three years post-CELTA teaching experience, and the English UK Diploma in ELT Management. They have been in their current role for two years and are responsible for observing junior classes and supporting teachers of junior programmes across the three sites.

Example 'experienced colleague' profiles

Mina joined the language centre after completing a Trinity Cert TESOL qualification, and after two seasons in the summer school is now a full-time teacher. She has only two years of full-time classroom experience but has been proactive in seeking out opportunities for her own professional development. She is very supportive of new teachers joining the summer school programme. She has independently done lots of peer observation and post-observation discussions with colleagues and run three INSET training sessions for colleagues in the last year.

Neil has worked at a language centre for eight weeks every summer for the last six years. Outside the summer season he works full time at a language centre in southern Europe. He has no TEFLQ qualification but has done lots of developmental and performance observations in his role at both institutions and is always happy to contribute to INSET sessions and informally mentor new teachers each summer.



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