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## International Teaching

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### Introduction

How can I have an international experience and make money while doing it? Living abroad appeals to the adventurous side of our spirit and may be expressed by our desire to experience the unknown or to work in a new and exotic environment. Teaching often becomes the targeted employment goal for many with these aspirations. Whatever your reasons are for wanting to teach abroad, the steps to obtain this kind of overseas employment can be daunting. We hope the following information will provide you with the resources to explore the many opportunities for teaching abroad.

### General Information

The recruiting process for international schools varies. From the Web site of The International Educator (TIE): "Most overseas schools assume individual responsibility for their own hiring and a personal interview is almost always required to teach abroad. It is difficult to know very much about either the quality of a school or the advantages and disadvantages of teaching overseas in a specific school. For this reason, it is strongly recommended that all opportunities be explored with as open a mind as possible."

What to be aware of in the world of international teaching

- Schools are either non-profit or for-profit.
  - For-profit schools need a certain amount of monthly income to stay open and pay employees.
  - Non-profit schools tend to "roll" money back into the school or into school-related funds for long-term improvements.
- Schools can be owned by one owner or run by a board and/or governing foundation.
- Board-run schools tend to be better organized and managed, but here can also be politics involved.
- Be aware of day or night language schools that are owned by a single owner.
- Don't get hooked into a month-by-month contract paid in local currency.
- Don't give up your passport on the first day for an "official Visa" trip.

Questions that need answers

- Is the salary per month or year, and is it paid in local currency or in U.S. dollars?
- Does the school or the employee pay local taxes on the salary (typically the school pays the taxes)?
- Is the salary paid in cash, deposited locally, or deposited in a bank of your choice?
- Is the insurance policy global or national?
- Is the transportation at the beginning and end of the contract paid by the school?
- Does the school provide housing or is the employee responsible for finding their own?
- Does the school pay for the housing or is the employee responsible?
- Can you see pictures of "typical" employee housing and are you able to contact current staff at the school?
- Is it shared housing or single housing?
- Who pays for and provides transportation to and from school?
- What is the annual staff turnover rate at the school?
- What national or international agencies have accredited the school? (*If it is not one of the major accreditation bodies from North America or the Council of International Schools - BE WARY!*)
- What is the composition of the student body and the staff of the school?
- What extra-curricular activities are teachers responsible for?
- How are women viewed in the local culture?

What not to expect

- Don't expect to work in the American school you went to or within a context with which you are familiar.
- Don't expect the same discipline regulations, attendance regulations, grading regulations, teacher expectations, etc., that we have in U.S. schools.

- Don't expect to replicate your U.S. lifestyle. Look for what is there, not for what isn't.

## Types of International Schools

### American-Sponsored Schools

State Department Sponsored Schools: <http://www.state.gov/m/a/os>

Schools funded/recognized by the U.S. State Department to meet the needs of the locally-based American diplomatic personnel and local American expatriate children.

- These schools tend to mirror U.S. schools in character, curriculum and services. Certification may be required. (A majority of teachers hold teaching certificates.)
- Little or no interaction with host nation (mainly due to security concerns rather than "overt" policy).

Department of Defense Schools (DoDDS): <http://www.dodea.edu/datacenter/schools.cfm>

Schools for the dependents of U.S. military personnel stationed overseas. Certification is required.

Department of Defense Education Activity (DODEA): <http://www.dodea.edu/home/index.cfm>

- Worldwide school system in 12 countries
- Pre-school through 12<sup>th</sup> grade for the children of employees of U.S. military, the DoD and other Civilian agencies
- Accredited by North-Central Association (NCA) – certification probably required
- Little or no interaction with host nation (mainly due to security concerns rather than "overt" policy)

### International or Private K-12 Schools

International Schools: The majority of students and faculty are international; international curriculum (IB).

National Schools: The majority of students and faculty are nationals of the host country.

Christian Schools: Schools founded by Christian missionaries seeking to introduce the Christian faith and values to the host nation.

Single Community Expatriate Schools: Schools where one expatriate community is dominant, thus the character and make-up of the school reflect the dominant expatriate community.

Language Academies: For-profit schools organized for teaching the English language to youth and adults.

## Supporting Documents You May Need

The following documentation may be required in preparation for teaching overseas: passport, birth certificate, marriage license, adoption and/or divorce decrees, diplomas, transcripts, teaching certificate, health certificate, visas, immigration card, and police certificate/statement. It is a good idea to have both the original and copies of these documents as well as several copies of a recent photograph on hand.

### Placement Agencies & Recruiting Fairs: (Some have fees – see Web sites)

**International Schools Services (ISS)**: <http://www.iss.edu>

A private agency providing a variety of support and staffing services for international schools

- Many international schools use ISS for staffing purposes.
- They hold IRCs (recruitment fairs) in U.S. and Canada from January-June.
- Teachers may open a resume file for a fee (\$185) and attend placement fairs for a fee (\$290).

**Council of International Schools (CIS)**: <http://www.cois.org>

A private organization providing staffing and support services for international schools; CIS accredits schools as well.

- Holds recruiting fairs in the spring, typically in Europe and the United States
- Also offers many professional development opportunities
- Teachers may open a resume file for a fee and attend placement fairs for a fee.

**Search Associates**: <http://search-associates.com>

A private placement agency placing teachers and administrators in international schools

- Very personalized search agency that individuals and schools subscribe to for a fee
- They find a school or person to match the needs of the client and also host spring career fairs.
- Teachers may open a resume file for a fee and attend placement fairs for a fee.

**University of Northern Iowa Overseas Recruitment Fair**: [www.uni.edu/placement/overseas](http://www.uni.edu/placement/overseas)

- Held in Waterloo, Iowa in February
- No placement fees for teachers who wish to attend. Registration fee to open resume file.
- Large number of schools from around the world attend

**Association of American Schools in South America:** [www.aassa.com](http://www.aassa.com)

- Fair usually held in late fall
- \$100 registration fee – will probably be reimbursed by school, if placed

## Recruitment Fair Information

What Happens at a Recruitment Fair?

- Many candidates look to go to the top/big schools in Europe. Be prepared to not get interviews at your top school choices.
- The position advertised as open, online, may be filled by the time the fair opens. Interviews “begin” before the scheduled interview times.

Advice on Recruitment Fairs

- Ask if teachers who currently teach at the school are at the recruitment fair. Talk to them. If they are not at the fair, ask for an e-mail or other contact information for a current or former employee.
- If you sign a contract, you are obligated to that school; do not sign and then break the contract. A contract should have all of the areas mentioned in the Guidelines for Recruitment Practices Handout given out at the fairs.

Be Aware! And More Advice

- High pressure sales tactics are sometimes used by school directors. They must fill the positions, so in turn they pressure teacher candidates to “take the job” or they will “lose the job.”
- Research your choices beforehand. Know the school(s).
- If you are unsure about the school, don’t take the job.
- Look for accredited schools! When a school is accredited by CIS or one of the U.S. accreditation bodies, such as North Central (NCA), they meet the following standards:
  - Strong curriculum
  - Good staff support services in the school
  - School has strong financial/budgeting background and resources
- Other things to look for:
  - Sound and “transparent” policies for all school components, (i.e. staff, students, administration, board, and other school community members)
  - Long-term goals for all participant parties and long-term financial goals and business plan
  - Long-term campus facilities plan
  - Finally, make sure you have a contract before leaving the country!

## Teaching English Abroad

Although fluency in English and enthusiasm might be enough to find a job teaching EFL (English as a Foreign Language), some training is highly recommended. Most universities, international schools, and corporations require either a TESL/TEFL certificate, a Master’s in Education or a Bachelor’s with an ESL focus. Without these credentials, there are still opportunities in small schools and for private tutoring, but fluency alone cannot guarantee that you will be an effective teacher.

English has become the universal language, so the world is an open market for EFL teachers. There seems to be a high need for EFL teachers in Eastern Europe, Turkey, and Asia (Korea, Japan, China, Thailand, Taiwan, and Hong Kong), but there are opportunities everywhere. Many schools (especially in Asia) use third party recruiters. Our advice is to ask for references from teachers who have worked at the school or through the agency.

## Internet Resources

- <http://www.ciee.org>: Council of International Educational Exchange provides quality programs and services for individuals, employers, communities and educational institutions.

- <http://www.teachabroad.com>: a directory that provides a diverse selection of teaching positions around the world. It is a valuable resource that contains hundreds of teaching programs, services, advice and content.
- <http://www.linguistic-funland.com/job.postings.html>: ESL Jobs page. This site has teaching job announcements, ESL/EFL jobs overseas, and lots of other resources.
- <http://internationalcenter.umich.edu/>: The University of Michigan has a great resource page for working abroad. Check out these sublinks for teaching abroad: <http://internationalcenter.umich.edu/swt/work/options/teach-no-main.html> and <http://internationalcenter.umich.edu/swt/work/options/qualteach-main.html>.
- <http://www.eflweb.com>: one of the World Wide Web's most experienced EFL/ESL practitioners and is a leading provider of job and recruitment services to the EFL industry.
- <http://www.goinglobal.com>: offers access to international career and employment resources, including world-wide job openings, internship listings, industry profiles, and country specific career information.
- <http://www.overseasdigest.com/>: Hundreds of tips plus information about everything you might need to know when living abroad, including specific sections for each country. Special page for teaching: <http://www.overseasdigest.com/teacher1.html>.
- <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ous/international/usnei/edlite-index.html>: U.S. Network for Education Information has a special section on teaching overseas.
- <http://www.uni.edu/placement/overseas/> Offering services since 1976, the University of Northern Iowa (UNI) Overseas Placement Service for Educators, a program area of UNI Career Services, connects international K-12 schools with certified educators year round. Services offered include the UNI Overseas Recruiting Fair, credential and referral services, and related publications. UNI is home to the original international fair for educators. They are committed to providing personal attention and quality service to all of our constituents. They do not charge placement fees to candidates or recruiting schools.
- <http://www.tieonline.com/>: Online newspaper featuring job postings, job fairs, and articles written by teachers who teach in overseas schools.
- <http://www.eslcafe.com/> for ESL/EFL Students and Teachers from Around the World. Includes information about getting certified to teach English as a second language and resources for bilingual educators.
- <http://www.transitionsabroad.com/listings/work/teachingk12university/index.shtml> Teach abroad in jobs ranging from K-12 and University. Essential resources and first-hand articles for summer and career work.
- <http://www.esljobs.com> Job board for overseas teaching jobs. Also information on TEFL certification.
- <http://www.iie.org>: Institute of International Education is an independent, non-profit organization founded in 1919 and sponsors over 250 programs annually, including the Fulbright Program, and other fellowships and research institutes.
- <http://exchanges.state.gov/academicexchanges/index/fulbright-program.html> The Fulbright Teacher Exchange Program has helped nearly 23, 000 teachers and administrators contribute to the mutual understanding between the United States and countries around the world.
- <http://www.oxfordseminars.com>: This site posts nearly 20,000 ESL jobs each month. Oxford Seminars regularly holds courses in Denver and Boulder.
- <http://www.tesol.org>: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages. Provides links to TESOL certification courses, articles, books and other resources related to teaching English to non-native speakers.
- <http://www.tefl.com/>: Teaching English as a Foreign Language, training, jobs, and other advice for those interested in teaching English overseas.
- <http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/ei26> Overseas Employment Information for Teachers. Lists contact information for teaching positions in elementary and secondary schools through U.S. government agencies.
- <http://www.aaie.org>: Association for the Advancement of International Education: "AAIE is a dynamic global community providing a forum for the exchange of ideas and research concerning development in the field of international education and school leadership and to advance international education through partnerships with educational institutions and associations worldwide."
- <http://ucblibraries.colorado.edu/govpubs/for/foreigngovt.htm>: country guides. Need information about the country where you will be teaching?

- <http://www.englishfirst.com/trt/index.html>: Teacher recruitment and training for Indonesia, China and Russia.

### **Books and Other Publications**

- *The International Educator* (TIE), <http://www.tieonline.com>, a for-fee interactive international teaching newspaper and interactive Web site. It is not a placement agency. TIE serves as a means for teacher candidates and schools to get in touch with each other. Place your resume in a resume bank and review job openings as advertised by schools.
- *The Big Guide to Living and Working Overseas* by Jean-Marc Hachey, 4th edition, Intercultural Systems: 2004
- *UNI Overseas Fact Sheet Book*, published by the University of Northern Iowa. Includes articles and information designed to assist educators searching for overseas positions, including an overview of international schools, candidate marketing, questions to ask, and UNI Overseas Recruiting Fair information. This publication is available from UNI for \$30. Career Services also retains a copy (contact the Credentials Manager, room 26).
- *Teaching English Abroad* by Susan Griffith and Deborah Penrith, Vacation Work Publications: 2006
- *Teaching English Overseas: A Job Guide for Americans & Canadians* by Jeff Mohamed. English International Publications: 2003

Contributors to this publication: Eric Trujillo, Education School, Colorado State University

### **CAREER SERVICES • UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO AT BOULDER**

Center for Community, N352 UCB 133 2249 Willard Loop Drive Boulder, CO 80309-0133

Phone 303-492-6541 FAX 303-492-5723 <http://careerservices.colorado.edu>

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