**PRE-INTERVIEW INFORMATION - FAQs**

We have complied a list of frequently asked questions for your information. There will be an opportunity for you to ask further questions at the interview.

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

**A** Yes

This **part-time** course takes place on Tuesday evenings from 5.30 pm to 8.45 pm and Thursdays from 9 am to 4.30 pm. However, in addition to this you should be prepared to spend two or more other evenings per week on course-related work and also a considerable part of weekends.

Here are some comments from former trainee teachers:

“A very challenging and stimulating experience”

“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** Regulations state that: “To meet the course requirements candidates are required to attend the whole course”. You would therefore put yourself at a serious disadvantage if you missed any of the course and may not be awarded the Certificate. Of course, you may need to miss some sessions if you are ill or for another unavoidable reason. In this case, your absences are recorded in your assessment booklet and you have to make up what you have missed in your own time.

**Q What is the course timetable?**

**A** The course is divided into methodology sessions and teaching practice with feedback.

A typical course timetable is as follows, although there will be variations to this.

Tuesday 5.30 – 8.45pm - 2 methodology sessions with a 15 minute break

Thursday 9 – 12.15 teaching practice and peer feedback

Thursday 1.15 – 4.30pm tutor feedback, lesson preparation and methodology

**Q What happens in the methodology sessions?**

**A** A variety of activities such as: discussion of language awareness and analysis tasks in groups; demonstration of teaching procedures by tutors; observation and analysis of teaching; analysis and preparation of teaching materials; peer teaching in groups. There is a high level of trainee participation, often in pairs or groups.

**Q When would I start teaching?**

**A** This varies according to the number of trainees on the course but typically in the second week of the course.

**Q Who would I be teaching?**

**A** Groups (up to 16 students per group) of students from a variety of different countries who are living here for different reasons. A substantial number of our students are refugees and asylum seekers. They are all adults (minimum age is 16) and 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 and weaknesses as a teacher.

**Q What teaching methods would I be expected to use?**

**A** No one ‘method’ is taught on the course: it is an introduction to the theory and practice of English Language Teaching and introduces trainees to a variety of current procedures and techniques in the field. You will be expected to put into practice the procedures and techniques that you have been taught on the course.

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

**A** You should expect to spend time:

* liaising with colleagues in your teaching practice group in order to ensure links and variety between in your lessons.
* planning your own lessons: although you may be teaching for relatively short periods, it is quite normal to spend about 3 hours, or sometimes more, preparing;
* working on written assignments: these would be both short homework tasks and four extended assignments (the requirements are that you write a minimum of 3000 words in total for these). The assignments are course-related and of a very practical nature. They are internally assessed and externally moderated.
* doing background reading of recommended texts 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, written assignments and professionalism, with each assessed component contributing to the overall grade. Trainees are given feedback by the tutors on their teaching and have at least two tutorials during the course at which they discuss their progress. All tutors working on the course discuss each trainee’s final grade. These grades are provisional until they have been confirmed by both the Cambridge assessor (who visits the course for one day) 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 of how language works and that they will be able to meet the demands of the course in terms of standard of writing. It is also 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 are stored so that the assessor can check our recruitment procedure when he or she visits.

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

**A** The regulations state that candidates “must have an awareness of language and a competence in English, both written and spoken, that enables them to follow the course”. We welcome applicants whose English is not their first language, as long as it is at an appropriate level. We often find that candidates who have gone through the process of learning English are in a good position to teach it to others.

**Q Why do I have to write down which languages I speak on the application form?**

**A** Candidates who speak another language well 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 can find it difficult to plan for teaching both language and skills development lessons. Their lack of understanding of the language learning process may make it difficult for them to anticipate 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 If I am offered a place and something prevents me from taking it, can I defer to a later course?**

**A** This may be possible. Please 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 in the UK?**

**A** Generally, the answer here is ‘no’. Many newly qualified teachers find work overseas but it may be possible to find work in this country, particularly voluntary work or community based classes and more so at the moment with the increase in the number of refugees and asylum seekers. Towards the end of the course, you will be given some general advice on looking for work. We also have a selection of teaching posts and agencies on file.

**Make notes below of any questions you would like to ask the interviewer:**