One Step at a Time: How to Have a Successful Working Experience Abroad

Step 1: Reflect on why you’re seeking a teaching opportunity abroad

- Why do you want to work abroad?
- What type of teaching opportunities are you seeking?
- What skills do you already have that will assist you in your teaching efforts?
- What skills are you seeking to gain through your teaching efforts?
- How might this experience contribute to your education/career/life?
- Use the Career Center’s Education and Working Abroad pages to explore your options, as well as TESOL’s Career Center.

Step 2: Research teaching opportunities

- Decide on the country or countries in which you would like to teach and assess each teaching position critically.
- I highly recommend using https://www.tefl.org/teach-english-abroad/ to inform your research

- Important Considerations:

  **Finances**
  - Prepare a budget that accounts for the expenses of the job you select- travel costs, living expenses, touring time outside the position, etc.
  - What does the position pay?
  - What will airfare/travel cost?
  - What are visa costs? Any required/recommended immunizations?
  - What would be your living situation? Will you be living in a city or rural community? How will you get from your home to work?

  **Personal Safety**
  - How safe is the area in which you will live?
  - Do other folks from your nationality work/live in the same area?
  - Will your job responsibilities put your health or safety at risk?
  - Safety and accessibility are also important factors. If you’re a member of the LGBTQ+ community, you want to ensure that the job you have is somewhere where you can feel safe and legally protected. If you have a disability, also, it’s crucial to find work that has accessibility legislation in place and suits you. (TEFL.org)
  - Safety: It’s important to follow the news in the country you’re thinking of moving to. Your safety is paramount – consider any conflicts, political upheaval, medical concerns, acceptance of the LGBTQ+ community and of people with accessibility needs. (TEFL.org)
  - Register with the US Embassy and find out more safety information at www.travel.state.gov.
For more information, you can browse the US Department of State’s Travel Advisories. Keep in mind, the information on this page is from a federal perspective.

Job Responsibilities

- What will you be responsible for? Is this clearly defined?
- Are the expectations reasonable for someone with your skills and level of education?
- To whom will you report?
- How many days of the week and hours of the day will you work?
- What is the work culture?

Cultural Experience

- Does the amount of cultural immersion you will have meet your expectations?
- Is it necessary to speak a language other than English?
- Do you have sufficient linguistic and pedagogical knowledge to teach? (Being a native speaker of English is not enough to teach English!)

Other Questions to Consider

- Take note of the job’s mission and purpose- does this align with your personal values? Are you comfortable promoting this school/business/institution?
- From what aspects of the job will you benefit the most? What is it about this job that appeals to you?

Step 3: Access internal and external resources

- Check with Global Education to see if there are students at CC who have traveled to the country or may be from there and want to share their experiences, or with the Career Center to see if there are any known alumni who have worked in that country/city.
- Consult with the Office of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) Education to learn more about opportunities
- Research applicable coursework, jobs, or volunteer opportunities at CC that may improve your readiness
- Consider a TEFL/CELTA certification program, if necessary

Step 4: Choose a teaching position

- Apply to the job
- When accepted, review any contract(s) before signing
- Register with the US Embassy

Step 5: Teach!

- Teach abroad and have a great time!
- Keep a journal to reflect on your experiences and draw from after your experience has ended