

# **TESL CANADA INSTRUCTOR CERTIFICATION MANUAL**



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# Table of Contents

## Purpose

## Benefits

## Pre-2006 Certification Exceptions

## Certification Overview

- I. TESL Canada Recognized Teacher Training Programs
- II. ESL Teacher Experience Hours (practicum not applicable)
- III. Positive Performance Reviews
- IV. Official Documents
- V. PLAR – Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition
- VI. TESL Ontario Certificants Streamlined Application Process

## CRITERIA/REQUIREMENTS

## APPLICATION PROCEDURES

- I. Membership
- II. Review of Applications
- III. Review Periods
- IV. Application Fee
- V. Confidentiality
- VI. Awarding of Certificates
- VII. Appeals
- VIII. PLAR – Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition
- IX. Upgrading to a Higher Standard

## PLAR

- I. What is PLAR?
- II. Who is eligible for PLAR?
- III. What is a professional portfolio and what are its contents?
- IV. What are the steps in the PLAR process?
- V. Assessment of portfolios against TESL Canada Standards One, Two, and Three
- VI. Assessment of portfolio introduction



TESL Canada Instructor Certification Manual

[VII. Assessment of professional experience](#)

[VIII. Other potential portfolio inclusions](#)

[IX. PLAR Skills-Rubric Requirements](#)

[FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS](#)

[APPENDICES](#)

[Appendix A: Pre-2006 Certification Exceptions](#)

[Appendix B: TESL Canada Federation Certification Classroom Observation Report](#)

[Appendix C: Standard One Application Form](#)

[Appendix D: Standard Two Application Form](#)

[Appendix E: Standard Three Application Form](#)

[Appendix F: Standard Two Streamlined Application Form](#)

[Appendix G: PLAR Application Form](#)



## TESL Canada Instructor Certification Manual

# INTRODUCTION

TESL Canada National Certification Standards for Instructors of English as a Second Language or Foreign Language in Adult Programs were developed for instructors trained in Canada. TESL Canada National Professional Certification Standards represent a teacher-driven initiative to create basic, minimum national standards. Some provinces currently have professional certification systems in place. A TESL Canada professional certificate does not replace provincial professional certificates where they exist. Professionals can choose to hold both TESL Canada and provincial organization certificates.

## Purpose

The purpose of TESL is to promote excellence in the teaching and learning of English as a Second Language across Canada by promoting professional certification standards that are recognized in all provinces.

Developed through participation and feedback across the ESL field, these standards address the professional context of Canadian ESL educators. TESL Canada recognizes that Canadian ESL delivery varies widely in structure and specifics and looks forward to the continuing development of these standards through feedback and the appeal process.

TESL Canada national standards provide a national focus on standards for all ESL educators and encourage high levels of participation in an accreditation system that recognizes and values the diversity of approach to ESL instruction in its many settings. Since their implementation in May 2002, the TESL Canada National Professional Certification Standards are continuing to be the authoritative base for evaluation and comparison of ESL teacher training in Canada.

## Benefits

The TESL Canada National Professional Certification Standards benefit educators by helping ensure that:

- TESL training and ESL teaching experience are recognized as main professional benchmarks of Canadian ESL educators
- Teaching credentials are recognized not only from province to province but by virtue of their national status, from country to country.
- Credentials are recognized by international students when they compare faculty at post-secondary schools and language institutes across Canada before their arrival in Canada. As a result, programs which hire qualified professionals will attract more students.
- Qualifications are valued appropriately by government and non-government funders when educators request financial support for awards, scholarships, and projects.

## Pre-2006 Certification Exceptions

TESL Canada certificants who have received TESL Canada Professional Certification prior to 2006 will have been awarded Levels One, Two, Three or Four. They are not required to re-apply for accreditation under the revised standards; they may opt, if they prefer, to retain their certification status under the pre-2006 guidelines. To review the pre 2006 certification levels please see **Appendix A**.



## TESL Canada Instructor Certification Manual

### Certification Overview

#### I. TESL Canada Recognized Teacher Training Programs

The minimum criteria include: (for Professional Standard One)

- a minimum of 100 hours of theory and methodology, and
- a practicum of a minimum of 20 hours (10 hours of observation and 10 hours of teaching) supervised by an instructor certified at a minimum of TESL Canada Professional Certificate: Standard One, Two or Three [Permanent] with at least 2,000 hours of experience in adult ESL/EFL classrooms. The practicum must be in an adult ESL classroom (adult classroom with a minimum of five students, 80% of which are over 18 years of age with a minimum of five students). This does not include teaching the provincially mandated K-12 curriculum.

Note: this training may be part of an undergraduate or graduate degree.

Name of Standard	Requirements
Professional Standard One	University degree + 100 hours (methodology and theory) and a minimum of 20 hours in a supervised adult ESL/EFL classroom practicum (10 hours of classroom observation and 10 hours of practice teaching).  Up to half of the observation and teaching hours may be done in online synchronous environments.
Professional Standard Two	University degree + 250 hours (methodology and theory) and a minimum of 50 hours in a supervised adult ESL/EFL classroom practicum (30 hours of classroom observation and 20 hours of practice teaching).  Up to half of the observation and teaching hours may be done in online synchronous environments.
Professional Standard Three	Master's in Applied Linguistics or TESOL and a minimum of 50 hours in a supervised adult ESL/EFL classroom practicum (30 hours of classroom observation and 20 hours of practice teaching).  Up to half of the observation and teaching hours may be done in online synchronous environments.

List of TESL Canada Recognized Programs: <https://www.tesl.ca/training/tesl-canada-recognized-teacher-training-programs/recognized-teacher-training-directory/>



## **TESL Canada Instructor Certification Manual**

### **CELTA**

Graduates of The University of Cambridge Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA) from an institution not recognized by TESL Canada are eligible to apply for Certification through the regular application process. An additional administrative fee of \$100 will be charged in these cases in order for TESL Canada administration to review information regarding the program that would have otherwise been submitted if the program had been through the TESL Canada Teacher Training Program Recognition process. Provided the CELTA Program is assessed at TESL Canada Standards, the applicant will be granted TESL Canada Certification without being referred to PLAR (Prior Learning Assessment Recognition).

### ***MASTER'S/ DOCTORAL DEGREE***

All master's/doctoral graduates in TESL or equivalent with a demonstrated background in adult education, with appropriate practicum, from a Canadian institution which is a member in good standing of the AUCC, are eligible for TESL Canada Standard Three upon application. These programs are listed on our list of recognized programs. Please complete the application form for Professional Certification Standard Three.

**List of Standard Three Programs:** <http://www.tesl.ca/training/tesl-canada-recognized-teacher-training-programs/standard-three-programs/>

### ***TRAINING COMPLETED PRIOR TO PROGRAM'S RECOGNITION***

Applicants who completed their training prior to their programs' TESL Canada recognition will be referred back to the program to determine equivalency. The TESL training program director must confirm that the program the applicant completed is equivalent to the program now recognized. If it is not equivalent, the gaps will be identified by TESL Canada and completed by the applicant before certification can be granted.

## **II. Official Documents**

### ***Undergraduate or Graduate Degree Transcripts:***

Official transcripts must be sealed in an envelope by the degree-granting institution.

Transcripts that are received unsealed will not be accepted. Photocopies are not acceptable unless embossed with the official seal and signed by an official of the institution.

Note: Applicants with degree(s) from outside of Canada must provide **Canadian equivalency** from a credential evaluation service. Please see FAQ for more details.

### ***TESL Training:***

Official transcripts or certified copies of the certificate are required.

### ***English Language Proficiency Scores:***

TESL Canada only accepts valid official scores. Any ELP test result provided must be current (scores completed more than two calendar years prior will not be accepted). Notarized copies of any of the above documents are accepted.



## TESL Canada Instructor Certification Manual

<b>English Language Proficiency Tests*</b>	<b>Score – Program Trainees</b>
TOEFL iBT	Overall 101 with a minimum of 23 in Listening, 24 in Reading, 27 in Speaking and 27 in Writing
Or IELTS Academic	Overall 7 with a minimum of 7 in each skill area
Or completion of an undergraduate degree from an English-speaking university in one of the following countries: Canada, Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Bermuda, Botswana, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Cameroon, Dominica, Ghana, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, Nigeria, New Zealand, Republic of Ireland, Saint Kitts-Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands, United Kingdom, United States, Uganda, US Virgin Islands, Zambia, Zimbabwe.	

\* Note that candidates can submit two or more IELTS or TOEFL reports done in the past two years, and the highest of the scores for individual skills will be considered.

### III. PLAR – Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition

Applicants whose training was completed at an institution not on our list of recognized teacher training programs can apply to TESL Canada for certification. They will not be eligible to apply under the TESL Canada certification scheme because their training is not from a recognized program, but will be recommended to PLAR (Prior Learning Assessment Recognition). A TESL Canada PLAR adjudicator will review an applicant’s experience and training to determine equivalency. If the adjudicator finds a component(s) lacking from an applicant’s portfolio he/she will recommend the course(s) of action needed to meet TESL Canada standards. Once applicants have been assessed through PLAR, they will be granted certification if a) their application is deemed equivalent to TESL Canada standards, or b) the missing requirements are provided in the prescribed length of time. The cost of the PLAR assessment is \$290.

### IV. TESL Ontario Certificants Streamlined Application Process

TESL Ontario certificants are eligible to apply for TESL Canada Certification through a streamlined process. Holders of a TESL Ontario Instructor Certificate applying for Professional Standard Two may select the streamlined process when directed to do so by the TESL Canada online system. This type of application is subject to a reduced application fee of \$45 + HST that will cover the direct costs of the streamlined administrative process.

TESL Ontario certificants who have sufficient experience to meet the requirements of TESL Canada Standard Two or who have relevant Master’s degrees for Standard Three certification will follow the usual path for Standard Two or Three certification and pay the full \$90 fee. If applying for TESL Canada Standard Two or Three applicants should complete the additional sections of the application requested by the online system.

## OVERVIEW OF STANDARDS

Name of Standard	Details of Eligibility
<p><b>Professional Standard One</b></p> <p><i>The Professional Certificate: Standard One is intended to recognize ESL/EFL educators who have completed an undergraduate degree and a Standard One TESL Canada recognized TESL training program.</i></p>	<p>The Professional Certificate: Standard One may be granted upon presentation of certified evidence of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Completion of an undergraduate degree at an accredited post-secondary institution, and</li> <li>2) Completion of a TESL Canada Recognized TESL Training Program which includes:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) A minimum of 100 hours of theory and methodology and</li> <li>b) A supervised practicum of a minimum of 20 hours (10 hours of observation and 10 hours of teaching under the supervision of an instructor certified at a minimum of TESL Canada Professional Certificate: Standard One, Two, or Three with at least 2,000 hours of adult ESL/EFL classroom experience or equivalent.) Up to half of the observation and teaching hours may be done in online synchronous environments.</li> </ol> </li> </ol> <p>Note: Item (2) may be part of an undergraduate or graduate degree.</p>
<p><b>Professional Standard Two</b></p> <p><i>The Professional Certificate: Standard Two is intended to recognize ESL/EFL educators who have completed an undergraduate degree and a Standard Two TESL Canada recognized TESL training program.</i></p>	<p>The Professional Certificate: Standard Two may be granted upon presentation of certified evidence of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Completion of an undergraduate degree at an accredited post-secondary institution, and</li> <li>2) Completion of a Standard Two TESL Canada Recognized TESL Training Program which includes:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) A minimum of 250 hours of theory and methodology and</li> <li>b) A supervised practicum of a minimum of 50 hours (30 hours of observation and 20 hours of teaching under the supervision of an instructor certified at a minimum of TESL Canada Professional Certificate: Standard One, Two, or Three with at least 2,000 hours of experience in adult ESL/EFL classrooms or equivalent). Up to half of the observation and teaching hours may be done in online synchronous environments.</li> </ol> </li> </ol> <p>Note: Item (2) may be part of an undergraduate or graduate degree.</p>
<p><b>Professional Standard Three</b></p> <p><i>The Professional Certificate: Standard Three is intended to recognize ESL/EFL educators who have completed a Master's/Doctoral degree in</i></p>	<p>The Professional Certificate: Standard Three may be granted upon presentation of certified evidence of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Completion of a Master's/Doctoral degree in TESL or equivalent from a Canadian institution which is a member in good standing of Universities Canada ,</li> </ol>



## TESL Canada Instructor Certification Manual

*TESL or equivalent with a demonstrated background in adult education from a Canadian institution which is a member in good standing of Universities Canada, and a minimum of 20 hours in a supervised adult ESL/EFL classroom practicum.*

- 2) Demonstrated background in adult education, and
- 3) Completion of a minimum of 50 hours in a supervised adult ESL/EFL classroom practicum (30 hours of classroom observation and 20 hours of teaching under the supervision of an instructor certified at a minimum of TESL Canada Professional Certificate: Standard One, Two, or Three with at least 2,000 hours of adult ESL/EFL classroom experience or equivalent.) Up to half of the observation and teaching hours may be done in online synchronous environments.

**OR**

- 1) The requirements of Professional Standard One or Two,
- 2) Completion of a Master's degree or PhD in a related field at an accredited post-secondary institution, and



## TESL Canada Instructor Certification Manual

Documents Required			
	Standard One	Standard Two	Standard Three
Proof of TESL Canada Membership	✓	✓	✓
Transcript of Bachelor Degree (Canadian University)	✓	✓	✓
TESL Program (Official Transcripts or certified copies of certificates required)	✓	✓	✓
Transcript of Master in TESL/Applied Linguistics (Canadian University)			✓
Proof of Practicum Completion Section #1	Applicants who have completed Bachelor or Master degree in TESL or Applied Linguistics will have to provide a letter of practicum completion from their institution/s.		
Canadian Equivalency Report	Applicants who have completed bachelor degree outside Canada must provide Canadian equivalency from a credential evaluation service. Please see FAQ # 4 for more details.		
English Language Proficiency Score (ELP)	Applicants who have completed an undergraduate degree from a university where the language of instruction and administration was not English will have to submit an ELP Score		



## TESL Canada Instructor Certification Manual



## APPLICATION PROCEDURES

### I. Membership

Applicants in Canada must be members of a TESL Canada Provincial or Territorial Organization, i.e. ATESL, TESL Saskatchewan, TEAL Manitoba, TEAM, TESL New Brunswick, TESL Nova Scotia and TESL Newfoundland/Labrador.

Applicants applying from British Columbia, Ontario, Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Prince Edward Island and Quebec can choose to become a member TESL Canada directly. TESL Canada Individual Membership is valid for one year.

International applicants may apply for TESL Canada International membership. TESL Canada membership fee is US\$62.00 for residents outside of Canada and United States and US\$58.00 for international applicants residing in the United States.

### II. Review of Applications

Applications are reviewed by a TESL Canada Professional Standards Adjudicator.

### III. Review Periods

Applications are reviewed twice a month. It is anticipated that complete applications will be processed within four to six weeks of receipt.

### IV. Application Fee

The non-refundable application fee for a life-time certificate is \$94.50 (\$90.00 plus \$4.50 GST) if applying from Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Quebec, Prince Edward Island, or the Yukon

or

Payment of \$101.70 (\$90.00 plus \$11.70 HST) if applying from Ontario, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland/Labrador

or

Payment of \$103.50 (\$90.00 plus 13.50 HST) if applying from Nova Scotia

or



## **TESL Canada Instructor Certification Manual**

Payment of \$90.00 U.S. if applying from outside Canada

Payment must be included with the application: VISA, MasterCard, or American Express are accepted online.

### **V. Confidentiality**

All documentation will be kept confidential. Documentation will be returned to the applicant upon completion of the application process. It is recommended that applicants retain a personal copy of the completed application and all documentation.

### **VI. Awarding of Certificates**

Successful applicants will receive a certificate at the appropriate standard.

### **VII. Appeals**

Applicants who do not meet the requirements will receive a letter of explanation. An applicant who is denied a certificate, or who is denied a certificate at the standard requested, may appeal to the TESL Canada Professional Standards Appeal Committee by submitting a letter along with documentation to TESL Canada. Appeals must be submitted within 6 months of notification of being denied.

The fee for Appeals is \$50.00 plus applicable taxes for the applicant's province or US \$50.00 if applying from outside Canada.

The undergraduate degree requirement may not be challenged by appeal.

### **VIII. PLAR – Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition**

Applicants whose education and training was completed at an institution not on TESL Canada's list of recognized teacher training programs can apply to TESL Canada and may be referred to PLAR. The TESL Canada PLAR adjudicator will review such applicants' prior education, training and experience to determine equivalency. TESL Canada will follow the PLAR Adjudicator's recommendation. The PLAR process will be outlined in a letter of explanation (Form A) which applicants may receive after applying to TESL Canada. For any questions, please contact the office by e-mail at [certification@tesl.ca](mailto:certification@tesl.ca) or by telephone at 1-800-393-9199.



## TESL Canada Instructor Certification Manual

### IX. Upgrading to a Higher Standard

Applicants may upgrade to a higher standard by submitting documentation of additional teaching/administration hours, education, and/or performance reviews.

The non-refundable fee for upgrading is \$90.00 + GST

\$94.50 (\$90.00 plus \$4.50 GST) if you live in British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Quebec, NWT, Nunavut, and Yukon

**or**

Payment of \$95.40 in Saskatchewan

**or**

Payment of \$101.70 in Ontario

**or**

Payment of \$103.50 in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland, and Labrador

**or**

Payment of \$90.00 U.S. if applying from outside Canada



## TESL Canada Instructor Certification Manual

# PLAR

## WHAT IS PLAR?

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) is a process used by TESL Canada to assess and evaluate the skills and knowledge of an ESL teacher applying for TESL Canada accreditation, but who has not received training through a TESL Canada accredited program. Applicants going through the PLAR process have to submit a professional portfolio demonstrating equivalent competencies to those who have graduated from a TESL Canada accredited program.

## WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR PLAR?

TESL Canada certification will be awarded to applicants who demonstrate an equivalent competency to those who graduate from a TESL Canada accredited program. Applicants whose training was completed at an institution not on the TESL Canada list of recognized teacher training programs may apply to TESL Canada for certification through the PLAR process. The following guidelines help determine whether to apply for TESL Canada certification through PLAR:

- **Formal Training:**
  - i. Have you completed a minimum equivalent of 100 hours of English as a Second Language (ESL) courses with a focus on theory and methodology?
    - Verifiable documentation (sealed transcripts) is required.
  - ii. Do you have performance evaluations of your adult ESL teaching that document successful implementation of ESL theory and methodology?
  
- **Informal Training:**
  - i. If you have the minimum equivalent of 100 hours of formal training, have you completed an equivalent of at least 25 hours of on-the-job teacher training, workshops, or non-credit courses with a focus on ESL theory and methodology?
    - Verifiable documentation (workshop certificates, workplace letter outlining on-the-job training received, transcripts showing participation in non-credit courses, etc.) is required.
  - ii. Do you have performance evaluations of your adult ESL teaching that document successful implementation of ESL theory and methodology?



## TESL Canada Instructor Certification Manual

- **Informal Learning:** Life experiences are an asset for an ESL teacher to possess, but informal learning alone will not qualify for TESL Canada Certification.

## WHAT IS A PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO AND WHAT ARE ITS CONTENTS?

A professional portfolio is a well-organized and documented record of one's learning, experience, and growth in a particular field of work. Both digital and hardcopy portfolios must have clearly defined sections that allow the reader to evaluate the qualifications of the applicant.

### 1. Introduction:

- In 250 words or less, provide a statement outlining your underlying beliefs about teaching strategies and practices. This statement should summarize the documents in the portfolio and how they exemplify your abilities, skills, and knowledge.

### 2. Education:

- Name of University, Degree(s) completed with year(s) of completion.
  - Sealed transcripts must be sent to TESL Canada by the applicant or the institution(s).

*Please note:* If a degree is from another country, the applicant must provide a Canadian equivalency report from one of the following agencies. Candidates should present a detailed document-by-document report that includes a transcript, or a short report.

- World Education Services (WES) <http://www.wes.org/ca/>
- International Credential Evaluation Service (ICES) <http://www.bcit.ca/ices/>
- International Credential Assessment Service (ICAS ) <http://www.icascanada.ca>
- Comparative Education Service <http://learn.utoronto.ca/ces.htm>

### 3. TESL/TEFL training:

- Include the following information – institution name and location, dates attended, program completed, and the name and precise address of a contact person, including an email address.

### 4. Practicum information:

- Please provide the name of your sponsor teacher, his/her TESL qualifications, his/her contact information including an email address, your practicum supervisor and his/her qualifications and contact information.
- Also specify how many hours were spent observing and how many hours were spent teaching under supervision.
  - Sealed transcripts must be sent to TESL Canada by the applicant or the institution(s).



## **TESL Canada Instructor Certification Manual**

### **5. Names and detailed descriptions of TESL and relevant Linguistics courses:**

- Ideally include at least 2 pages of information for each 40 academic contact hours.
  - At least 100 academic contact hours of this type of documentation is mandatory for a PLAR adjudication.

### **6. Learning Resources:**

- List of textbooks and other core resources used in your TESL/Applied Linguistics education and training.

### **7. Assessment of Learning:**

- Description of assessment requirements in your TESL/Applied Linguistics education and training.

### **8. Teaching experience:**

- List the institutions and locations where you have taught and the courses you have taught for them.
  - Sealed documents verifying the number of adult ESL teaching hours for Professional Standard One, Two, or Three Permanent and/or for those requesting practicum equivalency must be sent to TESL Canada.

### **9. Performance Reviews:**

- Two performance reviews for Professional Standard One, Two, or Three Permanent.
- One of these must be a classroom observation report.
  - The reviews must be originals sealed in an envelope with the referee's signature across the seal.
  - The names of the referees along with their contact information and institution must be included.

### **10. Other Documentations:**

- Other documentation that fills any gaps between the contents of your formal academic education in TESL and TESL Canada's standard descriptors.
- Documents may include in-service certificates stating topics and hours; letters from supervisors attesting to workplace training activities; essays from non-TESL courses that demonstrate required knowledge; or items you have created for classroom use such as sample lesson plans, unit plans, curriculum guides, assessment rubrics, handout materials, computer assisted language learning tools, audiotapes, etc.

### **11. Proof of membership in a TESL Canada Provincial/Territorial organization:**

- This is mandatory if residing in Canada.
- Please send your original membership receipt or email from provincial organization indicating that you are a member in good standing.



## TESL Canada Instructor Certification Manual

- If residing outside of Canada, a completed International Membership form along with membership fee must be included.

## WHAT ARE THE STEPS IN THE PLAR PROCESS?

Step #	Role	Action
1	Applicant	Initial review of PLAR requirements
2	Applicant → PLAR Counsellor	PLAR counselling
3	Applicant	Application, PLAR fee, and portfolio submission
4	PLAR Counsellor	Preliminary PLAR portfolio review and communication
5	Adjudicator	Portfolio adjudication
6	PLAR Counsellor	Adjudication letter
7	TESL Canada office	Issuance of certificate

### 1. Initial review of PLAR requirements

An applicant familiarizes him/herself with the PLAR guidelines published on the TESL Canada website and decides if he/she is eligible for PLAR and whether he/she requires counselling.

### 2. PLAR counselling

If desired, an applicant may contact the PLAR counsellor for clarification or guidance. The PLAR candidate is provided with additional information or explanation about what the PLAR adjudicator will need in order to carry out an efficient assessment of an applicant's credentials and experience. The counselling session usually takes place as an email or a phone conversation, followed by a detailed summary from the PLAR counsellor. At this stage a counsellor may be able to determine that a candidate is not eligible for PLAR.

### 3. Application, PLAR fee, and portfolio submission

Based on the counselling session and/or review of PLAR requirements, the applicant fills out the application form available on the TESL Canada website, pays the fees, and submits the portfolio as part of the application.

### 4. Preliminary portfolio review and communication

The counsellor reviews the portfolio when it arrives to ensure that all necessary documentation has been included. If the portfolio seems complete, the counsellor emails the PLAR applicant to let him/her know the portfolio has arrived and to offer an approximate timeline for completion of the adjudication. If the portfolio has some obvious gaps, the counsellor emails the applicant to discuss the gaps and ways the applicant might



## **TESL Canada Instructor Certification Manual**

be able to fill them. Ideally, the applicant communicates with the PLAR counsellor as soon as possible if the suggested timeline proves impossible and commits to an alternate timeline.

Some gaps in a PLAR portfolio may not be identifiable through a preliminary portfolio review and may only be identified through a thorough review by the adjudication in the next stage.

### **5. Portfolio adjudication**

The adjudicator thoroughly reviews the portfolio and writes the recommendation to the PLAR counsellor.

### **6. Adjudication letter**

The counsellor then writes a letter to the applicant stating the recommendation. If the recommendation is that the applicant receive the certification, the TESL Canada certificate will be enclosed. If the recommendation is that the applicant not receive certification, the counsellor will include a summary of how the applicant can proceed to fill the remaining gaps.

If the applicant has to fulfil recommendations in order to qualify for certification, he or she does not have to repeat the PLAR process after completing the recommendations. He or she only has to submit documentation of completion to the TESL Canada office, which will review the letter of recommendation to ensure that the new documentation fills the identified gaps, and then issue the appropriate certificate.

### **7. Issuance of certificate**

Following a successful PLAR adjudication, the TESL Canada office issues the appropriate certificate to the applicant.

### **8. TESL Canada PLAR process vs. TESL certification**

It should be noted that TESL Canada professional accreditation merely recognizes that a candidate has the minimum required education, training and/or teaching experience at the applicable standard to be employable as an adult ESL instructor in Canada. TESL Canada professional accreditation does not replace or supersede teacher training/education degrees or certificates issued by educational institutions. Applicants are encouraged to review various training programs recognized by TESL Canada and to seek advice whether further education may be required to enhance their employability in specific teaching contexts in Canada and/or internationally.



TESL Canada Instructor Certification Manual

**ASSESSMENT OF PORTFOLIOS AGAINST TESL CANADA STANDARDS ONE, TWO, AND THREE**

(as per standard descriptors on TESL Canada website) <http://www.tesl.ca/certification/certification-standards-descriptors/>

**Adjudication Rubric**

- The TESL Canada National Professional Certification Standards are based on level of education, TESL training, teaching experience and positive performance reviews. The following chart indicates the requirements for each Standard.
- If an applicant has successfully completed a program not recognized by TESL Canada, the adjudicator uses this chart to determine which standard to award based on PLAR applicant's documented TESL education and training hours.

Name of Standard	Requirements
Professional Standard One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• University degree + 100 hours (methodology and theory) and</li><li>• A minimum of 20 hours of supervised adult ESL/EFL classroom practicum, consisting of 10 hours of classroom observation and 10 hours of practice teaching. The practice teaching needs to be individual teaching by the applicant, not team teaching, and supervised by a qualified teacher of adult ESL learners in a regular classroom setting of a minimum of 6 ESL learners.</li></ul>
Professional Standard Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• University degree + 250 hours (methodology and theory) and</li><li>• A minimum of 50 hours of supervised adult ESL/EFL classroom practicum, consisting of 30 hours of classroom observation and 20 hours of practice teaching. Classroom observations must be completed in two different settings. Practice teaching needs to be individual teaching by the applicant, not team teaching, and supervised by a qualified teacher of adult ESL learners in a regular classroom setting of a minimum of 6 ESL learners.</li></ul>
Professional Standard Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Master's in Applied Linguistics or TESOL and</li><li>• A minimum of 50 hours of supervised adult ESL/EFL classroom practicum</li></ul>



## TESL Canada Instructor Certification Manual

# ASSESSMENT OF PORTFOLIO INTRODUCTION

The introduction should be in 12 point ARIAL font, 250 words or less, and should include a statement outlining candidate's underlying beliefs about teaching strategies and practices. This statement should summarize the documents in the portfolio and reflect how they exemplify candidate's abilities, skills, and knowledge.

Quality of language (demonstrated through features including use of standard academic English, varied sentence structure, clear organization), specific examples, and a succinct summary of applicant's teaching philosophy.

Here is a suggested link to help a candidate with the creation of a portfolio introduction:

<https://teachingcenter.wustl.edu/programs/graduate-students-postdocs/applying-for-academic-positions/creating-a-teaching-portfolio/>

## ASSESSMENT OF PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

### 1. Attestation of hours of professional English language classroom teaching

Include a list of present and prior TESL/TEFL workplaces, their locations, letters signed by program supervisors specifying the number of hours you were in charge of an ESL/EFL classroom, levels and nature of classes taught, and current contact information. Applicants are required to document their hours of professional English language classroom teaching using the following guidelines:

- Documented teaching experience must take place in English language classes of 5 or more students consisting of at least 80% adult English language learners of 18 years or older. The applicant must be teaching in a paid not volunteer capacity.
- Contact information must include the current name of the educational institution(s), the current postal and email address of the institution as well as the name of the program coordinator who supervised/coordinated the documented teaching hours.
- The forms or letters documenting the applicant's teaching hours and signed by the supervising program coordinator or administrator must provide the dates, the number of teaching hours, the English language level, and nature of the class that was taught by the applicant.

### 2. Performance reviews

The performance review and the practicum reports must come from two different persons. All performance reviews must be less than five years old and must be submitted by the program coordinator who supervised the applicant's ESL/EFL workplace and include the following:

- an assessment of the applicant's TEFL/TESL skills with reference to the dates
- the number of teaching hours
- English language level



### TESL Canada Instructor Certification Manual

- the nature of the class taught by the applicant as well as current contact information for the program coordinator and program.

If unable to provide performance reviews, indicate the reason.

### 3. Practicum reports

The following information must be provided as part of a practicum report:

- The sponsor teacher’s and practicum supervisor’s TESL/TEFL qualifications, including information regarding university degrees), years of ESL/EFL teaching, professional accreditation standard and current contact information.
- The number of hours spent observing and the number of hours spent teaching under supervision of a qualified teacher of adult ESL.
- The dates, the number of teaching hours, the English language level, and the nature of the classes observed or taught during the practicum
- The practicum reports must be based on the template below:

See Appendix VII for a sample performance report

## OTHER POTENTIAL PORTFOLIO INCLUSIONS

In addition to the required documents, a portfolio may also include:

- in-service certificates stating topics and hours;
- letters of recommendation from employers;
- letters from supervisors attesting to workplace training activities;
- essays from non-TESL courses that demonstrate required knowledge;
- items the applicant created for classroom use such as sample lesson plans, unit plans, curriculum guides, assessment rubrics, hand-out materials, computer assisted language learning tools, audio files, etc.

## PLAR SKILLS RUBRIC

TESL Canada Requirements	Minimum Hours	Candidate’s Prior Training	Candidate’s Practical Skills	Candidate’s Hours
1. Theory		Program/Course/Module	Demonstration Method	
<i>Historical perspective on second language teaching</i>				
<i>Models of second language acquisition</i>				



**TESL Canada Instructor Certification Manual**

<b><i>Pedagogy:</i></b>				
Learning strategies and styles				
Factors affecting language learning				
Adult teaching and learning principles (andragogy)				
<b><i>Linguistics:</i></b>				
Syntax				
Phonology				
Morphology				
Sociolinguistics				
Discourse analysis				
Pedagogical grammar				
<b>a. Methodological Issues</b>				
<b><i>Lesson/Unit Planning</i></b>				
<b><i>Material Analysis and Development</i></b>				
<b><i>Curriculum for Specific Contexts</i></b>				
<b><i>Methodology/Techniques for:</i></b>				
Listening				
Speaking				
Reading				
Writing				
Grammar				



**TESL Canada Instructor Certification Manual**

Vocabulary				
Pronunciation (including segmentals and suprasegmentals)				
Intercultural awareness and communication				
<b>Assessment/Feedback</b>				
Error correction				
Standardized exams				
Classroom tests				
Other				
<b>b. Professional Issues</b>				
<b>Resources</b>				
<b>Professional Conduct and Practice</b>				
<b>Classroom Management</b>				
<b>Ongoing Professional Development</b>				
<b>TOTAL HOURS – Methodology/Theory</b>				
<b>2. Practicum (Adult classroom setting)</b>				
Classroom observation	30			
Supervised practice teaching	20			
<b>TOTAL HOURS – Practicum</b>	50			
<b>TESL Canada Required Total</b>				



**TESL Canada Instructor Certification Manual**

<b>Methodology/Theory - Standard I</b>	100 hours			
<b>- Standard II</b>	250 hours			
<b>Practicum Teaching and Observation</b>	20 hours (50 hours after Sep 1, 2017)			
<b>TOTAL TRAINING</b>				



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **I. My TESL/EFL training is not from a TESL Canada Recognized Program. Do I have to start over?**

Applicants whose training was completed at an institution not on the TESL Canada list of recognized teacher training programs may apply to TESL Canada for certification. Applicants will not be eligible under TESL Canada's certification scheme because such training is not from a recognized program, but will be recommended to PLAR (Prior Learning Assessment Recognition). A PLAR adjudicator in TESL Canada will review such applicants' experience and training to determine equivalency. If the adjudicator finds a component(s) lacking from an applicant's portfolio, he/she will recommend the course(s) that will be needed to meet TESL Canada standards. Once applications have been assessed through PLAR, they will be granted certification if a) they deem the application equivalent to TESL Canada standards, or b) applicants satisfy the missing components within the prescribed length of time. The cost of the PLAR assessment is \$290.

### **II. I have a Bachelor of Education degree and did my teaching practicum with children. Am I eligible for TESL Canada Professional Certification?**

No. TESL Canada Professional certification is intended for ESL/EFL instructors teaching in adult learning environments. Please note that an adult classroom is defined as a classroom with five or more students where 80% of the students are aged 18 or older. Provincial Teachers' Colleges and provincial regulatory bodies govern the certification of K-12 teachers.

### **III. I have been teaching EFL overseas and would now like to be certified to teach in Canada. How should I apply?**

Applicants who completed a non-recognized program should see FAQ #1. Essentially the same standards for professional certification apply. Applicants who completed a recognized program should ensure that their TEFL/TESL program meets TESL Canada standards, then complete an application form and include their official university transcripts, TESL certificate, documentation of their teaching experience, and positive performance reviews. Applicants applying from overseas will need to become an International member of TESL Canada.

### **IV. I completed a degree in another country. Will TESL Canada accept my foreign education credentials?**

All applicants with university degrees completed outside Canada must provide a Canadian equivalency assessment of their university degree(s) as part of their application. Assessments must be completed by a credential assessment service recognized in Canada. Examples of recognized assessment services are ICES <http://www.bcit.ca/ices>, CES <http://www.adm.utoronto.ca/ces>, WES [www.wes.org/ca](http://www.wes.org/ca), and ICAS <http://www.icascanada.ca>.

Important: applicants do not need to provide TESL Canada with a copy of their degrees (translated or not). The documented Canadian university equivalency is the required document. TESL Canada uses the standard, document-by-document assessment, and not the comprehensive assessment. If an applicant's degree(s) is/are in TESL/Applied Linguistics then a course-by-course assessment is required.

### **V. How can I document my classroom teaching experience?**

Applicants need to provide documentation of adult ESL/EFL classroom teaching experience if applying for Standards One, Two, or Three (Permanent). Documentation may consist of teaching contracts, employment records, letters from supervisors indicating the number of hours taught at the school, or pay stubs.

### **VI. How long does the application process take?**

Applications are typically processed within four to six weeks of receipt. Applications which are missing required documentation take longer. This is because contact has to be made with the applicant, the missing documentation or information requested, and subsequent submissions added to the file. TESL Canada will keep applications on file, open for



## **TESL Canada Instructor Certification Manual**

a period of six months for missing information or documentation, at which point certification may be denied and the file closed. Originals will be returned to the applicant. Materials such as transcripts that arrive without an application will be kept on file for a maximum of six months.

### **VII. What does “proof of membership in a TESL Canada Provincial/Territorial organization” mean?**

TESL Canada certification is a service offered to its members. To qualify as a TESL Canada member, applicants must be members of their provincial/territorial organization (see provincial/territorial map on any of the pages of this website, click on appropriate province to find the relevant organization; contact this provincial organization and become a member before submitting an application for certification). Applicants from outside of Canada will be automatically be directed to the appropriate section of the application form for international membership. Proof of membership must include an original membership card/receipt or a direct e-mail from applicants’ provincial or territorial association indicating that membership in good standing.

Residents of a province/territory without a TESL association, please contact TESL Canada for further information.

### **VIII. Can I count my ESL teaching hours in a K-12 classroom if my students were over the age of 16?**

No. The curriculum in the K-12 system is designed for youth, their needs and developmental stages. Adult curriculum addresses different needs and concerns.

### **IX. I took a CELTA Certificate from a non-recognized institution; can I still be certified by TESL Canada?**

Yes. Applicants who have completed a CELTA Certificate Program at an institution not recognized by TESL Canada may apply for certification through the regular application process. An additional administrative fee of \$100 will be charged in these cases in order for TESL Canada administration to review information regarding the program that would have otherwise been submitted if the program had been through the TESL Canada Teacher Training Program Recognition process. Provided the CELTA Program is assessed at TESL Canada Standards, the applicant will be granted TESL Canada Certification without being referred to PLAR (Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition).

### **X. What are the differences between the different Standards?**

Professional Standard One is for those who have taken a program with a minimum of 100 hours of methodology and coursework and at least a 20 hour practicum. Professional Standard Two is for those who have taken a program with a minimum of 250 hours of coursework and methodology and at least a 20 hour practicum (50 hours of practicum starting September 1, 2017). Standard Three is for those with a Master’s Degree in Applied Linguistics or TESOL.

### **XI. I have a Master’s degree in TESL from a Canadian university. Can I get TESL Canada certification?**

All masters/doctoral graduates in TESL or equivalent with a demonstrated background in adult ESL education, with appropriate practicum, from a Canadian institution which is a member in good standing of Universities Canada (formerly AUCC) are eligible for TESL Canada Standard Three upon application. These programs are on the TESL Canada list of recognized programs. Please select Standard Three when completing the online application form.

### **XII. I am TESL Ontario certified. Can I use this certification towards TESL Canada certification?**

TESL Ontario certificants are eligible to apply for TESL Canada certification through a streamlined process. Individuals with TESL Ontario Certificate of Accreditation applying for Professional Standard Two should complete the standard online form as directed. It will lead TESL Ontario certificants to the TESL Ontario Streamlined Registration Form. This application category is subject to a reduced application fee of \$45 + HST (\$50.85) that will cover the direct costs of the streamlined administrative process.

TESL Ontario certificants who have relevant Master’s degrees for Standard Three certification will follow the usual path for Standard Three certification and pay the full \$90 fee. However, their TESL Ontario certificate will be taken as the necessary proof that all essential academic and practicum requirements have been met, thus making the process less complex than it is for those who have not achieved TESL Ontario certified status.



## **TESL Canada Instructor Certification Manual**

### **XIII. Is membership the same as certification?**

No. Canada residents may wish to consider becoming a member of their provincial TESL organization to enjoy benefits such as member discounts on conferences and/or professional training activities. TESL Canada is open year-round to applications for international membership at a cost of US\$58 for those residing in the United States and US\$62 for those of other countries.

Certification is an additional process which recognizes professional adult ESL teaching qualifications. It involves a longer application and requires providing supporting documents. Membership in the applicants' regional organization or direct membership with TESL Canada is required for TESL Canada's certification process. International applicants may purchase international memberships at the time they pay for their certification.

### **XIV. I have lost my TESL Canada certificate. Can I be issued a new one?**

Yes, requests to re-issue the certificate should be made by emailing [info@tesl.ca](mailto:info@tesl.ca) with the mailing address and payment of \$20 + G/HST. Cheque or credit card accepted.



**TESL Canada Instructor Certification Manual**

# **APPENDICES**



## Appendix A: Pre-2006 Certification Exceptions

### LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

#### Professional Certificate: Level One

The Professional Certificate: Level One is intended to recognize ESL/EFL educators who have completed an undergraduate degree and a TESL Canada recognized TESL training program or equivalent. For a complete description of the criteria for TESL Canada Recognized Teacher Training Programs, please check our website at [www.tesl.ca](http://www.tesl.ca)

##### Eligibility

The Professional Certificate: Level One may be granted upon presentation of certified evidence of:

- a) completion of an undergraduate degree at an accredited postsecondary institution or completion of the program at a Provincial Normal School and
- b) completion of a TESL Canada Recognized TESL Training Program which includes:
  - I. at least 100 hours of theory and methodology and
  - II. a supervised practicum of at least 20 hours (10 hours of observation and 10 hours of teaching under the supervision of an instructor certified at a minimum of TESL Canada Professional Certificate: Level Two (Level Three or higher preferred) or equivalent).

Note: Item (b) may be part of an undergraduate or graduate degree.

#### Professional Certificate: Level Two

The Professional Certificate: Level Two is intended to recognize ESL/EFL educators who have completed an undergraduate degree and a TESL Canada Recognized TESL Training Program, and have 2 years' experience in the field, as defined below.

##### Eligibility

The Professional Certificate: Level Two may be granted on the presentation of certified evidence of:

- a) The qualifications for the Professional Certificate: Level One, and
- b) Completion of 1600 hours as an ESL/EFL instructor in an adult program over a minimum period of 2 years, and
- c) Two (2) positive performance reviews by a supervisor or administrator: TESL Canada Professional Certificate: Level Three or higher preferred (or equivalent).



## Professional Certificate: Level Three

The Professional Certificate: Level Three is intended to recognize ESL/EFL educators who have completed an undergraduate degree and a TESL Canada recognized TESL training program, and have 5 years' experience in the field, as defined below.

### Eligibility

The Professional Certificate: Level Three may be granted on the presentation of certified evidence of a), b) and c) below:

- a) The qualifications for the Professional Certificate: Level One, and
- b) Completion of 4,000 hours as an ESL/EFL instructor in an adult program over a minimum period of 5 years or completion of at least 1,600 hours as an ESL/EFL instructor in an adult program over a minimum period of 2 years, and the balance in administration hours as defined above. The minimum number of years in the field to achieve this level will be five and,
- c) Two (2) positive performance reviews by a supervisor or administrator: TESL Canada Professional Certification: Level Three or higher preferred (or equivalent). One review must have been completed within the past 2 years.

## Professional Certificate: Level Four

The Professional Certificate: Level Four is intended to recognize ESL/EFL educators who are qualified at the graduate degree level and have 8 years of experience in the field, as defined below.

### Eligibility

Level Four certification may be granted on the presentation of certified evidence of a), b), c) and d) below:

- a) the qualifications for the Professional Certificate: Level One, and
- b) completion of a graduate degree in the field of ESL/EFL or related field,

and

- c) completion of 6,400 hours as an ESL/EFL instructor in an adult program over a minimum period of 8 years

or



**TESL Canada Instructor Certification Manual**

completion of at least 1,600 hours as an ESL/EFL instructor in an adult program over a minimum period of 2 years, and the balance in administration hours as defined above. The minimum number of years in the field to achieve this level will be eight

and

- d) two (2) positive performance reviews by a supervisor. One review must have been completed within the past 2 years.



## **Appendix B: TESL Canada Federation Certification Sample Classroom Observation Report**

<https://www.tesl.ca/certification/tesl-canada-professional-certification/sample-classroom-observation-form.html>

## **Appendix C: Standard One Professional Certification**

[https://www.tesl.ca/images/Membership/Application-Standard\\_One-November\\_2018.pdf](https://www.tesl.ca/images/Membership/Application-Standard_One-November_2018.pdf)

## **Appendix D: Standard Two Professional Certification**

[https://www.tesl.ca/images/Membership/Application-Standard\\_Two-November\\_2018.pdf](https://www.tesl.ca/images/Membership/Application-Standard_Two-November_2018.pdf)

## **Appendix E: Standard Three Professional Certification**

[https://www.tesl.ca/images/Membership/Application-Standard\\_Three-November\\_2018.pdf](https://www.tesl.ca/images/Membership/Application-Standard_Three-November_2018.pdf)

## **Appendix F: Standard Two Streamlined Application Form**

[https://www.tesl.ca/images/Membership/Application-Streamline\\_application-Standard\\_Two-November\\_2018.pdf](https://www.tesl.ca/images/Membership/Application-Streamline_application-Standard_Two-November_2018.pdf)

## **Appendix G: PLAR Application Form**

<https://www.tesl.ca/images/Membership/INTERNAL-PLAR-APPLICATION-revised-2018.pdf>



# TESL Canada Instructor Certification Manual