

What is the Pre-Course Task?

The pre-course task consists of approximately 11 hours of exercises aimed at developing your language awareness before you come to the school. These exercises are based on the core reading list (Jeremy Harmer – The Practice of English Language Teaching; Sound Foundations – Adrian Underhill; and Practical English Usage – Michael Swann). It is necessary to purchase these books to do the pre-course task. Carrying out this task will give you the best possible preparation at the start of the course so that the input sessions can be as effective as possible and we can get you into the classroom by the first Friday with a solid foundation.

How intensive is the course?

Trainees must bear in mind that the full-time four week formula is very intensive but it is a tried and tested workload that is heavy going and at the same time is invigorating and builds up momentum as the course progresses. The Teaching Practice is spread over the course as are the assignments culminating in the final week with an exam and the presentation of work and the assessment interview. A typical day begins at 9.30 and ends at 6.30.

What type of person can I find on the course?

Typical trainees come from all walks of life. Some are fresh out of college while others are mid-life career changers. We encourage a mix of ages, nationalities and backgrounds as we find it brings interest and new ideas to the programme.

Who are the practice students?

Your Teaching Practice lessons are open to anyone over sixteen who wishes to get extra English language practice. In general these students are either still at university or have recently graduated. Mostly they are Italian but more recently we have had participants of different nationalities as word spreads beyond the university circles.

Is there a dress code?

Since the course is held in a working language school we prefer you to dress in smart casual clothes. Strapless or backless tops and short shorts are not really appropriate in Teaching Practice.

Who are the tutors?

Our tutors are all highly qualified EFL teachers who have been selected for their special interest and ability to develop other teachers. They have many years experience both in EFL and other forms of training and teaching.

What happens in a typical day?

The mornings are dedicated to input sessions and workshops and the afternoons to Unknown language lessons or teaching practice. The approach is cumulative so that you will only start teaching once you have had sufficient practice and information.

What goes on in during an input sessions?

The input sessions are informative and fun! You will be taught using the same methodology that you will then be applying to your own teaching. The approach is very much a learning by doing one involving group and pair-work, games and activities - the sort of things that should take place in a language class.

How soon into the course will I be expected to teach?

You will begin teaching on Friday of week 1. This will be only a 20-minute lesson taught along with your training partners – each person doing one part of an hour-long lesson. This first lesson will be set out for you by the course tutors, but following this you will become increasingly independent in your lesson preparation. The next lesson will be on Monday or Tuesday of Week 2, this time a 40-minute lesson. The next five lessons you teach will each be one-hour in length, usually scheduled every other day, though some trainees will have to teach two days in a row at times. Each lesson you teach will be observed by a course tutor and there will be a feedback session afterwards to help you examine the strengths and weaknesses of your performance so you can make the most of this experience and grow as a teacher each time.

How much written work is there?

The course work is spread out throughout the programme so as not to overburden you. The first assignment, for example, is due on Monday of week 2 and the last is due at the end of week 4.

You have to complete four assignments involving the observation of experienced teachers, four additional observations based on the unknown language lessons along with a summary of that experience, a language-teaching materials assignment of approximately 1000 words which is assessed by an external moderator, self-evaluation tasks for each of the teaching practice sessions, and four peer observation tasks. These are generally one-page assignments based on pro formas. In addition, you will have to prepare lesson plans (assisted by tutors, especially at the beginning of the course).

How many exams are there?

Assessment is both formal and informal throughout the course. Your written work will be assessed by the tutors, though the materials assignment will be assessed by an external moderator from Trinity. There will be a language awareness exam covering grammar and phonology at the end of week 3. Your teaching practice sessions will be assessed by a tutor who observes your lesson and has a feedback session with you afterwards. Professional awareness and development are also taken into consideration. Written assignments are assessed according to a points system based on the objectives of each assignment. Spelling, punctuation and usage are also considered in assessing written work