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Teaching in the mainstream

The two previous sections of this book dealt with two distinct school types—both mostly private—funded by fee paying students: English language schools and international schools. This chapter takes a brief look at the mainly state-funded schools (though this formula varies among countries) and the opportunities available within these systems. This includes both the teaching of English in non-English speaking countries and the teaching of all subjects in English speaking countries. In most cases, applicants need to be formally qualified teachers, almost always with teaching experience in their home country. The JET Program is an exception.

The next chapter covers the teacher exchange programs managed by the various departments of education along with those run by the independent education unions. This chapter covers some other options run by various organisations involved in placing teachers in the public education systems of other countries.

Australia

New Zealanders looking at the option of teaching across the ditch should go to chapter 20.

Brunei

CfBT Education Services has been working with the Ministry of Education in Brunei since 1984. Currently there are about 200 native-English speaking teachers in state primary and secondary schools teaching English. These teachers are recruited and supported by CfBT, a non-profit educational consultancy and service organisation with more than 2000 staff employed around the world. See [//brunei.cfbt.org/bn](http://brunei.cfbt.org/bn). Enquiries about teaching in Brunei can also be made through

the Ministry of Education, usually in response to any vacancies that have been advertised. See www.moe.gov.bn.

Canada

Some Australian and New Zealand teachers can find positions as exchange teachers for 12 months through their department of education or independent education union. There are several provinces across Canada that participate in these exchanges which are small in number and keenly sought. See chapter 16. Those eligible for a working holiday visa may also be able to find some teaching positions in private schools or English language schools. Canada is one of the few countries that allows working holiday visa holders to work in one job for the full period of the visa, i.e. 12 months. Those who wish to work with children in Canada are required to undertake some additional tasks in their application process. See chapter two.

China

Unlike smaller countries such as Brunei, a country as huge as China has numerous entry points to the state (and private) educational system, almost always for English teaching. In 2000 the Chinese government introduced the teaching of English to the middle years at primary school and have since extended this policy. Clearly there are not enough Chinese English teachers to fill the positions required. The growth of English teaching in China is huge, but not all of these English teaching positions turn out to be what is advertised. In many cases, it is 'buyer beware' which is why it's important to go through reputable organisations, more so if you are planning a longer term stay. An outline of the education system in China can be found at www.edu.cn.

A keyword search on teaching in China will result in millions of websites in less than a second though few refer directly to teaching in state schools. Have a look at www.chinaeducationexchange.org and www.teach-in-china.net. Many of the English language schools listed in chapter five have schools in China, not surprisingly as it's the fastest growing market.

There are at least two Australian schools with campuses in China: Caulfield Grammar School and the Peninsula School. A few teachers are required to teach there, but in the case of Caulfield Grammar, applicants are required to possess good Mandarin Chinese language skills. See www.caulfield.vic.edu.au and www.tps.vic.edu.au.

Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

When Hong Kong ceased to be a British territory and became a Chinese territory in 1997 it was decided that 112 schools could retain English as the medium of instruction, but the remaining 300 or so would switch to Chinese instruction only. In an attempt to retain some English as a second language in these schools, the NET (Native-speaking English Teacher) Scheme was implemented and began in 1997 with 50 NETs. Needless to say, English ability plummeted. In an attempt to overcome the poor level of spoken English among school children, the Education and Manpower Bureau in Hong Kong has significantly expanded the NET Scheme so there are now some 800 NETs, but almost all schools have only one NET and some can find themselves in a fairly unsupportive school environment. Most NETs are from Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

Although there have been some recent problems with the scheme, mainly in relation to the total remuneration package, and there are stories of younger teachers not able to handle the isolation and pressure, many relish their time as a NET. One NET enjoyed her experience in part because all she had to do was to teach though she admitted there was a lot of this. However, there were no committees, no meetings and no paperwork. Nothing got in the way of what she really wanted to do.

Applicants must be a native-speaker of English or possess native-speaker English competence and have two years teaching experience in addition to teaching qualifications or a bachelor's degree plus a TEFL/TESL qualification. Preference is given to those with experience in teaching English as a second or foreign language. Teachers are recruited on a regular basis for primary and secondary schools on two-year contracts though it is possible to extend contracts

for which there is a financial incentive. There are also some other support, co-ordinator and curriculum positions available on a periodic basis. Salaries range from HK\$16,000-43,000 per month. See www.emb.gov.hk, choose English, and scroll to the bottom right for full details.

There is a Native English Speaking Teachers' Association with a website at www.nesta.com.hk where there is a good outline of life in Hong Kong along with information on the scheme.

Established in 1967 the English Schools Foundation—with five secondary, 10 primary, one special school, three kindergartens and one K-12 school—has some 11,000 students from 55 nationalities and around 1200 teachers. The curriculum is broadly based on that of the UK and the schools are co-educational with a non-selective intake. Each year some 50 teachers are recruited primarily from the UK, Australia, Canada and Hong Kong, with regional interviews taking place during February and March. In January of each year teaching vacancies are advertised in media such as the *TES* in the UK, *The Australian* in Australia and the *South China Morning Post* in Hong Kong, as well as on their website. Appointments are made for the following school year. See esf.edu.hk.

There are a number of English language schools and kindergartens employing foreign English language teachers. One place to keep an eye on adverts is the website of the *South China Morning Post* at www.scmp.com.

Ireland

For information on Ireland visit www.education.ie and go to 'mutual recognition of professional qualifications'. This will outline minimum eligibility requirements. Also go to www.leargas.ie which provides details on teacher and student exchange programs though the Australian and New Zealand education departments do not have exchanges with Ireland. Those with a European Union or Irish passport will have the best chance of teaching in mainstream schools in Ireland. Otherwise English language teaching is an option for those with qualifications and experience.

Japan

The Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme was established in 1978 and is run by the Japanese government as a means to fostering better understanding between Japan and other countries. Since its beginnings over 40,000 participants have worked in Japan either as Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) who comprise about 85 per cent of all placements, or Co-ordinators for International Relations (CIRs). More recently there have been a very small number of Sports Exchange Advisors (SEAs). The majority of participants come from those countries where English is the native language and are placed in junior and senior high schools where they assist in the delivery of English language teaching. Each year some 6000 are recruited, a good number of whom come from Australia and New Zealand.

The minimum requirement is a bachelor's degree and there is no requirement to speak Japanese or have a teaching qualification. Unless there are special circumstances, 35 is usually the upper age limit for applicants though most are in their 20s. The usual recruiting procedure is as follows: applications open in September, apply in writing by December, be interviewed at your nearest Japanese Embassy in February/March, and arrive in Japan in July. As an ALT you are assigned to a high school somewhere in Japan with a one-year contract renewable at the end of each academic year (July). The maximum stay is three years.

Almost every high school in Japan has either an ALT on staff, or a visiting ALT who visits a number of schools in their local area at least once a week. As an ALT you work a 35-hour week, although this may only involve a few hours of actual teaching time. You always work with a Japanese teacher, so there may be little chance to plan your lessons or teach what you would like. You're only expected to teach conversation (the Japanese teachers teach English grammar, reading and writing) so your hours of actual teaching time can be few and far between. Despite this, you're still expected to be at the school for a full day, every day, but you get weekends and public holidays off. The Japanese government looks after its JETs: your

apartment is subsidised, you're given help to organise your furniture and a car, and you get 20 days holiday per year, all in addition to your monthly salary of ¥300,000. In Australia see www.japan.org.au while in New Zealand check out www.nz.emb-japan.go.jp. Also see www.jetprogramme.org.

Korea

Each year the Korean Ministry of Education and Human Resources recruits a small number of native English speakers on 12-month contracts to teach students in primary and secondary government schools throughout Korea. Applicants must be university graduates and citizens of Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the US, Ireland or the UK. In 2006, 240 were chosen to participate, making a total of 1943 since the inception of the program in 1995. See [//epik.knue.ac.kr](http://epik.knue.ac.kr).

Malaysia

There is a widespread perception that English is widely spoken in Malaysia, but only about half the population is literate in English, compared to 90 per cent in Bahasa Malay. In recognition of this, in 2002 the government mandated the teaching of English from kindergarten. It also made a more controversial call of having all mathematics and science taught in English. Apparently few English teachers in national schools are able to hold a conversation in English.

CfBT Education Services assists the Malaysian Ministry of Education to improve the standard of English in secondary schools in both Peninsular Malaysia and North Borneo. For details on the small number of educational positions (around 50) go to CfBT Education Services's Malaysian website at www.cfbt.com.my. Those teachers with EFL teaching will be at an advantage.

New Zealand

Australians wishing to teach in New Zealand should see chapter 20.

Oman

CfBT Education Services recruits a number of teachers of English, computing and IT and a range of other educational positions for employment in state schools in Oman. See www.cfbtoman.com.

South Africa

There are no exchange schemes with South Africa given the disparity in teachers' wages however, there is nothing to prevent Australians and New Zealanders applying for positions, if successful they would need to apply for temporary residence status. See: www.teacherseeker.co.za though this site also includes jobs outside of South Africa.

United Arab Emirates (UAE)

The UAE consists of seven emirates: Abu Dhabi, Ajman, Dubai, Fujairah, Ras al-Khaimah, Sharjah and Umm al-Quwain. It has borders with Saudi Arabia and Oman and a population of around 4.3 million, but only about 20 per cent are citizens of UAE. Most of the population is from India and Pakistan. CfBT Education Services periodically recruits teachers of English to work in public schools in Abu Dhabi, the capital and largest of the Emirates. See www.cfbt.co.uk and follow the links.

United States

The school population in the US is growing dramatically with 55 million students attending school in 2006 and an estimated 56.7 million attending in 2014. That is more than twice of the population of Australia and New Zealand together. Some states, such as Texas, are growing much faster than the country's average, while others, such as New York, will be losing student numbers over this time. A number of school counties and districts are using foreign teachers—in small numbers compared to the total demand—to fill the gaps.

The Visiting International Faculty Program (VIF) has, since 1987 enabled thousands of overseas teachers to teach under the VIF program in a number of states in the US. States participating in this program include California, Colorado, Georgia, New Jersey, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia. In 2005 VIF sponsored around 1600 foreign teachers to teach in public schools through the issuing of a three-year cultural exchange visa. Remuneration includes a comprehensive salary and benefits package, round-trip travel and a comprehensive orientation. This program matches qualified applicants with positions available in the states listed above across a variety of subject areas. Applicants must be proficient in English, hold a university degree, have two years teaching experience and possess a drivers license with two years driving experience. See www.vifprogram.com.

As a result of the recent Australia-United States Free Trade Agreement, Australian teachers who are Australian citizens can apply to teach in the US using the new E-3 visa available only to Australians within the broader category of E visas. Though not aimed specifically at teachers this professional visa can be used by them along with other professionals and business people. There are 10,500 visas available each year, with visas being valid for two years, after which they can be renewed for periods of two years. The big advantage of this visa for married couples is that the spouse is eligible to work. It is first necessary to find a school to employ you, after which the school needs to obtain an approved Labor Condition Application (LCA) from the Department of Labor. For more details on this new visa see www.dfat.gov.au/geo/us/e3_visa.html and [//sydney.usconsulate.gov/consular/visa-e3.html](http://sydney.usconsulate.gov/consular/visa-e3.html).

There are plenty of websites about teaching in the US: www.uky.edu/Education/TEP/usacert.html lists the certification requirements for all 50 states; www.nais.org is the website of the National Association of Independent Schools with vacancies advertised; www.nea.org is the website of the National Education Association while www.aft.org is the website of the American Federation of Teachers. Job sites include: www.teachersatwork.com and www.educationamerica.net.

United Kingdom

The UK, particularly England, is by far the most popular country for Australian and New Zealand teachers due both to the familiar territory and ease of gaining a job, especially for those eligible for a working holiday visa. See under chapter two for more details on this visa. Also see chapters 18 and 19 regarding mainstream teaching options in England and Scotland and chapter five for English language teaching options. Chapter 18 includes information and websites providing information on educational topics including the National Curriculum for England. Note that the Scottish National Curriculum (see www.ltscotland.org.uk) has some significant differences to the English version, while both the curricula of Wales (see [//new.wales.gov.uk](http://new.wales.gov.uk)) and Northern Ireland (see www.ccea.org.uk) have some small differences.

Experienced teachers not eligible for the working holiday visa, but interested in teaching in the UK should contact Teach UK whose website is www.teachuk.com.au. Teach UK is not in the business of providing supply (casual) teachers as are many agencies, but rather in placing teachers into full-time positions. Opportunities exist primarily around London and southern England in early childhood, primary and secondary schools. A range of support services are provided in conjunction with their British partner. New Zealanders should keep an eye on the teaching overseas supplement in the *Education Review* in May and November of each year. Both Australians and New Zealanders should find a local travel agent that stocks the quarterly *UK Recruitment* newspaper, see www.recruitment.net.

A comprehensive list of schools in the UK can be found at www.goodschoolsguide.co.uk. Part of this site is free and part costs. The subscription section has reviews of over 1000 schools written by various contributors however, the free section has plenty of information for those wanting to find out about individual schools. The following two sites allow a search of private (called public in the UK) schools throughout the UK: www.schoolsearch.org.uk and www.uk.independentschools.com.

Though not mainstream teaching, PGL run adventure holiday camps for children in the UK, France and Spain. Instructors are hired across a range of outdoor activities and teachers with appropriate qualifications and experience are welcome to apply. See www.pgl.org.uk.