

## Reforms in Skills for Life teacher training and implications for ESOL teachers

There has always been a divergence between public and private sector education, which has been reflected to a great degree within the EFL and ESOL worlds. For teachers within EFL, there has been a structured system of qualifications available (for example Preparatory Certificates in TEFL, RSA Diploma, Trinity Licentiate Diploma TESL) and for schools, an external inspection process offered by the British Council. What was intrinsically lacking in this system was a generic qualification training teachers in the theory of learning (in contrast to language learning), dyslexia and disability, course planning and design and other key components in learner support.

Within the ESOL world, it used to be acceptable for Departments of Adult Education and organisations delivering ESOL within the Voluntary and Community Sector to employ teaching staff who had no specialist language teaching qualification and who often had limited experience in delivering language learning itself. An ESOL tutor may well have gained experience with their client group and be able to respond to their individual needs but would not necessarily have the range of language delivery techniques and resources at hand to support learning.

What was acceptable in the past no longer stands and recent years have seen huge investment from the Government to support an overhaul of the qualifications system for teachers delivering to adults learners within the public sector and an establishment of a compulsory and more rigorous inspection process. The implications to the ESOL world were clear. It spelt out that all ESOL teachers would require an ESOL subject specialist qualification at Level 4 and a generic teaching qualification in delivering to adult learners (a Certificate in Education). Inspection was formalised and made more rigorous through ALI (the Adult Learning Inspectorate). Many organisations delivering learning were facing inspection for the first time and ESOL teachers employed over many years were being asked to up-skill to continue to teach in their subject area.

The initial changes to teacher training, which began in 2002, were to be rolled out over a time period of up to ten years to allow both new and experienced practising teachers to reach the required level of qualification. This attempt to professionalise the

workforce left practising ESOL tutors with some dilemmas and, as a result, many teachers without a degree, an ESOL subject specialist certificate or with a legacy qualification, and who had no wish to retrain, chose to leave the profession.

As of 2007, however, the qualifications framework for those delivering Skills for Life to Adult Learners is changing again. Below is a description of the new structure, giving an overview of the credit-based system and its implications to anyone thinking of entering into the ESOL world. For ESOL teachers without fully-qualified teaching status (holding just the CELTA or DELTA qualification, for example), teachers changing their roles, those without subject specialist certificates or holding legacy qualifications, a staged entry programme is offered onto the qualifications ladder, with possibly a range of bridging course options available. To find out how your own qualifications fit within the DfES (Department of Further Education and Science) framework of fitness to practice, it is best to seek advice from an Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) network which deals with enquiries individual.

### New Qualifications Framework

- **Threshold teacher training (6 credits)** The qualification designed for new entrants to the teaching profession is to be known as *Preparation to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS)* and is delivered at level 3 or level 4. This supersedes the introductory Certificates in Delivering Learning.
- **Associate teacher training. (24 credits)** The next level is to be known as the *Certificate in Teaching Lifelong Learning Sector (CTTLS)* and offers a qualification for an associate teaching role. The mandatory units for this qualification are Planning and Enabling Learning (9 credits) and Principles of Practice and Assessment (3 credits), plus optional units (6 credits).
- **Fully qualified teacher training. (120 credits)** For fully qualified teaching status you need the *Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector. (DTLLS)* This is designed for those who have or want a fully qualified teaching role. Mandatory Units for this qualification are Planning and Enabling Learning (9 credits), Enabling Learning and Assessment (15 credits) and Theories and Principles for Planning and enabling Learning (15 credits). The second year mandatory units

include Curriculum Development for Inclusive Practice (15 credits) plus an optional subject specialist unit (15 credits) within the first semester and Wider Professional Practice (15 credits) and Continuing Personal and Professional Development (15 credits). Teaching status at this stage is Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) confirmed at registration with the Institute for Learning (IfL).

- **Practising teachers** Practising teachers are required to show evidence of professional development throughout their working lives. A range of optional CPD units will be available for qualified teachers.

For further information go to the LLUK (Lifelong Learning in the UK) website [www.lluk.org](http://www.lluk.org) or visit the IAG website at the professional Skills for Life development centre, LLU+, London South Bank University. [www.lsbu.ac.uk/lluplus](http://www.lsbu.ac.uk/lluplus)

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