

Online Training Certification Accreditation Committee (OTCAC)

STANDARDS FOR TEFL ACCREDITATION

The standards set forth in this document apply to all online TEFL, TESL, TESOL, and related certification courses seeking OTCAC accreditation.

In this document, OTCAC outlines the minimum course requirements standards acceptable for a TEFL (or related) English teaching certification course to cover over the duration of their online instruction. For simplicity, standards are differentiated for each course based on the number of effective course hours including taught content (including reading material, audio and video content, live online lectures, and unit reviews), estimated testing, and assignment production time.

While there is necessary leeway provided to applicant institutions regarding some objectives, OTCAC has compiled the core standards based on dozens of already accredited TEFL (or related) certification courses and the combined experience of the Committee.

The core standards will appear first, followed by OTCAC recommendations. In addition to course content standards, institutions seeking OTCAC accreditation are expected to adhere to the following general standards:

- 1) All standards established in the OTCAC Standards for Accreditation must be met.
- 2) An open channel of communication between the course provider and students must be available at all times. This in no way binds an institution to have a two-way chat service or compels the institution to reply immediately. However, students must be able to contact the course provider by email and at least one other medium (e.g. phone, Facebook, etc.). Course providers are expected to issue a response to students in a timely manner, not usually beyond a 72-hour period.
- 3) Course prices must be clearly displayed on the website and not fluctuate drastically, with the exception for sale prices.
- 4) Courses must offer some form of refund guarantee with a minimum cooling-off period of 7 days for newly enrolled students who change their mind about partaking in the specific course(s).
- 5) Course providers must provide free technical assistance to students throughout the duration of the online course where the fault lies with the web server or content delivery network. If problems continue to persist, it is expected that the institution

offers some form of compensation, extension of time allocated for completion of the course, or the choice of a full refund.

100-Hour TEFL Course

This is the shortest course OTCAC will accredit, simply because our Committee feels that anything less than this does not provide enough depth to aspiring EFL/ESL teachers. It is imperative that a TEFL course provides not just in-depth course material for new teachers but also allows the information to be presented in a number of engaging and memorable ways so that it consolidates in the learner's memory. Otherwise, the online TEFL course will be inferior to in-person theory courses. The obvious goal is to promote online TEFL certification that provides equal, or ideally, superior learning content compared to in-person equivalent courses.

120-Hour TEFL Course

This tends to be the most popular course globally, and one that schools and private academies prefer because it teaches a range of essential classroom skills. Teachers completing 120-Hour TEFL/TESL certification benefit from the more extensive coverage of theory and grammar, and are able to concentrate on key areas like lesson planning, assessment strategies, and motivation. The best courses offer a mixture of videos, audio, and interactive quizzes to consolidate learning, but OTCAC does not make these variations compulsory to obtain accreditation. Instead, we focus on the quality and scope of each TEFL course's content.

120-Hour to 180-Hour TEFL Courses

There are several variations of TEFL courses providing tuition exceeding 120-hours. Generally, such courses offer either a narrower focus on the key areas taught in the 120-hour course, or they provide add-ons to the 120-hour course. The latter may specialize on young learners, adults, business teaching, using activities in the classroom, or teaching core skills like reading.

200-Hour to 300-Hour TEFL Courses

OTCAC requires these TEFL courses to have practical components in order to gain accreditation. Providing such courses 100% automated and online cannot be justified according to the Committee. We necessitate that courses of 200-hours or more utilize tutor grading and feedback practices at a bare minimum. Ideally, there will be a component of face-to-face interaction between the institution's course tutor(s) and TEFL students via Skype, Zoom, or other communication software. There must be a graded (with feedback provided) creative element, which may include essay writing, shorthand answers, video or project-based learning, or performance of a live mock class(es).

Core Standards (minimum requirements for TEFL/TESL/TESOL courses)

- **Role of the EFL/ESL teacher**
 - Characteristics of good teachers
 - The variety of roles played by teachers
 - Student-centered learning
 - Classroom as a community
 - Professionalism as a role model

- **Classroom management**
 - Management versus discipline
 - Rewards
 - Stimulating environment
 - VARK

- **Cultural considerations**
 - Benefits of acculturation
 - Culture shock
 - Importance of cultural considerations

- **Motivation**
 - Feedback

- **Theories and methods**
 - Stages of development
 - Classroom methods of teaching
 - Different ESL approaches

- **Utilizing resources**
 - Modern technology in the classroom
 - Realia and

- **Lesson planning**
 - ESA, PPP

- **Grammar**
 - 12 English tenses

- Parts of Speech
- Comparatives & Superlatives

- **Teaching vocabulary**

- Pronunciation
- Phonics

- **Teaching productive skills**

- Speaking skills development
- Writing skills development
- Activities
- Feedback
- Assessment

- **Teaching receptive skills**

- Reading skills development
- Listening skills development
- Activities
- Feedback
- Assessment

- **Evaluation and feedback**

- Types of assessment
- How to give feedback

Our Accreditation Awards

Accredited - Excellent

This course of institution provides educational services above and beyond our necessary standards. We award such a merit of accreditation only when all accreditation staff agree unanimously.

Failure to achieve this meritorious award is not a reflection of substandard education but rather the norm. Standards are in place as a representation of the average expected quality of online education. Those few courses or course providers that are able to receive such a rating offer their students exceptional quality. It is not within the scope of OTCAC to determine whether this quality is reflected in the price and, therefore, value of the course(s) receiving the rating. In other

words, we measure the quality of the educational content without considering the cost as a factor of that quality.

Accredited

This is our regular rating. Courses attaining this rating have met our strict, objective standards on all fronts, and students can feel assured that the online course(s) they will undertake with such rating is/are suitable for their needs, as set out in the course(s).

Under Review

This status shows that the course(s) is/are currently undergoing the accreditation process, but are not yet accredited.

Not Yet

Courses with such a rating are not accredited. There are numerous reasons for this status, but it always means that the course(s) have failed to meet OTCAC's accreditation standards on this current cycle of review. Courses with such a rating are able to be amended by their course providers and reapply for accreditation with no bias applied.