

GSU Department of Applied Linguistics & ESL
Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) Certificate FAQ

1. What does a TEFL certificate enable me to do?

Teach English as a Foreign Language overseas, primarily. Some graduates do ESL work locally with refugee programs, adult education, or volunteer programs, but most university ESL jobs require an MA.

2. Does it qualify me to teach overseas?

Yes—that's the specific goal. Most countries require a certificate of 100-150 minimum. This one is 250.

3. Is a TEFL certificate a good way to see if I like teaching language before I pursue an ESL degree?

Yes—you'll be exposed to language and culture issues, as well as teaching methods and then ultimately have a practicum experience. You'll get to know easily if this is for you.

4. What courses do I need to take to earn the TEFL certificate?

AL 3021 Introduction to Linguistics (3 hrs.) **NOTE: this course has a prereq of AL 2021 or an exam*
AL 3041 Second Language Acquisition (3 hrs.)
AL 3051 TEFL I: Methods and Approaches (3 hrs.)
AL 3101 English Grammar in Use (3 hrs.)
AL 4161 TEFL II: Practicum and Classroom Practices (3 hrs.)

5. How long will it take me to complete the courses needed for the TEFL certificate?

Most people finish in one academic year. *NOTE: Because some courses build on others, it is impossible to complete the TEFL certificate in a single semester by taking all 5 courses at the same time. The fastest route is to take the first four courses in spring semester and the final practicum in China during May.*

6. Are all of the classes offered every semester, or do I need to wait until fall semester to take the correct sequence of classes?

We offer every course fall and spring semesters. Some courses are also offered during the summer when enrollment allows. There is a two year schedule projection available on our department website to help you plan.

7. In what order should I take the five courses?

You must take AL 3021 Intro to Linguistics first. If you need to, you may take a couple of the other courses concurrently with AL 3021, including AL 3051 TEFL I and AL 3101 English Grammar in Use. You must take AL 3051 TEFL I before taking AL 4161 TEFL II.

8. How long is my TEFL certificate valid once I have it?

Forever and ever. ☺

9. Can I get a TEFL Certificate if I'm not a GSU student?

Yes, but you must apply and matriculate to GSU. Most people earn the TEFL Certificate as part of their undergraduate degree. However, if you already have an undergraduate degree you can apply for post baccalaureate status and register for the TEFL courses. If you are a former GSU student you would be classified as reentry. Information on applying as a post baccalaureate or reentry student can be found at: <http://admissions.gsu.edu/how-do-i-apply/other-enrollment-types/>.

10. Does GSU have a weekend/night TEFL program for full-time business people?

No. However, we do offer the courses in the evening on a rotating basis, usually one per semester.

11. Is there a “fast track” way to get the TEFL certificate?

There could be—but not at GSU. Online and/or accelerated programs are not very reputable and are not well accepted by high status employers in the TEFL industry because preparing to be a classroom teacher takes time and practice. There are many great programs like ours, so you would be competing against these types of students for the best jobs.

12. Does GSU help place people in jobs once they have the TEFL certificate?

GSU does not, but our department is one of the most well known in the world so our faculty have many contacts and often help students with job searching (so it’s wise, of course, to get to know your professors well). Our department website also maintains a Careers FAQ page with great links for job-hunting.

13. What is the average salary of a TEFL teacher? (I know this is nearly impossible to calculate for each prospective country, but can you tell me if I will be able to live alone and still support myself?)

You’re right—all countries/situations are different, and a lot of it depends on supply and demand. You can always live alone and support yourself, but may not save much money. You just have to decide what’s most important to you: money, experience, language, a particular area of the world, etc. Then you can start looking at all the details. But yes, you should be able to support yourself—if not (like “volunteer” positions that require YOU to pay), we would strongly encourage you not to go.

14. What is the average total cost to take all the necessary classes to get the TEFL certificate?

It depends on how long it takes you. Figure up (15 hours x current undergrad tuition rates) plus (the number of semesters it takes you x current undergrad fee rates) at: <http://sfs.gsu.edu/tuition-fees/what-it-costs/tuition-and-fees/>. HOPE and Pell grants do cover TEFL coursework for undergrads. Postbacc students may be eligible for loans. If you are over 62 years old and a GA resident there is no tuition.

15. Which countries have the most demand for TEFL teachers?

It changes all the time. Europe is hard, but otherwise demand is good. If you have ideas of where you’d like to go, let me know (also let me know what your priorities are: salary, etc.).

16. Will I earn the TEFL certificate as part of my Applied Linguistics major or minor?

If you major in Applied Linguistics, you can take all five required courses for the TEFL certificate as either required or elective courses that count towards your major. If you minor in Applied Linguistics (5 courses) three of those courses would overlap with the TEFL certificate so that 7 courses total would give you both the minor and the certificate.

17. Do I have to apply for the TEFL program?

If you are not currently a GSU student, you must first apply to take classes through the university. Once you are eligible to register for classes here at GSU, visit the College of Arts & Sciences advising center on the 4th floor of Langdale Hall and fill out an application to add the certificate program. The application form is available on our department’s website as well, but you need to turn it in to the college advisers to have the certificate added to your program of study and show up in your academic evaluation like your major.

18. How can I get more information about the TEFL Certificate?

You may contact Susan Coleman for advising at secoleman@gsu.edu.

19. How do I get a physical copy of my TEFL Certificate once I complete the program?

Your TEFL certificate will be mailed to you by the registrar like your diploma when you graduate.