English Language Assistants
Programme 2021-22

Key Messages for Tutors

November 2020
1. **Key Updates**

**Application Dates**

Applications open on **Wednesday 28 October 2020**. The application form can be accessed on our [website](#). Applications will close at **16.00 GMT Wednesday 03 February 2021**. The candidate must have pressed submit by this date. The deadline for references will be a week later at **23.59 GMT Wednesday 10 February 2021**. Applications submitted after Wednesday 03 February or without a reference will not be considered.

**Language Requirements**

Key changes regarding language requirements:

- Rather than asking for a candidate to have ‘Native-level English’ we now ask them to self-certify that they are highly proficient in English, equivalent to C2 on the [Common European Framework of Reference for Languages](#) (CEFRL).
- For the majority of destinations, B1-level in the destination’s main language remains the language requirement. However, for Austria, Germany and Switzerland this requirement has been lowered to A2-level.
- For Spain, China and Hong Kong no language skills are required.

**Eligibility Criteria**

Key changes to the eligibility criteria:

The Language Assistants programme primarily provides undergraduates with the opportunity to carry out their year abroad, however we welcome applications from graduates and those who have pursued other academic and career pathways. To be eligible for the programme candidates must therefore have any of the following qualifications in advance of starting their post:

- Have completed at least two years of an undergraduate degree OR
- Have completed a TEFL or CELTA course with at least two years of English Language Teaching OR
• Have completed at least one year of study of a Level 5 qualification (or above) through a Further Education institution/ TVET college

In addition to this:
• Candidates must have lived in the UK at some point in their life for a total of 2 years prior to applying
• Knowledge of UK culture will be assessed through questions in the application form.

The full eligibility criteria can be found on our website.

New Opportunity for 2021-22

Candidates can now choose to spend 10 months working as a full time English Language Assistant in the high-rise metropolis of Hong Kong.

With no additional language requirements, this opportunity is open to final year students or graduates who would like to immerse themselves in Asian culture and cuisine, while bringing life to their students’ understanding of contemporary UK culture and language.

A summary of these details can be found below:
• No language required
• Hold a UK / Irish or EU passport
• Approximate salary: £1,800 – £2,000 GBP per month
• c. 50 places available
• Placement dates: end of August 2021 – 30 June 2022
• Hours per week: 40 (Monday – Friday)
• Candidates must have graduated by August
• Candidates must be aged 30 or under
• Accommodation sourcing support
• Contribution towards visa and return flight cost

2. Destinations Available – Summary

To be taken to the country or territory specific website page, please follow the links on the country or territory names below where you will find full details of the opportunity in each destination. A summary of these details has been provided in the table below:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Language Requirement (CEFRL)</th>
<th>Number of posts available (approx. Figure)</th>
<th>Age Limit</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>B1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Second semester placements only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>A2</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>35 (pending number of applicants)</td>
<td>Shorter placements available for 1st and 2nd semester.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>B1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>B1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>B1</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>No language skills required</td>
<td>150-200</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Opportunity for graduates only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>B1</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Minimum: 20 Maximum: N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>B1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>B1</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Our French partners also require candidates to have undertaken a minimum length of education in the UK. Please see the France page for details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>A2</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Shorter placements available for 2nd semester.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>No language skills required</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Opportunity for graduates only. 40-hour week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
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<td>-----------</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Italy     | B1    | 60      | N/A     | 10 posts available in the Italian & German speaking region of Trentino-Alto Adige.  
|           |       |         |         | **Holders of UK or Irish passports only.** |
| Mexico    | B1    | 22      | 30      |                                            |
| Spain     | No language skills required | 1000+ | 60      |                                            |
| Switzerland | A2    | 15-25   | Minimum: 20  
|           |       |         | Maximum: 35  
|           |       |         | Second reference recommended for applicants. |

### 3. General Information

**Application Form**

Applications must be completed through our online platform. After clicking on the apply button, applicants will initially be asked to register and create a profile on the system using an email address and creating a password. We ask candidates to use a permanent email address as this cannot be changed once you have registered. We also advise to not use a university email address if a candidate is due to graduate before starting in post.

Applicants will be asked to complete the following steps to apply for the programme:

- Create an account on our website
- Answer eligibility questions
- Insert personal and background information
- State country, regional, environmental and age preferences
- Complete motivation and supporting statement
- Enter reference details and submit
For further details on how to apply, please visit our website. Please be aware that the process will be slightly different for any returning assistants or consecutive year applicants.

References

Applicants will be asked to provide the email address of someone who can act as a referee. We advise that if they are a current or recent student, this should be one of their tutors or a year-abroad coordinator. If they graduated before 01 January 2020 their referee should be a recent employer.

Once the application form is submitted, the system sends an email to their referee requesting the reference. Applicants should ensure that their referee is able to complete the online reference request form that we provide and allow time for their referee to do this. If it is not completed in time, their application will not be taken forward.

Applicants for Switzerland: If a candidate is applying for a post as an English Language Assistant in Switzerland, we strongly recommend that they upload an additional letter of recommendation as it can drastically increase the possibility of being offered a post. They will be able to upload an additional letter of recommendation when selecting Switzerland as one of their country preferences in the application. The letter must be uploaded before submitting the application. Please refer to the Switzerland page for further information and guidance.

Assessment

Applications are assessed initially using the following criteria:

- motivation
- adaptability
- target destination and home country cultural awareness
- teaching experience
- expression and presentation.

Considerations Before Applying

If a candidate has any specific support requirements - for example, personal circumstances, a disability, medical conditions or dependent children - they should provide as much relevant information as possible in their application to allow us and our partners to find a post which is best suited to their needs.

It is not always possible for our overseas partners to accommodate all requests and applicants should undertake independent research to understand what support is available in their chosen country.
destination. Unfortunately, there is no additional funding available through the programme to support those who require adjustments or additional support.

All applicants can give three area preferences, and preferences relating to the size of town they’d like to work in and the age group they’d like to teach.

We endeavour to fulfil people’s preferences as best we can however, the number of posts in each area is limited and preferences cannot always be guaranteed – therefore a certain degree of flexibility is necessary.

Applicants should also visit the country specific pages to which they are applying to familiarise themselves with how the programme works in each destination.

Applicant Support

Regarding support for applicants, we would recommend that those applying to the programme take a look at our website where they can find out information regarding the responsibilities of an English Language Assistant and also how they can prepare for the placement. Here they can find information on the role, contacting the school, education and lesson planning, travel and insurance, finding accommodation and personal safety.

The Language Assistants team also has a podcast. Whether your students already have a Language Assistants placement confirmed, are thinking about applying in the future, or are generally looking for information to prepare them for living abroad, you may wish to encourage them to listen to the Language Assistants Podcast. Members of the Language Assistants team chat with colleagues, former assistants and experts on a range of themes. From finding accommodation, money matters and insurance, to settling into school life, managing culture shock and making friends.

For any queries regarding their application, our team can be reached on LanguageAssistants.uk@britishcouncil.org.

Once accepted onto the programme applicants will receive regular updates from us regarding the status of their application and further guidance helping them prepare for their time abroad.

Tutor Support

We have now updated our dedicated webpage for university tutors, which we hope will serve as a useful resource when informing your students about the programme.

We have created a pre-recorded promotional presentation, which can be downloaded on our website. This is a short video designed to give both students and tutors an overview of the programme offering for the 2021-22 academic year. Other useful resources are available to download on this webpage.
We also hosted two webinar sessions specifically for university tutors to give a programme briefing for the 2021-22 academic year, and to allow for a question and answer session. Please contact the team directly on LanguageAssistants.uk@britishcouncil.org to request a recording of these webinars.

Many thanks to those of you who have already contacted us to organise a virtual briefing at your university. We look forward to delivering these and hope to reach many of your students during these sessions.

For those of you who have not yet got in touch, please let us know if you would like to be considered for an individual Language Assistants programme promotional presentation and Q&A session at your institution. These will aim to involve Ambassadors from our selected cohort and where possible they will be affiliated with the hosting institution.

Our team are of course readily available to answer any queries you or your students may have. Please contact us on LanguageAssistants.uk@britishcouncil.org.

Ambassadors Programme

The Language Assistants programme recruits former English Language Assistants to act as Ambassadors for the programme. The majority of these former assistants are those who have just returned from their placements abroad and are now entering their final year at university. The purpose of recruiting Ambassadors is to promote the English Language Assistants programme through a network of former assistants through their universities and institutions in the United Kingdom.

Language Assistant Ambassadors are the voice of the programme on the ground at universities and online through social networks – they are essential to the success of the programme.

Being an Ambassador is about sharing the unique experiences of Language Assistants. These stories help bring the programme to life and sell it to others. Ambassador activity is mainly self-led, and each Ambassador can run activities suited to their individual university or preferred online platforms.

Following an application process, selected Ambassadors from your institution have been encouraged to reach out to you directly. However, as we have fewer Ambassadors this year, we have provided you with a list of Ambassadors from all universities across the UK who have given their consent for their details to be shared with you. Those on this list are happy to be contacted by universities other than their own. Ambassadors could help with any promotional activity, share their experiences and support with answering queries on the programme that potential applicants may have.

We hope that at all our promotional events we will have an Ambassador or former assistant present to share their experienced and up to date information. Therefore, please feel free to contact ambassadors for any events you have organised and we will also be inviting them along if we have organised a session with you.
4. **Additional Information**

**Modern Language Assistants Programme**

The Language Assistants programme delivers against a series of bilateral inter-governmental agreements between the UK and 15 other destination worldwide. This means that the Language Assistant programme also provides placements for incoming Modern Language Assistants for UK schools and educational institutions. Modern Language Assistants can help enrich classroom activities and bring fresh perspectives to language learning, helping to boost results. They are keen to bring knowledge of their culture and language into classes, helping to make your students more socially conscious.

Universities and higher education institutions can also apply to host a Modern Language Assistant. Equally, universities can apply to fund a Modern Language Assistant for schools in their local area. The British Council encourages a flexible approach to hosting - to limit costs, a Language Assistant can be shared by up to three nearby education institutions (primary, secondary and/or further or higher education).

The British Council Modern Language Assistants Programme is a Government Authorised Exchange programme and as such any MLAs requiring a visa would be obtaining a Tier 5 Government Authorised Exchange, temporary work visa. The British Council acts as the sponsor for any Modern Language Assistant requiring a visa and so your institution would not need to register as a sponsor.

Modern Language Assistants cost around £914.05 - £1,150.39 per month (depending on location). Applications for UK education institutions wishing to host an MLA for the 2021-22 academic year will open in February 2021. More information is available online [here](https://www.britishcouncil.org). As part of the application process you can make specific requests, for example if you wish to receive students from existing partner universities, or if you are looking for those with specific experience or qualifications such as those undertaking teaching degrees.

**Coronavirus (Covid-19)**

For all assistants travelling this year, the Language Assistants team advised that it was their own individual decision as to whether they felt it was safe to travel to their destination or not, in light of the FCDO advice, their own personal circumstances and of course advice from their university. We’re not in a position to make decisions for assistants and participants should always prioritise their own health above all else. The health and wellbeing of our participants, colleagues and partners is our priority during this rapidly evolving situation.

We are in close contact with our overseas partners and have been monitoring developments and adjusting our position over the past year. Some countries have allowed for later start dates...
and permitted virtual teaching, but this has not always been possible. You should have all received the latest updates from our programme lead, Tom Dearing, on this.

The British Council is not the employer of Language Assistants so the most important thing for programme participants is to communicate with their employer and set up a good working relationship.

Applications for placements in 2021-22 are proceeding as normal. We are liaising with our overseas partners to stay up to date with restrictions which may affect the ELA lifecycle. There may however be unexpected delays to the process due to Covid-19.

We will communicate updates directly to applicants and will continue to work with universities to understand their plans for students undertaking a year abroad. If you foresee changes to your policies regarding student mobility - we can be helpful in discussions about the impact on assistantships before final decisions are made.

We will support universities with their provision of online resources and briefings as far as possible.

**Brexit**

We have been monitoring the United Kingdom’s withdrawal from the European Union process closely since it was first announced, however the outcome of the process will depend on the ongoing negotiations between the European Union and the United Kingdom which are still evolving.

We would like to offer our reassurance that both the British Council and our overseas partners both in Europe and worldwide remain committed to the programme. The Language Assistants programme is not reliant on EU funding to function and as such any potential impact of the UK leaving the EU would be at an individual participant level in terms of visas, health insurance etc. rather than at a programme level. We are confident that we will have guidance in place to support applicants taking part in next year’s programme 2021-22, including key things for English Language Assistants, such as visas or work permit processes and costs.

It is worth noting that our overseas partners already work with countries that require a Visa or work permit and while it will be a different process for our programme participants, it is not something completely new to the programme. Although we will provide guidance in preparations of their placements, we would always recommend that assistants keep themselves well informed and do their own research.