

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ASSISTANTS

CHINA 2019/20

CHINA**FREQUENTLY ASKED
QUESTIONS**

APPLICATION STAGE

1. How many posts are available for each country?

The number of posts available varies year-on year, depending on the institutions that are able to offer a post.

2. Is it possible to change my country preferences? Do I need to re-write my application?

Yes, it is possible to change your country preferences. To do so, please email languageassistants.uk@britishcouncil.org by **Wednesday 24 April 2019**.

- You cannot change to another country which requires a visa.
- You may transfer to a European country, provided that you meet the language and age requirements. Please see the **eligibility criteria** for full details.

You will not need to re-write your personal statement to reflect the new order of your choices and this will not affect the success of your application. At the application stage, we often offer country transfers depending on the availability of posts. It is therefore common that an applicant's statement is suited for another country, but is used to determine the strength of their application and if they have carried out appropriate research before applying.

3. If I am offered a posting, how likely am I to get my first choice country/region?

Unfortunately we are not able to give an exact answer as to the likelihood of receiving your first choice country as this will depend on several factors such as;

- the strength of your application (eg. whether you meet the eligibility criteria and factors such as your teaching experience);
- the number of posts available in that year; and
- the number of applicants and popularity of specific locations.

However, if you are not successful in obtaining a post in your first choice of country, we would then consider you for your second and third choices.

THE ROLE

4. How much training will I receive prior to taking up the position in China?

All assistants going to China must complete a 60-hour online TEFL certificate as part of their preparation for going to China. Further face-to-face training will be provided upon arrival in China to complete the certificate. Language assistants will be invited to a pre-departure day at the beginning of July that will include a teaching session. You should also be offered an observational period of a few days/weeks at the beginning of your assistantship.

5. Are we expected to teach lessons by ourselves?

In many cases in China, mentors will ask you to take lessons by yourself. Others may ask you to take smaller conversational groups, or to assist them in class. This will often depend upon the institution that you are working in, and the requirements of your mentor and students. It is best to be prepared for any of these scenarios and to be prepared to help wherever you can.

6. What type of institution will I be working in?

The range of placements available changes every year, depending on which institutions are able to host an assistant, however assistants can generally expect to be working in the following types of institution: Primary School, Middle School, High School, University.

7. What is the age range of students in universities in China?

As in the UK, university students in China will mostly be young adults.

8. Do we teach purely language or are we also expected to teach literature?

Generally speaking, you will mainly be asked to teach English language, but you will often be able to incorporate cultural topics into your lessons. This should bring your lessons to life, as well as sharing important aspects of your British culture. Many assistants will be working with a number of teachers who will often have different teaching styles as may ask you to carry out a variety of tasks and teaching activities. If you have a particular interest in literature or any other aspect, we always encourage our assistants to let their mentor teachers know about this. In the past, assistants have used mediums such as music and sport to vary their teaching methods.

9. Do we create our own classes or teach from a lesson scheme?

Some institutions will give you a fixed curriculum or textbook to work from, whilst others might give you more freedom to create your own activities and classes. Many teachers will give you a topic to prepare, but allow you to produce the lesson plan yourself. This will depend upon the staff and students that you are working with and can vary greatly between teachers as well as institutions. It is worth regularly checking with other English teachers in your school to ensure that your lessons relate to each other.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

10. How long do I need to have on my passport?

Your passport needs to be valid for a minimum of 6 months after the end date of your assistantship. If you do not have this, we suggest renewing your passport as soon as possible as you will need to have this ready to begin your visa application. If your passport details change from those that you provided at the application stage, please send in details of your new passport to: languageassistants.uk@britishcouncil.org.

11. If I already have a DBS/ICPC can I update it or do I need to apply for a new one?

All assistants will need to apply for a new International Child Protection Certificate through the British Council, regardless of whether they already hold a DBS or ICPC. This costs £60 and you will be instructed when and how to do this. Assistants who do not have a valid ICPC will not be allowed to begin their assistantship. You should not apply for one until instructed to do so by the British Council.

12. How do I apply for a visa? How long will it take?

The process of applying for a Z-Visa is complex and requires a significant time investment. The British Council will support you in your application by providing guidance, which will be sent to you if you are offered a place on the programme. However, it is imperative that you act responsibly and carry out each stage of the process as promptly as possible. If you do so, you should hopefully be able to receive your visa in mid-July. There are several extended periods of waiting during this time due to bureaucratic processes.

13. Does the British Council meet you at the airport in China?

The British Council and our Chinese partner organization CEAIE will endeavor to have representatives at the airport during a large window of time on the arrival date. Clear instructions will also be provided for making your way to the accommodation where you will stay throughout your training period.

14. Who will support me in country?

Every assistant will be assigned a personal mentor teacher at the institution in which they will be working. Your mentor will be your first port of call who can help you with all matters that arise during your assistantship, from teaching advice, to local knowledge and welfare support. In addition, assistants will be supported by CEAIE and in some cities additional training may be provided by partner organisations.

15. Is it possible to postpone a placement for a later date?

No, unfortunately it is not possible to postpone a placement for a later date or the following year. Applicants wishing to do so should formally withdraw from the programme as early as possible and reapply the following year. Applicants who withdraw without a valid reason after having been offered a post may be prevented from applying the following year as late withdrawals negatively impact the programme and the institutions to which you are allocated.

16. Can I get another job?

If you wish to supplement your income by giving private tuition in English, you should ensure that this tuition does not interfere with your timetable at your host institution as this must be your priority. You are strongly advised not to advertise in local papers or public places for reasons of personal safety. In general pupils are easily found through school or private connections, i.e. by word-of-mouth. However, it is essential to check that the other English teachers in your school(s) do not mind, so that you are not perceived to be 'stealing' their private pupils.

17. When will I start my placement?

You will be given more specific start dates nearer the time of your assistantship; however at this stage we are able to provide the following rough dates below. Please do not book travel until given the clearance to do so by the British Council.

- Arrival: 17 -18 August, to begin training on the 19 / 20
- Departure to home city: 30 / 31 August, to begin working 02 September

18. What holidays will I have?

Holidays will differ slightly depending on the host institution. Even assistants in the same town may have different holiday dates. However, as a rough guide Language Assistants in China can expect to have 3-4 weeks holiday for Chinese New Year from mid-January to mid-February, 1 week's holiday at the beginning of October and several individual days or long weekends for national/ regional holidays. More detailed information regarding holidays will be sent to successful candidates. We strongly advise that assistants discuss holidays with their mentor teacher at the beginning of your assistantship. Any additional time off should be discussed and confirmed in writing.

19. Do I need to be in the UK to apply for my visa?

Obtaining your visa will require a visit to the relevant embassy or consulate in the UK. You should try to ensure that you are in the UK for the two weeks before departure in order to complete the necessary administrative processes.

20. What accommodation can I expect?

Accommodation in China is dependent upon the individual institution. In many cases, Language Assistants will live in on-site accommodation, which may have a curfew for all teaching staff. This can be a source of frustration for Language Assistants, but compromises regarding times, particularly at weekends, can often be reached. Other assistants will live in flats, either by themselves or with fellow ELAs. The British Council and CEAIE have reached an understanding that all accommodation will meet a minimum standard to ensure that ELAs are comfortable. However, you should not expect luxurious accommodation.

Candidates who are placed in Shanghai will be responsible for finding their own accommodation, and will be provided with assistance to do so. Salaries in Shanghai are higher to account for this difference.

21. How much will I be paid?

Pay is dependent upon the region, city and institution which candidates are allocated to. As a general rule, candidates can expect to be paid between 5000 and 9000 RMB per month, while candidates in Shanghai will be paid around 13000 RMB per month to account for accommodation.