BRITISH COUNCIL

Language Assistants in Italy
2026-27 Programme

ELA in Italy: The Guide

10 August 2026

How to use this guide

Section 1 provides an overview of Italy and key country information

Section 2 indicates key contacts for your assistantship and their roles

Section 3 provides detail regarding the assistantship role and what this involves

Sections 4 and 5 help you to prepare the essentials before you arrive in Italy

Sections 5 to 9 cover all core aspects and documents you will need once you arrive in Italy

Section 10 is for you to consider at the end of your placement.

Each section includes a recap at the end to highlight the key actions. These are not exhaustive but highlight the main takeaways.

You can consult this at any point in the year. Some assistants prefer to read it all in one go or you can focus on the specific section that applies to you. We encourage you to read the sections in full and do additional research on any aspects that are relevant to your assistantship.

Please ensure you have read through this document and carried out research yourself before contacting the Language Assistants team with any questions.

Disclaimer: Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in these notes. However, the British Council cannot accept responsibility for any errors which may exist or for any subsequent changes.

Date checked: 31/07/2026

Contents

ELA in Italy: 1
The Guide 1
How to use this guide 2
1 Spotlight on Italy 4
1.1 Emergency Contacts 4
1.2 Life in Italy 5
1.3 Local Laws and Customs 6
1.3.1 LGBTQIA+ 6
1.3.2 Internet and Phone 6
1.4 The British Council Office in Italy 6
Section 1 Recap 7
2 Key Contacts 7
2.1 UK British Council Language Assistants team 7
2.2 Our Overseas Partner Organisation 7
2.3 Placement Coordinator in Italy 7
2.4 Mentor Teacher 8
2.5 Key Contacts Table 8
Section 2 Recap 9
3 The English Language Assistant Role 9
3.1 Posting Information 9
3.2 Period of Appointment 10
3.3 Holidays and Sick Leave 10
Section 3 Recap 11
4 Read Before You Go 11
4.1 Costs to Prepare for 11
You should prepare for the following costs: 11
4.2 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) Advice 11
4.3 Travel to and Around Italy 12
4.3.1 New European Entry/Exit System (EES) 13
4.4 Insurance 14
4.5 Graduates with Student Loans 14
4.6 Benefits and Universal Credit 15
4.7 Visas and Passports 15
4.8 Medical Certificate 15
5 Health and Wellbeing 16
5.1 Medication 17
5.1 EHIC/ GHIC 17
6 Outside of School: Arrival and Settling in 19

6.5 Bank Accounts 23
7 In school: Arrival, Settling in and Support 24
7.1 Induction 24
7.2 Observation Period 24
7.2.1 Settling into School Life 24
7.3 Absence from School 25
7.4 Social Media 25
7.5 Support Networks 26
7.6 Concerns and Queries: Who to Contact? 27
8 Money Matters 28
8.1 Bank Account 28
8.2 Tax 28
8.3 Monthly Allowance 29
8.4 Additional Income 29
9. Language Learning and Studies 30
9.1 For Language Learning 30
10. End of your Placement 32
10.1 Administrative Matters 32
10.2 Staying a Consecutive Year 33
10.3 Become an Ambassador 33
10.4 Getting into Teaching 33

1 Spotlight on Italy

You are joining the next generation of this legacy strengthening educational and cultural links between the UK and Italy through the British Council and our partner organisation Il Ministero d'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca (MIUR) and the Education Department in Trentino-Alto Adige (TAA).

By this point, you should have a good knowledge of Italy. Here are some key points to consider.

1.1 Emergency Contacts

1.1.2 Emergency Services in Italy

In any emergency: call **112 (the European emergency number)**

Ambulance: call **118**

Fire Brigade: call **115**

Police: call **113**

Carabinieri (Italian Military Police): call **112**

General enquiries to the British Embassy: **+39 06 4220 0001**

Choose 1 for English and then 2 for Consular Services (within office hours) or 4 for an emergency involving a British national (outside of office hours). Leave a message and someone will normally get back to you within one hour of your call.

1.1.2 British Embassy and Consulate

For up-to-date British embassy and consulate contact details in Italy please refer to: GOV.co.uk world embassies Please take note of the address of the British embassy in Italy below in case of emergency or loss of your passport. Assistants who do not hold British citizenship should check with their own consulates/embassies in Italy.

British Embassy Rome

- Via XX Settembre 80/a, 00187 Rome, Italy
- Tel: +39 06 4220 0001

The British Consulate General also provides services in Milan.

1.2 Life in Italy

If you're interested in doing more research on Italy or a specific region, have a look at these sites:

General	News
Visit Italy Public Holidays Calendar Rough Guide to Italy Lonely Planet Italy	BBC's Italy Profile La Repubblica - Italian News Italy's News in English Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

1.2.1 Personal Safety and Travel

Your personal safety is of paramount importance whilst living overseas and we strongly advise that you spend some time looking at the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office website and check it regularly as there is a lot of useful and up-to-date information provided.

As mentioned in section 4.2 of this document, ensure you regularly check the Italy travel advice page, sign up to their email alerts and ensure you are aware of these key sections:

- Safety and Security Page

- Natural Disasters Page
- Sexual Assault Support
- FCDO advice for women travelling abroad
- Lost Passport recovery

You can find more details on travel in section 4.5.

1.3 Local Laws and Customs

Please ensure that you familiarise yourself with the local laws and customs in Italy by conducting your own research. Familiarising yourself with the information provided on the UK government website is a good place to start.

1.3.1 LGBTQIA+

Lonely Planet guide for LGBTQIA+ travellers

1.3.2 Internet and Phone

- The Country code for Italy is +39. To phone abroad from Italy the code is 00 followed by the country code.
- If you set up a phone line or internet connection, past assistants have warned to check phone subscription charges and cancellation policies with providers first. You may be charged for a full year's subscription even if you end your phone contract earlier than this.
- For this reason, assistants often recommend getting a pay-as-you-go mobile rather than one on contract.
- To avoid internet contracts, you may want to explore other options of internet access such as dongles.

1.4 The British Council Office in Italy

Please note: The British Council office in Italy is not responsible for the administration of the Language Assistant programme in Italy - this is the role of the MIUR or the Education Department in TAA.

The British Council develops and participates in many different projects themed around society, science, education and the arts. We encourage you to sign up for the British Council Italy newsletter to keep up to date with activities which may interest you.

Section 1 Recap



2 Key Contacts

2.1 UK British Council Language Assistants team

The Language Assistants programme has a dedicated team to provide support during the application and pre-departure process for each destination. Please note that the British Council is not the employer of participants of the Language Assistants programme whilst abroad.

2.2 Our Overseas Partner Organisation

Depending on your allocation, either the central Ministry for Education in Italy, Il Ministero d'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca (MIUR) or the Education Department in Trentino-Alto Adige (TAA) administers the Language Assistants Programme in Italy. They liaise with the schools hosting Language Assistants and your mentor teachers in Italy on the British Council's behalf.

They will contact you throughout the year regarding your placement and other opportunities.

2.3 Placement Coordinator in Italy

The British Council work together with our partner organisation to allocate you to a school within Italy. The MIUR or the Education Department in TAA are then responsible for issuing you a '*Lettera di Nomina'* which confirms the details of your placement and the terms and conditions of your placement. It is likely that you will receive this information in July.

2.4 Mentor Teacher

Your host school should identify a mentor teacher for you, usually in the English department. This mentor should provide pastoral care and support during your time in Italy. Your mentor teacher can become an integral part of your support network in Italy, and you should invest time in building this relationship.

If a mentor teacher is not identified at the start of your placement, you should try asking for one and then contact the MIUR or Education Department in TAA for support as soon as you can.

2.5 Key Contacts Table

- **Application**
- **Allocation**
- **Pre-Departure**

Sending Organisation:

British Council Language Assistants Team:
Aobh McAnulty, Consultant
Eleanor Thomas, Assistant Consultant

LanguageAssistants.UK@britishcouncil.org

Responsible for: application and pre departure process

- **Arrival**
- **Assistantship**

Italian Authorities

The MIUR/ The Education Department in Trentino Alto-Adige:
MIUR: assistentilingue@istruzione.it
Trento-Alto Adige: progettualitascholastica@provincia.bz.it

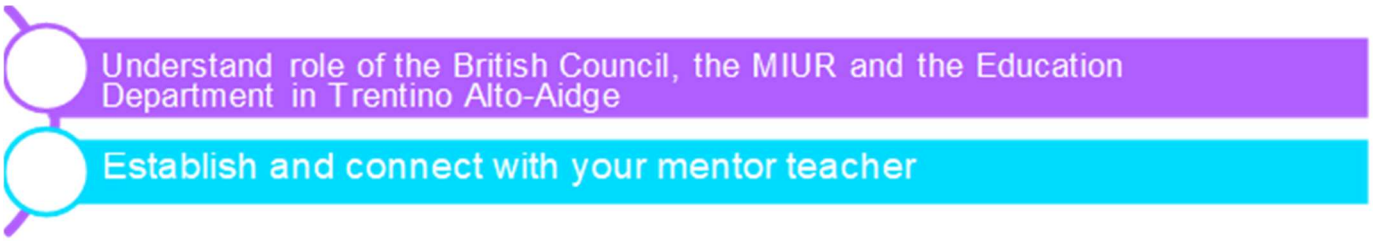
Responsible for: administration of the programme in Italy, liaising with schools in Italy and organising induction events

- **In School**

Your School
Responsible for: issuing payments and establishing your contract details

Support: Mentor Teacher
Responsible for: in school support and first contact

Section 2 Recap



3 The English Language Assistant Role

The role of a language assistant is a very important one and one that we hope you will enjoy. Please remember that you are a paid member of staff with the responsibilities and required professionalism that this entails. Please refer to our website for more information on your role as an English Language Assistant:

www.britishcouncil.org/study-work-abroad/outside-uk/english-language-assistants

As a language assistant you are also an ambassador for the UK and its culture, influencing how those around you view the UK. You should endeavour to set a positive example and avoid any potential damage to the reputation of the programme which could adversely affect the experience of future assistants.

Your first-hand experience of life in the UK is a key part of the cultural exchange and an excellent resource you should draw on during your lessons.

3.1 Posting Information

You will receive your school allocation details directly from our partner organisations in Italy. This is usually sent out in July. The British Council is not involved in this part of the process.

Upon receiving this information, you should write immediately to your school(s) confirming acceptance of the post. If you do not receive a reply by mid-September, we recommend that you ring the school(s) to ask about accommodation and to give them an idea of your anticipated arrival date. You should also ask them for some information about the school(s) that you will be working in. For example, it may be useful to know the age range of pupils, the average class size, the general level of ability, the social background of pupils, the facilities available and if you

should bring any specific materials from home. It is also important to enquire about the dress code for teachers and any other general school information.

3.2 Period of Appointment

The period of appointment for UK assistants in Italy will be **1 October 2026 – 31 May 2027**. Assistants are expected to work 12 hours a week. Those who have been appointed to more than one school will be asked to divide their time between the schools concerned. You can request information regarding how your timetable will be arranged from the head of the host school, which is usually the first one mentioned when you are sent details of your posting in the *Lettera di Nomina*; however, this information will most likely not be available until you arrive in Italy.

3.3 Holidays and Sick Leave

Assistants are entitled to the usual school holidays. The Italian Ministry for Education website has further details regarding the school calendar. You should not be absent on other occasions without prior permission. Attending any induction courses set by the Italian partners does not give assistants the right to take leave at a later date.

3.4 School Allocation

The maximum number of schools to which you can be appointed is **three**. Please contact us if you have been appointed to more than three schools. If the different schools are several miles apart and you have to travel between two on the same day, you are entitled to ask for help towards travel expenses. Under no circumstances should an assistant be required to buy a car to travel to their schools. After contacting your school, if you establish that there is no regular public transport which serves your school(s), and there are no lifts available to your school(s) please inform us of the situation. Please do not contact us without contacting your school first.

Section 3 Recap



4 Read Before You Go

4.1 Costs to Prepare for

You should prepare for the following costs:

- £99 ICPC
- Administrative costs: visa (if applicable).
- Travel costs
- Accommodation costs including initial temporary accommodation and deposit for permanent accommodation.
- Insurance costs - please see section 4.6 (Insurance) for more information.
- €1000 - €1500 to cover the initial costs of moving abroad. Read more in section 8.3 (Money Matters)
- Residency permit costs on arrival (£60 - £100).

4.2 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) Advice

During a crisis, official advice for British nationals will be published on the travel advice website and regularly updated. For your safety and to stay well-informed, we **strongly recommend** you subscribe to receive FCDO email updates for Italy so that you are immediately notified of any important changes to the FCDO's advice.

As international issues and subsequent advice can change often and rapidly, you must take responsibility for your own health and safety by staying informed of any changes to such advice. When responding to an immediate in-country danger or threat to your health and

safety, you should always prioritise your own health and safety and make decisions in the best interest of your personal circumstances – do not wait for advice from the British Council.

The FCDO have published a comprehensive guide for Living in Italy. The guide sets out essential information for British nationals residing in Italy, including advice on health, education, residency requirements and more. We recommend you read this guide thoroughly.

You can also contact the British embassy or your respective embassy for advice in event of an emergency. Those travelling on an EU passport should follow the guidance of the respective government for travelling to and living in Italy.

4.3 Travel to and Around Italy

You are responsible for the upfront cost of your own travel and any travel to and from your place of appointment during the year.

The British Council strongly advises against booking your travel until you have received your visa and are certain that you will be able to travel on your chosen date **unless it is a requirement of your visa application**. In some instances, you may be able to pay the airline a small fee for flexible dates if you wish to book further in advance. The British Council is not responsible for arranging your travel.

Past assistants have advised that you check the baggage allowance for both outbound and return journeys when travelling by plane.

The most widely used travel sites in Italy are:

Flights	**Train and Ferry**
Skyscanner	Eurostar
British Airways	Rail Europe
Easy Jet	Eurolines
Tui	Oban Ferry
Opodo	
Expedia	In Italy:
Ryanair	Trenitalia
ITA Airways	Südtirolmobil

Other Travel Pointers:

- Car-share: website for sharing arrangements blablacar
- Bus: flixbus

Former Assistant Recommendations:

- A previous assistant has recommended the InterRail Italy pass if you are planning a longer trip around Italy.

- Other assistants living in Milan recommended getting an ATM abbonamento student which covers all the main city lines in the metropolitan, the trams, and the buses.
- When travelling by train **remember to validate** your ticket by stamping it in one of the green machines located at the end of each platform. If you are caught with a ticket that has not been stamped, you will be fined. You must also generally stamp bus tickets when boarding a bus.
- Each town/commune has its own website which can give useful information about what to see and do in the local area. For these websites use the formula www.comune.INSERT NAME OF TOWN.it e.g. www.comune.verona.it.
- International Student Identity Cards or for non-students International Youth Travel Card can be used to obtain cheap entry into certain museums, theatres, cinemas and art galleries throughout Europe.

4.3.1 New European Entry/Exit System (EES)

The European Entry/Exit System (EES) is a new digital system being introduced by the EU to record entries and exits of non-EU citizens entering the Schengen Area. This system aims to modernize border control, track the duration of stays, and ensure compliance with visa regulations. The EES is expected to be operational by October 2025. Italy, as part of the Schengen Area, will participate in the EES, so it's important to understand how this may affect your travel plans.

There are three key changes under the new EES:

- **Digital passport stamping**: Traditional passport stamps will be replaced by a digital record that includes personal and biometric information (fingerprints, facial recognition). This system will automatically track the time you spend in the Schengen Area.
- **Strict time tracking**: The EES will accurately calculate how long you've been in the Schengen Area, ensuring compliance with the 90-day rule for short stays and visa terms.
- **Strict visa rules**: Overstays will automatically be flagged by the system, which could lead to bans from re-entering the Schengen Area for 1-3 years, depending on the length of the overstay.

Important travel tips under the new EES:

- **Avoid leaving Italy without your *Permesso di Soggiorno or proof of application***: Leaving the Schengen Area before securing your residence permit or having proof that you have applied for it could complicate your return. Exiting Italy without a valid Permesso di Soggiorno or proof of application may cause the EES to flag an overstay if your entry visa has expired. It's advised not to leave Italy until you have your Permesso di Soggiorno or proof of application.
- **Plan travel carefully**: If you plan to travel in Italy after your placement, make sure your total stay does not exceed the terms of your visa. If you plan to travel in the rest of the Schengen area before/after your placement or during school holidays, make sure you do not exceed 90 in 180 days rule. The EES will automatically track your days in the Schengen Area.

- **Check your documents before leaving Italy**: Always ensure your Italian residency card and visa are valid. The EES will record your entry and exit details, so having up-to-date documents is essential.

4.3.2 Taking a Car Abroad

You will need to research the laws on driving in Italy, including adapting your head lights for driving on the right and driving licenses. The website www.gov.uk/driving-abroad provides useful information about motoring abroad. It's also worth considering insurance and additional documentation you may require.

4.4 Insurance

The British Council is unable to advise on particular insurance packages; you are recommended to consult professional advice, or to check whether you are covered by any existing family policy. Booking insurance should be carried out before any travel.

Undergraduate assistants should consult with their university to check what cover is provided and it is important to check the small print of your policy.

Those applying for a study visa are required to have travel insurance that covers the **entire Schengen area, not just Italy.**

Personal Accident Travel insurance is recommended to cover medical expenses, air ambulance, repatriation, personal accident & civil liability, luggage & valuable items, and cancellation in extreme cases.

Personal Accident Travel policies are readily available on price comparison websites, or by using a search engine to search for 'travel insurance'. The UK Foreign & Commonwealth website offers additional advice on taking out Travel Insurance: www.gov.uk/guidance/foreign-travel-insurance

Please Note: Your host school will reimburse your privately sourced health insurance up to 500 Euros. You must provide a copy of the insurance form for the school and the health insurance must be valid within the Italian territory.

This applies to ELAs with an INDIRE post. Assistants in Trentino-Alto Adige (TAA) are also supplied a form of insurance. Please discuss this with your relevant TAA contact.

4.5 Graduates with Student Loans

If you have a student loan, you will need to let student finance know that you are going to Italy. Complete an Overseas Income Assessment Form to enable the Student Loans Company to calculate how much you need to repay.

Whilst in Italy the money you receive is considered a monthly allowance or a mobility grant, rather than a salary. This means that you are officially taking part in **a grant**

funded mobility programme rather than formal employment. Last year assistants who declared their Language Assistant role as formal employment rather than a grant funded mobility programme faced challenges with the Student Loans Company, who requested copies of employment contracts in English.

You will be required to provide evidence of income or means of support. They will then send you a repayment schedule showing how much you need to pay each month. Your monthly payments will be based upon the earnings threshold for your destination Italy. The British Council UK team are not able to advise on student loans matters. For all questions relating to student loans please contact Student Finance directly.

4.6 Benefits and Universal Credit

If you are in receipt of government support in the UK, you must inform the authorities that you are moving to work abroad. Tell your local Jobcentre Plus or the office that pays your benefit if you're going abroad. If it's a temporary move, tell them when you're coming back. You must also tell HMRC if you're leaving the UK.

4.7 Visas and Passports

You must meet the passport requirements for Italy before leaving the UK and must check these here: entry requirements. These may vary depending on the type of passport you will be travelling on.

Those who are not in possession of a passport, or need a new one, should complete the application procedure as soon as possible either through a regional Passport Office or online: passports.

If you have a non-EU passport, to work in Italy you will be applying for a long stay student visa. This process requires your own investment of time and money. The British Council UK team and our overseas partners will provide guidance on this process when the time comes to apply.

Assistants are expected to cover the costs of this, which can include sourcing documentation, attending visa appointments, and paying service fees to the visa office.

4.8 Medical Certificate

In accordance with the statement in the medical section of the British Council application form, the Ministry for Education in Italy or your school may request a medical certificate from you once you are allocated to a position.

If requested by your school or the Italian authorities, you must obtain a medical certificate / letter from your GP (on letter headed paper, stamped, and signed) over the summer and forward it to the Ministry when requested to. The medical certificate should be written

in English and confirm that you are in a good state of health and do not suffer from any contagious illnesses.

You may also wish to take a copy of the certificate to Italy for your own reference.

If your school or the Italian authorities do not contact you to request a medical certificate, no further action is necessary.

Section 4 Recap



5 Health and Wellbeing

Before you go

At least 8 weeks before your trip, check the latest Italy-specific health advice from the National Travel Health Network and Centre (NaTHNaC) on the TravelHealthPro website. Each country-specific page has information on vaccine recommendations, any current health risks or outbreaks, and factsheets with information on staying healthy abroad. Guidance is also available from NHS (Scotland) on the FitForTravel website.

General information on travel vaccinations and a travel health checklist is available on the NHS website. You may then wish to contact your health adviser or pharmacy for advice on other preventive measures and managing any pre-existing medical conditions whilst you're abroad.

Make sure that you have comprehensive travel and medical insurance covering healthcare and medical evacuation and repatriation for the duration of your stay.

5.1 Medication

The legal status and regulation of some medicines prescribed or purchased in the UK can be different in Italy. If you're travelling with prescription or over-the-counter medicine, read this guidance from NaTHNaC on best practice when travelling with medicines. For further information on the legal status of a specific medicine, you'll need to contact the embassy, high commission or consulate of the country or territory you're travelling to.

If you're on prescription medication, make sure you either bring enough with you or have access to a supply once in Italy. Certain medicines may not be available in Italy (including major brands readily available in the UK), and you may be prohibited from bringing some medicines into the country. For more information and advice, check with your GP and the Embassy of Italy before travelling.

5.1 EHIC/ GHIC

UK-issued European Health Insurance Cards (EHICs) are still valid. Once your EHIC has expired, you'll be able to replace it with a Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC).

The GHIC allows UK residents to access state-provided healthcare during a temporary stay that is less than 6 months in the European Union (EU), including Italy. When using a GHIC in Italy, you are entitled to healthcare on the same basis as Italian nationals, which means:

- You may receive free or reduced-cost treatment in public health facilities.
- It's intended for medically necessary care during a temporary stay — e.g. if you fall ill or have an accident.

The GHIC is **not designed for long-term residencies** and is **not an alternative to medical insurance** but gives you access to **emergency/one-off** healthcare which becomes medically necessary during your stay, if you cannot reasonably wait until you're back in the UK to get it. The GHIC won't cover the cost of returning home in case of serious illness/injury.

Ensure you have medical insurance and bring an EHIC/GHIC with you to Italy. We strongly recommend you take out your own private comprehensive travel and health insurance that includes:

- Private medical treatment
- Repatriation (return to the UK if needed)
- Coverage for personal belongings and travel issues
- Optional: pre-existing conditions or dental care

If you are a student, you may wish to contact your university for advice surrounding the Student GHIC. You can read more online about the UK Global Health Insurance Card from the NHS.

Once in Italy

Please see the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office website for more information regarding healthcare in Italy: GOV.UK healthcare guidance living in Italy. The FCDO details more on the Healthcare for UK nationals in Italy page.

If you require urgent medical attention in Italy dial **118.**

Remember, your host school will reimburse your privately sourced health insurance up to 500 Euros. You must provide a copy of the insurance form for the school and the health insurance must be valid within the Italian territory.

This applies to ELAs with an INDIRE post. Assistants in the Trentino-Alto Adige (TAA) region are also supplied a form of insurance. Please discuss this with INDIRE or your relevant TAA contact.

5.3 Healthcare in Italy

Please consult the UK government's guidance on Healthcare in Italy with more in-depth guidance found here.

4.3.2 Medication

If your medicine is available from suppliers in Italy, doctors may first want to conduct their own diagnosis before repeating a prescription issued elsewhere. It is important to find out where your nearest doctor, dentist and hospital are as soon as you arrive. Ask your school for information about the facilities in your area and advise staff and your landlord of any medical conditions.

5.4 Mental Health

Although working abroad can be enjoyable, it can also be challenging. Lack of familiar support systems, disrupted daily routines, language barriers, culture shock and unexpected situations can intensify stress levels rather than alleviate them.

It is important to remember that culture shock affects everyone. There is no shame in admitting that you are having a difficult time. If you do feel homesick or frustrated, consider talking to your fellow assistants on the programme as they will understand how you are feeling better than anyone else. Also, be sure to keep up to date with your family and friends back home.

Listen to our podcast to learn more about dealing with culture shock: Culture Shock

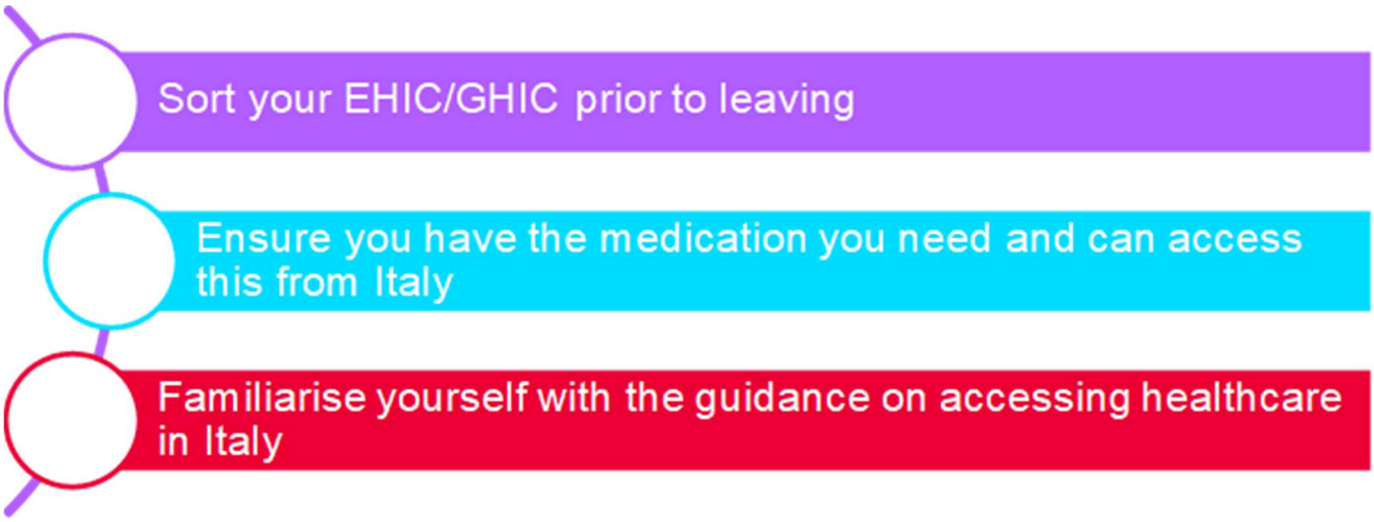
Your mental health is just as important as your physical health. It is advised to read this information even if you are not currently experiencing mental health problems.

The websites hyperlinked below contain information about how the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) can assist British nationals with mental health needs abroad, and guidance on travelling abroad and mental health.

- GOV.UK mental health and wellbeing abroad
- Mental Health Travelling Abroad Checklist
- The NHS website lists helplines that can offer expert advice to people with different mental health needs.
- The fitfortravel website has a section on Mental Health and Travel.

- International Association for Medical Assistance to Travellers provide useful resources for mental health.
- Mind has some useful tips for looking after your mental health, including contacts for support services you can reach out to via email, text, or phone.

Section 5 Recap



6 Outside of School: Arrival and Settling in

6.1 Administrative Checklist

Once you arrive in Italy, there are several important steps to take to establish your legal residency and comply with visa requirements. These steps ensure that your stay is fully documented under the new EES system (see section 4.5.1). Further details are given in the sections below the checklist.

1. **Apply for the *Permesso di Soggiorno* (Residence Permit)**
    a. **Where:** At a *Patronato* or a *Poste Italiane* (Italian Post Office) offering *Sportello Amico* services.
    b. **When:** Apply within 8 days of arriving in Italy. Bring your passport with visa, application form, *marca da bollo* (tax stamp), and any documentation supporting your purpose of stay.
    c. **Appointment with *Questura* (local Police headquarters):** After submitting your application, you'll receive an appointment date with the *Questura* for biometric data collection and an interview. Attendance is mandatory.
2. **Register at the local *Comune* (Town Hall)**
    a. **Purpose:** Officially registering at your local *Comune* is required for establishing residency, accessing local services and completing certain administrative tasks.
    b. **Documents:** Bring your *Permesso di Soggiorno* application receipt, proof of address and identification.

3. **Obtain a *Codice Fiscale* (Italian Tax Code)**
    a. This tax code is essential for most administrative matters, including setting up a bank account or renting property. Apply for your *Codice Fiscale* online or at the *Agenzia delle Entrate* with your passport and visa.

6.2 Obtaining your Residence Permit

Non-EU citizens arriving in Italy with a National Visa for stays longer than 90 days, must request a residence permit *(permesso di soggiorno)* from the Italian authorities **within 8 days** of arriving. The residence permit, which will be issued for the same reason and for the same duration indicated in the visa, is the document that authorises your stay. Further information on this can be found on the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs website.

Instructions on how to do this process may vary depending on your region – however we have highlighted a few steps on the next page which we hope will guide you through this process. These steps detail the way that most ELAs have previously applied for their residence permit. Members of the most recent ELA cohort to Italy have informed us that you can also apply for the residency permit and receive guidance while doing so at a Patronato. The Patronato is a state-subsidised service, helping Italians and foreigners complete paperwork and immigration documents. The following Yes Milano webpage shares further information: Residence Permit | Yes Milano.

Please be aware that this guidance has not come from an official source and therefore each assistant should conduct their own research. We recommend you also ask your school/mentor teacher and/or former ELAs in your area for advice.

- First, pick up your application for Italian residency from the *Sportello Amico* of the local post office (*ufficio postale* or *Poste Italiane*). You must apply within 8 days of arriving so start the process as soon as possible.
- Not all post offices offer application kits for Italian residence permits. You need to find a post office with a *Sportello Amico* counter or go to a *Questura* (local police headquarters), depending on your area. The application kit is an envelope with the required forms that you must fill out. The forms will be in Italian.
- Next, buy a *Marca da Bollo* stamp (around 16 euros), which you must attach to your application before submitting. This is a “duty stamp” which you can find at a *tabaccheria*. You must buy the specific type of *Marca da Bollo* stamp stated on your application kit.
- Once you have completed your application kit and have the other required documents, submit them at the *Sportello Amico* where you first picked up the application kit. You won’t have to submit the originals of any documents but bring them just in case they need to see them, along with photocopies for each. Postage can cost around 70 euros.
- Make sure not to sign the application or close the envelope, since the officers handling your application have to review them first. If they find that everything is in order, they will give you your appointment date for when you have to appear at the *Questura* for the second part of your Italian residence permit application.

- They will also give you a receipt, which will serve as a temporary residence permit because the *Questura* appointment is usually 1-2 months away. You must keep this receipt with you in case someone asks to see your residence permit, to let them know you are in the process of getting one. We recommend taking a picture of it in case you misplace it.
- On the date of your appointment at the *Questura*, you must bring the originals of all the documents that you need, along with the receipt and the letter containing your appointment date that you received at the post office. There, they will take your fingerprints and may ask you some questions.
- They will also let you know when you can come back in order to pick up your Italian residence permit card.
- Please ensure that you have all the supporting documents needed for the residency permit and any documents that you need to submit for your Long-Term visa. Make sure to have copies of the documents used for your visa.

Official information on this process can be found on the following governmental website however, your experience of the process may be slightly different depending on where you are based: https://www.interno.gov.it/it/temi/immigrazione-e-asilo/modalita-dingresso/visto-e-permesso-soggiorno.

6.3 Codice Fiscale

A *codice fiscale* is the tax code card in Italy, similar to the National Insurance Number in the United Kingdom. The card serves to identify individuals residing in Italy. You'll need a *codice fiscale* in Italy for things like opening a bank or postal account, registering a vehicle in Italy, signing a lease for a flat or signing a contract with utility companies.

Please note!

While the majority of ELAs apply for their *Codice Fiscale* once in Italy it is possible to apply for it online from UK.

ELAs with a placement in Trentino-Alto Adige (TAA) are advised to apply for their *Codice Fiscale* from within the UK before they arrive in TAA.

Previously, non-resident individuals who needed to obtain a *Codice Fiscale* could apply for it through the Italian consular authorities in their country of residence. We have been informed that this is no longer the case.

This tax code can be obtained at the local *Agenzia delle Entrate* (the Italian Revenue Agency). As experiences vary widely, you would be well advised to check for information locally (in your school) before obtaining one. Former assistants have stressed the importance of having a *Codice Fiscale* and have recommended that you always carry it with you.

The following governmental website provides some useful information on how to obtain the tax identification number: *Codice Fiscale*. You may also find this guide helpful: Get your tax code.

The process for obtaining a *Codice Fiscale* in Italy can vary greatly, but in general you could follow these instructions:

- Book an appointment at your local *Agenzia delle Entrate*: Book an appointment

- Fill out the application form. You can find the form and instructions here: *Codice Fiscale* forms
- Bring your passport/national identity card. Non-EU citizens will also be required to present their visa and proof of residence permit application.
- If you have not printed out and completed the application form, ask for a *Codice Fiscale* form. Fill out the form (personal and address information). Please be aware that the form is in Italian so you may want to bring a dictionary with you.
- Take a number from the front desk.
- When your number is called on screen, go to the *sportello* (window) displayed and give them your form.
- They will then give you a piece of officially stamped paper with your number, and your card will arrive later by post.

You may want to consider asking your mentor teacher or a friend to come with you to the local Agenzia delle Entrate.

6.4 Accommodation

6.4.1 General Advice

If you are travelling to Italy on a visa, you will be required to have at least temporary accommodation booked prior to your visa appointment.

Previous ELAs have recommended using temporary accommodation initially (3 weeks) and to ask your mentor teacher for advice before you arrive. They may be able to provide details of a previous ELA's accommodation.

When you look for accommodation, take a dossier of papers with you including as many of the following as possible: confirmation of appointment, proof of salary, identification.

There may not be many language assistants living near you if you live in a rural area – you may want to look for accommodation in a bigger town and commute to your school.

Here are some useful links when looking for accommodation:

Temporary Accommodation	Permanent Accommodation	
Hostelling International Hostelworld AirBnB	Subito Spotahome Mioaffitto Bakeca Idealista	Erasmusu Cerco Alloggio Wanted in Rome Wanted in Milan



6.5 Bank Accounts

Ensure you have a bank account that you can receive your grant payment into. Please discuss this with your mentor teacher and see Section 8.1 (Money Matters: Bank Account) for further guidance.

Section 6 Recap



7 In school: Arrival, Settling in and Support

7.1 Induction

The Ministry for Education in Italy (MIUR) will organise an induction course or information meeting for all foreign language assistants which will likely be held in-person this year. Please note, the British Council is not involved in the organisation of these meetings. You will receive details about the induction meeting directly from the Ministry; this is just for your information. The format of the induction meeting varies year on year, but it provides you with useful information about your placement directly from the partner organisation and is a great chance for you to meet other assistants in your region. Attendance is expected.

7.2 Observation Period

When you first arrive at your school(s) you may ask for a period of observation of 1-2 weeks however, some schools would prefer to involve you from the start. Regardless, both informal and formal observation allows you to familiarise yourself with the school environment, to experience classroom management techniques as well as to get to know the names, faces and personalities of your pupils and gauge their level of English. Try to note the following:

- How the teacher starts and ends the lesson;
- How the teacher speaks to pupils;
- How the teacher involves all pupils, including shy ones, in the class activity;
- What the teacher's attitude is to pupil errors and error correction; and
- How the teacher controls disruptive behaviour, lateness, and lack of effort

This can also be a valuable opportunity to discuss with your mentor teacher about the following:

.1 How you are finding your experience and settling in

.2 If you have any additional requirements which may facilitate your placement.

7.2.1 Settling into School Life

You can hear tips from former assistants in our settling in podcast.

Starting any new job can be a daunting experience, no matter how confident a person you are. It's completely normal to be unsure of where to go, what to do or who to talk to at the beginning.

Remember – it is not good practice to correct another teacher in front of students.

Apart from your work in the classroom you may be able to attend other classes in subjects which interest you. You will find that you become much more integrated into school life and gain

considerably more from your stay if you become involved in activities organised by the school, such as sports days, theatre or music productions or modern language societies. Go to school ‘open days’ or parent evenings as these are also a good way of meeting people.

Assistants who are proactive and take the initiative often settle into school life much faster. Being a self-starter is a great way to make a strong first impression. Teachers are often very busy and will certainly appreciate your efforts to help and try to make an impact.

7.3 Absence from School

Please remember that you are a member of staff and must therefore adhere to the holiday dates set by the school. If you cannot work because of illness, you should inform your school(s) and the partner organisation (if applicable) immediately by telephone. You may be asked to provide a letter from a doctor to justify your absence. This should cover the entire duration of the absence and must be sent to the school as soon as it is issued.

Any prolonged absence on account of illness should be reported as soon as possible to the Ministry for Education in Italy and to the British Council. Requests for leave of absence for any other reason should be made in advance to the head of the school(s) who is within their right to refuse it. You are reminded that if you are absent from school without prior authorisation, your monthly allowance might be reduced and in extreme circumstances your assistantship might be revoked.

If you do receive permission to take an additional leave of absence from school, we recommend that you get this in writing (i.e.an email) from the head of the school.

If it becomes necessary to resign from your post, you must give sufficient prior notice in writing of your intended departure to the school, the Ministry for Education or the Education Department in Trentino-Alto Adige and the British Council, setting out your reasons in full. If you are an undergraduate, you must also inform your university/college in the UK.

Please be aware that if you are absent for more than 30 consecutive days during one academic year, even if these absences are justified, your school withholds the right to revoke your contract. This clause is referred to in the letter of appointment provided by the Italian authorities.

7.4 Social Media

You should be very careful about how you use social networking sites whilst you are an assistant in Italy. Keep your profile private so that it can only be seen by people you intend to see it. If you connect with other teachers on social media, remember to remain professional in what you post and be careful what you say about your school(s) and your experiences in Italy.

You should not exchange personal contact details with students or connect with them on social media. Check with teachers about the school’s internet policy, particularly regarding any online communication involving students either in or outside school. It is exceptionally important that you understand issues around child protection, both to protect the students and to protect you from any damaging and potentially serious accusations.

7.5 Support Networks

Give yourself some time to adjust –in the beginning, you will have a lot of administrative matters to deal with. Former assistants have recommended that you don't spend all your free time with other programme participants, as this will make it more difficult to integrate into your community and life in Italy. On the other hand, don't feel that you must cut yourself off from them – your programme peers can provide a very good support network, as you understand each other's experiences. Don't forget that there might be language assistants from other countries in your area too.

On arrival, the thought of making friends and meeting locals can seem like a daunting task but, if you are prepared to put yourself out there, it is a part of the experience which previous assistants have found the most enriching.

Here are some other ways to meet people within the area:

1. Use the Buddy Maps provided in the ELA Summer Pack to contact previous ELAs and Modern Language Assistants from the local area
2. Enrol for an evening class, join a sports club, music group, choir etc
3. Join or set up a language exchange or find a language tandem partner
4. Join the local Erasmus society through the ESN network
5. Enquire about joining the local university and attending lectures
6. Get involved in the local culture and join clubs that you can't join in the UK
7. Volunteer for a charity, society, festival, etc

Start at School

8. Showing that you are enthusiastic and keen to get to know staff will go a long way. Start with a simple hello or ask how their weekend went. Remember, though, that you will be working in a school environment therefore staff may not have a lot of free time.
9. Try introducing yourself to staff you may not directly work with, for example teachers in other departments, lunch time staff, receptionists, caretakers etc. If there are social occasions or team meetings try to make an effort to attend.
10. If you hear about something happening which interests you, ask if you can become involved. Be proactive - don't wait to be invited as people may assume that you're not interested.
11. Some colleagues might want to practice their English with you, which is a great way to integrate yourself in the wider school community. Socialising with colleagues is also a good opportunity to improve and practice your Italian; however, keep in mind that some schools will ask you to speak only English around your students.

Rural Posts

It should be noted that a number of the posts in Italy are in rural areas. Past assistants to rural areas have had very positive experiences as they have been able to see the "real Italy".

Sometimes assistants posted to rural locations find it can be more challenging to adapt to, especially at the start, however it can be a very enriching experience on a personal development

level and a real immersion in culture and language. Often assistants in rural postings comment that they receive much more support from their school which can help with setting into life in Italy.

7.6 Concerns and Queries: Who to Contact?

Meeting regularly with your mentor gives the opportunity for them to feedback about your performance and for you to raise any concerns or issues. Do tell someone if you have problems or if you need information as otherwise, they may assume everything is fine.

Conditions in schools in Italy may differ from those in the UK. We have come up with a who to contact guide to assist you with who to ask if you have a query or concern regarding your placement. Please consult this guide for help on who to contact if you have a query or an issue. The British Council has a zero-tolerance policy approach to discrimination of any kind. If a serious incident occurs and the who to contact sheet is not appropriate, please contact us.

Past assistants may tell you that their assistantship in Italy was the best year of their life. This can raise expectations and often leads to people feeling low, especially during the first few weeks until they settle in.

The assistantship year is a wonderful opportunity to absorb Italian language and culture and gain much in life experience and transferable skills. However, it is perfectly understandable that while being abroad in a completely different environment there may be times when you feel homesick, have trouble with pupils or colleagues, or with your living situation and so on.

Section 7 Recap



Please note! Some ELAs may be asked to teach and partake in classes other than English. This is normal and you do not have to be an expert in these areas. This is part of an EU teaching framework known as CLIL.

8 Money Matters

8.1 Bank Account

Opening a bank account in Italy can be a complicated process and you pay for the service, so some assistants prefer to use online bank accounts with an IBAN. This should be discussed with your school as they are responsible for issuing your payments.

Things to consider if opening a traditional bank account:

- It is advisable that you open a bank account soon after arriving in Italy in order to receive your payments.
- We recommend waiting until you arrive in your town of appointment, allowing you to research all the local options, seek recommendations and receive help from your school.
- Some banks will not allow customers to open an account until they have been a resident in Italy for six months. You can, however, open a libretto di risparmio (a savings account) but should seek advice as to which type and how to go about opening it, as savings account vary from place to place.
- Former assistants have also advised that they needed an Italian phone number, their passport, codice fisicale and their UK National Number prior to opening a bank account.
- You may find this glossary of Italian banking terms helpful: useful-vocabulary-you-need-at-the-bank
- Check with local banks in advance to find out what kind of documents will be required

8.2 Tax

Our team cannot assist you is this area because we are not trained in tax, cannot give advice on how your personal circumstances will affect your tax, and for data protection reasons.

Enquiries regarding UK income tax should be addressed to a local Inspector of Taxes, please check HMRC for information about who to contact.

We recommend looking into the Double Taxation Agreement between the UK and Italy which normally exempts assistants from paying Italian income tax for a period of up to 2 years.

However, it is normally the case that 100% of the remuneration received abroad will be liable for UK tax.

It is important to note that the agreement only covers teaching jobs.

8.3 Monthly Allowance

Your monthly allowance will be €850 per month net. This will be paid by the school generally by the 5th day of the following month.

Your allowance will be higher if you are placed in the Trentino-Alto Adige region and as payments are made by the regional departments, assistants in this region are unlikely to be affected by payment delays.

Budgets to schools are disbursed twice a year, in November and in February. It is therefore likely that the first payment of your allowance may not arrive until late November. Therefore, you should ensure that you take around €1000 to €1500 or a credit card with you to cover initial costs, which will be higher in Rome and the big cities.

Consider taking a Credit Card to cover initial costs and be aware that, unless you have an online travel card, you are often charged for using your British debit card to withdraw money abroad.

Please note that, because the Italian financial year ends on 31 December, assistants have sometimes experienced significant delays in receiving their pay during the months of January and February. If there is a delay, you should let your school know about the situation immediately and contact the Ministry via the email: assistentilingue@istruzione.it. Please also contact the British Council in the UK to inform us of any persistent delays in payment.

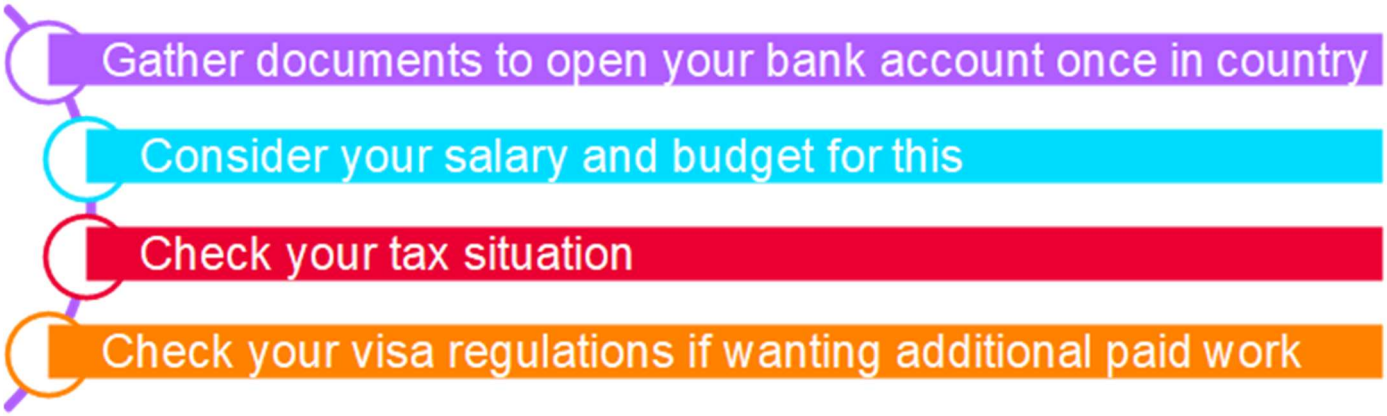
8.4 Additional Income

For those travelling to Italy with a visa, you must check the visa policy to see if you will be able to take on additional work. This unfortunately may not be possible.

If you wish to supplement your income by giving private tuition in English, you are strongly advised not to advertise in local papers or public places. 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.

The going rate for private one-to-one tuition seems to be €10 - €25 per hour depending on how much preparation for the lesson you plan to do and how much your pupils can afford. Please ensure that any additional work does not conflict with your school timetable.

Section 8 Recap



Documents Recap

Prepare the following copies and documents prior to leaving:

- Passport
- Photographs
- Insurance cover
- Certificate of appointment
- Another valid form of photographic ID
- Bank statements from your UK bank
- Birth Certificate
- Certificates of school exams
- Passport sized photos

When in Italy:

- Payslips
- Rental agreement

9. Language Learning and Studies

9.1 For Language Learning

For Language Learning

- BBC- Learn Italian. Offers a wealth of resources for learning Italian, including short guides, videos and the BBC World News service in Italy.

- Memrise. A sophisticated platform for language learning, with a large online community. App also available.
- Duolingo. A simplistic platform for language learning which is very easy to access. Bite-size lessons allow the user to practice for anywhere from 5 minutes a day. App also available.
- Netflix. There are lots of Italian films and series available. Putting Italian subtitles on is a great way to pick up on new vocab.

10. End of your Placement

10.1 Administrative Matters

Bank: Make sure you do not close your Italian bank account until you have received any final payments you are due. You are advised to keep your account open for a month or so after the contract with your school has ended to ensure that all outstanding payments have been received. Please do check on the conditions for transactions relating to your account. For example, it might be that you can only close your account in the same branch in which you opened it.

Accommodation: Please make sure that you leave a good impression with your landlord – a future assistant may be depending on this:

- Leave a forwarding address with your landlord so that they can forward any mail on to you.
- When you leave your accommodation, remember to cancel any personal contracts, e.g. internet or utilities.
- Discuss with your landlord what you need to do for them to return your deposit and terminate your rental agreement, as well as arranging the return of your belongings if you have already left.
- If you rent your flat through a property agency, they may want to carry out an inspection before returning your deposit; if possible, you should make sure that you are present during the inspection to avoid any potential disagreements at a later date. Alternatively, you may wish to take photos of your accommodation before leaving to document how it was left.

Reference: If you haven't already done so, please liaise with your host school to ask for a reference.

- This will be invaluable when it comes to an official record of your assistantship and for any future applications to be an ELA. This should ideally be on headed paper, stamped and comment on your performance as an assistant.
- Please note that as the British Council is not the employer, we are unable to provide references for language assistants, only a certificate certifying participation upon request.

10.2 Staying a Consecutive Year

Due to high competition for posts, Language Assistants in Italy cannot apply for a consecutive year in the same country, although you are welcome to apply to work in a different country.

10.3 Become an Ambassador

Ambassadors play an essential active part in promoting this opportunity. By representing a British Council programme, former assistants will be able to develop their creative, organisational and professional skills and network with the future generation of assistants. To have an opportunity to be involved with this, you must have filled out our end of year survey.

10.4 Getting into Teaching

If you want to take your assistantship even further, find out more from the links below on how to get into teaching and inspire future linguists:

- England: get into teaching
- Wales: discover teaching/routes into teaching
- Scotland: teach in Scotland
- Northern Ireland: get into teaching