

## The Westminster CTEFL programme and the CELTA or Trinity Cert TESOL course – how do they compare?

Those completing the full Westminster programme will have fulfilled exactly the same minimum requirements of a CELTA course and would therefore be recognised under the British Council inspection scheme as a first level qualification. These require the certificate to:

- be externally validated by a reputable examination body (usually a university or recognised examination board)
- contain at least six hours' supervised teaching practice (i.e. teaching practice where a qualified assessor observes the trainee teacher teaching real students and gives feedback on his or her performance)
- contain at least 100 hours of ELT/TESOL input.

The Westminster Programme however provides more complete training at a less intense pace, which the course provider believes will result in better teachers who are more confident and more independent.

Worldwide, up to 8% of CELTA candidates do not receive the certificate because they fail or do not complete the course. 63% gain a basic Pass grade. According to Cambridge's own criteria these trainees need further support in both teaching and planning of lessons - support which most schools are not able to give. Indeed, many good schools now only look to employ candidates with higher grades (Pass B and A).

That's why the validation panel, which included Jenny Johnson, at the time Head of Cactus TEFL, commended the Westminster programme, saying it was "a unique and innovative course, which addresses many of the shortfalls of initial TEFL training".

### What does the programme have which is different to CELTA?

The programme is three linked courses which provide over **300 hours of study** including a minimum of **16 hours** of teaching observation and mentoring and **12 hours teaching practice**. The first two courses are part-time and focus on language and methodology through workshops, observations, mentoring and guided learning online. The final teaching practice module is a full-time four-week summer course teaching real EFL students.

- Each course carries a separate certificate and has 15 credits at BA level.
- Each course can be paid for separately so you can build towards the full qualification.
- You gain a comprehensive knowledge of language *before* you have to do teaching practice.
- You meet EFL students and gain an understanding of their language and level *before* you start teaching practice.
- You gain a good understanding of methodology and how course books work *before* you start teaching practice.
- You take part in real EFL classes and have several hours of mentoring *before* your teaching is assessed.
- Teaching practice focuses *only* on teaching techniques and aspects of professional life.
- Teaching practice includes areas such as homework, placing students, and assessment, which are not usually dealt with.
- Teaching practice includes plenty of unassessed lessons where you have time to truly reflect and develop as a teacher.
- The students who you will be teaching will have paid a reduced fee to attend the course rather than being volunteers.

The Westminster school thinks that this course provides a better model for learning to become a teacher because they believe:

- you can't teach well if you don't know the subject you're teaching
- you can't assess and develop as a teacher if you don't have an understanding of methods and theories of teaching
- you can't relax and reflect if you are always being assessed
- you can't concentrate on technique if you are learning about content and methodology at the same time.
- you get a more realistic training by teaching on a full-time course with paying students.

Note that only those who have averaged 55% on the first two courses will qualify to do the final TEFL certificate which is based on teaching - so there may be some who will not complete the

full programme. This is no different to CELTA and Trinity courses. Not everyone finds they are cut out to be a teacher and some may decide they are not interested. According to Cambridge, worldwide, 3% failed and another 5% withdrew before completing the course. However, unlike CELTA, the structure of the Westminster programme means you do not have to commit to (and lose) a large payment and you may still achieve a qualification and university credits without completing the full programme.

Westminster courses on the Cactus TEFL site:

[Special Certificate Language for English Teaching \(LET\)](#)

[Special Certificate Methodology for English Language Teaching \(MET\)](#)

[Special Certificate Teaching English as a Foreign Language \(CTEFL\)](#)

[Special Combination Certificate Teaching English as a Foreign Language \(LET, MET and CTEFL\)](#)