

7 Top Research Tips for Teaching Internationally



1. Check you have the necessary qualifications and experience.

Most international schools will require you to have already had some practical teaching experience in the country where you trained; some prefer at least 2 years' experience. Make the most of this time by gaining experience of working with students who have a different mother tongue to your own at home. It will stand you in good stead in terms of the salary you can command internationally, as well as opening up your options should you decide to return later on.

On the qualification front, it is important to know how your teaching qualifications are viewed in different countries as this will impact on your earning potential and likelihood of promotion.

Special qualifications like TESOL (for teaching English to speakers of other languages) may be useful but generally aren't requirements for most international teaching positions.



2. Consider which countries really appeal to you.

Not every country will suit everyone, so you'll really need to think about what you're looking to gain from your new location. Do you want to use it as a base to go exploring, or is it that country itself you're looking to experience? It's also worth considering your priorities in terms of the language spoken, security and culture too.

Once you have a shortlist, contact your Foreign Office for their advice on any higher risk countries, then buy a good guide and read up on the country to ensure it would be somewhere you could live comfortably. If there are political tensions, what is the impact of this day to day? How different is it from your home country in terms of how it is socially acceptable to dress and behave? Would you be able to live with your partner or drink socially at the weekend?



3. Spread your net widely.

There are a multitude of websites that focus on international teacher recruitment, including TES in the UK, with some running job fairs too. Most of the activity happens in the January/February period in preparation for the new academic year in September, so this will be when the best opportunities appear.



4. Research down to the school level.

International schools may have an elite reputation, but in a competitive market, not all are offering the same package in terms of pay, working conditions and perks. In some cases, the possibility of promotion can be less than in a school in your home country as well, as there are simply fewer leadership roles.



5. Read the contract thoroughly.

As with all contracts, it's vital that you read all of it as it is legally binding. Make sure too that it's signed at the beginning of the school year, otherwise you might not receive redundancy pay should your school run into difficulties. Watch out for any penalties too, which may come into force should you leave before the end of the contract as these can be significant, ranging from the withdrawal of air fares to financial levies.



6. Check which resources you'll have available to you.

Find out as soon as possible which year group or groups you will be teaching and which subjects. It would be worth contacting the school to see what you can work with. Many online education companies, such as Edmentum International offer online solutions for international schools, and have interfaces that have been adapted to different countries' cultural sensitivities. Edmentum International's EducationCity solution even includes content specifically created for students who are learning English as an additional language!!



7. Prepare for a potential return.

You may or may not have plans to move back to your country of origin from the outset, but many teachers do return. To make this process easier, it's best to keep up to date with educational developments in your home country from the outset. This can be achieved by becoming an examiner on an exam board, for instance, or regularly accessing local training sessions.

