

How do I become a teacher of adults?

This briefing sheet outlines the skills, qualifications and courses which are required to become a teacher of adults.

1. What is adult and further education?

Teaching adults is a specialist area. 'Adults' are generally considered to be people over the age of 21, but adult learners can range from 16 to 85+. Typically the term "adult and community education" refers to courses and programmes specially designed for this wide age group that may be designed for younger learners. This paper covers provision described as 'adult and community learning', 'adult education', 'further education', 'continuing education' and 'lifelong learning'.

Education for adults takes place in a wide range of settings: in specialist adult education centres, community and voluntary projects, unions, workplace settings, prisons, schools, further education, colleges and universities. Courses can be vocational, and lead to work or computer training; they can be a first step to further study, as with access programmes; or they can be intended for personal development, such as creative arts, languages or family health. A large area is adult literacy, numeracy or ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages).

Adult learners have very varied backgrounds and life experiences: employed, unemployed, parents, carers, homeless – the range is wide. They may have degrees or have left school early with few qualifications. Groups of learners therefore are not homogenous in terms of background or age.

Teachers of adults need particular skills that are different to those working in a school or with young people on vocational training or those teaching on degree courses. Teachers recognise that adult learners are generally coming because they have chosen to be there. They come because the learning is relevant to their lives and has a clear outcome. Adults generally bring a wide range of life experience to their learning which the teacher will want to build on. Sometimes adults are not learning because they have chosen to do so but because they have to: as in training courses in the workplace, or where they must attend as a condition of receiving benefits.

Work for teachers of adults is often part-time and suits people who have other commitments. For example, artists who want to have some income to support their own work, or parents who have childcare responsibilities. There is full-time work available, however, and this usually involves some management or broader responsibility, or working in a college of further education.

2. What skills do I need to have?

Usually you will be expected to have at least a level 3 qualification in the subject you want to teach. This is roughly the equivalent of 'A' levels. However, you may find work if you have a lower level of qualification but considerable experience in your subject.

If you are interested in teaching adult literacy, numeracy or ESOL, you will need to show your personal skills in these areas are at a good level. Usually this will require a minimum of level 2 (equivalent to GCSE) and you will be expected to reach a level 3 and above in the course of your training. Many tutors first test the water by working as volunteers. There are clear lines of career progression from volunteer to teacher.

It will be helpful to you if you have had previous experience of working with groups, working in the community, given talks, or helped people. For example, if you have been involved in your local playgroup, school, church, youth group, trade union or similar. You should also be willing to work with a wide range of people with different experiences and backgrounds, to respect and value that diversity and to support people in achieving a range of goals.

3. What training do I need?

It is often possible to get work initially without any teacher training, if you have a qualification in your chosen subject, or if you have professional expertise. However, you will be strongly advantaged if you can acquire at least some basic training before looking for work. If you are already working in adult or further education, even if this is very part-time, you should attend an in-service training course as soon as possible.

Most adult and further education providers will require you to take up some teacher training once you are in post, and many make it a condition of employment that you should achieve at least a Stage 1 adult education teaching qualification within one or two years. You should note that the teacher training courses referred to below only train you to work with people over 16 (or 14 in FE colleges). They will not currently qualify you to teach in primary schools, or the early years of secondary schools. Although the PGCE (FE) will not usually qualify you to teach in schools, the field of qualifications for adult education teachers will become more formalised over the next few years. This briefing sheet will be updated periodically to highlight these changes.

a) Part-time training for new teachers

Is this you?

Kofi is a fully qualified and experienced Shiatsu practitioner. He has his own practice but he would also like to teach Shiatsu to adults.

Jennie is an experienced Union official with considerable experience in health and safety law in employment. She already runs some one day workshops for Union officials.

If you have no teaching experience, or run occasional classes or workshops, and you wish to study part-time, you would be best advised to join an introductory course. The commonest is **City and Guilds 7302 Certificate in Delivering Learning: an Introduction**. This certificate offers a basic teaching 'toolkit' covering practical skills that will enable you to get started.

b) Part-time training if you have started teaching

Is this you?

Magdalena has just started work in a community centre teaching basic computer skills to local people. She will teach a class two hours a week.

Jackie works in a community project for homeless people. She has been offering individual support in CV writing. She has been offered the chance to run a preparation for employment course.

Gareth has been working 10 hours a week for 9 months, teaching web design in a project for unemployed people referred by the Job Centre, and in an adult class in his local further education college. His course leads to City and Guilds qualifications. He has learned how to teach 'on the job' but has had no formal training.

If you are already teaching groups of adults, but have not had teacher training, you should plan to do a nationally approved teaching qualification at level 4 (first year undergraduate level). The most generally recognised is **City and Guilds 7407 Further Education Teachers Certificate Stage 1**. This is usually considered the minimum qualification for part-time teachers of post-16 year olds. Some organisations require you to have this qualification before they will employ you.

This course is designed for in-service teachers, unless the course can offer a teaching practice placement. You must complete 45 hours of study and 20 hours of teaching. You are observed three times while you are teaching and you have to complete a range of assignments.

For those working in adult education centres only, a drawback to this programme is that it has been designed for teachers in further education colleges who generally teach substantial vocational qualifications. If your teaching is very informal, you may find that you are not accepted. However, by 2007, all qualifications will be adapted to meet the needs of teachers in any post-16 context.

If you have more work, and build up your teaching hours, you can continue to **City and Guilds 7407 Stage 2** (40 hours of teaching at this stage) and **7407 Stage 3** (a further 60 hours of teaching). In many areas, the third stage is completed at a local university and you achieve a **Certificate in Education** or **Postgraduate Certificate in Education**. This is a full teaching qualification and will qualify you to teach full time in FE colleges. It will take you a minimum of two years to gain a full qualification through part-time study.

Although City and Guilds is the most widely used examining body, you may find that, in your area, similar qualifications are being offered that are accredited by other examining bodies such as OCR, OCNW (Open College of the North West) or by your local university.

c) Is it possible to get my full teaching qualification by studying full-time?

Yes it is. This may be difficult financially, however, if you have family responsibilities or are used to being on a full-time income. You are unlikely to find full time teacher training courses specifically for the adult education sector. However, there are courses which train you to work in further education colleges where students now start at fourteen, and sixth form colleges. You may be able to negotiate a placement (your practice teaching) in a solely adult education setting.

d) I am already a trained schoolteacher. Do I need to do additional qualifications?

Technically you don't. However, teaching in adult and further education is very different from working in schools. You would be advised to attend a 'teaching adults' course to explore the differences and to prepare you. You might be advised to apply for work directly, and then join a course such as **City and Guilds 7407 Stage 1** once you are teaching. You should check the course considers the needs of adult learners, and not only those of younger people.

e) I would like to work as a literacy, numeracy or ESOL teacher. Do I take the same training route?

Since 2001, there have been special requirements for teachers of these subjects. You may have a Professional Development Centre for literacy, numeracy and ESOL teachers in your area that could offer you advice. Contact your local Learning and Skills Council for information. Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) also provides information about this area. Alternatively, advice booklets are available from the Skills for Life Strategy Unit at the Department for Education and Skills (website: www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus).

4. Will I get work once I have trained?

Getting work often involves networking and trying different providers in your area. You should send letters and CVs to local colleges and adult education centres, and look out for advertisements in the local press. Sometimes jobs teaching adults are advertised in the Guardian education pages and the Times Educational Supplement (further education pages).

5. Where are teacher training courses offered?

City and Guilds courses are usually offered in further education colleges. You should also investigate local universities. Awarding bodies, such as City and Guilds, can provide you with details of centres in your area.

6. How much will my training cost?

If you are doing an introductory course, such as the City and Guilds 7302, you can expect to pay around £100 – £150 for the course. Fees vary, and some colleges will charge you little or no fees if you are in receipt of benefits. If you join a part-time in-service course, your employer will often offer support with fees. If you study towards a PGCE or Certificate of Education in a university, you are eligible for a mandatory award from your local authority to cover your fees.

7. How much will I earn?

Very often, teachers of adults, particularly for evening or leisure classes, are paid 'per session'. You could earn anything between £15 and £30 an hour. (You should bear in mind that this hourly rate, although calculated according to the number of hours you spend teaching, i.e. actually with a group – also includes within it the time you will spend preparing your class and, perhaps, marking assignments and completing paperwork).

There is salaried part-time and full-time work available, and you should check your local paper for typical salary scales as these vary round the country. Full time or substantial part-time teaching posts are also advertised in the national educational press, such as the Guardian - the Education section on a Tuesday, or the Society section on a Wednesday, and/or in the Times Educational Supplement (TES) on a Friday. Often you will not be on a fixed salary, but on a scale, your salary increasing for each year of employment.

This briefing sheet was written by Wendy Moss at the City Lit and will be updated periodically. Please contact us if you believe any changes should be included.

Useful Contacts

City and Guilds

1 Giltspur Street
London, EC1A 9DD
Tel: 020 7294 2468
Website: www.city-and-guilds.co.uk

Institute for Learning (pcet)

4th Floor, 32 Farringdon Street
London, EC4A 4HJ
Tel: 020 7332 9540
Website: www.ifl.ac.uk
The new professional body for teachers across the post-16 sector

Learning and Skills Council

Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry, CV1 2WT
Tel: 0870 9006800
Website: www.lsc.gov.uk
The website gives contact details for all the LSC's in England

Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK)

4th Floor, 32 Farringdon Street
London, EC4A 4HJ
Tel: 020 7332 9535
Website: www.lifelonglearninguk.org
Email: helpline@lifelonglearninguk.org
This organisation offers a helpline (which was formerly provided by FENTO) advising on teaching qualifications

LLU+

London South Bank University
103 Borough Road
London, SE1 0AA
Tel: 020 815 6290

Website: www.lsbu.ac.uk/lluplus

Provides training courses in London for teachers of adult students with dyslexia and consultancy

NATECLA (National Association for Teaching English and other Community Languages to Adults)

NATECLA National Centre
South Birmingham College
Room HB110, Hall Green Campus
Cole Bank Road
Hall Green

Birmingham, B28 8ES

Tel: 0121 688 8121

Website: www.natecla.org.uk

Email: co-ordinator@natecla.fsnet.co.uk

Skills for Life Quality Initiative

Tel: 0118 902 1914

Website: www.sflqi.org.uk

Email: sflqi.org.uk

Website includes accredited teacher training and CPD course listings.

Skills for Life Strategy Unit (formerly Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit)

Department for Education and Skills
Caxton House

6-12 Tothill Street

London, SW1H 9NA

Tel: 020 7273 1223

Website: www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus

Talent (training adult literacy, ESOL and numeracy teachers)

Website: www.talent.ac.uk

Talent offers advice on teacher training in literacy, numeracy and ESOL in London.

Courses are listed on their website and they offer an information and advice service.

References and Useful Resources

A learner's guide to the Certificate in Further Education Teaching (7407)

City & Guilds, 2003

Website: www.city-and-guilds.co.uk

City & Guilds basic skills website

Downloadable subject specifications and scheme handbooks for C&G teaching qualifications for adult literacy, numeracy & ESOL subject specifications

Website: www.basic-skills.org.uk

City & Guilds smartscreen

Detailed information about C&G 7407. Website: www.smartscreen.co.uk

The Skills for Life teaching qualifications framework. NIACE briefing sheet 62. NIACE, 2005. Website: www.niace.org.uk/information/briefing_sheets

Literacy Trust

Information about adult literacy volunteering. Website: www.literacytrust.org.uk

Skills for life teaching qualification framework: a user's guide. DfES Read Write Plus. DfES, 2003. Website: www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/bank/ACFFD57.pdf

Teachernet

Provides information about some of the latest developments in the further education and training sector. www.teachernet.gov.uk/professionaldevelopment/careers/post16/

Training to teach languages in adult and further education. CILT Information sheet 8. Website: www.cilt.org.uk/infos/rtf/0to25/InformationSheet8.rtf

This is the fifty-fifth in a series of briefing sheets, which aim to provide an introduction to a variety of lifelong learning issues. Many earlier titles in the series are still available including:

54. Mobile ICT resources for older learners
53. Extended schools and adult learners
52. Adult participation in learning
51. The NLN and adult and community learning
50. Fees charged to part-time adult students 2002-2003
49. Sources of funding for adult learners
48. Older people and mentoring
47. Young adult learners, disaffection and social inclusion

Requests for briefing sheets in other formats, such as large print are welcomed, we will be pleased to consider your request. Copies of this and other sheets are available from NIACE.

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Tel: 0116 204 4289
Email: information@niace.org.uk
They are also available on the website at
www.niace.org.uk/information

NIACE, the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, has a broad remit to promote lifelong learning opportunities for adults. NIACE works to develop increased participation in education and training. It aims to do this for those who do not have easy access because of barriers of class, gender, age, race, language and culture, learning difficulties, or insufficient resources. Registered charity number 1002775; Company registration number 2603322.