

## **CELTA Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q: I have heard that the course is very intensive – is this true?**

**A:** Yes.

If you are considering the full-time course, you should be prepared to devote five days a week (including evenings) to the course, and to spend a considerable part of each weekend on course-related work.

If you are considering the part-time course, which takes place on Monday and Wednesday evenings, you should be prepared to spend other evenings during the week on course-related work and also a considerable part of weekends. If you're considering the CELTA Online course, you will need to spend time working online and for teaching practice blocks, you will need to spend time in the mornings and evenings preparing your lessons.

**Q: Would I have to attend all the course hours?**

**A:** Cambridge regulations state that: "To meet the course requirements, candidates are required to attend the whole course". You would therefore put yourself at a serious disadvantage if you missed any of the course and may not be awarded the Certificate. It is also strongly advised that you have no other commitments outside the course if you're considering the full-time course.

**Q: What is the course timetable?**

**A:** The course is divided into methodology sessions and teaching practice with feedback.

On full-time courses, the timetable is:

09:00-13:00: seminars and supervised lesson planning

14:00-17:00: teaching practice and feedback

On part-time courses, the timetable is:

Tuesday and Thursday 18.00-21.00: teaching practice and feedback from tutors. Supervised lesson planning will also be timetabled on Tuesday and Thursday for 15 minutes for each candidate between 1700-1745, before teaching practice. Input on the part time course is on 7 Saturdays. For CELTA Online, input is by distance and teaching practice is in two blocks of 10 days.

**Q: What happens in the input sessions?**

**A:** A variety of sessions, such as methodology, language awareness, phonology, language and skills, lesson planning and professional development.

**Q: When would I start teaching?**

**A:** Full time course: Day 1; Part time course: Week 2; CELTA Online: Day 1 of TP Block 1. *bThe first teaching practice is not observed and not assessed*

**Q: Who would I be teaching?**

**A:** Groups of up to 15 adult students of English from different countries.

**Q: Am I observed?**

**A:** Yes, your tutor will observe you and assess your teaching. Some of your colleagues will also observe you and complete an observation task which you will refer to in feedback.

**Q: What is feedback?**

**A:** Feedback refers to the time after teaching practice when you have the opportunity to reflect upon and discuss your teaching with your colleagues (there are up to six course participants in each teaching practice group) and one of your tutors. This part of the course is extremely important because it should help you to develop an increasing awareness of your strengths and weaknesses as a teacher, and you will be given action points to address in future teaching practice lessons.

**Q: What teaching method would I be expected to use?**

**A:** No one method is focused on during the CELTA course. It is an introduction to the theory and practice of English Language Teaching and introduces participants to a variety of current procedures and techniques in the field. Methods will depend on what is appropriate and most useful to the level, age, size and composition of your class.

**Q: What else would I be expected to do outside the timetabled hours?**

**A:** You should expect to spend time:

- On the part-time course, you need to observe lessons given by experienced IH teachers in the morning. This is arranged with your tutor to suit your schedule.
- Liaising with colleagues in your teaching practice group in order to produce a cohesive timetable of lessons for your students.
- Planning your own lessons: although you may be teaching for relatively short periods, it is quite normal to spend up to six hours preparing your lesson.
- Working on written assignments: these are four assignments which are all course-related and of a very practical nature. They are internally assessed and externally moderated by the CELTA Assessor.

**Q: How would I be assessed on the course?**

**A:** Assessment on the course is continuous and integrated, taking into account teaching skills and written assignments, with each assessed component contributing to the overall grade. Participants are given feedback by the tutors on their teaching and have at least two tutorials during the course at which they discuss their progress. All tutors working on the course discuss each participant's final grade and their decisions are unanimous.

**Q: What are the possible grades?**

**A:** Pass, Pass B and Pass A. A small number of candidates fail the course: it is likely that they would be warned of this possibility at their tutorial. The majority achieve a Pass grade.

**Q: I am not a native speaker of English: is this course appropriate for me?**

**A:** The Cambridge regulations state that candidates “must have an awareness of language and a competence in English, both written and spoken, which enables them to follow the course”. In reality, this means that you should have a C1 or C2 level of English. International House also runs an IH Certificate course in the teaching of English. If you are accepted for the Cambridge CELTA, you should be aware that you may be withdrawn from this scheme and awarded the International House Certificate, should your English fall below the required standard. In such cases, the Cambridge registration fee will not be refunded. Non-native English speakers may be asked to complete some English language tasks to assess their level of English.

**Q: If I pass the course, will I be able to find full-time work easily?**

**A:** The CELTA is very highly regarded and newly qualified teachers with a CELTA will find it easier to find work than teachers with other qualifications. There are many opportunities overseas, and at present, the areas most in need of English teachers are Central and Eastern Europe, the Middle East, South East Asia and South America. Here in Ireland, there are many possibilities in the summer months (July and August), and less full-time work is available in the winter. Towards the end of the course, you will be given some general advice on looking for work. There are over 150 IH schools around the world and the recruitment office at IH World Organisation can give free career advice and information to IH CELTA trainees. We often receive requests for teachers from schools abroad and in Ireland. At IH Galway, we often recruit suitable candidates from our CELTA courses, either for summer courses or for part-time courses during the year. Candidates are told about possible work in the third or last week of the CELTA.

**Q: I don't have a degree: will this be a problem?**

**A:** You don't need to have a degree to complete a CELTA course. In some countries, a degree is required in order to get a work permit; in others, other third level qualifications may be acceptable for work permit purposes. You are advised to consult individual embassies and consulates for accurate information and advice. In this country, the QQI/ACELS-recognised schools can only employ teachers who hold pass degrees or the level 7 equivalent on the QQI qualification scales.

**Q: When do I find out my result?**

**A:** A letter informing candidates of their provisional result, subject to confirmation from Cambridge, is sent out the week following the end of the course.

**Q: How much do I need to know about grammar before the course?**

**A:** You will complete a pre-course task and you should also do some background reading. Beyond that, you are given time to research any grammar point that you will be teaching.