

TEFL Certification Framework: Three-Tiered Pathway

Objective: To provide a clear, progressive pathway for educators, ensuring they meet internationally recognized standards at each level, with a specialized emphasis on teaching pronunciation effectively.

1. Criterium: Eligibility, Assessment, and Certification

This section outlines the requirements to enter, progress through, and pass each level.

Level 1: TEFL Foundation Certificate

- **Focus:** Core principles, survival skills, and basic classroom competence.
- **Eligibility:** High school diploma; proficiency in English (native or C1/C2 level).
- **Testing & Assessment:**
 - **Entry Test:** Basic grammar and language awareness test.
 - **Module Quizzes:** After each curriculum module.
 - **Final Written Test:** MCQ and short answer on methodology, lesson planning, and grammar.
 - **Practical Assessment:** 2 observed teaching practices (can be with peers or via video submission) with tutor feedback.
 - **Pronunciation Assessment:** A separate test identifying key phonemes (vowel sounds, consonants like /θ/ vs /ð/) and basic intonation patterns. Must demonstrate ability to *hear* and *produce* sounds accurately.
- **Experience:** No prior teaching experience required. The course includes **10 hours** of total engagement: 6 hours of teaching practice (observed and unobserved) and 4 hours of peer observation.
- **Certification Outcome:** Qualifies holder to be a teaching assistant, a conversation partner, or a teacher in very informal settings.

Level 2: TEFL Advanced Diploma

- **Focus:** Methodological depth, learner autonomy, and managing diverse classroom environments.
- **Eligibility:** Level 1 Certificate **OR** a Bachelor's degree in any field.
- **Testing & Assessment:**

- **Entry Test:** Review of Level 1 content.
- **Assignments:** Longer written assignments (e.g., designing a full week of lessons, a learner case study, materials creation project).
- **Final Written Test:** Essay-based questions on language acquisition theories and problem-solving classroom scenarios.
- **Practical Assessment:** 4 observed teaching practices with real EFL students (or via high-fidelity simulation). Must show ability to plan coherently, adapt to student needs, and manage classroom dynamics.
- **Pronunciation Assessment:** Must create and execute a 15-minute lesson segment targeting a specific pronunciation feature (e.g., past tense '-ed' endings, sentence stress). Assessed on clarity of instruction, effectiveness of activities, and ability to provide corrective feedback.
- **Experience:** Minimum **20 hours** of practicum: 15 hours of teaching and 5 hours of observing qualified teachers.
- **Certification Outcome:** The industry standard. Qualifies holder for most EFL teaching positions globally (language schools, private companies).

Level 3: TEFL Expert Certificate (Specialization in Pronunciation)

- **Focus:** Specialization, teacher training, and curriculum leadership.
- **Eligibility:** Level 2 Diploma **AND** a minimum of 1-2 years of full-time teaching experience post-Level 2.
- **Testing & Assessment:**
 - **Thesis/Portfolio:** A major project, such as an academic paper on a phonology topic, or a portfolio of developed pronunciation materials and curricula.
 - **Practical Assessment:** 1) Conduct a full 45-minute lesson focused primarily on pronunciation, integrating multiple techniques. 2) Deliver a workshop for fellow teachers on a key pronunciation teaching technique.
 - **Oral Examination:** Defend thesis/portfolio and answer in-depth questions on phonology and pedagogy.
 - **Pronunciation Assessment:** Mastery-level. Must be able to analyze a learner's speech, diagnose persistent error patterns, and design a long-term remedial plan. Assessed through a live diagnostic session with a non-native speaker.
- **Experience:** Minimum **50 hours** of teaching experience post-Level 2, with a logbook showing a focus on integrating pronunciation. Requires **10 hours** of mentoring other teachers.
- **Certification Outcome:** Qualifies holder for senior teacher roles, academic management, teacher training, and materials development, especially in the realm of speaking and pronunciation.

2. Curriculum: Course Content by Level

Level 1 Curriculum (Approx. 120 hours total)

- **Module 1: Principles of TEFL:** ESL vs. EFL, popular methodologies (CLT, TPR).
- **Module 2: Language Awareness:** Basic grammar review (tenses, parts of speech).
- **Module 3: Lesson Planning:** Basic structure (PPP: Present, Practice, Produce).
- **Module 4: Classroom Management:** Giving instructions, setting up activities, error correction.
- **Module 5: Teaching the Skills:** Intro to teaching reading, writing, listening, speaking.
- **Module 6: Introduction to Pronunciation:**
 - The phonemic alphabet (recognition, not production).
 - Introduction to key sounds often problematic for learners.
 - Basic word stress and intonation (questions vs. statements).
- **Practicum:** 10 hours (Teaching Practice & Observation).

Level 2 Curriculum (Approx. 180 hours total)

- **Module 1: Theories of Language Acquisition:** Krashen, Vygotsky, etc.
- **Module 2: Advanced Grammar & Lexis:** Analyzing language for teaching purposes.
- **Module 3: Lesson Frameworks:** Deep dive into ESA (Engage, Study, Activate), Task-Based Learning.
- **Module 4: Teaching Special Groups:** Young Learners, Business English, Exam classes.
- **Module 5: Resources & Technology:** Using digital tools in the classroom.
- **Module 6: Teaching Pronunciation:**
 - Mastery of the phonemic alphabet (production and teaching).
 - Sound-spelling relationships.
 - Key areas: connected speech (linking, elision), rhythm, stress-timing, intonation patterns for attitude.
 - Techniques for correcting pronunciation (e.g., drilling, mouth diagrams, tactile feedback).
- **Practicum:** 20 hours (Teaching Practice & Observation).

Level 3 Curriculum (Specialist - Approx. 100 hours)

- **Unit 1: Advanced Phonology:** Phonetics, accent variation (e.g., GA vs. RP), sociolinguistic aspects of pronunciation.
- **Unit 2: Diagnostic Assessment:** Tools and techniques for analyzing learner speech.
- **Unit 3: Curriculum Design for Spoken Production:** Creating syllabi and long-term plans for pronunciation.
- **Unit 4: Technology & Pronunciation:** Using software (e.g., speech visualization tools) for teaching.
- **Unit 5: Teacher Training:** How to coach other teachers in pronunciation instruction techniques.
- **Capstone Project:** Thesis or Professional Portfolio.
- **Practical Leadership:** Mentoring and workshop delivery.