

Welcome and Hello, potential CELTA candidate! Here's a look at how the CELTA is run at the British Council Kraków CELTA centre.

The course runs over 4 weeks, and normally Monday through Friday. Saturdays and Sundays are free to the extent that you are not required to come into the centre. However, you should be aware that CELTA is a very intensive course; weekends may provide time to finish assignments, plan upcoming lessons or organize and review notes.

A typical day on the course consists of teaching practice in the morning followed by feedback on the lessons; there is preparation for the next lessons in the afternoon, and then input sessions in the late afternoon. Later on, this course description will look at other various components and, finally, grades, as well as mention something about the intensive nature of the course. Let's first go through a typical day on the course.

### A TYPICAL DAY ON THE CELTA COURSE at the British Council Kraków

- 8:30 - 9:30 personal time for TP prep
- 9:30 - 12:00 TEACHING PRACTICE
- 12:15 - 13:00 feedback
- 13:00 - 14:00 lunch
- 14:00 - 14:45 TP prep for next day
- 14:45 - 17:30 INPUT SESSIONS

#### 9:30 - 12:00 TEACHING PRACTICE

The day starts with teaching practice. It's two hours long plus a ten-minute break between the lessons and it is the central part of the course – since it is how you perform in the classroom that will be primarily reflected in your final grade.

You'll be teaching typically about 12 students – these are Polish students who are keen to participate and have a keen interest in learning English. The students are fully aware of the fact that they are being taught by trainee teachers and not experienced teachers and so they are very supportive and quite easy to teach in many ways.

Now, we'll look at how the classes and your teaching practice is organized throughout the four weeks of the course. You'll teach **two** different levels – a lower level class and a higher level class. One of these levels you'll teach for the **first two weeks**, then you'll switch to a new level for the **second two weeks**. In total you'll teach **6 hours** throughout the length of the course – 3 hours for each level. Lesson length is always 45 mins and these will happen 8 times during the course, 4 lessons at each level.

#### PEER OBSERVATION during Teaching Practice

Another aspect of the course is peer observation. When not teaching, you'll be watching your fellow trainees teaching and taking notes on their performance. These notes will be useful to you so that you can contribute to the feedback discussion that will follow the lessons. You'll need to hold on to these notes for your final written assignment called Lessons from the classroom. Similarly, as you are teaching, there will be up to five other trainees observing you, plus the tutor. This could be initially a bit stressful, but be assured that you get used to it very fast; remember they are a support group, who are all in the same boat. In addition, everyone is requested to be very constructive in the feedback given, accentuating the strengths displayed by the teacher.

#### 12:30 – 13:00 approx. TP FEEDBACK

After the lessons are over and the students go home, it's time for TP feedback session. If you've taught on this particular day, you'll be asked to reflect on your performance, recognizing the strengths and weakness of your teaching as seen in various parts of that particular lesson. This is done using a post-lesson reflection form with questions to guide you.

Feedback on your performance comes in two components – oral and written tutor comments - and they both form part of your assessment.

In your oral feedback, you'll sit with the tutor plus the other members of the TP group and together look at the two hours of the lesson, commenting on what seemed to work, what the students responded well to during the two hours but also on what maybe went less well than expected, the reasons behind that, as well as what could be done in future situations of that type to make sure they go better. The usual reasons for a lesson to have had some issues is due to (a) mis-sequencing parts of the lesson (b) omitting a key part of the lesson (c) executing a particular stage ineffectively. In feedback, what has occurred in the teaching is linked back to input sessions so that you can review your notes and improve for next time. In addition, smaller practical techniques are also covered for smoothening classroom management.

In your tutor's written feedback, you'll receive a stage-by-stage commentary of what the tutor observed during your teaching slot. There's also a cover sheet with a summary of the strengths and development needs emerging from that lesson (and lesson plan) and a statement of achievement as to whether the lesson is **to, above, or below standard for that stage of the course**. Given the developmental and experiential nature of the course, standards inexorably rise throughout the four weeks as exposure to input increases and the amount of teaching experienced mounts up.

### 14:45 - 17:30 INPUT SESSIONS

After an hour for lunch, you have a consultation period with the tutor on your upcoming lesson. This is TP prep – teaching practice preparation.

At first, you'll be given everything you need to teach – what to teach and how to teach it. The what-to-teach comes in the form of modern up-to-date course-books from major publishers which you'll have a copy of to use and work from for the duration of the course. The how-to-teach will come in the form of teaching points given to you by your tutor who will also talk you through how they see your particular slot going and the sequence of tasks the students will be doing in order to achieve the main aim of the lesson.

Later we'll naturally expect and encourage you to become more independent in your planning and, having seen the basic lesson shapes and observed these in action, we firmly believe you will be well-equipped to do so. Having said that, be aware that you can still ask tutors about any aspect of your lessons even up to the end of the course.

### 14:45 - 17:30 INPUT SESSIONS

Later on in the afternoon, there are 2 input sessions of around 75 minutes' duration, each led by one of the two tutors, and with each session having a particular theme focusing on practical aspects of teaching. Initially sessions focus on the fundamentals of classroom management and the basic lesson shapes and techniques. As the course goes on, sessions deal with more complex lesson shapes and considerations, as well as reviewing in more depth what has previously been touched upon.

The input sessions are emphatically not lecture-style; they are more like workshops where you'll be involved in discussions on the pros and cons of an approach or technique, you might role-play being a student, critique some 'advice for teachers', you might be looking at materials and evaluating their applicability to your classes, perhaps sequence some lesson stages, watch snippets of video lessons, and all sorts of other tasks. So, you'll be expected to be very active and to contribute energetically to these sessions - not just sitting back and taking notes but fully hands-on, participating in discussions and demos, sharing views, noting information and asking questions from peers and tutors. The input notes from tutors are kept to a minimum but they soon accumulate so you need study skills to be able to organize these in a file with dividers and review them continuously throughout the course. Another crucial ability will be to link what you hear, read and discover in these sessions to what you experience in the classroom.

Another thing to consider is that these input sessions, while being a vehicle for eliciting and relaying ideas and rehearsing techniques, also act as a model for your own classroom teaching – in other words, the session style reflects much of what we expect from **your** lessons during the course, in terms of students being active, taking part in group work and pair work, working out for themselves how language operates, rather than being explained to or lectured at.

### LESSON GRADES AND YOUR FINAL GRADE – HOW ARE THEY LINKED ?

*Let's briefly outline how lesson performance relates to your grade at the end of the course.*

It's important to realize that the final grade is **not** an averaging of all the lesson grades you do on the course. Your final grade reflects what you are consistently able to do **by the end of the course**. So, you might start unsteadily, but, by the end be very solid in your classroom performance, and the grade reflects this – your end-point in your development as a teacher by the end of the course.

*There are two more components: assignments and observation of experienced teachers.*

### ASSIGNMENTS

These are 4 pieces of written work – they are very practically orientated – they only focus on your teaching to date on the course. Here's what these assignments are about in chronological order as they set up and due on the course.

1. First, **LANGUAGE RELATED TASKS**. This is basic language analysis for teaching purposes. Around 3 grammar structures and 3 lexical items need to be researched in depth – you'll use dictionaries, grammar books and other sources for your own research and analysis of these items.
2. The second is called **SKILLS ASSIGNMENT**, and it looks at your ability to devise a lesson around a piece of authentic material – material not designed for teaching. So you'll receive a text, (a reading), and describe how you'd exploit this text for classroom purposes by coming up with tasks you could do with it in the classroom. To help you, there are two input sessions on receptive skills, one on speaking skills and two on writing, so you will have plenty of ideas to choose from.
3. The third assignment is called **FOCUS ON THE LEARNER**– here you'll be asked to write a detailed profile of one of the learners in your class: their needs, motivations, level, preferences as well as common errors you've gathered from them during an interview you conduct, as well as anything you've heard them say or seen them write. In the final section of the assignment, you will gather together some supplementary materials and say how you'd use these to help the students with some of the errors/problem areas that you identified earlier. To assist you with this assignment, there is an input session on learner styles, some sessions on certain tricky language areas as well as three on different areas of pronunciation.
4. The last assignment is called **LESSONS FROM THE CLASSROOM** and in this you record your reflections on your observations of yourself and other teachers and conclude what lessons you've drawn from that. You also draw up a mini-action plan for how you intend to develop after the course.

These assignments are 750-1000 words each and you have around a week to do them. There's a detailed rubric for each and, as mentioned, certain input sessions will help you with particular sections of these assignments. In fact, almost everything you do on the course in some way feeds into these assignments so they provide an effective means of reviewing and consolidating what you've taken on board during the course. To help with the assignments, there is a sample model of parts of the assignment and an FAQ to look through for each one.

### OBSERVATIONS OF EXPERIENCED TEACHERS

The other component is your observation of experienced teachers - this will be arranged for you. You'll observe 3 hours of live teaching (monolingual students in a non-English speaking environment) and 3 hours or more of guided DVD observation of teachers with multilingual groups teaching in English-speaking environments.

### POSSIBLE FINAL GRADES

There are 4 possible final grades:

- ◆ **Pass 'A'** [for outstanding teaching as well as creative and independent planning & awareness of teaching and learning principles, – a double distinction]
- ◆ **Pass 'B'** [for excellent classroom teaching – a distinction]
- ◆ **Pass** [by far the majority of candidates pass the course]
- ◆ **Fail** [quite rare]

Note that just attending the course does not guarantee a pass. You need to be prepared to work hard and put a lot of effort in to pass the course. For the purposes of your British Council report, which you receive along with the Cambridge certificate, the pass is divided into separate bands *weak/mid/strong*. On the Cambridge certificate, there is simply *Pass*, *Pass 'A' or Pass 'B'*

The final grade is based on **teaching practice + planning skills + written assignments** and your awareness of teaching and learning principles - the latter coming through in your contributions to the input sessions, in your contributions to the feedback sessions, and from your assignments, as well as flexibility and insights shown in the lessons. There's no official examination of any kind used to assess you on the course – you're simply building up a portfolio of work all of which goes into a file and is also externally scrutinized at by a Cambridge-appointed assessor who comes to the centre near the end of the course. He/she inspects the files, observes some lessons, has a meeting with the candidates, and following feedback, there is a meeting with the tutors.

### TUTORIALS

There are two tutorials during the course (after week one and in week three) to give you a personal update on your progress and work up an action plan for development of your teaching. The second one of these involves a one-to-one meeting with your tutor.

### **And one *IMPORTANT* final word...**

*The course is (and we cannot emphasize this enough), extremely **intensive**, thus potentially stressful due to the high workload over a short period of time. Initially, on arrival to a new country/place, a certain amount of adjustment to your new surroundings and cultural differences is usual, so this is the first thing you need to be capable of dealing with. Then, you learn a lot of new techniques and skills, in a new type of working environment along with a certain amount of new terminology and are expected to be able to start applying these by performing in front of students very soon after exposure to them. You teach from day 1 or 2 of the course.*

*For this reason, the CELTA course is not for absolutely everybody. Best suited to it is a resilient person who can work quickly, apply themselves fully, focus their attention for considerable periods, handle time/work pressure calmly, meet deadlines promptly and hold up under the stresses and strains of the process. Experience of or the capacity for working in a place far from home should also help greatly. It is also essential that you can work well in a team. Thus, good communication skills (especially listening carefully) and respect for, consideration for and co-operation with the other candidates on the course is also a pre-requisite. Plus, in this day and age, basic computer literacy skills (ability to search the net, word processing skills, copy paste) are a must-have to maximize your chances of success. The course will not turn you into this kind of person - you already need to be this type of person at the start of the course in order to deal with the course successfully. However, our feedback from candidates who finish the course say it has largely been very enjoyable, stimulating and rewarding – and they almost invariably say they would wholeheartedly recommend it for those ready for an intensive month ahead of them and committed to becoming a teacher.*

*At times, some trainees can experience contrasting emotional highs and lows depending on their most recent lessons, the workload or on how they perceive they are progressing, so being ready for that should enable you to handle this. The tutors will endeavour to bring balance and perspective in order for you to start building critical awareness of your current strengths and development needs and get a more objective view on where you are. An ability to plough through what seems like a crisis (at the time) will also be a valuable quality.*

*You need to be able to take advantage of and manage your time prudently as well as organize and keep up with the many types of paperwork (including keeping administrative records of your teaching practice and observations in the **official file**) and organizing notes and handouts in your **personal file**. As noted above, some evenings and parts of weekends are pretty much entirely taken up with coursework and many successful trainees come in earlier (8 am) before TP starts to complete assignments and lesson plans and/or create materials for their lessons. So, there are definitely long days, but they are regularly punctuated with pauses, breathing space and interaction with others on the course and at the school.*

*You also need to set realistic expectations for yourself – realize that it is a learning process and that it involves a certain amount of trial and error as well as an ability to give and take constructive feedback. In terms of the latter, naturally, you are expected to change your methods of teaching based on feedback received from tutors on the course in order to pass the course. At the same time, it has to be said that trainees often exceed their own expectations as to what they can achieve over a relatively short time.*

*The process is fairly unremitting to the end. Thus, it is certainly not advisable to be doing anything else at the same time – be it a job, mini-vacation, sightseeing, receiving guests, excessive socializing or any other time-consuming commitments during the course - because you may well soon find that you have too much on your plate with the risk of your backlog of work becoming overwhelming. Because of the demands of the course, you need to be free of any personal issues that you feel might prove too much of a distraction or an impediment during the four weeks of the course.*

*Overall, the vast majority completes the course successfully and feels well-equipped to face the challenge of working as a teacher.*

**If you have any questions about all this or any other aspect of the course, please feel free to ask the interviewer in the third part of the interview or email us at.**

**To arrange an interview, just fill in the pre-course application form and task, available for download from the website. On receipt and acceptance of the application and task, we will contact you to arrange a time for the interview.**

***The advantages of doing your CELTA at British Council, Kraków:***

- *A sensible daily schedule – late morning starts (10:00 am) for teaching practice (with ample time early in the morning to finish preparations if necessary. Once you have delivered your lessons, your mind is clear to attend to input in the late afternoon. There is plenty of time after that to prepare your lessons before teaching the next morning. So, it's good if you're not a real morning person – but morning people can still take advantage of the free time before teaching practice starts.*
- *A smaller, more intimate setting than other big schools – and friendly reception staff.*
- *Highly experienced trainers with over 15 and 9 years experience respectively – and have worked as a team together on courses over the last 10 or so years, training well over 1000 trainees. The main course tutor regularly assesses other courses in the region.*
- *We run 11 CELTA courses every year and, as a result of long experience, the courses run very smoothly with very positive feedback from candidates about how all aspects of the course are delivered.*
- *We are responsive to the particular make-up of the group, modulating the elements of the course depending on whether the groups are more or less experienced.*
- *There's an emphasis on making the process as comfortable as possible – we recognize when trainees may be overloaded and adjust the timetables, deadlines and input session order when we feel it would help – while still being firm on the requirements necessary to pass the course.*
- *With its modern, well-equipped classrooms, highly qualified teachers and pleasant atmosphere, British Council is considered to be the premier language learning and training institute in the city.*
- *The centre is ideally placed right on Krakow's large medieval square. Its central location makes it easy to access from all parts of the city.*
- *Other cities in the Central European region can be a bit overwhelming – Krakow is just as impressive to work in but is much more compact – which means most places are within easy walking distance. This also means you are not spending lots of money on tram, metro and bus tickets.*
- *The cost of living is substantially lower than a major capital city, with lots of affordable places to eat at.*

**WE LOOK FORWARD TO MEETING YOU!**