

Finding Teaching Work in Germany

Teachers often contact me to ask how they should look for work here – and very often these teachers are still resident outside Germany which doesn't make finding work any easier.

If you are trying to find teaching work and are not resident here, the best way to find language schools in the area you are interested in moving to is Germany's equivalent of Yellow Pages. Go to <http://www.gelbeseiten.de/yp/quick.jp> and type "Sprachenschule" in the *Was/Wen suchen Sie?* box and the name of the town/city you are interested in teaching in in the *Wo suchen Sie?* box and click "Suchen".



Was / Wen suchen Sie?

Wo suchen Sie?

 Suche im Nahbereich

The GelbeSeiten website should then list most of the language schools in that town/city. You can expand your search by clicking on the *Suche in Nahbereich* link and choosing the distance from the town/city you would like GelbeSeiten to search (up to 75 km).

For teachers trying to find work from outside Germany the biggest problem is that most language schools will want to interview you before offering you any work/courses, so you will probably need to line up several interviews and then fly over for a vacation and combine it with some job hunting.

For non-EU citizens getting all the necessary paperwork (work and residence permits) together will be easier, or rather, may be possible if you have a letter from an employer offering you work, but beware... I've met some American and Canadian teachers who had been given a work permit which only allowed them to work as employees at a school... and that is almost impossible as most schools **only** work with freelance teachers!

You do not need to have any teaching qualifications to be able to teach at private language schools or companies, but if you do not have any recognized TEFL or TESOL qualification, it will make finding work much more difficult. The most widely recognized teaching qualification is CELTA (Certificate in English

Language Training to Adults). There are only three centres in Germany which offer this certificate; in Berlin, Hamburg and Munich. If you would like more detailed information about the centres or want to find a centre in another country click on this link: <http://cambridgeesol-centres.org/centres/index.do>

Some of the English Language Teachers' Associations in Germany also advertise teaching work, but certainly not all. The only teacher's association that advertises work on a public website which anyone can access is MELTA, the English Language Teachers' Association for teachers living in or around Munich (see <http://www.melta.de/jobs.htm>).

You can advertise you are looking for work for free at www.tefl-germany.de, but do not pin many hopes on finding work there as this site is primarily for English teachers in Germany and is not often viewed by would-be employers of teachers.

Language schools don't normally place advertisements for teaching positions in newspapers as they usually get enough applications directly from teachers looking for work to be able to fill any vacancies they might have.

Putting an advertisement into a local or regional newspaper saying you are looking for teaching work is relatively expensive and hardly ever pays for itself. If you are tempted to try finding work this way, make sure you place your advertisement directly after a school holiday. For some strange reason Germans seem to look for courses/teachers after a holiday.

Ironically, the worst time to look for work at language schools is just after a holiday when schools have normally managed to find enough teachers to cover all the courses that will be starting or starting up again. It's best to send your application to a school at least two or three weeks before a school holiday ends.

Finding work directly at a company, rather than through a school is not easy, but you should certainly think about this option if you are well-qualified and have some experience in teaching in-company courses.

Working directly for companies is much better paid as there is no middleman (school) who wants their cut of the pie first. It is best to find out who is responsible for language training and address your application to them personally. Failing that, address your application to the company's "*Bildungsabteilung*" or "*Weiterbildung*" (training department).

Tip! If you don't really mind where you live in Germany as long as you have enough work, or rather money, to live on, avoid the places most English teachers flock to... Berlin, Düsseldorf, Hamburg, Frankfurt, Munich, etc. There are areas of Germany where English teachers are scarce and still in demand!

If you can identify an area which has one or two bigger companies and a lot of medium-sized companies in it and there aren't many (or any) language schools other than the VHS, you shouldn't have a problem finding enough work to keep the wolves from the door if you are qualified and experienced.

If you are a non-native speaker of English and want to teach here, bear in mind that most language schools and companies will put your application straight into their waste-paper bin. First come native speakers, next German speakers of English and then non-native speakers.

Sad, but I'm afraid it's true. I know that because a very good friend of mine is Polish and has a Ph.D. in Linguistics from Oxford University – and speaks better English than most native speakers! She was unable to find any work as an English teacher when she first moved to Germany. It wasn't until she changed her name to an English sounding one that she was invited to an interview.

Finally, to those of you are unqualified, inexperienced and can't speak much German, please don't think you are going to have an easy time here in Germany. There are a lot of very experienced and well-qualified EFL teachers here who are down on their hours and are looking for more work right now. Undercutting them may help you in the short-term, but if you are planning to stay here long-term it certainly won't... you will gain experience and will probably want to get a TEFL qualification in order to find more work/open a few more doors, but you certainly won't get paid much more or find much more work if your prices and experience/qualifications are undercut by the would-be teachers that follow you.

Anyway, good luck with finding work... and good luck in developing your career in teaching English!

John Sydes