



TEFL JOBS IN SOUTH KOREA

A Guide to Teaching
English in South Korea



SEOUL



GWANGJU



BUSAN

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The South Korean economy relies heavily on export to the US, Western Europe and Australasia, so having English language skills has become increasingly important for professional Koreans. Both wages and demand for TEFL teachers are high, so it's a great choice, especially for first time teachers.



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TEFL Jobs in South Korea: A Little Background

It can sometimes seem that learning English is something of a national obsession. Early mornings in most major cities see a pre-rush-hour-rush-hour as students and business people head off for early morning lessons. Universities demand that all students pass an English proficiency test before offering them a place. And the school holidays see huge numbers of students signing up to join English classes at private language institutes.

As with many of the so-called 'Asian tiger economies', South Korea took a massive hit in the recession that hit the late 90s. The financial crisis saw thousands of language schools and even some of the big chains go belly up. However, the market has now recovered and the demand for TEFL teachers is high and landing a TEFL job in South Korea is pretty straightforward.





Opportunities for TEFL Teachers

There are countless hagwans in Seoul, Busan and in pretty much any other city across the country. You'll need a university degree to get your working visa, and although there are employers who will hire untrained teachers, a recognized TEFL qualification will make finding work with a reputable school a lot easier. One way of ensuring good working conditions is to check out the government-run EPIK programme.



Our Top Three TEFL Destinations

These are our top three TEFL destinations in South Korea. The first two are pretty obvious, while the third one will give aspiring TEFL teachers a slightly different view of teaching English in South Korea.

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Seoul

Seoul is home to over 10 million people. It is South Korea's capital, and its most important centre for commerce and industry. The opportunities for teaching in Seoul are many and varied with language schools and institutes scattered across the country.



Busan

Busan is South Korea's second city. The number of TEFL jobs in the city is second only to Seoul, and due to its position on the coast it enjoys a more comfortable climate than many of the inland cities.

Gwangju

Gwangju sits amid stunning countryside in the agricultural region of Jeolla. It is also home to a number of thriving industry's and universities. The opportunities for teaching English are wide and varied, including TEFL jobs in universities and language schools across the country.

Show Me the Money!

Wages and Cost of Living in South Korea

Wages



As an English teacher in South Korea, your salary will be among the best for your profession anywhere in the world. The cost of living is still pretty low, but it's slowly increasing as the economy strengthens. The average salary for a new teacher working in South Korea is 1.8million KRW a month (US\$1,500), but you can earn as much as 2.4million KRW a month (US\$2,000) depending on where you are.

Cost of Living

Living in South Korea is very cheap compared to the relatively high salaries teachers get, so it's easy to either save money, or live it up! Almost all teaching contracts include free accommodation, so you only really need to worry about food and having a good time! A slap-up meal out costs only 5,000KRW (US\$4), meaning you won't have to wait until pay-day to enjoy a night out!

Accommodation

South Korea is very densely populated, so you'll probably end up in either a shared apartment or a studio apartment. While it will be comfy and clean, it may feel a little small compared to Western standards!

Flight Reimbursement

It's very common for employers in South Korea to cover the cost of your flight as an end-of-contract bonus.

Taxes

This will vary depending on how much you earn, but you can expect that around 4-7% of your salary will go towards tax.

Potential to Save Money

Many people come to Korea to save money, but it obviously depends on your own spending habits. Most teachers are well paid and the cost of living is low; you can earn more if you live in a big city, but the cost of living will be higher and there are far more



activities to tempt you. So how much you save is up to you! While working, you can easily transfer some of your salary into your bank account at home.



How Much TEFL Training is Recommended?

The demand for TEFL teachers is high, and so is the level of competition. So the more hours of TEFL study you've done, the more of a chance you have of landing a well paid TEFL job. Most schools in South Korea will want to see that you've done at least 120 hours of TEFL study either online, in the classroom, or a mixture of both, especially if you don't have previous teaching experience. These courses will all qualify you to teach in South Korea:

- ★ <http://www.onlinetefl.com/tefl-courses/combined-tefl-courses-120.html>
- ★ <http://www.onlinetefl.com/tefl-courses/combined-tefl-courses-140.html>

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Common Teaching Conditions

As a rule, South Korean schools are pretty well equipped. If you're working in a state school, you'll usually work Monday to Friday, 9-5, with 22 contact hours per week – the rest being reserved for preparation. If you're teaching in a private hagwan it's a little less clear-cut. While you

probably won't work weekends you may work split shifts with some of your classes in the morning and some in the evening. You're likely to end up working 40 hours per week,

with 30 contact hours. TEFL job contracts range from six to 12 months, depending on where you're working. Shorter term contracts are sometimes available if you search after arriving in the country.





Anything to Be Wary of?

You can avoid scams and faulty contracts by checking how long a recruitment agency or hagwan has been in business. If you choose to go through an agency, it's best to use a well-known one that ensures good wages, accommodation, and in-country support. The wages for private tutors are very high, which can tempt those without visas. But Koreans are rewarded for reporting any illegal activity, so don't risk being deported for the sake of some extra money.

Working and Visas

Finding TEFL Jobs from Home

First up, you can apply for jobs in South Korea straight through i-to-i's hassle-free job placement service. If you choose to go it alone, take a look at the useful links section below. Once you've applied, most recruiters interview candidates by phone, so you can easily set up a job at home and then fly out safe in the knowledge that you'll have a job ready and waiting for you.



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Finding TEFL Jobs in South Korea

Although there are plenty of opportunities to teach English in private language schools and institutes across the country, it can be really tricky to find work while your in the country. This is due to the sheer amount of red tape that's required to get a visa and teach legally.

The Hiring Process

If you apply from home, you'll need to fill out an application form or send off your resume and a covering letter. If the employer likes you, you might be invited for a Skype interview before hopefully being offered a job! When you're in-country it's a question of trawling the local jobs sites and newspapers, signing up to recruitment agencies and getting in touch with the hagwans.





Getting Your Visa

To teach legally in South Korea you need to have an E2 visa. To get this you need notarized and apostilled copies of your degree certificate and criminal record check, plus sealed university transcripts, a photocopy of your passport, a health check statement and a signed copy of your contract. Once your school has all of these documents they'll go down to the Ministry of Justice and Immigration to get a visa authorization number.

Once you have this it's just a case of going down to your local South Korean embassy to apply for your visa. The good news is that your employer will help you apply for your visa and give you instructions as to which documents you need.

Requirements for a Working Visa:

- ★ Bachelor's degree
- ★ No criminal record
- ★ Proof of job offer
- ★ Passport from a native English-speaking country

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Useful Links

www.eslcafe.com
www.eslbase.com
www.tefl.com
www.tefl.net
www.eslemployment.com

Useful Books

Teaching English Abroad by Susan Griffith

This is something of a Bible for TEFLers and will give you all the info you'll need to get started.



