



Internationally Educated Teachers— *Welcome to Alberta*



The Alberta
Teachers' Association

www.teachers.ab.ca



The Alberta Teachers' Association

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Welcome to the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA)! You are new to Canada, new to Alberta and new to the teaching profession in Alberta. The ATA is pleased to provide you with information, resources, supports and services that will help you learn how to acquire teacher certification and a teaching position in Alberta.

1. Who are IETs?

You are an internationally educated teacher (IET) if you have a professional four-year postsecondary degree leading to a bachelor of education (BEd) degree or if you have completed an acceptable preservice teacher education program from a country other than Canada.

Moving to another country can be exciting and challenging. You might ask yourself some of the following questions:

- Can I teach in Alberta?
- How do I get certificated to teach in Alberta?
- What can I do if I am having difficulty obtaining official documents from my country of origin?
- Is financial assistance available to help with certification requirements and professional development?
- Where can I find support to help me find a teaching position in Alberta?

We hope that this publication will assist you in obtaining the necessary documentation and qualifications to pursue your teaching career in Alberta.

1.1 What are the advantages of hiring IETs?

- Many IETs hold multiple degrees and have many years of experience.
- IETs can share first-hand knowledge of immigrant or refugee experience with students.
- IETs create a rich and diverse school community.
- IETs can fulfill specific teaching context needs (for example, language-based programs).

The ATA understands the advantages of hiring IETs and supports their transition into the profession in Alberta.

1.2 What challenges do IETs face to become certificated teachers in Alberta?

- Understanding how the school system works.
- Meeting all the requirements for certification.
- Accessing limited spaces to the bridging program at postsecondary institutions, if required.
- Understanding alternatives to the bridging program to upgrade qualifications.
- Gaining experience in the Alberta school system.
- Making contacts with potential employers.

2. What is the ATA?

In Alberta, when you are hired by a public, separate or francophone school jurisdiction, you automatically become a member of the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA). The ATA is the voice of the teaching profession in Alberta and advocates on behalf of teachers. The ATA is a democratic organization governed by teacher representatives elected from the membership. One of the most important functions of the ATA is to maintain the high regard the Alberta public has for teachers. This is done by upholding standards related to teacher education, practice and conduct. The ATA is also the premier provider of teacher professional development in education in Alberta. For more information on the ATA, go to www.teachers.ab.ca.

2.1 What are the rights and responsibilities of teachers in Alberta?

The ATA holds that teachers are entitled to the following rights and must accept the corresponding responsibilities:

- ✓ Teachers have the **right** to base diagnosis, planning, methodology and evaluation on professional knowledge and skills, and have the **responsibility** to review constantly their own level of competence and effectiveness, and to seek necessary improvements as part of a continuing process of professional development.
- ✓ Teachers have the **right** to expect standards of student behaviour necessary for maintaining an optimal learning environment and have the **responsibility** to use reasonable methods to achieve such standards.
- ✓ Teachers have the **right** to a voice in all decisions of a professional nature which affect them and have the **responsibility** to seek the most effective means of consultation and of collaboration with their professional colleagues.
- ✓ Teachers have the **right** to criticize educational programs and have the **responsibility** to do so in a professional manner.
- ✓ Teachers have the **right** to work in surroundings that are sanitary, healthful and conducive to teaching and learning, and have the **responsibility** to assess conditions encountered and to seek improvement of unacceptable conditions.



✓ Teachers have the **right** to a reasonable allotment of resources, materials and services of support staff and have the **responsibility** to use them in an efficient manner.

✓ Teachers have the **right** to fair and reasonable evaluation of professional performance and have the **responsibility** to give sincere consideration to any suggestions for improvement.

✓ Teachers have the **right** to protest and in extreme cases to refuse the assignment of teaching duties when they believe their qualifications and experience will not provide adequate service and safety to students and have the **responsibility** to consider any special circumstances under which the duties were assigned.

✓ Teachers have the **right** to be protected against discrimination on the basis of prejudice as to race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical characteristics, disability, marital status, family status, age, ancestry, place of origin, place of residence, socioeconomic background or linguistic background and have the **responsibility** to refrain from practising these forms of discrimination in their professional duties.

✓ Teachers, collectively and collegially, have the **right** to

- be members of the organization representing their professional, economic and contractual concerns;
- serve the organization and be represented by it;
- adhere to and to expect other members to adhere to the organization's Code of Professional Conduct;
- have a voice in determining criteria and procedures for the evaluation of professional performance of teachers;
- be protected under provisions outlined in contracts of employment with the employer;
- bargain for salaries and working conditions which include fair and equitable grievance procedures;

- receive an adequate income while teaching and upon retirement, and have the **responsibility** to support actively their professional organization in its objectives to regulate relations between teachers and their employers and to improve the quality of education, the status of teachers and the status of the teaching profession.

Teachers' rights and responsibilities can be found by visiting the ATA's website at www.teachers.ab.ca.

Additionally, section 18 of the *School Act* outlines the specific roles of teachers as determined by law. The *School Act* can be found here: www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/Publications/Teachers-as-Professionals/IM-5E%20Declaration%20of%20Rights.pdf.

2.2 What is the standard of conduct for teachers in Alberta?

The Code of Professional Conduct stipulates minimum standards of professional conduct of teachers in Alberta who are members of the Alberta Teachers' Association. Please see the Code of Professional Conduct on pages 8 and 9.

2.3 How do I become an ATA member?

If you are employed by a school authority that is not public, separate or francophone, such as an accredited private school, a First Nations operated school or a charter school, you are not automatically an active member of the ATA. You are welcome to apply for an ATA associate membership. Associate members have the right to vote, are subject to the bylaws and have the right to hold office in the Association; however, they are not subject to the Association's disciplinary provisions.

For more information on ATA membership, go to www.teachers.ab.ca.

CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

The Code of Professional Conduct stipulates minimum standards of professional conduct of teachers but is not an exhaustive list of such standards. Unless exempted by legislation, any member of The Alberta Teachers' Association who is alleged to have violated the standards of the profession, including the provisions of the Code, may be subject to a charge of unprofessional conduct under the bylaws of the Association.

In relation to pupils

- 1** The teacher teaches in a manner that respects the dignity and rights of all persons without prejudice as to race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, physical characteristics, disability, marital status, family status, age, ancestry, place of origin, place of residence, socioeconomic background or linguistic background.
- 2** (1) The teacher is responsible for diagnosing educational needs, prescribing and implementing instructional programs and evaluating progress of pupils.
(2) The teacher may not delegate these responsibilities to any person who is not a teacher.
- 3** The teacher may delegate specific and limited aspects of instructional activity to noncertificated personnel, provided that the teacher supervises and directs such activity.
- 4** The teacher treats pupils with dignity and respect and is considerate of their circumstances.
- 5** The teacher may not divulge information about a pupil received in confidence or in the course of professional duties except as required by law or where, in the judgment of the teacher, to do so is in the best interest of the pupil.
- 6** The teacher may not accept pay for tutoring a pupil in any subjects in which the teacher is responsible for giving classroom instruction to that pupil.
- 7** The teacher may not take advantage of a professional position to profit from the sale of goods or services to or for pupils in the teacher's charge.

In relation to school authorities

- 8** The teacher protests the assignment of duties for which the teacher is not qualified or conditions which make it difficult to render professional service.
- 9** The teacher fulfills contractual obligations to the employer until released by mutual consent or according to law.
- 10** The teacher provides as much notice as possible of a decision to terminate employment.
- 11** The teacher adheres to agreements negotiated on the teacher's behalf by the Association.

In relation to colleagues

- 12** The teacher does not undermine the confidence of pupils in other teachers.
- 13** The teacher criticizes the professional competence or professional reputation of another teacher only in confidence to proper officials and after the other teacher has been informed of the criticism, subject only to section 24 of the *Teaching Profession Act*.
- 14** The teacher, when making a report on the professional performance of another teacher, does so in good faith and, prior to submitting the report, provides the teacher with a copy of the report, subject only to section 24 of the *Teaching Profession Act*.
- 15** The teacher does not take, because of animosity or for personal advantage, any steps to secure the dismissal of another teacher.
- 16** The teacher recognizes the duty to protest through proper channels administrative policies and practices which the teacher cannot in conscience accept; and further recognizes that if administration by consent fails, the administrator must adopt a position of authority.
- 17** The teacher as an administrator provides opportunities for staff members to express their opinions and to bring forth suggestions regarding the administration of the school.

In relation to the profession

- 18** The teacher acts in a manner which maintains the honour and dignity of the profession.
- 19** The teacher does not engage in activities which adversely affect the quality of the teacher's professional service.
- 20** The teacher submits to the Association disputes arising from professional relationships with other teachers which cannot be resolved by personal discussion.
- 21** The teacher makes representations on behalf of the Association or members thereof only when authorized to do so.
- 22** The teacher accepts that service to the Association is a professional responsibility.

Approved by the 2018 Annual Representative Assembly pursuant to the Teaching Profession Act.

Please note:

- Items 13 and 14 of the Code of Professional Conduct do not pertain to reporting to the Association on the possible unprofessional conduct of another member.
- The *Teaching Profession Act*, section 24(3), requires members to report forthwith to the executive secretary on the unprofessional conduct of another member.

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3. How are schools and school jurisdictions organized in Alberta?

Alberta Education is the Government of Alberta ministry that funds education. The *minister of education* is responsible for who holds teaching authority in Alberta. The *Registrar at Alberta Education* is responsible for evaluation of credentials and issuing Alberta teacher certification.

Alberta's education system consists of

- public schools,
- separate schools (Roman Catholic),
- francophone schools,
- charter schools,
- accredited private schools,
- early childhood services (ECS) programs,
- First Nations (band) operated schools and
- Alberta accredited international schools.

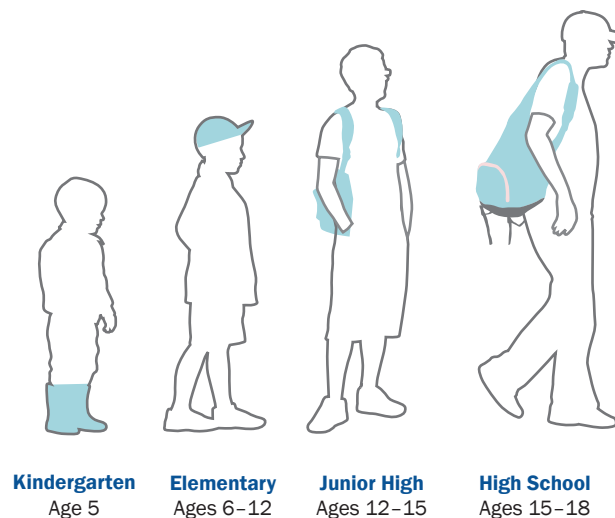
The province is divided into 61 public school jurisdictions. Public school jurisdictions are defined as those jurisdictions that are 100 per cent publicly funded. These include public, separate and francophone school jurisdictions. They may also be referred to as school authorities, school divisions and school districts. School jurisdictions are responsible for employment of teachers.

Charter schools, private schools, early childhood services (ECS) programs, First Nations school authorities and Alberta accredited international schools are not part of the 61 public school jurisdictions, although they are responsible to adhere to the requirements established by the Ministry of Education.

A school jurisdiction is governed by an elected school board (also known as boards of education) and is operated under the guidance of an administrative team led by a superintendent. In Alberta, teachers are hired by school jurisdictions, not by Alberta Education. A complete list of all school jurisdictions and links to their websites can be found at www.teachers.ab.ca.

There are three categories of schools in Alberta:

- Elementary—kindergarten to Grade 6 (ages 5–12)
- Junior high—Grades 7 to 9 (ages 12–15)
- Senior high—Grades 10 to 12 (ages 15–18)



There are a variety of configurations of schools across Alberta, including kindergarten to Grade 9.

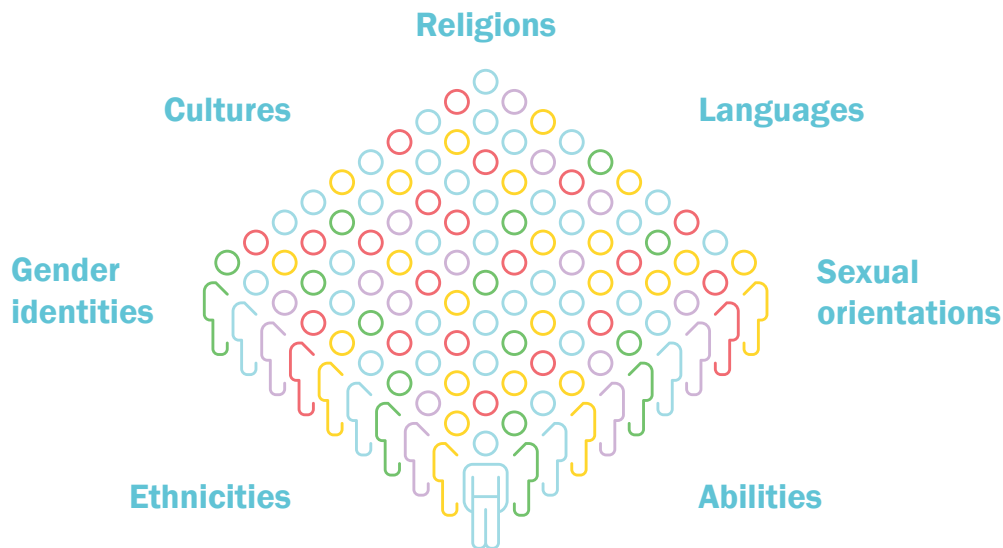
Elementary teachers traditionally work with one class of students for an entire school year. They provide lessons in a variety of subject areas, including mathematics, language arts, social studies, science and art. Secondary school teachers are subject area specialists who provide instruction to students in junior and senior high school (Grades 7–12). Alberta Education requires that secondary

teachers have a minimum of 24 credits in a teachable subject area, such as math or science. Technology now allows some teachers to teach through distance learning. Others teach in nontraditional school settings such as in a shopping mall or community centre.

In addition to instruction, teachers in Alberta have many other responsibilities, such as supervision duty, advising students, meeting with parents and organizing field trips.

3.1 Alberta schools are inclusive

School communities in Alberta reflect diversity:



Alberta teachers respect the diverse nature of school and are required to acquire the knowledge, skills and attributes necessary to create inclusive learning environments for all students.

4. Can I teach in Alberta? What are the requirements to teach in Alberta?

If you wish to teach in Alberta, you are required to be certificated by the Ministry of Education of the Government of Alberta. Before receiving a Permanent Professional Certificate, you must first apply for an Interim Professional Certificate.

4.1 Interim professional certification

Apply directly to Alberta Education, Teacher Certification Branch, for your Interim Professional Certificate. Your credentials will be assessed, and if you qualify, certification will be awarded when you provide evidence of the right to work in Canada. The certificate may take several months to obtain. Once issued, it is valid for up to three years. Go to www.education.alberta.ca.

4.1.1 Certification requirements for an Interim Professional Certificate

To be certificated, you will need to meet the following certification requirements:

A. Academic credentials

Four years of university education and a recognized degree that includes 48 semester hour credits in teacher education coursework, with a minimum of 10 weeks in supervised student teaching at the elementary or secondary level.

If you are prepared as an elementary school teacher

Your required university coursework must include a minimum of 24 credits, including Canadian studies (3 credits), mathematics (3 credits), science (3 credits), and English/French literature and composition (6 credits).

If you are prepared as a secondary school teacher

Your university coursework must include a minimum of 24 credits in your teachable subject area and 6 credits in English/French literature and composition.

B. Professional standing

You must submit a Statement of Professional Standing from the licensing body or education ministry where your teacher preparation program was completed and from every jurisdiction where you have held teacher certification.

C. Work experience

You will require written verification of your teaching experience from each school authority where you have worked as a teacher.

D. Immigration status or evidence of right to work in Canada

Evidence of the right to work in Canada is required. If you are born outside Canada, you must provide proof of citizenship and/or immigration status.

E. Language proficiency

You may be required to provide evidence of language proficiency. Proof of language proficiency ensures that teachers are able to communicate effectively in all modes (speaking, reading, listening and writing) in English or French prior to entering the classroom.

The evidence of English language proficiency accepted by Alberta Education is the Test of English as a Foreign Language or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) academic test. Required scores are listed below. Once you have successfully completed the TOEFL-iBT or IELTS and achieved the required scores, please arrange for your official results to be sent directly to the Teacher Certification Branch at Alberta Education. Scores older than one year are not accepted.

IELTS		TOEFL	
		98 overall with minimum	
Speaking	7	Speaking	27
Writing	7	Writing	25
Listening	6.5	Listening	23
Reading	6.5	Reading	23

French Language Proficiency

Individuals who wish to demonstrate language proficiency in French must provide evidence in the form of a recorded interview to Alberta Education. The following conditions for a recorded interview must be met:

- The recording must be, at minimum, 20 minutes in duration and reflect an unrehearsed conversation between the applicant and an appropriate interviewer whose first language is French.
- An appropriate interviewer may be defined as an individual holding certification as a teacher in Alberta. Such individuals include superintendents of schools, school principals, teaching colleagues or staff of Alberta Education and/or the Alberta Teachers' Association.

F. Be a fit and proper person

You are required to complete a Confidential Self-Disclosure form and provide an original criminal record check which includes a vulnerable sector check that is current within six months.

G. Application fee

The application fees are determined by the location of the postsecondary institution where you completed your teacher preparation program:

- Prepared within Alberta \$200
- Prepared within Canada or the USA \$225
- Prepared outside Canada or the USA \$250

4.1.2 How do I request a statement of professional standing from my own country?

Contact the Office of the Registrar at Alberta Education for assistance.

Alberta Education, Office of the Registrar

Alberta Education, Office of the Registrar
2nd Floor, 44 Capital Boulevard Building
10044 108 Street, Edmonton AB T5J 5E6
780-427-2045 or 310-0000 toll free within Alberta
teacher.certification@gov.ab.ca
(By appointment only)

Important note: Alberta Education and the universities in Alberta complete their own credential evaluations for teacher certification and admissions. They do not recognize credential assessments completed by other agencies, such as World Education Services (WES) or International Qualifications Assessment Services (IQAS).

Also, with respect to transcripts, please note that Alberta Education and the universities in Alberta only accept official transcripts sent directly to their offices by the applicant's former university or other postsecondary institution.

Please contact Alberta Education or the university admissions directly if extenuating circumstances prohibit your ability to have your transcripts sent directly from your previous postsecondary institution.

4.2 Permanent professional certification

Once you have met the following criteria for certification: taught in Alberta for the equivalent of two school years (400 full-time days) on an Interim Professional Certificate where your teaching practice consistently met the Teaching Quality Standard, a school authority superintendent or designated signing authority may submit a written recommendation to Alberta Education for you to be issued an Alberta Permanent Professional Teaching Certificate.

4.2.1 Restrictions on eligibility

Permanent certification may be denied to applicants who do not meet the eligibility requirements described above. If you do not agree with the official results of the evaluation of your credentials, you may appeal the decision to the Certification Appeal Committee.

5. What standard do I need to meet and maintain to teach in Alberta?

5.1 Teaching Quality Standard

The Teaching Quality Standard (TQS) is a key policy that guides professional learning in Alberta. It outlines the knowledge, skills and attributes that teachers are expected to demonstrate. The standard specifies

competencies for those teachers holding interim certificates (typically teachers in their first two years of practice) and permanent certificates. It is important that you become familiar with the Teaching Quality Standard.

Go to www.education.alberta.ca.



6. How can I upgrade my education to meet the requirements for certification?

After your credentials have been assessed by Alberta Education, you will be provided with a letter of assessment that identifies any further studies that are required. You can complete these further studies at the postsecondary institutions listed below.

6.1 Universities

The following postsecondary institutions offer bachelor of education programs:

Edmonton

- University of Alberta
- Campus Saint-Jean
- The King's University
- Concordia University of Edmonton

Calgary

- University of Calgary
- Mount Royal University
- St Mary's University
- Ambrose University

Camrose

Augustana Campus offers degree program through the University of Alberta

Fort McMurray

Keyano College offers a degree program through the University of Alberta.

Grande Prairie

Grande Prairie Regional College offers a two-year transfer program to the University of Alberta or University of Lethbridge.

Lethbridge

University of Lethbridge

Medicine Hat

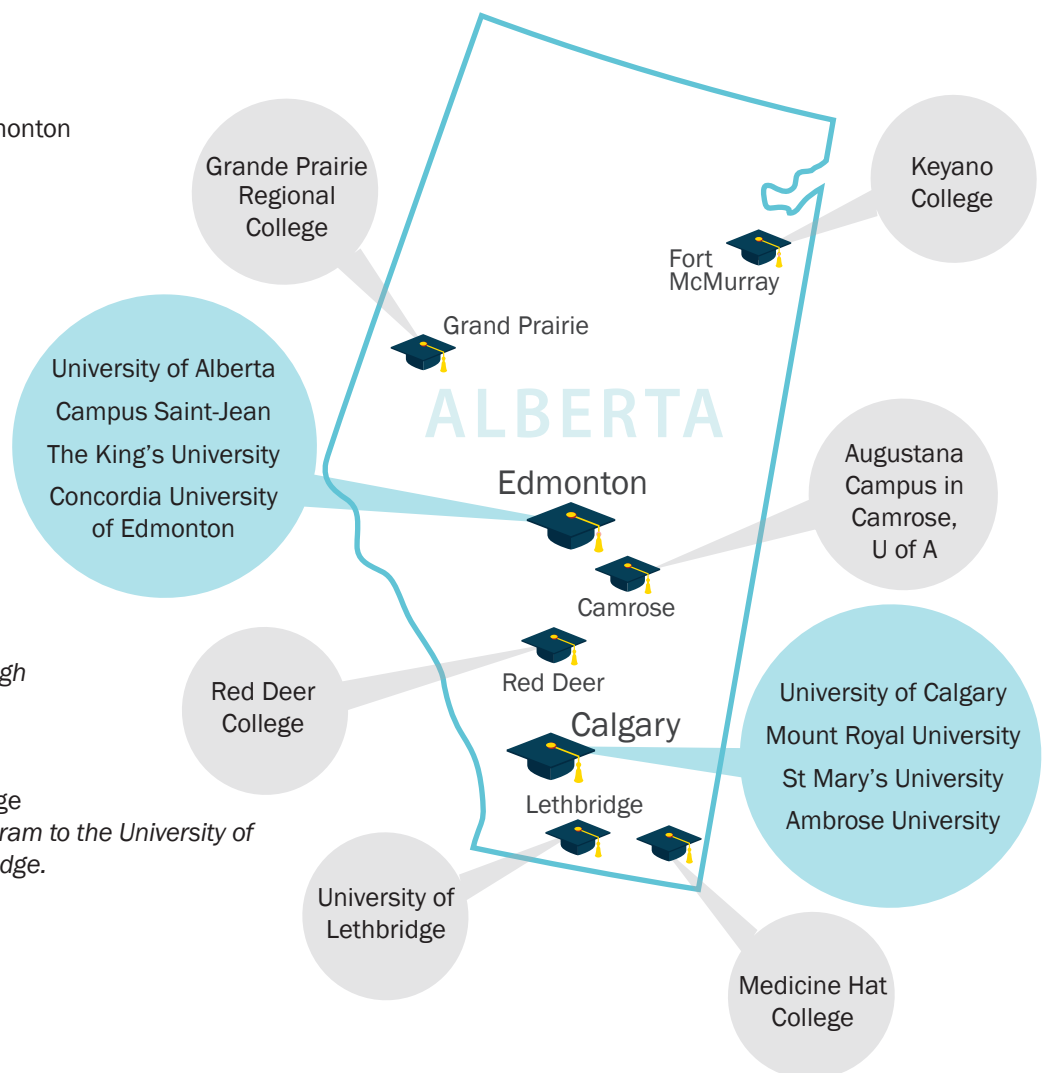
Medicine Hat College

offers a degree program through Mount Royal University

Red Deer

Red Deer College

offers a degree program through the University of Alberta.



6.2 Bridging programs

If you earned your teaching qualifications in a country other than Canada but do not yet meet the qualifications for Alberta teaching certification, the Internationally Educated Teachers Bridging Program may be for you. Bridging programs prepare experienced foreign-trained teachers to teach in Alberta schools. The programs are offered at the Universities of Alberta and Calgary.

6.2.1 Program objectives

Participants examine various educational policies and pedagogies that affect teaching and learning in Alberta and explore how the expectations for teachers and students compare to those in their previous country. Bridging programs help IETs to

- meet the requirements for teacher certification in Alberta,
- enhance professional growth and
- make a transition to teaching and related employment in Alberta schools.

6.2.2 Admission requirements

The requirements to be eligible to participate in the bridging program are below:

- Successful completion of a teacher preparation program outside Canada from a recognized institution.
- A letter of assessment regarding teacher certification from the Teacher Certification Branch, Alberta Education.

Please visit each institution's website for other admission requirements specific to each program and important links.

University of Alberta

<http://uab.ca/iet>

For additional inquiries about eligibility and admissions, e-mail IETbridge@ualberta.ca.

University of Calgary

www.werklund.ucalgary.ca/gpe/bridge

6.2.3 Funding to complete education requirements

Funding for tuition and fees for bridging program participants is available from the Universities of Alberta and Calgary. Please visit each institution's website for more information.

If you are a foreign-trained professional, you may be eligible for a loan from the Immigrant Access Fund. This fund offers loans of up to \$10,000 to help immigrants become accredited to work in Alberta. You can borrow up to \$10,000 to cover the following costs:

- Short-term (two years or less) studies
- Exam fees with a professional governing association
- Travel expenses to write an exam
- Qualification assessments
- Professional association fees
- Books and course materials
- English or French language courses specific to employment
- Living allowance during study time

For more information, visit the Immigrant Access Fund website at <https://windmillmicrolending.org>.

You may also seek additional government funding through a student loan. Student loans are available to Canadian and American citizens, permanent residents and protected persons. Visit the Alberta Student Aid (Student Loans and Grants) website for details. <https://alis.alberta.ca/explore-education-and-training/pay-for-your-education/loans-and-grants/#program>

A student line of credit from your bank may be an alternative if you are unable to receive a student loan.

7. Assessing your English language skills

If English is not your first language, you should contact your local immigrant-serving agency for a referral to an assessment service. You can also contact the Alberta Support Contact Centre for details.

<https://alis.alberta.ca/tools-and-resources/alberta-supports-contact-centre>

7.1 Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada

The Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program is a free language-training program for eligible adult learners. LINC provides basic language skills. To register for LINC classes you will need a LINC card. To obtain a LINC card, it is necessary to be assessed. Newcomers should contact the nearest immigrant-serving agency to make an appointment for an assessment.

7.2 English as a second language

If you need specific language skills, you may want to consider a program that better fits your educational or career goals, such as English as a second language (ESL). Training is designed to help participants learn basic to advanced reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. Visit these websites to find out more about ESL programs in Alberta:

- Calgary area: <https://immigrantservicescalgary.ca>
- Edmonton and other select urban centres in Alberta: www.cssalberta.ca

8. Translating documents

You may need to have your education and training credentials translated. To find a translator, go to the Association of Translators and Interpreters of Alberta website at www.atia.ab.ca. Immigrant-serving agencies may also be able to assist with document translation.



9. How do I find a teaching position?

9.1 Where do I apply?

There is no central employment agency in Alberta for teachers. Individual school authorities are responsible for the recruitment of teachers in Alberta. Applications must be made directly to the school district, private school or other employing authority, and each has its own distinct hiring practices. Here are a few suggestions for how you can find current teaching positions:

- Browse school jurisdiction websites to locate teaching position sections. You may also want to contact the human resources department of the school jurisdiction to ask what training and experience they are looking for in their new hires. You can usually find phone numbers, question submission forms and e-mail contact information on school authority websites in addition to teaching positions. A complete list of all school jurisdictions and links to their websites can be found at www.teachers.ab.ca.
- The Education Canada website advertises teaching positions from across Canada. www.educationcanada.com
- Over 30 school authorities in Alberta use the Apply to Education website to advertise teaching positions and gather resumes. www.applytoeducation.com

Be open to the idea of looking for work outside of large cities. There is often more demand for teachers in rural locations.

For many school boards, substitute teaching is the first step toward a continuous teaching contract. Substitute teachers (also called supply teachers or teachers on call) are teachers who are employed to replace other teachers when they are absent. Substitute teachers provide professional service in schools throughout Alberta. Substitute teachers carry the same daily responsibilities of instruction, management and supervision of students that regular classroom teachers do. Substitute teaching allows you to demonstrate your abilities in a Canadian classroom setting to be evaluated, to build your experience and to network.

Persevere. Obtaining a teaching position is not always easy and may take more time than anticipated!

9.2 Resume, cover letter, references and interviews

9.2.1 Building your resume and cover letter

Most school jurisdictions will require you to submit a teaching resume and cover letter. A well-written resume and cover letter will help increase the likelihood that school board staff as well as school principals will review your application.

The Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS) website offers information on writing your resume and cover letter, learning how to network and prepare for your interview, and has job search resources and labour market information. Visit their Look for Work page for guidance. <https://alis.alberta.ca/look-for-work/resumes-and-references>

9.2.2 References

Your references are people who know you and can tell an employer about you. These are people who have worked closely with you in employment or volunteer settings. If your work experience is limited, you may need to use personal references. These are people who can vouch for your character but haven't worked with you. Include your references on your resume.

Choose your references carefully. Make sure the people you have selected meet these criteria:

- They know you well enough to answer specific questions about you and your work.
- They can recommend you without reservation.
- They have good communication skills, especially on the phone. (This is important because many employers check references by phone.)

9.2.3 Job interviews

Job interviews are an important part of securing a teaching position. If you know what to expect in an interview with a school board human resources personnel officer or a school principal, you can be prepared and feel confident.



9.2.4 Who conducts the interview?

When you accept an interview for a teaching position, ask for the names and positions of the people who will be interviewing you. Doing so will give you a better idea of what to expect. In Alberta, in large urban boards, interviews for teaching positions are usually conducted by human resources personnel, followed by a second interview with the school principal and administration. More than one person will often interview you. Be prepared to answer questions from each person as they write notes about your responses.

During your interview, discuss your education, experience and expertise, and how they support the school board and school's goals for student success. Your

first task is to demonstrate that you have the necessary skills to meet these objectives. Your second task is to find out whether you are interested, willing and able to work in this particular educational setting. You should be prepared to ask questions as well as answer them.

9.2.5 Know your answers

To make a good impression, write down and practise your answers to possible questions with a friend or family member before you go to your interview. Visualize yourself at the interview responding to scenario or role-play questions. These are questions like, "Tell us about a time when you..." where you will be asked to draw on your past teaching experiences.

9.2.6 Tips for answering questions

- Use strong, clear words to describe yourself (for example, flexible, courteous, creative, disciplined, self-starter, knowledgeable, team player, passionate), and be prepared to share teaching examples that demonstrate these qualities.
- If you do not understand a question, politely ask the interviewer to repeat it. If you do not know the answer, say so.

You will have to wait until each candidate has been interviewed to find out if you will be offered the position. The principal or human resources will contact you if you are the successful candidate.

9.2.7 Tips for making a good first impression with an employer

- ✓ Arrive 10 to 15 minutes early, and let the receptionist know you have arrived.
- ✓ Do not bring family members with you.
- ✓ Do not chew gum or bring a beverage. (It is OK to accept an offer for a glass of water once you are in the interview room.)
- ✓ Turn your cellphone off and put it away during the interview.
- ✓ Be pleasant, honest and sincere with everyone in the office. Interviewers may ask other staff members for their opinions once you leave.
- ✓ When you first meet the interviewers, introduce yourself, shake hands firmly and make eye contact.
- ✓ Remain standing until you are offered a chair and then sit up straight.
- ✓ Take a copy of your resume and cover letter, the teaching position advertisement (if there was one), references, your list of questions about the position and any other relevant documents.
- ✓ In certain educational settings, such as French Immersion or in francophone schools, you may be asked to respond to oral questions in French or complete a written language proficiency test.
- ✓ At the end of the interview, always thank the interviewers for their time.

9.3 Bredin Centre for Learning—Centre for Skilled and Internationally Trained Professionals

The Bredin Centre for Learning is located in Edmonton, Calgary, Red Deer and Spruce Grove and offers support for internationally trained professionals to help them understand and successfully move through the licensure and credential process in Canada. Workshops providing support with job search skills are provided.

The Bredin Centre for Learning offers a no-cost program to guide internationally educated teachers (IET) through the licensure and credential process in Alberta. As part of a regulated profession, they are provided with up-to-date information on the teaching profession. A dedicated career coach supports the clients through the process and assists with finding pre-employment volunteering, mentoring educators and employment directly related to education or an industry-related occupation.

For the IET bridging program students at the University of Alberta, the Bredin Centre for Learning creates industry-specific curriculum workshops with invited guest speakers including employed educators and school board representatives. Workshops cover work-search strategies, resume writing, work-search communication, interview skills and social media networking.

Specifically, the Bredin Centre for Learning can help with

- understanding the process for licensure recognition;
- counselling on transferring professional skills and knowledge to Canadian industries;
- providing help on what to do when there are limited financial resources available to pay for additional postsecondary classes, credential evaluations, exposure courses, phone calls and faxes;
- reviewing an IET's current resume and providing expert advice on refining it for the potential employer;
- spending time with IETs to create a job-search plan;
- providing IETs with coaching on interviewing to help IETs get work;
- offering networking opportunities with other teachers; and
- providing postemployment follow-up including job maintenance support and integration into the Canadian workplace.

To become a client, call 780-425-3730 to set up an initial meeting. At this meeting, IETs must bring all of the following original documents:

1. Proof of Canadian citizenship (citizenship certificate, permanent residency card or refugee confirmation letter with favourable decision with work permit)
 2. Social insurance number (SIN) card or letter
 3. Original degree or diploma from outside of Canada (if the original is not in English, a certified translated copy is required)
 4. Up-to-date resume
 5. English language assessment results with a minimum CLB–A 6.0 or an academic IELTS 5.5
- When IETs come to Bredin, they will meet with the career coach who will work with them to understand what has been done to date to obtain employment and/or licensure.
 - Eligible clients work together with their Bredin career coach on developing a plan of action to determine what services, seminars, workshops, courses and so on they will take at Bredin.
 - IETs will work closely with staff to prepare to take exams, attend study groups, obtain employment and so on.
 - Once IETs are ready to look for employment, the career coach will assist with the resume, interview skills, cover letter and job-search skills.
 - When the IETs find employment, they will continue to receive support with any issues they may encounter on the job.

For more information, go to www.bredin.ca.

9.4. Volunteering

Even if you are an experienced teacher, volunteering in a school is an excellent way to become acquainted with Alberta schools. It demonstrates your initiative to potential employers and that you have an awareness of the operational aspects of a school. Schools often look for volunteers to provide support within classrooms, work one-on-one or with small groups of students, to prepare materials and so on. Contact schools in your area to learn about volunteer opportunities.

Of course, teaching experience can come from places other than a school. Consider volunteering as a tutor, mentor, lunchroom supervisor, coach or at a daycare or an after school program. Many public libraries provide children's programming and often need volunteers.

By volunteering, you will not only build your knowledge and understanding of schools and curriculum in Alberta but also have the opportunity to build a network of professional contacts, enhance your resume, improve your English skills and provide support to children who need it.

9.5 Other applicable work experience

While you are working through the process of becoming certificated and finding a teaching position, you may consider applying for work in related positions. Working as an educational assistant, for example, could provide excellent experience in the Alberta education system and could offer opportunities to meet potential employers for future teaching positions. Other relevant opportunities could include working at an after school care centre or as a school lunchroom supervisor.

10. What happens after I am hired?

Teachers hired in Alberta will receive a contract of employment from their employer and then be part of a collective agreement. Be sure you understand what the contract and collective agreement require of you. If you have any questions, please contact the Member Services or Teacher Welfare program areas at the Alberta Teachers' Association at 780-447-9400 (in Edmonton) or 1-800-232-7208 (toll free elsewhere in Alberta).

11. How do I have my level of education evaluated for salary purposes once I secure a teaching position?

11.1 Teacher Qualifications Service

Once hired, teachers should apply to the Teacher Qualifications Service (TQS) of the Alberta Teachers' Association to have their years of education assessed for salary purposes.

Who uses the TQS?

- Beginning teachers and teachers new to Alberta
- Teachers who have upgraded their university and college education
- Teachers who want advice on taking additional courses or programs to improve their placement on the salary grid

- Teachers who are not clear about how their educational qualifications were assessed or who disagree with an assessment they have received

Complete the TQS application form found on the ATA website. There you will also find the application guidebook, which will assist you to correctly complete all sections of the application form and guide you through the application process.

Go to www.teachers.ab.ca/TheTeachingProfession/TeacherQualificationsService/Pages/index.aspx.

12. Where can I find more help?

An abundance of support is available for you as you continue your teaching career in Alberta.

12.1 ATA library

The ATA library at Barnett House has an extensive collection of books, periodicals, digital resources and other materials focusing on educational research and professional development for teachers. Library services and materials are available in French and English. ATA members and members of university student locals may borrow materials and access Association library services. Go to www.teachers.ab.ca or visit the library in person at

11010 142 Street NW
Edmonton AB
780-447-9400, ext 648 (in Edmonton)
1-800-232-7208 (toll free elsewhere in Alberta)

12.2 Other resources

Alberta Teachers' Association

www.teachers.ab.ca

Teachers' Rights and Responsibilities in Alberta

www.teachers.ab.ca > The Teaching Profession > Teachers' Rights and Responsibilities

Alberta School Jurisdictions and Website Links

www.teachers.ab.ca/Public%20Education/Jurisdictions/Pages/Index.aspx

Alberta Education

www.education.alberta.ca

Teacher Certification

<https://education.alberta.ca/teacher-certification>

Teacher Certification Process

www.albertacanada.com/files/albertacanada/Teacher_Certification_revSept2015.pdf

Guide to Applying for Teacher Certification (Alberta Education)

<https://education.alberta.ca/teacher-certification>

Ontario College of Teachers

Provides country-specific contact information for requesting your statement of professional standing
www.oct.ca/becoming-a-teacher/internationally-educated-teachers/country-info

Alberta Education, Office of the Registrar

780-427-2045 (in Edmonton)
310-0000 (toll free elsewhere in Alberta)
teacher.certification@gov.ab.ca

Bridging Programs

University of Alberta
www.ualberta.ca/education/programs/diploma-and-certificate-programs/internationally-educated-teachers-program

Internationally Educated Teachers Bridging Program Steps

<http://uab.ca/iet>
University of Alberta Faculty of Education Undergraduate Student Services
E-mail educ.info@ualberta.ca or IETbridge@ualberta.ca
University of Calgary
www.werklund.ucalgary.ca/gpe/bridge#quickset-field_collection_quicktabs_1bridge@ucalgary.ca

Immigrant Access Fund

www.iafcanada.org
780-756-3023 (in Edmonton)
403-228-9981 (in Calgary)
1-855-423-2262 (toll free elsewhere in Alberta)

English as a Second Language

Calgary: <https://immigrantservicescalgary.ca> > How We Can Help > ESL and LINC Directories

Immigrant and Settlement Services

www.catholicsocialservices.ab.ca > Find Programs by Service > Immigration and Settlement Service

Association of Translators and Interpreters of Alberta
www.atia.ab.ca

Teaching Quality Standard (TQS)
www.education.alberta.ca/media/1626523/english-tqs-card-2013_3.pdf

Bredin Centre for Learning
www.bredin.ca

Education Canada
Offers a national online database of teaching positions. This link takes you straight to the teaching position postings for Alberta.
www.educationcanada.com//browse.phtml?sid=ab

Apply to Education
www.applytoeducation.com

**Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS):
Look for Work**
Find helpful information to use when writing your resume and cover letter.
www.alis.alberta.ca/look-for-work/resumes-and-references

**Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS):
Occupational Profiles**
Here you can find up-to-date information on Alberta's occupations, wages and salaries, and educational programs, certification requirements and schools.
www.alis.alberta.ca/edinfo

Alberta Career Information Hotline
Find an immigrant-serving agency and get advice and referrals about your career, education and employment options from a career advisor. www.alis.alberta.ca/tools-and-resources/career-information-hotline/career-information-hotline
780-422-4266 (in Edmonton)
1-800-661-3753 (toll free elsewhere in Alberta)

**Alberta Student Aid (Student Loans and Grants)—
Government of Alberta**
www.alis.alberta.ca/explore-education-and-training/pay-for-your-education/loans-and-grants/#program

Teacher Qualifications Service (TQS)
www.teachers.ab.ca/TheTeachingProfession/TeacherQualificationsService/Pages/index.aspx
780-447-9400 (in Edmonton)
1-800-232-7208 (toll free elsewhere in Alberta)

Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA)
AAISA are dedicated to supporting immigrants and refugees. Member agencies provide a range of programs and services, from core settlement to language and essential skills training, employment supports, and community connections. www.aaisa.ca/membership/current-members

13. Q & As with an IET

Alma is an internationally educated teacher who became certificated to teach in Alberta after attending the bridging program at the University of Alberta. She has been teaching successfully in Alberta for over three years. Alma has prepared the following questions and answers to share her experience with you as an IET in Alberta.



Q: I just arrived in Alberta and I am an experienced teacher from overseas. I didn't know what I should do to be able to teach in Alberta? Where do I start?

A: Currently teachers arriving from overseas must search for information about essential documents and applications needed before they can practise their skills here. Requirements include certification (licence to teach), employment (teaching position) and placement on the TQS (determining placement for salary based on qualifications). For further information go to

Teacher Certification Branch, Alberta Education
<https://education.alberta.ca/teacher-certification/>

Employment
www.applytoeducation.com
<https://educationcanada.com>

Teacher Qualifications Service, Alberta Teachers' Association
www.teachers.ab.ca

Each of these websites will start internationally trained teachers on a path that will bring together required documentation from home and locally. Depending on your country of origin, you may have to meet different expectations including language proficiency in English or French. Your qualifications will be assessed based on the university from which you graduated and on your years of teacher education and experience.

Q: After receiving my Alberta teaching certificate, I got a teaching position with a school board, but I didn't know where to start. I didn't know the students, and I didn't know anybody in the school.

A: The first day of classes is one key to a successful year in school. It is as important to establish relationships with students as to start the academic lessons. It is crucial to include relationship-building activities for the whole class.

It is also important to set the routines and expectations from the first day. There are different resources that will help. One of them is *The First Days of School: How to Be an Effective Teacher* (2009), by Harry K Wong and Rosemary T Wong. This book explains the typical classroom set-up, routines and procedures, which can be very different from the classrooms in your home country. This book and many other useful resources are available free to members of the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) from the ATA library.

In the beginning days of a school year, teachers must prepare a syllabus of content, expectations and assessments for each class they will teach. This information is often shared with students and parents. It forms an informal contract of learning between the students, parents and the teacher. In order to prepare the syllabus, you must know the required provincial outcomes of the course that you will teach and how to pace the content into the given timeline (term or entire year). The research, organizing and planning prior to starting teaching is critical. The outcomes can be

found at <https://education.alberta.ca/programs-of-study/programs-of-study/>. These outcomes form the backbone for planning.

Teachers have to be well organized in order to succeed. Planning is crucial—a well-planned class can offset a lot of classroom management issues. Teachers do long-range, unit and daily plans. Well-designed plans include outcomes, activities and assessment. Of course they also take into account the needs of the students so they will vary from class to class and year to year. We teach students, not subjects.

Q: I have more than seven years' experience of teaching math at the high school level, and I have never taught any other subject. Yesterday, I got an offer to teach junior high math and another subject. I graduated from university in math in my country, and I am uncomfortable about teaching another subject or different aged students.

A: In Alberta, teachers' certificates enable them to teach most subjects from kindergarten to Grade 12. Teachers need to be flexible about both subjects and levels to teach. Few teachers have the luxury of teaching only one subject area. It is a lot of work to prepare for a subject that you have never taught before but you will get better with experience. Good planning skills combined with good teaching skills are transferable from subject to subject. Of course some subjects require specialized training especially beyond introductory levels. Taking on the challenge of a new subject is a good opportunity to use your skills. Taking on students at a different age is, within reason, an acceptable challenge. Knowing your students and knowing their capabilities means matching your knowledge with the prescribed outcomes and planning accordingly.

Q: From my experience overseas, I am used to following a textbook and completing it by the end of the school year. I got a teaching position in Edmonton and my colleagues told me that they do not use a textbook at all. I started panicking, as I have never worked without a textbook. I didn't know where I would find the content that I needed to teach or what resource I could use.

A: You need to become very familiar with the Alberta Education program of studies, which can be found on the Alberta Education website at <https://education.alberta.ca/programs-of-study/programs-of-study/>.

Here you can find the methodologies and content for each course and level. Every lesson should be planned based on the objectives from the program of studies. The content is clearly outlined, but each teacher must then find the resources, the methodologies and assessments for each of the outcomes listed. An outline of the outcomes to be completed is needed to complete the syllabus for each course.

Many schools have a lead teacher, grade coordinator or department head for subjects or levels. It is a good idea to meet with this person prior to the opening of school. For example, if you are teaching science, meet with the science lead teacher. He or she can be an invaluable resource for you and can introduce you to the year plan, the department's objectives for the school year and the suggested pacing of the work. Most of the time the lead has the topics already arranged according to the units to cover, the equipment needed and some assessment material. Usually new teachers do not need to do all the planning by themselves or work in isolation. Often, teachers who previously taught the course will have materials ready and available from previous years. Adapting these to meet the needs of your students can cover much of your preparation.

Q: I have just been hired days before classes begin, and I am overwhelmed as I don't know how I am going to be ready. I have been given dates to submit my syllabi, long-range plans and unit plans, and I am not familiar with unit- or long-range planning. I have little time to prepare these plans.

A: Each course should have a syllabus, which lists the topics to be taught, the timelines, the methods of assessment, the teacher's name and contact information. Usually a syllabus is one to two pages long that should be given to students during the first week of classes.

A long-range plan is crucial, as it is the teacher's guide for the year. It includes the topics, the timeline and the assessments. It is good practice to refer to it constantly and to follow the timelines. The long-range plan is more detailed than the syllabus.

Unit planning is necessary. Try to plan at least one unit ahead of the unit you are currently teaching. To plan a unit, check the program of studies and highlight the objectives. Then plan the lessons including



activities and assessment for each outcome. This is good practice as it will help you organize the resources, equipment, books, papers and so on that you will need to collect before beginning the unit.

Your school administration will want to see that you know how to plan, covering and assessing the outcomes. Write notes on your plans as to successes and things to change for the future. Keep organized using folders or binders for each unit per subject for future use. These practices will make the next year's planning easier. If you are uncertain about planning, ask a mentor teacher for assistance. It is a lot of work, but well worth the effort in creating structure for your class that saves time and helps with classroom management.

Q: I have 20 years' teaching experience in the country I come from, and I don't need any advice as I am a veteran teacher. In the school where I am now working, my colleagues give me feedback and suggest changes in my teaching. I am not willing to change as I am a very good teacher, and I don't want to change.

A: It is good that you have many years of experience. Your experience is overseas, and many expectations may be different in Canada. Alberta teachers are committed to continuous professional growth requiring constant reflection and change. We all should be open to suggestions and advice as it helps us

improve and grow. If an international teacher wants to succeed, it is important to listen to suggestions and take them seriously. Your colleagues want to see you succeed too. Constructive criticism helps us make appropriate changes. You might consider asking to do an inter class visitation so that you can watch another teacher's style and methods. You could ask some colleagues to watch you teach and provide feedback, or ask your students for feedback as well.

Q: I never had problems with the students in my country, as I knew the students' families. I would call their parents to discuss the students' behaviour. In my present school, the students are sometimes disrespectful and use inappropriate language. I am not sure how to handle this problem. Maybe the generation has changed or maybe the students.

Ways of dealing with students in Canada can be different from overseas. Classroom management is important to success. It is important to create relationships with students and to respect them. When you discipline, keep the discussion about their behaviours and do not make it personal. The students have to understand that you care about them. If the students feel that you care about them, they will appreciate that and will respect you. Students will act out more when they think you do not care about them. Most often students will show respect when they are treated with respect.

It is important too to plan well. When the class moves at a good pace and students are involved in their learning, the chance of classroom management problems lessens.

If you are having issues, here are few suggestions:

- a. Ask a colleague to observe you and give you feedback.
- b. Ask colleagues who teach the same students to share some strategies that they use for specific students or classes.
- c. Ask your administrator for support and guidance.
- d. Use the ATA library or online resources for good classroom management procedures.
- e. Plan, plan, plan.

Q: A year after immigrating to Alberta, I received my teaching certification. Now I am looking for a teaching position and having a difficult time finding one in the city. My children are settled in their new schools in Calgary, and my wife has a job in Calgary. I don't want to relocate. What can I do?

A: A teaching position in Alberta is a good job that pays well and has excellent benefit plans. Every family should prioritize what is important. The fact that you went back to school in Canada to receive an Alberta certificate shows that you love teaching. You could begin by applying to substitute teach in Calgary. That would expose you to the schools, and often substitutes enter the system after becoming known to the various administrators who do the hiring. This would also familiarize you to different levels, Canadian styles of teaching and various communities within Calgary.

You could also apply to the school districts surrounding the city and commute daily or weekly as needed. You may also surprise yourself and learn to enjoy some of the smaller communities. The benefit of small communities is that you and your family will be welcomed and you can be involved. A small community can be a great place to raise a family. Bigger cities have their benefits as well. You can then commute during weekends and holidays. It may be a sacrifice in the beginning, but it may be easier to get a teaching position in Calgary after you have some teaching experience elsewhere in Alberta. Many employers appreciate flexible teachers.

Q: I am teaching in a school in Edmonton. My administration often drops into my class to watch for a few minutes. I am not used to the administration coming into my class. I don't know if I am in trouble. Is it something common in Canada?

A: One important responsibility of the administration in Alberta is to support and help teachers, especially new teachers. The administration must supervise and support the teachers at their school. They will often have suggestions and tips to help you. Students are generally familiar with the administrators being around. The administrators will support you as well as provide feedback before they evaluate your teaching performance. You should become comfortable with their presence—they are a big help to you.

Alberta teachers work under a program of ongoing supervision. Because administrators are familiar with the work being done, they do not need to do frequent evaluations. They evaluate only in the first years, promotion years or when they feel the need for a closer look.

Q: I heard that teachers work with a letter of authority. I don't know what it is and if I can teach with it?

A: The Alberta Education Registrar in charge of certification will determine if you are eligible for a temporary letter of authority while you finish courses required to upgrade your international qualifications to meet the requirements of Alberta certification. A letter of authority allows you to teach while you are completing your courses. This might happen if finding teachers in your specialty (a language, a trade or a specialized subject) is difficult. A school board first hires you and then they request a letter of authority from the department of education. You cannot make the request yourself. Once your qualifications are met, you must apply for interim certification.

Q: Do my years of teaching experience overseas count for consideration in Alberta?

A: Generally, experience overseas will not be considered when it comes to years of experience. If you have been teaching with a requirement for Alberta certification or its equivalent, some of your most recent years of experience may be recognized as per the recent agreement with the provincial government.





The Alberta
Teachers' Association