

North America warms to CELTA challenge

But candidates should beware of CELTA imitations

GERALDINE FAULKNER

reports

INSTITUTIONS IN the US and especially Canada are increasingly interested in becoming CELTA centres, according to Helen Potter, CILTS Project Assistant at UCLES in Cambridge, UK.

A number of factors lie behind this trend. Americans are becoming aware both of the possibility of working overseas, and of the CELTA's reputation abroad. And they are turning to the CELTA before taking an MA to get some classroom experience before deciding whether to pursue a career in TESL.

"Another reason for this increase in interest is the Internet," says Clint Boswell, Head Teacher Trainer of St Giles Language Center in San Francisco. "We have seen a sharp rise in enquiries from people who found information on the CELTA while investigating overseas employment opportunities on the Internet."

CELTA Centers in Canada are based at Columbia College (Burnaby, British Columbia), Kwantlen University College (Vancouver, British Columbia), International Language Institute Halifax (Nova Scotia), Concordia University (Quebec) and Language Studies Canada (Toronto).

Alex Rossi and Gerald Bagge, CELTA trainers and administrators at Language Studies Canada, say there is little rising demand in Canada in the Public Schools Sector (State), as they tend to favour their own TESL Certificates. "Increasingly though," they add, "there are people with the CELTA who are managing to penetrate into that field."

They also acknowledge the recognition that CELT-qualified teachers receive when they go to Korea and Japan, where it is "increasingly recognised as the certificate of choice along with the Trinity."

South of the border, English International Inc in San Francisco - along with the Center for English Studies/International House (New York) Coast Language Academy (Portland, Oregon and Santa Monica,



NETSEARCH:
US colleges say
Internet
sponsors
CELTA interest

California). St Giles College (San Francisco) and Georgetown University (Washington).

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Jeff Mohamed of English International Inc. says that demand is growing as Americans become "more aware of the possibility of working abroad and of the fact that more overseas schools require a TEFL certificate - and more specifically require the CELTA; many language schools in the USA/Canada now prefer the CELTA to an MA in TESL."

Bruce Sharpe of the CES/IH agrees, adding: "There is no other reputable short course in the US."

Helen Potter, CILTS Project Assistant at UCLES, says the detailed CELTA syllabus and transparency of course guidelines are a key attrac-

tion for centres.

All courses have a minimum of two course tutors. Maximum numbers on North American courses vary from 12 to 15 persons and potential candidates should be aware early on that the course is very intensive.

CELTA trainers Alex Rossi and Gerald Bagge of Language Studies in Canada say it make take some time for the full value of the course to sink in.

"Immediately after the course, candidates are generally too tired mentally and physically to know what they've experienced," they say. "But after a few weeks they can see that they have learnt an incredible amount in a very short time."

Feedback from Jeff Mohamed's trainees includes the comment that although the course is "very rigorous and challenging, compared with MA courses, law degrees, medical school, etc" it is not only the most useful and practical "education or training" course they have ever done, but it helps them get a good job where they wanted to work and helps them do the job well!

Anyone thinking of taking a course is offered this advice from Alex Rossie and Gerald Bagge: "Don't commute long distances, don't expect to hold down your part-time job and don't be afraid of the tutors - they're there to help."

Helen Potter of UCLES advises that potential CELTA candidates in the US and Canada should beware of courses advertised as "CELTA equivalent" training and Certification which implies that "Cambridge/RSA" and "CELTA" are generic names rather than specific to courses approved by UCLES.

The final word comes from candidates who have taken CELTA. Their verdict: "It's worth every penny, even though there is no family life and it means coffee, coffee, and more coffee!"