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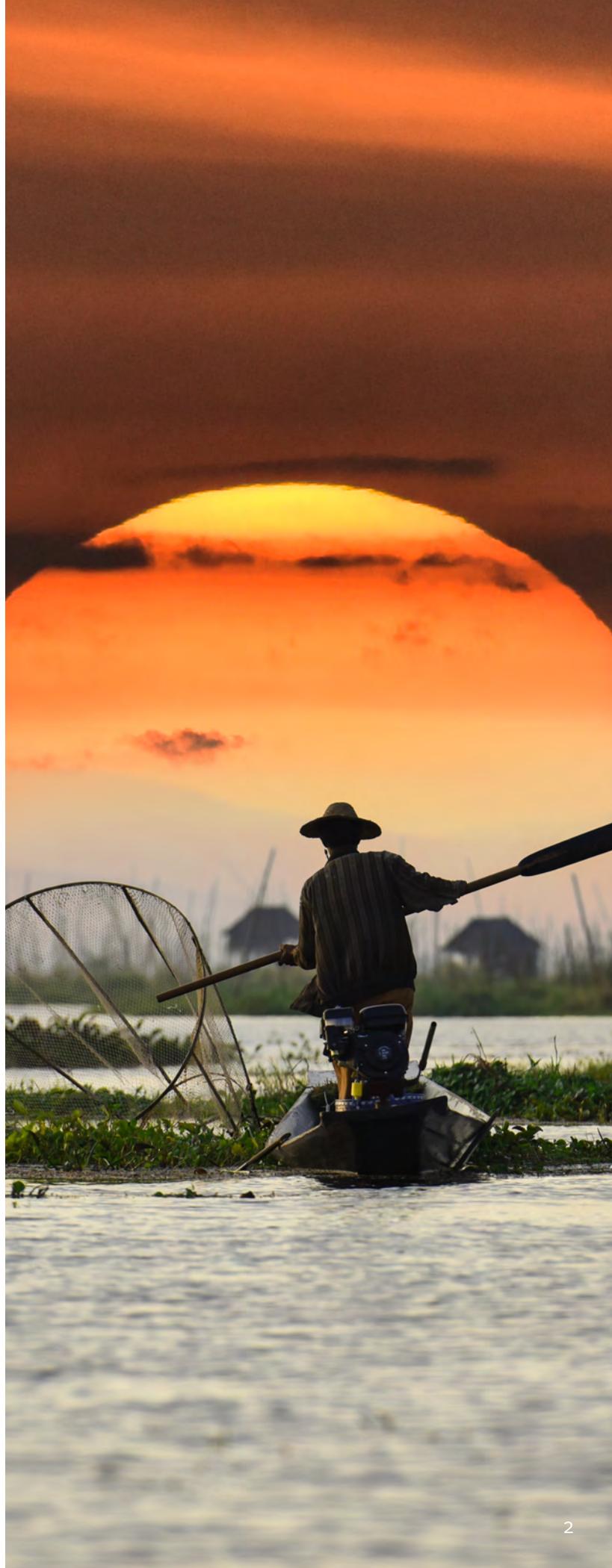
TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

**TEFL**  
**THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE**

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# INTRODUCTION

So, you want to know about TEFL, and teaching abroad? Lucky for you, the folks behind CIEE TEFL are going to let you in on the skinny of all things TEFL and what you need to know before taking the plunge.

Teaching English as a foreign language is an experience of a lifetime, whether you fulfill a five-month or five-year contract. With certification in hand, you'll decide where you want to go: Thailand, Vietnam, Chile, Spain, or any other country you can think of, the world is your oyster (yes, yours!)

It's true what Dr. Seuss said: "Oh, the places you'll go ..."— then go places! Your TEFL certification is your one-way ticket to freedom of travel. And getting paid to do it. You can be a recent graduate, on a career hiatus or shift, or even a retiree. The good thing about your TEFL certificate is it never expires. Nope, never.

Want to explore the world, immerse yourself in different cultures, and make money? A TEFL certification gives you the ability to educate others, while educating yourself. Take it from those who have done it.

“ I love you Thailand ... the people, the beaches, the food, the coconuts, the taxis, the hot weather, the peace, and the chaos. Thank you for changing my life in the best ways possible. Thank you for making this part of my “choose your own adventure” story my favorite part yet. ”

—Amy S., Teach in Thailand



# WHAT'S TEFL?

Let's start with the acronyms, shall we? We know it's confusing.

A TEFL Certification is an academic course that certifies you to Teach English as a Foreign Language. Many acronyms are used when discussing Certification programs. TEFL, TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages), and TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) all mean essentially the same thing, but the value of the certification is determined by the number of hours, content and pedagogy of the course, quality of instruction, and the accreditation.

As you can imagine, there are many other acronyms you will quickly become familiar with as you start your TEFL Certification. Don't worry, we've spelled them out for you!

## **EFL: English as a Foreign Language**

Typically refers to English language instruction in a non-English-speaking country (your students may be referred to as EFL students)

## **TEFL: Teaching English as a Foreign Language**

## **ELT: English Language Teaching**

Another umbrella term for the entire field

## **ELL: English Language Learner**

Any non-native speaker who is learning English (your students may be referred to as ELLs.)

## **ESL: English as a Second Language**

Typically refers to English language instruction in an English-speaking country (your students may be referred to as ESL students.)

## **TESL: Teaching English as a Second Language**

## **TESOL: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages**

The umbrella term for the field of teaching nonnative speakers of English in any context

“The course material is informative and broken down in a way that makes the course great for visual, audio, and kinesthetic learners.”

– Paris M., preparing to teach in Thailand





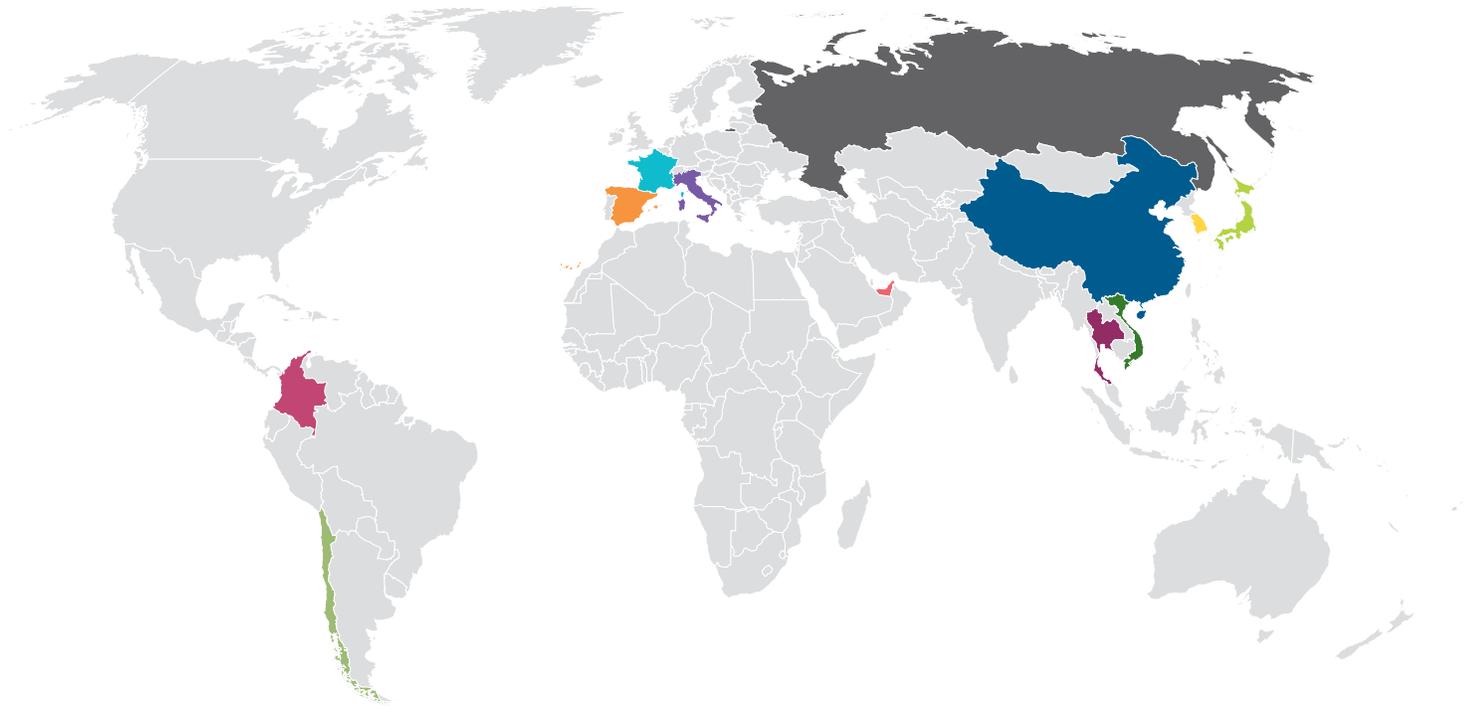
# WHY TEACH

Every year, hundreds of thousands of people move overseas to teach English for an endless number of reasons. We'll name a few for you! Teaching abroad will allow you to gain intercultural skills, travel the world with a purpose, build confidence, boost your résumé, make a difference in students' lives, learn a new language, earn money to pay off student loans, explore teaching, or to simply try something new and exciting.

Whatever your reason setting off on this path, one thing is for certain: teaching English will be an unforgettable and endlessly rewarding experience, both in and out of the classroom.

# WHERE CAN I GO?

With your TEFL certification in hand, the world is your oyster. Examples of popular in-demand TEFL countries include:



Spain

Thailand

Vietnam

China

South Korea

Chile

France

Colombia

Japan

Russia

United Arab Emirates

Italy

# BENEFITS OF A TEFL CERTIFICATION

Those who consider teaching abroad often come to the same crossroad: Should I invest and become TEFL-certified? Experts and English teachers alike will all have slightly different answers to this question. Almost everyone can agree that even for the countries that don't require it, a TEFL certification can always benefit someone headed into a foreign school system.

## Here's how:

### Gives you classroom confidence

A CIEE TEFL certificate benefits both you and your students. It's totally normal and expected to be nervous about moving to a foreign country, standing in front of a class, and teaching a grammar concept that you might not have learned well yourself. Earning a TEFL certificate will put these nerves to rest by giving you the confidence skills you need to rock any teaching position anywhere! Even if you have teaching experience, TEFL is invaluable in preparing you to enter a foreign classroom—because let's face it, no one really knows what they're doing until they get there!



### Resume booster

This is the most straight-forward reason. Many like the fact that they can translate their teach abroad experience to a unique certification on their resume. A TEFL certificate equals an added professional skill that most recent college graduates lack. This course will develop your interpersonal skills, relationship building, cognitive and problem-solving skills, all highly-desirable skills in the workforce, no matter the discipline.

### Opens the door to a global career

As an added bullet on your resume, your TEFL certification can also lend itself to a global career. TEFL is not only a teaching certification but your key to becoming an international citizen. It gives you the training to think and speak cross-culturally, react quickly and think on your feet.

### **It never expires**

Don't want your teach abroad experience to end? Most don't. With your TEFL certification, you can extend your contract, or travel to another country and teach English. Your TEFL certificate is your one-way ticket to paid travel. If a country requires a TEFL certification, you will always be able to teach English there. How about that for job security?

### **Better paying jobs**

In some cases, having a TEFL certification earns you a higher salary. With a TEFL certification, you are automatically more qualified than the average college grad with a bachelor's degree and no foreign experience., and many employers look for that. In a stack of similar resumes, this special credential will make you stand out as a candidate.

### **Opportunity to test the waters**

Maybe you've recently graduated and want to try your hand at a teaching career, but aren't ready to go back to school right away for your education degree. Maybe you are curious if teaching is even right for you. Or maybe you have no idea what you want your career to look like at all! If this is the case, then TEFL is your answer. It's a short-term course that gives you the knowledge you need to succeed, and first hand experience in the classroom as part of your required TEFL practicum. It's the perfect way to give teaching a test-drive without the full commitment.



# CHOOSING A COURSE

Okay, so you've decided on a country — time to get TEFL certified! Some schools might require a TEFL (or TESOL) certification, but beyond that, choosing the right course will still require some thought. Here are your first steps:

## 1. Online or in-person?

Decide if you prefer an on-site or online course. This will be based on your learning environment preferences, finances, or work schedule. An in-person class will typically be more expensive (expect to pay \$1,500 - \$2,500 for a quality course) and requires time and travel commitments. The plus side is that you're getting an immersive, collaborative classroom experience. If you're motivated by face time with an instructor, collaboration with classmates, old-school pen to paper note-taking, then an in-person class is a great option for you.

If you can't spare the time for an immersive in-person course, go for the online course. You'll be able to schedule your coursework around existing commitments, and the tuition will typically cost \$500 - \$1,000 less than an on-site course. Some online courses even have live tutors to instruct you throughout — so you can have the in-person feeling without the in-person price tag.

## 2. Check accreditation

Don't let them fool you! You are in the driver's seat of your TEFL experience, so make sure you are getting the best one possible. A quality TEFL course should be reviewed and accredited by a scholarly or non-affiliated organization. Make sure the TEFL provider can provide a means for you to confirm the accreditation from the relevant entity.

## 3. Verify that the course meets international standards

The TESOL Press has identified 100-120 hours of coursework combined with a minimum of 20 hours of practice teaching as the international standard for TEFL certification classes. If a school requires a certificate, it will recognize these standards and expect applicants to meet them.

## 4. Make sure you get in the classroom

Double check that the course has a practicum, i.e. it requires you to spend time in the classroom with English language learners (ELLs). The practice teaching is a crucial part of your development as a teacher and will give you work experience to present to future employers. Furthermore, it's the very best way to truly experience how teaching works.

## 5. Beware discounts and deals

Avoid courses offering coupons or special deals on websites like Groupon. An accredited course with valuable content, personal instruction, and over 100 hours of coursework is going to have a corresponding tuition for the value. Just like university courses that are a few thousand a pop, a quality TEFL course is going to require an investment.



### **6. Ensure that you'll have guidance, structure, and attention**

Cyberspace can get lonely, so choose a course that connects you to your classmates and tutor. Expect to be able to contact your instructor easily and receive individual feedback on your work just like you would in an in-person class. You should also scope out what online platform a course uses. Will it allow you to save resources and chat with other students? The beauty of an online course is that you can take it anywhere, but it shouldn't cancel out the human touch that comes along with teaching and learning.

### **7. Connect with a live course rep**

Even if you can get the answers to all of the questions above on the website, reach out. Whether it's by phone or email, expect to be able to chat with someone about course structure, content, and requirements before enrolling. You'll feel a lot better about taking a class when you know there is adequate support. The representative should be able to describe class size, tutor involvement and instruction, and course length.

### **8. Ask about alumni opportunities and assistance**

A TEFL course should be your ticket into the EFL community, so make sure your course has ways for you to network, get job assistance, and stay connected even after you've finished the course and received your certificate.



# PROS OF A PRACTICUM

All teachers can describe two very important moments in their career: the first time they stood in front of a class, and the first time they succeeded as a teacher. Practicum takes CIEE TEFL trainees beyond the theory and into an authentic learning environment where you can finally put what you've learned to the test. Don't worry, we won't take off the training wheels until you are 100% ready.

So why is practicum so essential? Let's break it down:

## **1. It's required by many schools abroad and at home.**

The international standard for TEFL certificates around the world is 100-120 hours of coursework combined with at least 20 hours of practicum with ELLs. A credential that complies with these requirements will give you flexibility as an applicant and world traveler.

## **2. It helps you find your footing.**

If you've ever taught before, you'll know firsthand that this is a hands-on profession. Acquiring the knowledge and skills that TEFL will provide is one thing, but applying them is another. Practicum allows you to get your feet wet, work out the nerves, and see what teaching English is all about. It's a safe space for you to learn, grow, and gain confidence before starting a paid position.

## **3. See your coursework in action**

You'll work hard on your TEFL assignments for a good reason. Practicum helps you to apply concepts and approaches used in EFL classrooms around the world.

## **4. It's crucial for professional development**

Your course hours should give you an idea of where you want to go next professionally. This is a time for you to establish career goals whether it's exploring a specific area of English, getting to know different learning styles, or working with a certain age group.

# CIEE TEFL CERTIFICATION COURSES

CIEE accredited and uniquely designed TEFL courses prepare you for any classroom, anywhere. TEFL courses are designed to prepare you for the classroom.

## The 411 on CIEE TEFL

- Choose the TEFL certification course that fits your needs (we have something for everyone) this next step in your life is all about YOU.
- Enjoy interactive learning with classmates and tutors in virtual discussion forums, conferences, and chats via computer, tablet, or mobile phone, without the hassle of commuting.
- Complete an innovative course developed by TEFL professionals, academic peers, intercultural experts, and educational programmers—not to mention accredited by the World TEFL Accrediting Commission.
- Become prepared to work in another culture—a skill highly valued in today’s job market.



## Certification courses that fit your needs

### 190-hour Destination TEFL Certification

Spend 11 weeks immersed in the world of TEFL with your online cohorts and expert tutor. In this course, you’ll learn classroom management skills, English language theory, and intercultural competence. Once your online coursework is over, hop on a plane for your Destination TEFL journey and complete your 20 hours of practice teaching in a foreign country! Check out [www.ciee.org/tefl](http://www.ciee.org/tefl) for a comprehensive list of locations.

At the end of your Destination TEFL journey, you'll receive a 190-hour TEFL certificate from CIEE.

Earn a 190-hour TEFL certificate while you gain international experience. After 11 weeks of online coursework, you'll practice what you've learned in a foreign classroom, with 40 hours of classroom instruction from an experienced teacher-trainer, plus 20 hours of observed teaching practice. This course will put stamps in your passport, international teaching and traveling on your horizon, and immersive classroom experience on your resume.

### **150-hour Professional TEFL Certification**

Our 11-week course begins with one week of introductory work followed by 10 weeks of coursework. The majority of the course consists of lessons, reading and exercises that you complete online in the comfort of your home, at your local coffee shop, on the beach—wherever you choose! A tutor will support you throughout the course, providing written and video feedback on assignments and hosting live discussions. You will meet virtually with your tutor once a week for a tutorial, and have any and all questions answered.

One significant advantage of CIEE's 150-hour course is that it includes 20 hours of required practicum teaching, so you will feel completely prepared on your first day of teaching.

CIEE TEFL participants in our 150-hour certification course will also benefit from lifetime job assistance and access to the CIEE alumni network, a vast community of more than 350,000 connected individuals.

### **60-hour Introductory TEFL Certification**

Our introductory course gives you the basic prep you need to succeed as an ESL teacher. You'll have a tutor grading your assignments and six months to complete the course at your own pace. It's a great option if you want to refresh your TEFL skills or learn about TEFL theory, but aren't quite sure about a career in teaching English as a foreign language.

### **30-hour Specialized TEFL Certification**

Become an expert in teaching young learners, teens, or adults with a three-week age specific course. They are great to help you land the type of teaching job you want. If you're already teaching, they will deepen your understanding of age-specific pedagogy.



# JOB ASSISTANCE

Completing a CIEE TEFL Certification grants you access to the extensive CIEE alumni network of over 350,000 people worldwide. 150-hour and Destination TEFL alumni can take advantage of CIEE TEFL's job assistance program, giving you the support you need as you navigate the world of TEFL.

CIEE also has many renowned teach abroad programs, and has helped thousands of participants to secure a job abroad.

Check out CIEE Teach Abroad programs here: [www.ciee.org/teach](http://www.ciee.org/teach).



# LIFE AFTER TEFL

So you're thinking about what's next. Your future. You're a planner and a realist, and understandably grappling with the question:

## **What will I do after teaching English abroad?**

Maybe you fell in love with teaching. Maybe the course made you realize that teaching is not for you. Maybe you like teaching, but only as means to travel. Maybe you are unsure how to transfer your international teaching skills to a job in your home country. Whatever the case, everyone comes to the inevitable “what next?” question after teaching abroad.

The good news is that we are living in a growing global marketplace, and employers are placing even more importance on effective international communication and cultural competence. . As a teacher in a foreign country, you have already proved that you are capable of both. You now have invaluable cultural experience that will help guide your life path and make you stand out on a job or graduate school application. Rest assured that your decision to teach abroad will continue to pay off.

## **Capitalize on your global experiences**

These make great talking points in interviews. Don't underestimate the importance of real-world experience. Aside from teaching students and trying to keep up with the local language, maybe you were solving transportation crises in Thailand, or figuring out how to negotiate with street vendors in China.

What did you personally gain from teaching English in a foreign country? Increased patience, cultural understanding, greater adaptability, a comprehensive worldview, improved communication with others, management and leadership abilities, confidence and independence in unfamiliar environments...and the list goes on! Don't be afraid to mention personal experiences either—this will make you an even more memorable candidate.

## **Brag about your TEFL Certification**

Another resume booster! Maybe you won't be teaching professionally anymore, but that doesn't mean your hard-earned TEFL certification will go to waste. This course helped your professional development, interpersonal skills, relationship building, cognitive and problem-solving ability, and cross-cultural sensitivity. It's all about relating one experience and ability to the next—even lesson planning skills can correlate to project planning for a company.

Never underestimate what you've gained from managing hundreds of students per week in a foreign country. The ability to adapt to new environments can help you in whatever career you choose back home. Or, you may never want the adventure to end! Don't forget your TEFL certificate never expires, and with it there are endless job opportunities abroad—especially if you are an alumni of CIEE.

# PHEW ... I THINK THAT COVERS IT! STILL HAVE QUESTIONS? WANT TO ENROLL? GET IN TOUCH!



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## THE WORLD IS OUR CLASSROOM. JOIN US.

A nonprofit, nongovernmental organization, CIEE has been leading the way in cultural exchange for nearly 70 years. Through the most comprehensive, relevant, and valuable exchange programs available, we provide transformative work and study experiences for both international and American students and professionals—helping participants gain the knowledge and skills necessary to live and work in a globally interdependent and culturally diverse world.

CIEE is designated by the U.S. Department of State as a sponsor of J-1 Exchange Visitor programs.

### **Council on International Educational Exchange**

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