

# Sunshine Language Center

And

Will-Excel TESOL

FAQ

To Our Marketer:

- The answers to these FAQs have been written as though you are giving the answer to a prospective teacher.
- This FAQ list is for your information, and is not to be given out or emailed to prospective teachers.
- See the sample contracts. Each teacher will receive a specific contract when offered a position but unless they request something different in their contract such as more/less hours, the contracts are standard.

Can I teach in other countries?

- Our Certificates and Diplomas are issued by Will-Excel TESOL Institute (Canada) and our TESOL courses exceed international standards of TESOL Course Instruction and Teaching Practice. Therefore, you can use your TESOL Diploma or TESOL Certificate to apply for jobs around the world. Our graduates have taught across Asia, Europe, Middle East, the Americas, and Oceania.

What are the TESOL course fees?

- The total cost of the TESOL course is US\$1500 for self-funded participants, US\$200 for sponsored participants.

Where will I live?

- You will have free, furnished apartments throughout your month of TESOL training in Harbin which includes free utilities and Internet. The apartments may be shared, with a private bedroom during the training month. You will have a private apartment through your teaching term but are responsible for your own utilities.

How much will I pay in Utilities?

- Combined: Water+Gas+Electric ~140-200/month
- Internet ~100/month
- Mobile Phone ~20-100/month

What will I eat?

- Throughout the first month of training of the TESOL course, Will Excel will provide lunch and dinner on site, free of charge. Of course you can choose to prepare your own meals at home or eat at local restaurants.

What will my healthcare be?

- We do not provide medical coverage during your first month of training of the TESOL course. If you want health coverage during this month, you can arrange to either purchase travel insurance from home or Chinese health insurance once you arrive in Harbin. A year of coverage through PingAn insurance in China costs approximately US\$100.
- Sunshine offers emergency medical coverage for all teachers. This covers hospital visits. Teachers pay for medications. Pre-existing medical conditions are not covered. Teachers who have ongoing medical issues can still apply, but will need to discuss the details of the issue(s) before being given an offer.

What is the state of healthcare in China?

- Medical care is good in China but staying in hospitals for any length of time is not very comfortable. Dental and vision care are very cheap. Several Sunshine teachers have chosen to get a lot of dental work done, while in Harbin, for a fraction of the Western cost. Prescription glasses are also a fraction of the Western cost.

How do I arrange my flight?

- Harbin has direct international flights from Russia, South Korea, Japan and Los Angeles. But most other flights connect through Beijing or Shanghai. If you're coming from the northern hemisphere don't bother checking Hong Kong or Shanghai flights since it costs nearly as much to get from there to Harbin as it costs to get there from the West. Coming through the southern hemisphere, most flights connect through Singapore, Hong Kong and Shanghai.

Which vaccinations do I need?

- The Chinese government does not require any vaccinations. Many travelers get immunizations against tetanus, typhoid and diphtheria (a common shot that people get when they travel almost anywhere) plus some people get a Hep-B vaccination since the disease is fairly common in China. However, most people get it done after arrival in China, if they want it. However, before you can get a working visa or a work resident permit, you must have a health check. They check your general health but are primarily checking for Hep-B, TB, HIV and Syphilis.

How much money should I bring?

- It's easy to live on US\$300 a month. Some people spend much more than necessary because they frequently go out to western-style bars and restaurants. We recommend that you bring at least US\$500 as it may be two months before you receive your first salary. We recommend that any money you bring with you be in US cash. Some bank cards can be used to make withdrawals from your Western account but not deposits. If you bring travelers checks, you will get a slightly lower exchange rate. Basically, everything is done in cash in China. Therefore, Sunshine pays teachers in cash as well. Recently e-cash is becoming more common so once you're settled, you can get your phone set up to deal in one of the local e-cash options.

Will I Pay Chinese Income Tax?

- No. The salary you are offered by Sunshine is net of any taxes.

How can I get a working visa?

- With a job offer, you will enter China on a work visa. We will let you know

which documents you need to prepare for your work visa invitation letters. After we've received those and obtained the invitations, you apply for your work visa. Once you begin your teaching term, you will need to convert your work visa into a work resident permit. The resident permit gets renewed once per year and lets you exit and enter China freely as long as it's valid.

- If you come to China to study Will-Excel TESOL's course, without a job offer, you will enter on a tourist visa, you will need to get invitation letters from an employer once you've chosen one. You will use these letters to apply for a work visa. This must be done outside of China. Many teachers do this in Thailand or another nearby country.
- If coming on a tourist visa, get a 90 day single entry one. The multiple entry visas are only good for 30-60 days following each entry. Visas can be obtained in a couple days if you go to the embassy/consulate in person but takes weeks if you are mailing it in through a visa service.

What should I bring?

- There are no really essential items to bring since almost everything can be bought locally. 95% of new arrivals over pack. By the time people are ready to return home, they have bought so much that they leave most of their original belongings behind. Most Westerners notice a small food item or brand that they can't locate. New shoes may be a worthwhile thing to bring. Good shoes in China are no cheaper than in the West, the quality is often a problem and large sizes may be hard to find. See Harbin Information on our web site (right menu) for more packing ideas.

Should I bring my own computer?

- Bring a laptop/tablet if you have one. You'll find it useful, or you can buy one here for about the same price as in the West. Don't bring a full desk-top computer. They are too bulky. If you are planning on making China your home for an extended period, you can leave your monitor and case at home and only pack the internal cards. A new case and monitor will have you up and running here at little cost. You can also buy a full desktop system here for about the same price as in the West. Chromebooks won't work without a VPN so set this up before coming.

What can I expect upon arrival?

- Members of Sunshine and Will Excel TESOL's management teams will be on hand to pick you up at Harbin Airport with a private driver to bring you to your accommodations.
- At the earliest convenient time, a staff member will meet with you to give you a neighborhood tour, showing you where to shop, take care of daily living needs, etc.

What kind of students will I teach?

- All schools value flexible TESOL teachers since they are able to effectively deal with wide ranges of student ages and levels. Therefore, during your month of TESOL training you will gain experience with students of a variety of ages and levels.
- The exact type of students that you have during your teaching term will depend on your employer. (Details provided with employment offer.)
- Classes mostly focus on oral English or using oral methods to teach underlying structure. Students in China tend to learn vocabulary and grammar in their regular classes but cannot use what they have learned. This is the primary focus of our TESOL course.
- How will I get to class?
- Teachers live near one of Sunshine's branches (typically a 10-15 minute walk or less), where they likely have the majority of their classes. Sunshine provides transportation to and from other branches and any off-site classes.

Will I have course material to teach from?

- Yes. Text books and additional materials are provided. We also encourage teachers to blend current events and appropriate activities into classes whenever possible. Some classes have a very specific curriculum to follow. This curriculum must be completed each class before any additional materials or activities can be added.

Who will I report to?

- You will report to Sunshine's Director of Studies (DOS) and Assistant Directors (ADOS), who oversees the development, evaluation, and training of Sunshine's teachers. One unique benefit to Sunshine's management is that it is made up completely of foreigners, who just like you, were interested in starting a new career in China, and who have over time been promoted into their current positions.

What is Sunshine's dress code?

- You are expected to dress professionally. That does not mean that you must wear a suit and tie or a dress for every class. You must look appropriate for an office environment. You are expected to wear at least "business casual / smart casual." However, making a good first impression is important. You should come to China with at least one business formal outfit.

Will I have any office work to do?

- If all of your teaching time is not assigned, then Sunshine may assign an office task during the extra hours.
- If you take and pass Sunshine's Senior Teacher tests then you will have 2 hours/week of office duties.
- Typical office duties consist of small admin. duties, organizing special events such as English Corners, being responsible for some aspect of the school such as updating a bulletin board, working on designing tests, developing or distributing questionnaires, etc. They may also include doing marketing presentations or attending outside events to promote the school. If a teacher has a special ability such as ad design, computer skills, etc. they may be asked to use office hours on related tasks.

What will my schedule be like?

- The first four weeks of the TESOL course will be an extremely busy, full-time intensive study term and you will teach your first classes early in your course, while also observing experienced teachers.
- During your teaching term, most teachers have heavy weekends and teach most evenings. Therefore, daytime during the week is often free time.

What type of support can I expect?

- We recognize the challenges that come with acclimating to a new environment while learning a new skill. You will receive support, advice, and specialized China training from Will Excel TESOL and Sunshine's management team, Assistant Directors of Studies, Senior Teachers, and foreign teachers throughout your first few weeks.
- Will Excel and Sunshine deal with police, hospitals, etc. on teachers' behalf, in rare emergency situations. If you need to visit a hospital, Sunshine will arrange a driver to take you, a staff member to translate for you, and payment for the visit.
- In order to ensure a good start to your teaching term, a member of Sunshine's management team will meet 1 on 1 during your first week of full time teaching to review basic policies, curriculum, pacing, and other things that you have learned during your TESOL training. Assistant Directors of Studies are available at each branch for training questions, teaching advice, and other support.

Who will I work with?

- Sunshine employs teachers of a wide variety of backgrounds, ethnicities, nationalities, and ages. Our teachers range from 22 to 55 years old, have worked in many different careers before arriving in China, and have used their own unique talents and experiences in their journey to become unforgettable teachers. Our teachers come from the United States, Canada, the UK, South Africa, New Zealand, Australia, and Ireland. Sunshine teachers also have varying hobbies that they pursue in their spare time, including painting, Dungeons and Dragons, playing in bands, investing in cryptocurrency, filmmaking, writing, gaming, etc.

What will I do in my spare time?

- Harbin is a large city with the same conveniences and entertainment venues available in the West: pool halls, bowling alleys, gyms, swimming pools, movie theatres that show some of the biggest blockbuster movies in English, and a few bars that are frequented by many of the local Ex-pats. For entertainment at home, you can download western TV shows or stream movies. Once you have settled in for your teaching term, you can sign up for classes in Chinese painting, calligraphy, Kung Fu, Tai Chi, etc.

How can I get around Harbin?

- You can easily get around by bus or taxi. Many teachers choose to take taxis regularly, while others learn the bus system and save money on travel. Map apps such as Baidu maps or Apple maps show you the correct buses to take from your location, as well as the correct stop to get off. Buses cost 1 yuan per trip, while taxis cost 9 and upwards, depending on distance.
- The Harbin subway currently has 2 lines, with more being completed over the next several years. You can only take the subway to/from a limited part of the city, but is the option most prefer when available, as it isn't affected by weather or traffic. The subway costs 2-4 yuan per ticket, depending on the number of stops you are travelling through. Tickets can be purchased from self-service kiosks at the subway station in English.
- Several teachers own cars and drive. However, driving in China is a bit different and it can take a while to get used to, so it is not recommended for new teachers to immediately buy a vehicle after arriving. Assuming you have a driver's license at home, you will still need to pass a written driving test to obtain a Chinese driver's licence.

Can I study Chinese while working?

- Yes. Sunshine offers free Mandarin lessons with a native speaking instructor once or twice weekly, depending on the teacher's preference. You also have several options available to study at the many different Mandarin language centers around Harbin. Because the majority of your teaching will be on weekday evenings and weekends, several teachers have successfully completed Mandarin courses with little to no conflict in their schedules.

### Can I get by in English?

- The number of fluent English speakers in China is quite low. Even in more international cities such as Shanghai or Beijing, only about 5% of residents have a good command of English. This number is much lower in other cities, such as Harbin. All teachers are urged to learn Survival Chinese, and use the Mandarin study resources they are provided upon arrival.
- You can learn enough “Survival Mandarin” in your first few weeks to do simple things like buying things in a shop or taking a taxi. Upon arrival, you will be provided with an address card with your home branch, as well as the other Sunshine branches, printed in Chinese for a taxi driver to read, as well as a phone number to call in case verbal confirmation is needed for directions.

### Where will I live?

- All Sunshine teachers are provided with a free, furnished, private apartment, located within walking distance to your home branch. Teachers can expect their walk to work to take less than 15 minutes. All of Sunshine’s apartments are located in developed areas of the city with close access to shops, supermarkets, restaurants, and other points of interest.

### Will I have internet access?

- During the month of TESOL training, you will have wi-fi Internet access in your apartment and at our offices. Internet is available everywhere, often free in shops, etc. You will pay for your own Internet at home.
- A VPN allows users in China to access sites such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. which are blocked in China. Teachers who wish to subscribe to a VPN service are urged to do so before arrival, as many VPN services’ home pages are blocked in China, which therefore makes subscribing a challenge.
- Wifi is widely available in Harbin. From the large shopping centers to the smaller ‘hole in the wall’ shops and restaurants, it is likely that you’ll be able to connect to the internet on your phone or device when going out. Harbin also has very good 4G coverage for when you’re on the go and can’t connect to wifi. Data is included with prepaid phone credit, but you can also buy data packages



separately if you use more than the average person.

How can I use a phone in China?

- Mobile phones are widely available in Harbin, with a wide variety of options and prices. Those who wish to bring their own phone should ensure that it is unlocked to accept a SIM card. A SIM card is what allows the phone to communicate with the provider's network. You will have an option on providers and plans, such as China Mobile. You can expect to pay about 30-100 RMB per month, for your phone service. All services are prepaid.
- Any time you run out of credit, your phone will not be able to make calls, and you will receive a message from the provider letting you know that you need to make payment. This can be done at the provider locations, many small shops, and online. Once a teacher arrives, they are urged to get a SIM card as soon as possible, and give their contact details to management so they can be contacted for urgent issues.

What are the holidays?

- There are two 5-14 day long national holidays each year, in February and October. There are also several other single-day holidays during the year.

What places can I travel to?

- There are many scenic locations within a few hours of Harbin including summer getaway spots and winter ski hills.
- Within an overnight train ride from Harbin: Beijing, Dalian (Seaside), or BeiDaiHe (Old section of Great Wall).
- China is a big and diverse country. You may take advantage of the 2 long national holidays each year for extended trips.

Is Harbin a safe place to live?

- Harbin is a very safe city with little violent crime. Like most places, some bars have bad reputations. You may hear of an occasional pickpocket.

Is it possible to 'Settle Down' in Harbin?

- Many of our teachers have been in Harbin for over a decade, have bought apartments, are married, and have children. Several Teachers have saved enough from their salary to make a down payment to buy an apartment.
- Many long-term Sunshine teachers have chosen to buy an apartment. Typical apartments can range from 300,000 to 1,000,000. A single teacher can save for a 20-30% down payment in 1-3 years. The apartment bonus, which Sunshine pays to teachers who provide their own apartments, will cover all or most of your mortgage payment.

Why should I earn my TESOL certificate abroad?

- Living abroad is an important aspect of learning to teach abroad and teaching experience with real language learners is required to assimilate the materials that you are studying in your input sessions.
- Many school managers have told us that newly arrived teachers from other TESOL courses seem as though they have not really taken a TESOL training course because they are not prepared to start teaching classes. This is because their TESOL courses didn't include real teaching experience.
- In fact, most elements of learning how to teach can only be learned after you teach your first couple classes. So, if you study for weeks or months from texts and classes but have not yet taught real language learners, your time studying TESOL will not be well spent.
- Just as a rocket can only be guided after it's launched, a TESOL teacher can only begin to really learn after he/she has started teaching.
- This is why it is not only important to take a TESOL course abroad, but to choose a TESOL course that includes substantial teaching practice with real language learners.

Why should I take the Will-Excel TESOL course?

- You earn a salary while you earn your TESOL Diploma or TESOL certificate.
- When you finish our TESOL course you'll have over 500 hours teaching experience, beginner-intermediate Mandarin, and your TESOL Diploma or TESOL Certificate.
- You would be wasting your time and money studying a TESOL course that gives little if any real teaching experience.
- Our initial TESOL training month includes the best TESOL course available plus: free food, free accommodations, and free Mandarin lessons.

I haven't studied grammar in a long time? Is that a problem?

- You already have a superior understanding of grammar. You use it everyday when you speak.
- We'll teach you everything you need to know in order to teach grammar to all

levels of students.

Can I get a job without a degree?

- The rules and loopholes for teachers without degrees are regularly changing. Therefore, we'll explain your options when you apply.

What opportunities are there for me after the TESOL course?

- Many teachers stay with Sunshine for many years. With these extensions come more income and other benefits.
- Sunshine also offers teachers the opportunity for promotions to Senior Teacher and Assistant Director of Studies, which gives teachers valuable experience in managing and overseeing projects that benefit the school, mentoring, and developing leadership skills which will strengthen your resume for any line of work. Teachers who wish to become a Senior Teacher must pass a test of Grammar, Survival Chinese, and Office Guidelines. Former Senior Teachers and ADOS have gone on to take management positions at other schools or international companies in China and abroad.
- Teachers with at least 2 years teaching experience are generally offered better salaries and prospects from employers throughout the world, and look favorably at those who spent those 2 years at the same job, as this shows that they were able to develop as an educator and employee in a particular system. Therefore, it is recommended to gain at least 2 years of initial teaching experience before applying to other cities in China, or other countries.

What if I need to Cancel my Contract Early?

- Your contract has a clause for either party to give early termination notice. If a teacher were to leave without giving the required notice then their resident permit will not be able to be transferred to a new employer in China.

What is sponsorship?

- This means Sunshine pays Will-Excel TESOL all of your TESOL tuition fees except your \$200 registration fee.
- Many teachers also take part in Will-Excel's TESOL course under the self-funded option.

I do not qualify for sponsorship. Can I still participate in the TESOL course?

- Yes. Providing you pass the application screening process, you can participate in Will-Excel's TESOL course through our self-funded option.

What is the TESOL Self-funded Option?

- The self-funded option is the same as the sponsored option in that it includes a 160-hour TESOL certification course, free accommodations throughout the course (accommodations may be shared), free meals (lunch and dinner), transportation (when applicable), 20 hours of Mandarin Chinese classes, and additional Mandarin home study materials.
- Self-funded participants are responsible for paying their own tuition fees (US\$1500). Self-funded participants are issued a TESOL certificate upon completion of the first month of training. These teachers can upgrade this TESOL certificate to a TESOL Diploma after they have taught 500 hours for which we have received evaluations through their employer. As it is the teacher's responsibility to choose their own employer, they may apply to any schools with which they would like to work.

What is the difference between Will-Excel's TESOL certificate and the TESOL Diploma?

- Will-Excel TESOL issues both government accredited TESOL Certificates and TESOL Diplomas. Our TESOL Diploma signifies that you have not only completed the 160-hour TESOL training course, but also have a substantial amount of TESOL teaching practice.
- A Will-Excel TESOL certificate is awarded once you have completed the 160-hour TESOL training in Harbin and your TESOL tuition fees have been paid in full. TESOL Diplomas are issued once you have taught 500 hours for which we have received your evaluations through your employer.

Where do your graduates go on to teach?

- Will-Excel TESOL graduates go on to teach in many cities throughout China and countries throughout the world. Some of these international locations include: The European Union, Japan, South Korea, Turkey, UAE, Saudi Arabia, USA, Vietnam.
- Regardless of where you want to teach, Will-Excel TESOL Certificates and TESOL Diplomas are recognized world-wide via our reputation and government accreditation.

Steps to Apply:

- To apply for Will-Excel's TESOL program, go to [WillExcelTESOL.com](http://WillExcelTESOL.com)
- If you are already TESOL certified, send the following materials to

[Dos.Sunshine@outlook.com](mailto:Dos.Sunshine@outlook.com)

- Scan of passport main page
  - Resume
  - Recent photo
  - Scans of degrees/certificates
- Renew your passport if it's expiring soon, as China won't issue a visa in a passport without at least 6 months left before it expires.
  - If you do not have a passport, apply for one now as it may take 8 weeks to receive it. None of your visa invitation paperwork can start without it.