

Teacher Training

LSI Portsmouth endeavors to provide our students with the highest quality of teaching possible. All our teachers are CELTA-qualified or equivalent. Many of our teachers undertake a DELTA or Masters in TEFL and Linguistics during their time here, and we actively encourage and support them to do so. We have a year-round training and observation programme devised and led by DELTA-qualified teachers and teacher-trainers.

As a school, LSI Portsmouth commits a great deal of time and resources to staff training, and we are proud of the extent and quality of our training programme. Training takes place in the following ways:

Induction and Initial Training

When a new teacher is employed by LSI Portsmouth, they are given an initial induction, in which they are introduced to the procedures of the school, the resources, and timetabling of lessons. They are assigned a mentor for the first three weeks, who is on hand to provide advice on teaching ideas, help with finding resources, and so on. We also schedule paid-for peer observations for new teachers before they start teaching, or in their first week or two.

General English CPD Workshops

LSI Portsmouth has an extensive programme of in-service training. We hold regular General English workshops, generally every fortnight, which are open to all teachers, on a range of topics. These workshops are generally given by the members of the teacher-training team, but experienced teachers who would like to give a workshop are encouraged to do so, and supported with paid time out of class to prepare. Where appropriate, copies of the slides and handouts are made available on the common T-drive, as a hard copy and also made available digitally through the teacher's WhatsApp group, so that teachers who may have missed the workshop can access the material. Hard-copy and computerised versions of these workshops (available from "LSI Help") are accessible to all staff and many of the workshops are also recorded on DVD, copies of which are available in the 3rd floor teachers' room. At the start of each training cycle (for instance, from January to June), we consult with teachers about what they would like to see on the workshop programme, and try to incorporate as many of their suggestions as we can into the programme. We also ask for workshop suggestions in the individual appraisals of GE teachers. Where possible, we try to invite one or two guest speakers a year to contribute to the programme. Recently, we have had two guest speakers from the MA in Applied Linguistics and TESOL programme at the University of Portsmouth.

Exam Training Courses

LSI Portsmouth regularly runs in-house exam training courses for teachers who are new to either IELTS or Cambridge Exam teaching. Both courses have been written, and are delivered by, the teacher-training team. For IELTS, we provide a one-week (22.5 hours) course, which helps to familiarise teachers with the format of the exam, ideas and strategies for teaching it, material and timetabling. Similarly, for Cambridge exams, there is a 10-hour paid introductory training course for teachers new to teaching Cambridge preparation courses. These courses are also followed by paid-for observations of experienced exam teachers.

Executive Staff Training and Workshops

Executive staff training and workshops take place throughout the year and focus on areas including appropriate teaching methodology for 1:1 and small group contexts and materials content development for intensive professional courses. Staff development is a key priority and our aim is to ensure that the teachers are kept abreast of the latest materials, resources and developments appropriate to the courses range of Executive courses that are available.

Pre-Sessional Staff Training and Workshops

All Pre-Sessional teachers, before teaching on the course, are given 3-5 days paid training depending on level of Pre-Sessional experience and familiarity with the school. The course covers the purpose of our Pre-Sessional courses, an analysis of typical student profiles and needs, rationale behind the course design and schemes of work, familiarisation with assessments and standards required, training on referencing practices, feedback strategies and techniques, and administrative procedures. Where possible, teachers are also encouraged to complete at least one peer observation. The initial training is supported with a detailed Tutors' Handbook which is issued to all teachers.

Once the training has been completed, new teachers are assigned a mentor to help them for the first three weeks of the course. In addition, daily informal meetings with the DOS and the ADOS and a weekly meeting which includes discussion with each group's teachers, ensure that teachers are given extensive support and guidance.

In addition to the initial training, regular Pre-Sessional workshops, led by the DOS, the ADOS or a member of the teaching team, provide opportunities for the team to share areas of personal expertise and experience with each other and to promote best practice. This is further supported by a teachers' group on Edmodo, our online learning forum used by Pre-Sessional teachers and students, which enables teachers to share articles, videos, ideas and worksheets.

Formal Observations: General English

Each teacher is observed at least once in a contract year by a member of the teacher-training team. It is common to follow up an observation with one or two more, in order to help the teacher work on the points raised in the initial observation. Detailed two-way feedback takes place as a matter of course. In many cases, a senior teacher or academic manager works with a particular teacher over a period of several weeks or months, undertaking a series of observations with a developmental focus. We have found that this approach works well in helping less experienced teachers to develop in a positive and constructive atmosphere.

If a teacher has received complaints from students, the teacher-trainers try to work with the teacher to deal with the issues raised. Sometimes this may involve several observations.

Towards the end of the contract year these observations are followed by appraisals between a member of the General English management team and the General English teachers. It is at this time that ideas for future staff workshops and training are also discussed and planned.

Formal Observations: Executive

As with the General English observations, these take place at least once during a contract year. They can take the form of developmental observations (as outlined above) and drop-in observations with relevant feedback to teachers provided by the Executive DOS and senior support team.

Following on from this, appraisals take place between the Executive DOS and each member of the Executive team providing a forum for discussion on areas such as:

- general feedback on the year
- observations
- types of teaching
- workshops / In-House Training
- technology in the classroom
- help with specific areas of teaching
- EFL Qualifications in the future
- future plans

These interviews provide valuable insights into teacher interest and prioritising areas for teacher development and training for the coming year.

Formal Observations Pre-Sessional

As with the other departments, observations within the Pre-Sessional department may take the form of either a developmental observation or an evaluative observation, conducted by either the Pre-Sessional DOS, ADOS, or Senior Teacher. Following the observation, the teacher and the observer get together to discuss the lesson and identify points for development.

Peer Observations

LSI Portsmouth encourages peer observation. We timetable peer observations for a variety of reasons. One is for new teachers to the school, to familiarise them with the school and possibly to look at the classes they are going to start teaching. As mentioned above, we also timetable peer observations when teachers are about to teach an exam or Pre-Sessional class for the first time. We also sometimes suggest peer observations as a result of an observation of a teacher – for instance, if in feedback it is clear that the teacher would like to improve a particular aspect of their teaching, we may organise a peer observation of teacher known to be strong in that area. We have our own peer observation form, which we ask the teacher to fill in, keep a copy for themselves, and give a copy to the DOSes.

Appraisals

LSI Portsmouth holds annual appraisals with all teaching staff. These are conducted by the management team, and allow us to identify staff needs and wishes, as well as giving feedback on performance over the year. Informal appraisal reviews may also take place at other times of the year, to see how the teacher is doing.

External Professional Development: EFL Qualifications

At LSI Portsmouth, we encourage our teachers to undertake further training; in particular the Cambridge DELTA course, and the MA in TEFL and Applied Linguistics at Portsmouth University. For the DELTA course, we offer funding of £2000 towards the cost of the IH London Distance DELTA, in return for a commitment from the teacher to work full-time at LSI Portsmouth for two years after the course. We also provide them with an in-house Local Tutor for the duration of the course, who will support the teacher with all aspects of the course. Four LSI Portsmouth teachers have completed the DELTA in this way, and one will complete the course in December 2018. In addition, we support teachers who enrol on the MA in Linguistics at Portsmouth University by being flexible with our timetabling, in order to allow them to combine teaching and part-time study, as well as



offering the support of teachers at the school who have completed the MA in the past, and access to our library of methodology books.

The DELTM

In the last four years, LSI Portsmouth has funded and supported five senior staff through the Trinity Diploma in ELT Management. For the final projects, areas specialised in have included tutorials, observation, staff morale and recruitment videos.

EFL conferences

In order to keep up-to-date with the latest development in EFL, we support attendance at the major EFL conferences in the UK, such as English UK conferences, TEN group conferences and ETP Live.

Refugee Classes

In February 2016, two LSI Portsmouth teachers independently set up weekly free classes for asylum seekers and refugees, in a local community centre, with LSI Portsmouth support for resources. A by-product of this has been that several relatively inexperienced teachers gained the opportunity to teach relatively mixed-level classes with limited resources, which enhanced their teaching at LSI Portsmouth.



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