

# Personal tuition in the UK

The one-to-one market is changing, and two-to-one models or combination courses incorporating group training and personal tuition are just as popular. We report on a range of personal tuition options in the UK.

One-to-one courses have been around for years – some schools offer them as part of their suite of products and other companies specialise in providing private, focused tuition. Programmes are available in a teacher's home or at a school centre; learning in a teacher's home helps intensify the language learning experience because, as Jose Roest at Home Language International points out, "students cannot speak their own language after class."

According to many operators in this sector in the UK, there is a significant rise in the number of language school clients choosing to take a combination of small group and one-to-one courses, which is something that many providers can offer. John Miles at Canterbury Language Training relates, "Now, 80 per cent of our clients include an element of one-to-one in their training."

At St Giles, Jane Wright adds, "We are witnessing more growth in combination courses than in purely one-to-one lessons. As people become more secure with the homogeneity of small groups, they are happy to back this up with one-to-one lessons in order to cover their specialist requirements."

Wright makes the point about specialist needs of one-to-one clients: most indeed have a limited timeframe and particular

learner requirements. Paul Gallina at Southbourne School of English in Bournemouth explains, "One-to-one tuition addresses individual needs in a personalised way that is not possible in a class."

Carmel Engin at Lake School of English in Oxford explains that in her experience, one-to-one clients tend to be "motivated, older learners who know what they are trying to achieve and very-low level learners who need a lot of personal attention and explanation." She agrees that "clients tend to take individual tuition in addition to a group class."

At Lydbury English Centre in Shropshire, Duncan Baker believes that combination courses of one-to-one and group lessons are actually more effective. "Much of real life communication does not take place in a one-to-one situation!" he says. Heather Jackson at Pilgrims English Language Courses in Canterbury reports a similar trend for such courses. "This offers the best of both worlds," she says. "The personal attention of one-to-one plus the benefits of a multinational group."

One group of learners who have tended to favour personalised tuition is business executives who are time-pressed. Kate Hargreaves, Principal of Living Learning English, which is based in Bristol with host teachers all over the UK, points out that executives may also have been away from the classroom environment for many years and prefer a one-to-one option for this reason.

A new target clientele is friends, couples and even parents and children. Baker says that two-to-one tuition for friends or couples is popular "and very cost-effective. We only charge one tuition fee plus accommodation for the second person." Jackie Verrall at English Language Homestays agrees. "Schoolchildren and students like to come with their friends," she reports, "and also couples come as an unusual British holiday. We also find courses beneficial for business English with colleagues."

While all providers listed can cater for two-to-one tuition, only selected providers cater for adults and their child/children. At Intuition Languages, Norman Renshaw reports increasing demand for such courses. He suggests, "This may be down to demographics changing, where there are more one-parent families and it is easier to bring children than leave them at home."

Verrall says that they offer such courses in the school holidays. "It's a new idea, since 2004, but gaining in popularity," she says.

## Selection of programmes available

Location of school	Name of one-to-one provider	Min. length of course	Min. hours tuition per day	Combi. courses available?	Parent/child courses?
Bournemouth	Southbourne School of English	1 week	2	yes	g
Brighton, Eastbourne, London	St Giles	1 week	12.5	yes	no
Canterbury	Canterbury Language Training	1 day	3	yes	no
Canterbury	Pilgrims English Language Courses	req	req	yes	no
Leamington Spa	Heart of England Language School	1 week	1	yes	yes
London	Frances King School of English	1 week	2	yes	g
London	The Terrace English Tuition	1 week	2	yes	yes
Lydbury North	Lydbury English Centre	2 days	req	yes	yes
Oxford	Lake School of English Oxford	2 days	2	yes	no
Portsmouth	Language Specialists International	1 week	2.5	yes	no
Stratford-upon-Avon	Oxford House College	1 week	3	yes	no
various	English Language Homestays	1 week	2	yes	yes
various	Home Language International	2 days	3	no	yes
various	Intuition Languages	3 days	3	yes	yes
various	Living Learning English	4 days	3	no	yes

g one or both catered for in a group req on request



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# Canada's mix

English language schools in Canada experienced mixed fortunes over the past 12 months. BETHAN NORRIS finds out about the strengthening Canadian dollar and increased work rights for international students.

## Work permits for full-time students

One of the most significant events to occur in Canada's international education industry over the last 12 months was the introduction of a nationwide system allowing full-time international students studying for more than six months at tertiary institutions in Canada the chance to work off-campus for up to 20 hours a week (see *Education Travel Magazine*, March 2006, page 53).

This development puts Canada in line with many other popular study destinations, and although the rule is currently not applicable to language students, many in the industry believe the change will have a positive effect across all sectors.

"I think the off-campus work permit [rule] will continue to drive up enrolments in academic and career programmes," says Nadina Dodd from Vancouver Community College International in Vancouver, BC, who adds that some of their student applications for permits have already been successful. "These programmes also feed into our ESL programmes when students need to do a bit of English upgrading so we may also see a slight increase in ESL [enrolments]."

English language students with long-term study plans will also benefit. Mark Herringer from the international recruitment office at Malaspina University College in Nanaimo, BC, says, "It has positively affected our retention rates and will positively impact on our recruitment as word-of-mouth gets out that part-time jobs are plentiful in most locations in Canada."

After what was generally reported to be a good year in 2005, some language schools in Canada point out that the beginning of 2006 saw international enrolments increase with the opening up of new student markets. "Our student numbers are up this year for both adult and teen programmes," confirms Anthony Stille, Director of English School of Canada in Toronto, ONT. "We have had some successful marketing trips to Brazil, Mexico, Korea and Taiwan, and this seems to have had a significant impact on our overall numbers."

Ken Gardner from Vancouver English Centre in Vancouver, BC, also reports a positive 12 months. "Our numbers have increased by approximately 15 per cent over the previous year," he says, adding that they have recently increased their marketing budget and while some student markets, such as Korea, have declined, "they have been replaced by other students from Latin America and the Middle East".

Other schools, however, relate less positive experiences, with George Jasper at the Language Repair Shop in Vancouver, BC reporting that student numbers at the school are "down 10 per cent" on the previous year, largely due to "overseas competition". Gary Gervais from Heartland International English School in Winnipeg, MN, notes that while Mexico has been performing well recently, overall, "the strength of the Canadian dollar has had a negative impact on enrolments".

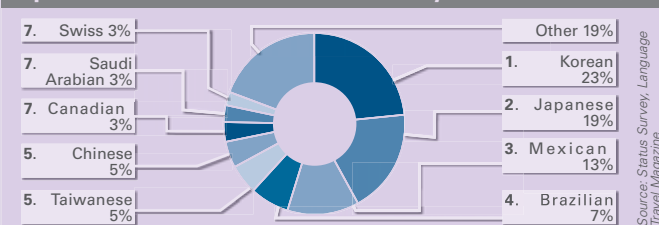
With such diverse factors influencing the market in Canada, it is difficult to highlight unilateral trends. However, Korea and Japan remain key student markets while most schools have noted increased interest from new markets – largely South America and the Middle East, which have been performing well in the last 12 months. "Brazil has exploded as have other markets such as Spain and Saudi Arabia," says Stille. "Canada as an educational destination has received increasing attention in Brazil and the problems with obtaining US visas have helped... Canada." He adds, "Saudi Arabians also seem to be shifting away from the USA towards Canada."

Increasing Canada's profile as a study destination is a priority for the marketing departments of individual schools, but, until recently, Canada's government has been slow to follow the lead of rival destinations such as Australia and the UK and develop an international student recruitment strategy. However, developments such as a welcome change to work rights for full-time international students (see left) and attention to quality standards herald an ongoing change in attitude towards this lucrative industry, and provincial governments have also been increasingly active in marketing their educational opportunities overseas.

"The Ontario government, specifically the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, is making a great commitment and effort in helping the recruitment efforts of post-secondary institutions," says Helen Chadwick from St Lawrence College in Kingston, ONT. "They have committed resources towards show attendance, website development and the creation of collateral materials."



Top student nationalities in Canada by student weeks, 05



In the absence of a national recruitment strategy, however, many private language schools are relying on their own marketing efforts, and keeping a continuing eye on developing new courses, to improve enrolment figures and tap into new markets. Janice Ferguson from Mount Royal College in Calgary, AB, says that the college is to start offering Business English certificate courses at the end of this year, while Barbara Yates from Queens University in Kingston, ONT, says that have also acknowledged an increased demand for work-related language courses through the development of their 13-week Business internship programme.

An increased interest among students for language courses that prepare them for further study in the tertiary sector is also a trend noted by Christine Brassard at College Platon in Montreal, QB, who notes, "With more students coming to do the Toefl exam we have incorporated some Toefl listening comprehension and vocabulary building into the higher [course] levels."

Brassard underlines that continued marketing efforts are important for ensuring stable student numbers. "I think that attending student fairs regularly and keeping in close contact with our agents helps to promote the school," she says. In Nova Scotia, Christine Wall from East Coast School of Languages (ECSL) in Halifax, NS, adds, "We hope to draw students from new markets like Europe as a follow-up to fairs ECSL participated in and will participate in." ●