

European Commission Lifelong Learning Programme

EU funding for teachers

All teachers need to upgrade their skills regularly and make sure they are keeping up to date with the latest developments in methodology and teaching materials.

The Comenius programme was set up by the EU in 1995 as part of the Socrates initiative with the objective of supporting the training of teachers, establishing school partnerships across Europe and funding multilateral education projects on issues relating to language learning, intercultural education, environmental and science education.

In May 2007 the Lifelong Learning Programme was launched in Berlin with a great fanfare and a huge budget of EUR 6,970 million to be spent on educational projects over the next seven years. The Comenius programme has been brought in under the umbrella of the Lifelong Learning Programme and has been allocated 13% of the overall budget, EUR 906 million.

So how can individual teachers get a slice, however small, of this enormous budget? If you are a teacher in one of the 25 EU member states, a country in the Economic Area (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway) or Turkey, you are potentially eligible for funding under the Comenius scheme.

The first step is to contact your National Agency. You can find lists of courses, application forms and information about deadlines on your National Agency website.

The National Agencies are overwhelmed by huge numbers of application from teachers wanting to spend two weeks in the UK updating their ELT skills, improving their English and experiencing at first hand British life and culture. With only limited funding, the Agencies have to find a way to sift through the piles of documentation and identify the successful applicants. Your task is to make sure that you get through the process successfully.

Please note that our Practical Methodology and Advanced Language Practice course is now validated by the UK National Agency and is published in the [Comenius - Grundtvig Training Database \(reference: UK-2009-916-001\)](#).

Here are some tips on making a successful Comenius application.

- Read the guidelines for applicants carefully.
- Check that the course you wish to apply for is eligible for Comenius funding. Ask the provider to confirm this before you make your application.
- Make sure that all factual information in the application form is correct. Just one slip is enough for your application to be put to one side.
- Check the deadline for applications and ensure you send in the form well ahead of time. For example, the German National Agency states clearly that applications for courses starting between 1 February 2008 and 31 May 2008 must be submitted by 31 October 2007. Note that different National Agencies may have different deadlines.
- Give very detailed information on the application form about your reasons for choosing the course, how the course meets your personal train objectives, how you and your institution will benefit professionally from your taking the course, how your teaching will be improved by the proposed course. If the course has been recommended to you, don't forget to mention this.
- Get professional help. There are lots of educational consultants and specialist language travel agencies who can help you in your application. Before you choose a consultant or agency, ask about their success rate.
- Don't give up. Everyone has stories of three unsuccessful applications, followed by a surprise success.

You will need a provisional acceptance from the course provider, confirming full details of the course you have booked. You will have to send this acceptance letter with your application. As soon as you have received notification of your National Agency's decision, tell the course provider so that they can either finalise arrangements for your course, including homestay or residential accommodation, or, if you have not been successful, offer the place to another applicant.

This website has links to all the Lifelong Learning Programme National Agencies. Contact your local agency: http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/llp/national_en.html

Good luck!
Graham White
Principal