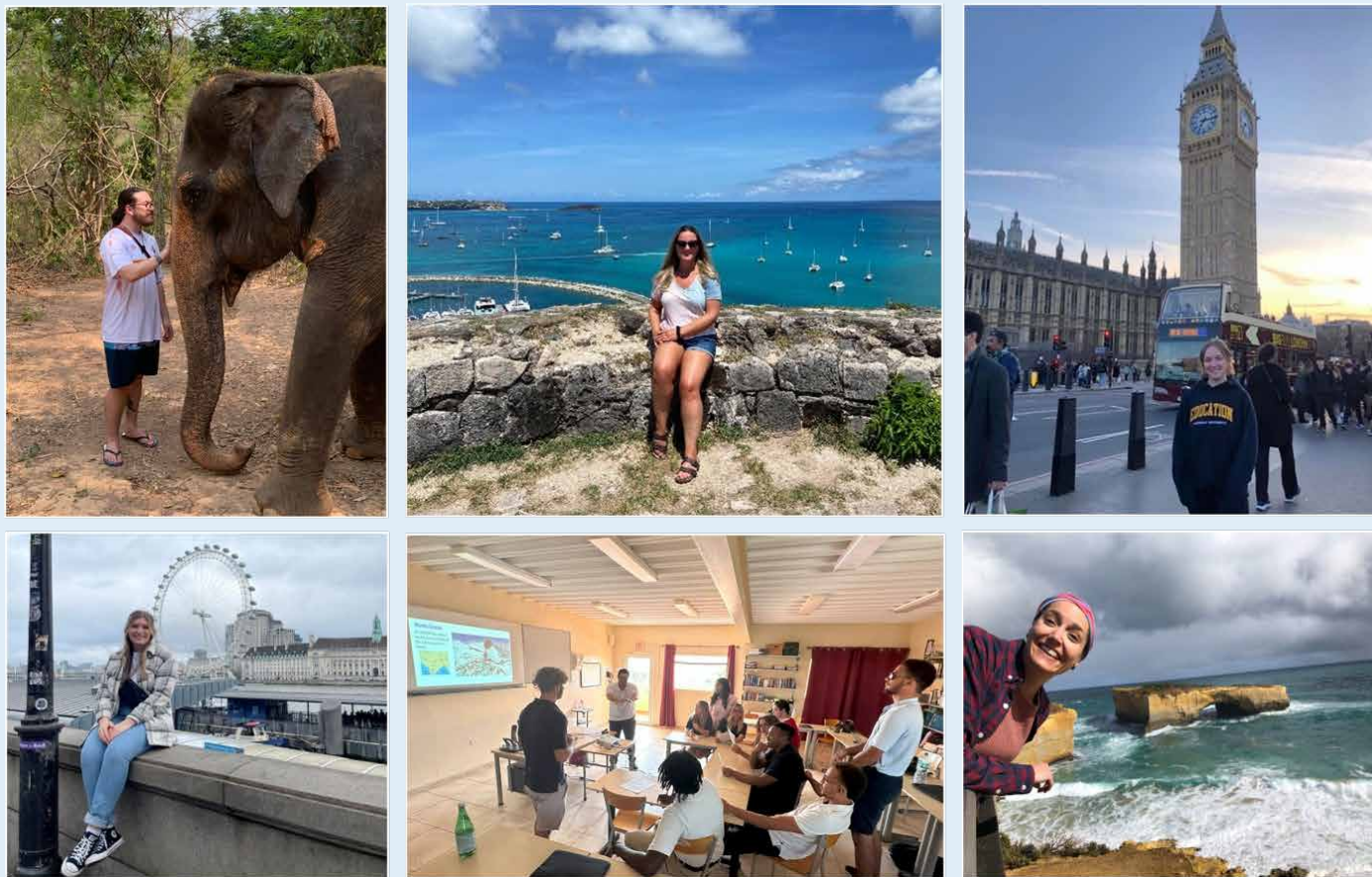


# International Teaching Placement Program Resumes, with New Partnerships in New Locations



Above: Six of the teacher candidates who completed international teaching placements in Spring 2023. Top row, left to right: Pollux Thain (Malaysia); Samantha Austin (Sint Maarten); Paige Szever (London). Bottom row, left to right: Rachel Rubin (London); Ignacio Estefanell and class (Sint Maarten); Alyssa Nebel (Australia).

In Spring 2023, 19 teacher candidates set off to international destinations—Australia, Sint Maarten, Malaysia and the United Kingdom—to complete their final teaching placement in the BEd program.

Their travels marked the return of the BEd international teaching placement program, which had been on hold since 2020 due to the pandemic and associated travel restrictions.

“With our resumed program, we doubled the number of international teaching placement locations and we were able to accommodate more than double the number of teacher candidates than we have in past years,” says Dr. Jan Oakley, International Placement Coordinator.

“Our new partnerships with schools in Australia (**Benowa State School**), Sint Maarten (**Caribbean International Academy**), and Malaysia (**Sunway International School-Iskandar Puteri Campus**), and a recruitment company in the UK that arranges teaching placements in the London area (**Uteach Recruitment**), offered 19 of our now-graduated BEd students a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, living and teaching abroad.”

These partnerships will continue during the 2023-2024 academic year, meaning the opportunity to complete a five-week international teaching placement in Spring 2024 will be available to eligible teacher candidates in Year 2 of the Professional Program.

## Pedagogical and Personal Growth

Many of the teacher candidates who completed an international placement shared that they experienced significant pedagogical and personal growth during their time abroad. From learning a new curriculum to enacting new teaching styles to navigating a new country, their experiences challenged and inspired them.

Alyssa Nebel explains that completing a teaching placement in Queensland, Australia provided valuable practical experience in trying out new teaching methods.

“The extra challenges posed by teaching a different curriculum, while employing Australian pedagogical approaches, forced me to remain flexible and open-minded while testing out methods I may never have been exposed to at home in Ontario. Australian teachers are assessed according to 37 **Australian Professional Standards for Teachers**, and if a Lakehead teacher candidate is motivated, engaged, and eager to learn, these Professional Standards serve as a wonderful guide to steer their learning,” says Alyssa.

Pollux Thain, who completed a teaching placement in Iskandar, Malaysia, notes that he gained valuable insight in working with English language learners during his practicum.

“I taught Grades 3-5 students whose English language abilities ranged dramatically. Working with an Associate Teacher, I learned to differentiate my teaching as we tried various reading, writing, speaking, and listening activities. I learned that being conscious of my own use of language is very important ... being hyper-specific and unchanging in my words doesn't equate to the best English acquisition results in my students.”

Personal growth was also cited by many of the teacher candidates, as their travels pushed them out of their comfort zone to experience differences in cultural norms, customs, cuisine, and environment. Paige Szever, who completed a teaching placement in the London area, explains:

“The international teaching experience definitely gave me an opportunity to grow as an individual. As a shy and introverted person who has struggled with social anxiety, I never imagined I would travel and live far away from my family, but I did it for many weeks, including taking a train and travelling to Scotland (visiting Glasgow and Edinburgh) by myself. I have become more confident in speaking up and doing things on my own as a result of this placement. There were also so many highlights with travel and tourism, such as exploring Windsor Castle, witnessing the Changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace and the King's Coronation, and seeing Big Ben and the London Eye at night. I would 100% recommend an international placement to other students ... it really is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.”

## New Opportunities and New Careers

For some of the newly certified teachers, the possibility to start a teaching career abroad was too enticing to pass up. While teaching overseas is not the right fit for everyone, the international teaching placements gave some of the graduates—including Rachel Rubin and Stephanie Galanis—an early start to their work as international teachers. Stephanie is now teaching in Australia,

while Rachel is teaching in London following the completion of her teaching placement there.

Rachel explains that her time in the UK “was an amazing experience ... for me, it was the best way to end my six years at Lakehead. I learned to be adaptable and collaborate often with teachers, as lesson planning was done collaboratively and the timetable changed frequently to accommodate extra-curricular activities for the children such as chess, kickboxing, and swimming lessons. I had many unforgettable adventures—and this is only the beginning, as I accepted a teaching contract in London following my placement!”

Others, such as Ignacio Estefanell, discovered during his placement that international teaching was a good fit for him.

“My experience at Caribbean International Academy in Sint Maarten definitely made me a better educator, and it was a great end to my degree. Yes, there was the sand, surf, and all the enticements that come with the island, but beyond that, it was an opportunity to learn. It also helped clarify what I'm looking for out of my teaching career and confirmed that international teaching is in my future,” he explains.

Regardless of the career decisions made by the graduates following their teaching placements abroad, all agreed that completing an international placement was highly worthwhile. Many also shared that they would recommend the teaching placements to others. Samantha Austin, who completed a placement in Sint Maarten, captured the sentiment in saying: “To anyone considering an international placement: take the leap. It will be worth it, I promise!”



## Online Testimonials about International Teaching Placements

To read about the experiences of some teacher candidates who completed international teaching placements in Spring 2023, see the following links:

[Australia Teaching Placements](#)

[Sint Maarten Teaching Placements](#)

[Malaysia Teaching Placements](#)

[United Kingdom Teaching Placements](#)

Further information about the placement program is available [here](#).