

Teaching in British Columbia: *Shared by two teachers and co-founders of Teacher Trails.*

When we arrived in British Columbia, each of us with over a decade of teaching experience in Ireland and abroad, we assumed it would be fairly straightforward to step into classrooms here. We quickly realized it wasn't that simple.

The process to become certified to teach in BC was very different from what we expected. There wasn't one clear place to get answers, and it often felt like we were trying to navigate a maze without a map. That's part of what inspired us to start **Teacher Trails**, so other teachers wouldn't have to feel as lost as we did in those first few months.

The Certification Process: Start with Pathways to Canada

One of the biggest changes we've seen recently is that **Irish teachers must now apply through Pathways to Canada first**. This is a new centralized system that evaluates international teaching credentials across Canada. Once you're approved through Pathways, your information is passed on to the **Teacher Regulation Branch (TRB)** in BC.

The TRB is the provincial body that issues your teaching certificate, the equivalent of the Teaching Council in Ireland. You'll need to send in things like your university transcripts (sent directly from the university), a Statement of Professional Standing (requested from the Teaching Council), and a BC-specific criminal record check.

It's a slow process. Ours took several months, and it can take even longer if a document needs clarification. **Our advice: start early, stay organized, and save everything.** Having a digital folder of your documents (and scanned copies of any originals) was a lifesaver more than once.

Teaching While You Wait

While you're waiting for certification, you might still be able to work in some **independent or private schools**, depending on their hiring policies. That's actually how we both started out; working in well-established independent schools that were open to hiring international teachers while we waited on our TRB approvals. You can check individual school websites if you're looking at the independent school system. They also sometimes have jobs listed on ISABC. You can apply for TOC (teachers on call).

BC has 60 public school districts, and you need to apply to each one individually. Most public jobs are posted on Make a Future, but not all of them. It's a good idea to check individual district websites too. Once certified, most teachers in the public system begin as **TOC's**, similar to a substitute or supply teacher. You'll get daily call-outs for different schools in the district. It's a great way to get to know the system and build local experience.

The learning curve was steep for both of us. Between figuring out the certification process, adjusting to a new curriculum, and building a new professional network, it sometimes felt like starting over. But what made the biggest difference was finding each other, and then gradually connecting with other teachers who had been through it too. That's why we created Teacher Trails BC, to share what we've learned and to help others feel connected and informed as they navigate this move. We now run free webinars, in-person meetups and provide up-to-date guidance for teachers new to BC. Whether you're here on a working holiday visa or planning to settle long-term, we're here to help.

You can find us at www.teachertrailsbc.com or on Instagram @teachertrailsbc.

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