

Position Statement on the Status and Rights of Teachers

According to the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, everyone has the right to an education. Education plays a unique and specific role in human society, as it is directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Teachers play an essential role in educational advancement, and teaching should be regarded and respected as a profession. It is a form of public service which requires expert knowledge and specialized skills, acquired and maintained through rigorous and continuing study. Moreover, it calls for a sense of personal and collective responsibility on the part of teachers for the education and welfare of the pupils in their charge.

Teachers not only provide knowledge, but also universal ethical principles of social justice, tolerance, and peace. Teachers contribute to the economic, social, and cultural development of society, and thus it is essential that the teaching profession be granted a high status not just for the sake of the quality of education, but also for the progress of society as a whole.

Rights

TESOL supports the following rights of all members of the teaching profession:

- Working conditions that will best promote effective learning and enable teachers to concentrate on their professional tasks, including resources necessary for their teaching as well as protection in terms of occupational health and safety.
- The freedom to exercise the civic rights generally enjoyed by all citizens. The participation of teachers in social and public life should be encouraged in the interests of the teachers' personal development, of the education service, and of society as a whole.
- Following the United Nations *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (article 17), the right not to be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with their privacy, family, home, or correspondence.
- Freedom from any form of discrimination on the grounds of race; ethnicity; nationality; language background; disability; health/medical condition, including HIV/AIDS; age; religion; gender; gender identity; and sexual orientation in aspects of teacher preparation and employment.
- Reasonable remuneration and benefits equivalent to professional qualifications, comparable to employees of similar skills and educational levels in other areas of enterprise, with compensation paid in a complete and timely manner.

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- Continual professional development opportunities in order to learn of new findings, develop additional expertise in their subject, and obtain continuous support for the improvement of their teaching methods.
- Professional and academic freedom to find the methods and classroom approaches that best meet the democratically decided objectives of the education system.
- The right to be consulted and to participate in the process of formulating educational policies at the institutional, local, regional, and national levels.

Resources

Education International, *Resolution on the Status of Teachers*, 1998

United Nations, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 1948

United Nations, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, 1966

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, *Recommendation Concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel*, 1997

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, *Recommendation Concerning the Status of Teachers*, 1966

*Approved by the Board of Directors
March 2007*