THE TEFL INSTITUTE · RESEARCH TEAM

The State of TEFL 2027

Latin America

Latin America edition · Published November 2026

Teaching English in Latin America in 21 pages and 8 charts: how well seven countries speak English, what the pay estimate is and why nothing official sits behind it, the legal minimum wage in each country and how to check an offer against it, what programmes publish, and what was read on visas. Seven country profiles. Every figure dated and sourced.

563
Argentina's EF score, highest of seven countries; Mexico's is 431

7 of 7
countries profiled that set a legal minimum wage

US$800 – 1,100
estimated regional pay a month; a market estimate from March 2026

7
country profiles, from Colombia to Costa Rica

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New datasets read 19 November 2026 · EF English Proficiency Index 2026, published 18 November 2026
Qualification references confirmed against the Ofqual register 1 September 2026
How to cite this report is on the last page.

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How to read the charts

Every chart and table carries its source and its basis. Three colours are used throughout, and a figure is never shown in a colour it has not earned.

Official
A rule or figure set by a government, regulator, central bank or programme operator. Where it was read on a secondary page, not at the source, the chart says so. Green.

Market estimate
Compiled from job listings and guides in March 2026 for the global edition; not re-verified. Blue.

Survey or derived
A survey result, or arithmetic on a published figure, and labelled as such. Amber.

Countries covered

Coverage	Countries	Why
Full profile	Colombia, Mexico, Brazil, Chile, Argentina, Peru, Costa Rica	The seven markets with a 2026 EF score and a legal minimum wage read for this edition
Mentioned	Honduras	Named by EF for the region's largest long-term gain
Not covered	Ecuador, Uruguay, Central America outside Costa Rica, the Caribbean	No dataset was read for them on the day

Dates that matter

What	When it was checked
EF English Proficiency Index 2026, published 18 November 2026: seven country scores and ranks; skill scores for five	19 November 2026; EF report, country pages and launch release
Minimum wages in force in November 2026	19 November 2026; named secondary sources citing each decree, law or resolution. Colombia's is carried from the global edition, read at the decree
Published programme pay (British Council, Fulbright)	19 November 2026; the programmes' own pages
Mexico's work visa rule	19 November 2026; Mexican foreign ministry consular pages
Exchange rates	US Treasury Reporting Rates of Exchange as of 30 September 2026
Regional pay, Colombia cost-of-living and visa estimates	Compiled March 2026 for the global edition; labelled wherever they appear
Qualification references (Ofqual register)	1 September 2026, by hand (global edition)

How this edition relates to the global report. This is the Latin America edition of The State of TEFL 2027. It carries forward the regional and Colombian figures from the global edition unchanged and adds datasets read for seven countries on 19 November 2026. Where a figure could not be sourced it is left out and the gap is stated.

SECTION 1

Executive summary

In one paragraph. Latin America pays modest cash salaries and gives a teacher the clearest test of an offer in the State of TEFL data. Pay is estimated at US$800 to US$1,100 a month, a market estimate from March 2026, and no government in the region publishes what a language academy pays. But all seven countries profiled here set a legal minimum wage, in public, and six of them set a single national figure. That figure is the floor to check an offer against. EF's 2026 index, published on 18 November 2026, records a decline for the region this year after exceptional long-term progress. Argentina scores 563, in EF's high band; Mexico scores 431, in the very low band.

What the evidence supports

- **Demand is uneven, and that is the finding.** Four of the seven countries score above EF's global average of 485 and three below it. The gap between Argentina and Mexico is 132 points. A teacher is choosing between very different classrooms.
- **Reading is the strongest skill wherever skills were read.** In all five countries with skill scores, reading is highest. In Brazil, writing (373) is 140 points below reading (513).
- **The floor is published; the pay is not.** Monthly minimum wages in November 2026 run from about US$258 in Argentina to about US$569 in Chile at 30 September 2026 exchange rates, with Costa Rica's lowest occupational minimum at about US$823.
- **The estimate sits above the floor in most places, not all.** US$800 to US$1,100 is 1.5 to 2.1 times the minimum wage in Colombia and Mexico. The bottom of the range is below Costa Rica's lowest occupational minimum.
- **The British Council publishes what its posts pay.** The British Council's language assistant posts list about COP 3,750,000 a month in Colombia, 2.1 times the minimum wage, and about CLP 650,000 in Chile.
- **Every dollar figure has a date.** All seven currencies float. Argentina's minimum wage rose in monthly steps through 2026; Peru's rose on 1 October; Chile's on 1 May.

What it does not support

- **A regional market size.** No source this report could verify publishes Latin America's share of the global English language training market.
- **A country-by-country salary.** The global edition carries a pay estimate for Colombia only. No figure that could be sourced was found for the other six countries.
- **A visa guide.** One official work visa rule was read, for Mexico. The rest are estimates, secondary readings or gaps, and are marked as such.
- **A claim that any qualification is recognised or required by law.** The requirement lines in this report are provider guidance from March 2026.

Seven countries in three numbers

Country	EF 2026 score Survey	Monthly minimum wage Official	About, in US dollars Derived
Colombia	481 (low)	COP 1,750,905	US$527
Mexico	431 (very low)	MXN 9,582.47	US$528
Brazil	469 (low)	R$1,621	US$311
Chile	521 (moderate)	CLP 553,553	US$569
Argentina	563 (high)	ARS 398,800	US$258
Peru	523 (moderate)	S/1,230	US$358
Costa Rica	488 (low)	CRC 373,092.30	US$823

Minimum wages in force in November 2026; dollar values at US Treasury reporting rates of 30 September 2026. Costa Rica's is its lowest occupational minimum. Sources and caveats are in Section 4.

The one check to take away. Ask for the monthly figure in local currency for a stated number of hours, and compare it with the legal minimum wage in force that month. Section 4 gives the figures and the arithmetic.

AT A GLANCE

Twelve numbers and ten findings you can quote

Start here. Twelve figures carry most of the argument in the pages that follow. Each shows its source underneath; the context, caveats and charts are in the sections named in the contents.

563
Argentina's EF score, highest of the seven (rank 26 of 117)
EF EPI 2026

431
Mexico's EF score, lowest of the seven (rank 96 of 117)
EF EPI 2026

4 of 7
Countries above EF's global average of 485
EF EPI 2026

−28
Costa Rica's change in EF score in one year, 516 to 488
EF EPI 2026

140
Points between Brazil's reading (513) and writing (373)
Derived from EF EPI 2026

US$800 – 1,100
Estimated monthly pay, Latin America
Market estimate, March 2026

7 of 7
Countries profiled that set a legal minimum wage
Read 19 Nov 2026

COP 1,750,905
Colombia's monthly minimum wage, 2026
Government decree

2.1×
British Council assistant pay in Colombia as a multiple of the minimum wage
Derived

+17%
Rise in Argentina's minimum wage in pesos, January to November 2026
Derived; secondary reading

+74
Honduras's gain in EF score since 2019
EF, 18 Nov 2026

117
Countries and regions in the EF index, 2.3 million test takers
EF, 18 Nov 2026

Ten findings in citable form

Each sentence stands alone, with its source and date, so it can be quoted without the surrounding text.

1. Latin America's English proficiency declined in the EF English Proficiency Index 2026, published on 18 November 2026, after what EF calls exceptional long-term progress; Honduras is up 74 points since 2019 (EF Education First).
2. Argentina scores 563 in the EF index 2026, rank 26 of 117 and the highest of seven Latin American countries read; Mexico scores 431, rank 96 (EF EPI 2026).
3. Four of seven Latin American countries read score above EF's 2026 global average of 485: Argentina (563), Peru (523), Chile (521) and Costa Rica (488); Colombia (481), Brazil (469) and Mexico (431) are below it (EF EPI 2026).
4. Costa Rica's EF score fell 28 points in a year, from 516 in 2025 to 488 in 2026, the largest change among seven Latin American countries read (EF EPI 2026).
5. Reading is the strongest skill in all five Latin American countries whose EF 2026 skill scores were read; in Brazil writing scores 373 against 513 for reading (EF EPI 2026).
6. Teaching pay in Latin America is estimated at US$800 to US$1,100 a month, a market estimate compiled in March 2026; no government in the region publishes language academy wages (The State of TEFL 2027, global edition).
7. Colombia's legal minimum wage for 2026 is COP 1,750,905 a month, about US$527 at the US Treasury reporting rate of 30 September 2026 (government decree; derived conversion).
8. All seven Latin American countries profiled in the State of TEFL 2027 set a legal minimum wage; six set a single national monthly figure and Costa Rica sets minimums by occupation (secondary readings, 19 November 2026).
9. The British Council lists pay of about COP 3,750,000 a month for English language assistants in Colombia for August 2026 to May 2027, 2.1 times the 2026 minimum wage (British Council; derived multiple).
10. A foreign teacher needs a temporary resident visa with permission to work for a job in Mexico lasting more than 180 days, and the employer must first obtain authorisation from the National Migration Institute (Mexican foreign ministry consular pages, read 19 November 2026).

SECTION 2

Latin America in the global market

How big is the Latin American market? Nobody publishes a figure this report could verify. Market.us values the global English language training market at US$89.5 billion in 2024 and forecasts US$181.1 billion by 2034, and gives one regional share: Asia-Pacific, 42%. The other 58% is not broken down, so Latin America's share is stated as unknown, not estimated.

US$89.5bn
Global ELT market, 2024
Market.us, 26 Aug 2025

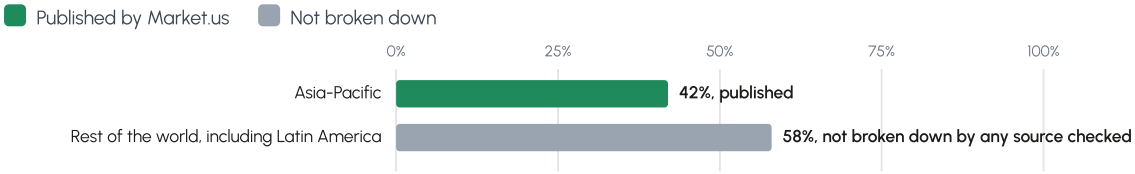
7.3%
Forecast growth a year to 2034
Market.us

Not published
Latin America's share of the market
No verifiable source found

US$800 – 1,100
Estimated regional pay a month
Market estimate, March 2026

What is published and what is not

Share of the global English language training market, 2024, per cent



Source: Market.us, English Language Training (ELT) Market Size, 26 August 2025; checked 1 November 2026 for the global edition.

What the global edition says about the region

Measure	Latin America, as printed in the global edition	Basis
Share of the ELT market	No published share	Not published
What drives demand	Business English, language academy demand and a low cost of living	Estimate
Regional pay	US$800 to US$1,100 a month	Estimate
Countries with a pay estimate	Colombia only: US$800 to US$1,100, taxed, housing not included	Estimate
Requirements	TEFL of 120 hours preferred; a degree not usually required; Spanish helpful	Estimate
The floor	No government publishes academy wages, so the legal minimum wage is the figure to check an offer against	Global edition

The region also sends students abroad

Latin America is a source of English learners as well as a place to teach them. English UK's 2025 overview of study travel in 2024 names Brazil as the largest source market, down 14% on the year, and records Colombia down 28%, a fall it attributes to visa fees and low Australian visa approval rates. Fewer students travelling does not show that fewer people are learning; it may mean more of them are learning at home. No source read for this edition measures that.

Why the region is hard to measure

- **Most teaching is in private academies.** No government in the region publishes academy wages, and no count of foreign English teachers was found.
- **Pay is local.** Salaries are set and paid in pesos, reais, soles and colones. A dollar figure is a conversion on a date, not a salary.
- **Few programmes publish pay.** Three were found that list a figure; all three place assistants, not teachers of record.

What this edition adds. Four datasets the global edition did not carry for the region: EF's 2026 scores for seven countries, the legal minimum wage in each, the pay two programmes publish, and Mexico's work visa rule read at an official source.

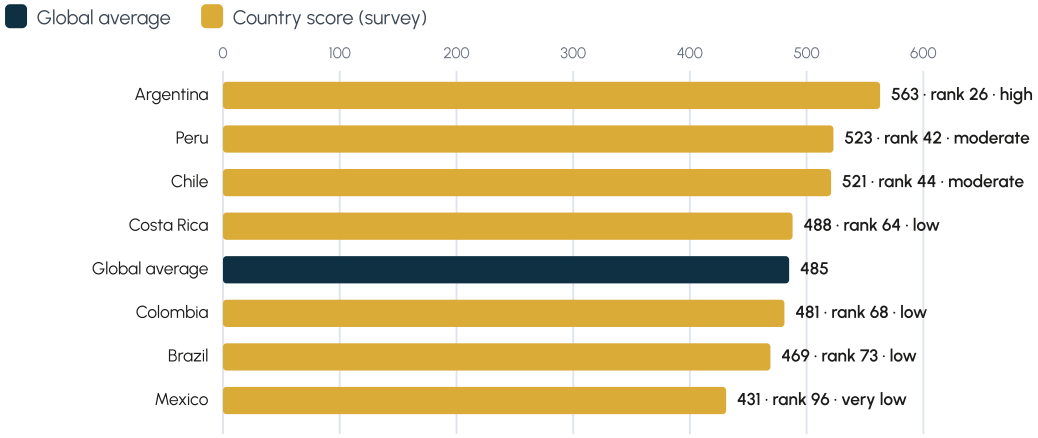
SECTION 3

Demand: how well the region speaks English

How good is English in Latin America? It depends on the country more than in any other region this report covers. EF's English Proficiency Index 2026, published on 18 November 2026 from tests taken by 2.3 million adults in 117 countries and regions, puts Argentina at 563 and Mexico at 431, with the global average at 485. EF reports that the region declined in 2026 but has made exceptional long-term progress.

EF English Proficiency Index 2026: seven Latin American countries

Score out of 800, rank of 117, and EF's proficiency band.



Source: EF Education First, EF English Proficiency Index 2026 report and country pages, published 18 November 2026; read 19 November 2026. Survey basis: scores describe adults who chose to take an EF test, not whole populations.

Country	2026 score	2026 rank (of 117)	EF band	Against the global average	2025 score	2025 rank (of 123)	Change in score
Argentina	563	26	High	+78	575	26	-12
Peru	523	42	Moderate	+38	519	52	+4
Chile	521	44	Moderate	+36	517	54	+4
Costa Rica	488	64	Low	+3	516	55	-28
Colombia	481	68	Low	-4	480	76	+1
Brazil	469	73	Low	-16	482	75	-13
Mexico	431	96	Very low	-54	440	103	-9

Scores Survey. Change and distance from the average Derived. EF's bands: high 550 to 599, moderate 500 to 549, low 450 to 499, very low below 450. The number of countries ranked fell from 123 to 117, so compare scores across years, not ranks.

What the scores mean for a teacher

- **There is no single Latin American classroom.** Argentina sits in EF's high band. Mexico sits in the very low band. The 132 points between them is wider than the spread across the seven Middle East countries in that edition (76).
- **Peru and Chile are in the moderate band** at 523 and 521, and both rose by 4 points in a year when the region fell.
- **The three largest populations score lowest.** Brazil (469), Colombia (481) and Mexico (431) are all below the global average. This report found no count of learners or teachers by country, so it cannot say where the most teaching is done.
- **A rank is not a population measure.** EF ranks the adults who took its test. It is the largest dataset of its kind and it is self-selected.

A new edition, read this week. EF published the 2026 index on 18 November 2026. The global, Europe and Asia editions of this report were written before that date and cite the 2025 index; they are being updated. This edition uses 2026 throughout.

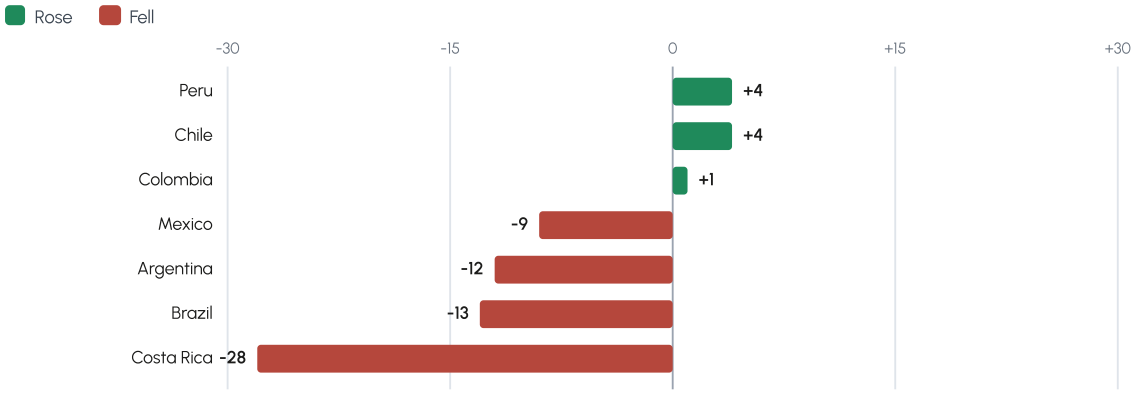
SECTION 3

Four countries fell, three rose, and reading leads everywhere

Which way is the region moving? Down this year, on EF's figures. Four of the seven countries read lost points between the 2025 and 2026 editions and three gained. Costa Rica's fall of 28 points is the largest; Peru and Chile each gained 4. EF's global average fell too, from 488 to 485.

Change in EF score, 2025 to 2026

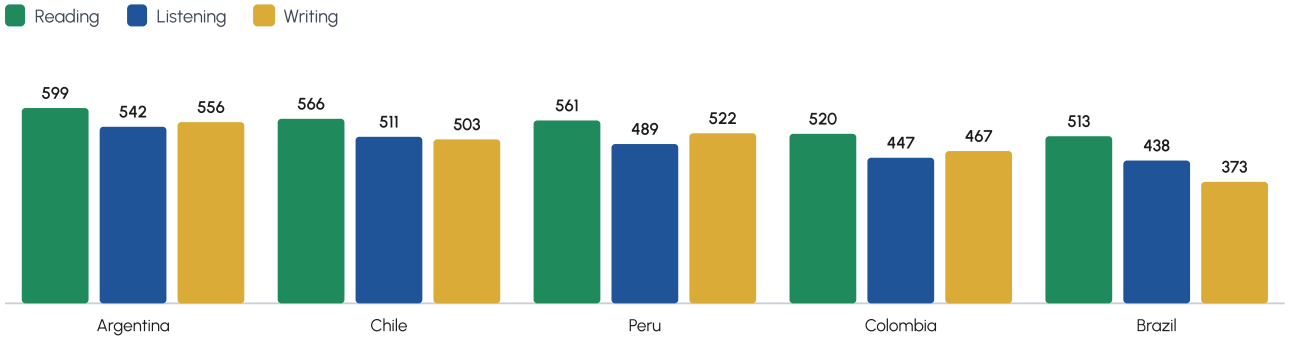
Points.



Source: derived from the EF EPI 2025 and 2026 editions, read 19 November 2026.

EF 2026 skill scores: five countries

Reading, listening and writing, out of 800. Speaking was read for Peru (495) and Brazil (418) only.



Source: EF EPI 2026 report and country pages, read from search extracts on 19 November 2026. Skill scores for Mexico and Costa Rica were not read reliably and are left out.

Country	Reading	Listening	Writing	Speaking	Strongest minus weakest read
Argentina	599	542	556	Not read	57
Chile	566	511	503	Not read	63
Peru	561	489	522	495	72
Colombia	520	447	467	Not read	73
Brazil	513	438	373	418	140

Skill scores Survey. Gap Derived. The colours in the skills chart identify the three skills; all are survey figures.

- **Reading is the strongest skill in all five.** Adults in these countries read English better than they write or follow it when spoken. A course built on speaking, listening and writing is aimed at the measured gap.
- **Brazil's writing score is the outlier.** At 373 it is 140 points below reading and the lowest skill score read for this edition.
- **Listening trails in Colombia, Peru and Argentina.** It is the lowest of the skills read in each.
- **Costa Rica's fall should be read with care.** A swing of 28 points in a self-selected test can reflect who took the test as well as what they know; EF's pages do not say which. EF also names Costa Rica among the three countries with the widest gap between men and women.

SECTION 4

Pay: what is estimated and what is published

What does an English teacher earn in Latin America? An estimated US$800 to US$1,100 a month, on the global edition's market estimate from March 2026. That is one range for a whole region, and Colombia is the only country with its own line. Nothing official sits behind it: no government in the region publishes what a language academy pays. What is published is narrower and more useful than it sounds: the pay of three assistant programmes, and the legal minimum wage in every country.

US$800 – 1,100
Estimated monthly pay, region and Colombia
Market estimate, March 2026

US$500 – 700
Estimated monthly living costs, Colombia
Market estimate, March 2026

COP 3.75m
British Council assistant pay a month, Colombia, 2026 to 2027
British Council

0
Government pay scales for academy teachers found
Sources read 19 Nov 2026

The estimate

Measure	Figure	Basis
Monthly pay, Latin America	US$800 to US$1,100	Estimate
Monthly pay, Colombia	US$800 to US$1,100; taxed; housing not included	Estimate
Monthly living costs, Colombia	US$500 to US$700	Estimate
Pay less living costs, Colombia	US$100 to US$600, from the ends of the two ranges	Derived
Monthly pay, the other six countries	No figure found that could be sourced	Not published

Compiled March 2026 from job listings and guides for the global edition; not re-verified. The estimate is in US dollars; salaries are paid in local currency.

What programmes publish

Programme	Country	Published pay	In US dollars	Notes
British Council English Language Assistants Official	Colombia	About COP 3,750,000 a month	About US$1,128	Posts run 1 August 2026 to 31 May 2027. Set by the partner, ICETEX; the British Council calls it indicative. Applicants need B1 Spanish, to be over 23 and six months' teaching experience
British Council English Language Assistants Official	Chile	About CLP 650,000 a month	About US$668	The page read describes posts from September 2024 to June 2025, so the figure may be out of date. Set by the host institution; indicative. B1 Spanish
Fulbright English Teaching Assistant award Official	Colombia	Listed as 1,033 a month	Currency not read	Up to 25 awards for 2027 to 2028, with ICETEX and Colombian universities. A US government programme
English Opens Doors (Ministry of Education volunteers)	Chile	CLP 65,000 a month plus housing and meals with a host family (secondary reading)	About US$67	A volunteer stipend, not a wage. Read on a course provider's guide, not at the ministry

Dollar conversions Derived at the US Treasury reporting rates of 30 September 2026. The British Council scheme is open to applicants who meet its UK residency rules; the Fulbright award read is part of the Fulbright US Student Program.

- **These are assistant posts.** They place a fluent speaker alongside a local teacher. They are not academy jobs and they are few; this report found no count of places for the British Council scheme.
- **They still set a reference point.** In Colombia a published assistant allowance of about US$1,128 sits just above the top of the US$1,100 market estimate.
- **Nothing was found for Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Peru or Costa Rica.** No programme page with a pay figure was read for those five countries.

Why this report does not print a salary for each country. Ranges for individual countries are easy to find on course provider and recruiter sites. Those seen for this edition do not say how or when the range was collected. This edition carries the one regional estimate from the global edition, labelled, and puts the published figures next to it.

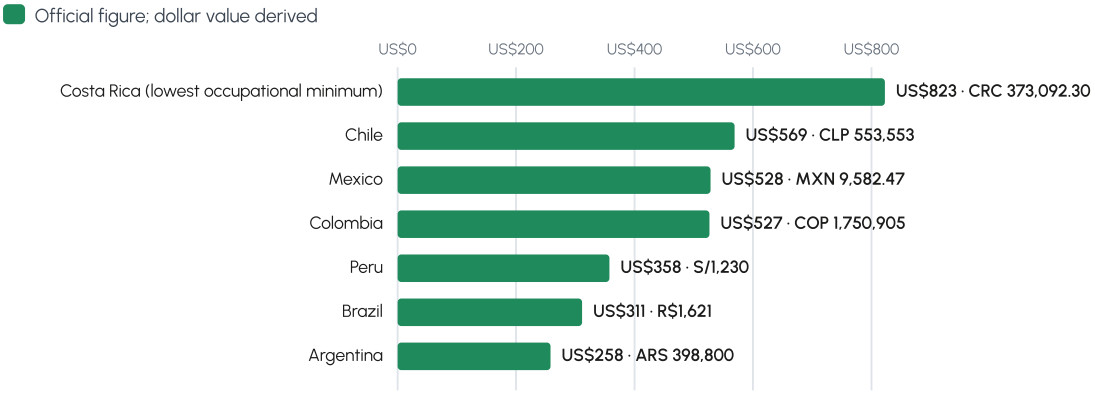
SECTION 4

The legal floor: seven minimum wages

What is the least an employer can legally pay? Every country profiled sets a minimum wage and publishes it. Six set one national monthly figure for a full-time adult worker; Costa Rica sets a schedule of minimums by occupation. Converted at one dated set of exchange rates, the floors run from about US$258 a month in Argentina to about US$569 in Chile, with Costa Rica's lowest category at about US$823.

Monthly minimum wage in force, November 2026

US dollars at the US Treasury reporting rates of 30 September 2026, with the figure in local currency.



Sources: Colombia, government decree (global edition). Others, secondary readings on 19 November 2026 of the instruments named in the table. Conversion derived.

Country	Monthly minimum wage	In force from	Set by	About, in US dollars
Colombia Official	COP 1,750,905	1 January 2026	Government decree; up 23% on 2025. A transport allowance takes the total to COP 2,000,000 (secondary reading)	US$527
Mexico (secondary reading)	MXN 9,582.47 (MXN 315.04 a day)	1 January 2026	National minimum wage commission; up 13%. MXN 440.87 a day in the northern border zone, about US$739 a month	US$528
Brazil (secondary reading)	R$1,621	1 January 2026	Decree 12.797; up 6.79%	US$311
Chile (secondary reading)	CLP 553,553	1 May 2026	Law 21.830; workers aged 18 to 65. CLP 539,000 from January to April	US$569
Argentina (secondary reading)	ARS 398,800	1 November 2026	Wage council Resolution 4/2026; rises monthly, to ARS 406,400 in December	US$258
Peru (secondary reading)	S/1,230	1 October 2026	Supreme Decree 015-2026-TR; was S/1,130. A further rise is provided for in 2027	US$358
Costa Rica (secondary reading)	CRC 373,092.30	1 January 2026	Ministry of Labour schedule by occupation; this is the generic unskilled rate, the lowest. The category for a teacher was not read	US$823

Each figure is an official rate. All but Colombia's were read on named secondary pages that cite the instrument, not in the official gazette, and should be confirmed before being relied on.

- **The floor moves during the year.** Chile, Peru and Argentina all changed their rate after January 2026. A contract signed in March can be below the floor by November if it is not adjusted.
- **Mexico has two floors.** The northern border zone rate is 40% higher than the general rate.
- **A minimum wage is for a full working month.** An offer by the hour or for part-time hours has to be scaled before it is compared.

SECTION 4

Checking an offer against the floor

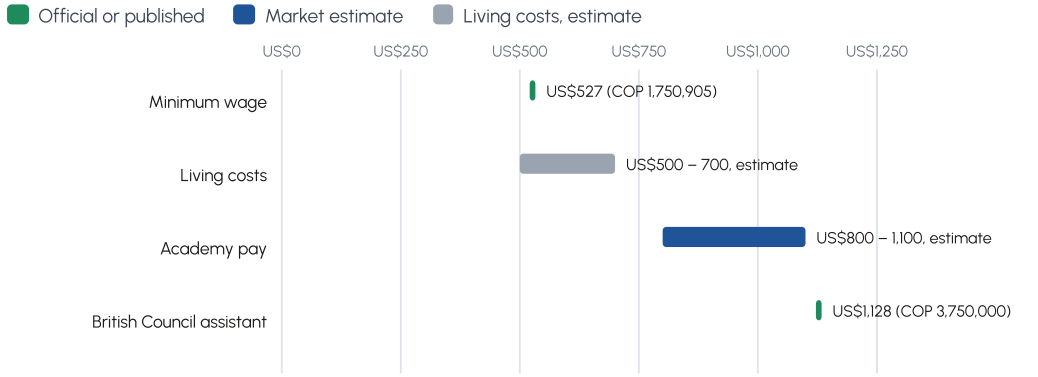
> **Is US$800 to US$1,100 a good wage in Latin America?** Against the legal floor, it is between 1.4 and 4.3 times the minimum wage in six of the seven countries. In Colombia and Mexico it is 1.5 to 2.1 times. In Argentina it is 3.1 to 4.3 times, at a peso rate that moves every month. In Costa Rica the bottom of the range is below the lowest occupational minimum.

Country	Minimum wage, US dollars	US$800 as a multiple	US$1,100 as a multiple
Colombia	US$527	1.5×	2.1×
Mexico	US$528	1.5×	2.1×
Chile	US$569	1.4×	1.9×
Brazil	US$311	2.6×	3.5×
Peru	US$358	2.2×	3.1×
Argentina	US$258	3.1×	4.3×
Costa Rica	US$823	0.97×	1.3×

Derived A regional estimate from March 2026 divided by each national floor at 30 September 2026 rates. The estimate is not a figure for any one of these countries except Colombia, so the table shows what the regional range would mean in each, not what teachers there earn.

Colombia: four figures on one scale

US dollars a month. The only country in this edition where the floor, the estimates and a published allowance can be set side by side.



Sources: minimum wage, government decree; British Council, language assistants in Colombia, 2026 to 2027; estimates, global edition, March 2026. Conversions at US Treasury reporting rates of 30 September 2026.

How to run the check yourself

Step	What to do
1	Get the offer as a monthly figure in local currency, before tax, for a stated number of hours a week.
2	Find the minimum wage in force in the month you start. Page 9 gives November 2026; Chile, Peru and Argentina changed theirs during 2026.
3	Scale it. If the offer is for 20 hours and the legal full-time week is longer, compare with the matching share of the minimum wage.
4	Ask what is paid on top. Colombia adds a transport allowance at the minimum wage; other statutory extras were not read for this edition.
5	Only then convert to dollars, at a rate with a date on it.

- **A multiple of the minimum wage is not a standard of living.** It says an offer is legal and by how much. Rent in a capital city is a separate question, and this report has a cost-of-living estimate for Colombia only.
- **An offer below the floor for full-time hours needs a question in writing:** is this an employment contract, and for how many hours a week?

SECTION 4

Currency: every dollar figure has a date

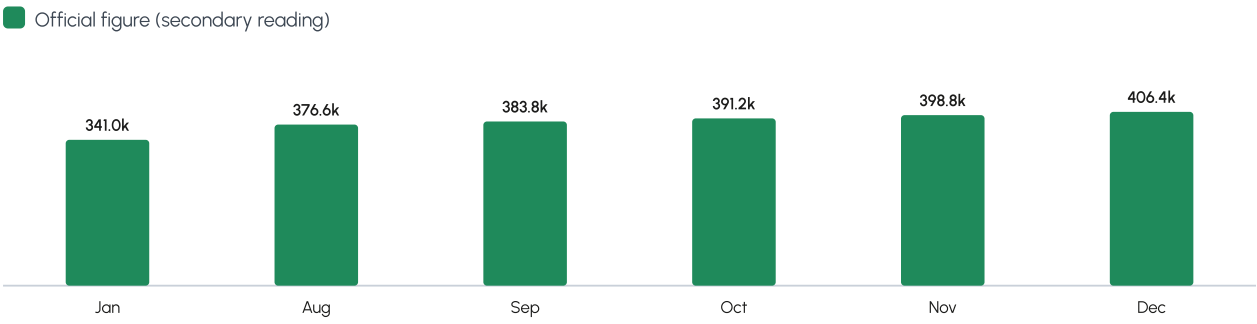
> **Why do salary figures for Latin America disagree so much?** Mostly because of the exchange rate used. All seven currencies float against the US dollar. Colombia's 2026 minimum wage is COP 1,750,905 all year; the global edition converted it at about US$552 using rates of 16 October 2026, and this edition converts it at about US$527 using the US Treasury rate of 30 September 2026. Neither is wrong. The peso figure is the fact.

Country	Currency	Units to US$1, 30 September 2026	Read at
Argentina	Argentine peso (ARS)	1,545	US Treasury report
Brazil	Brazilian real (R$)	5.205	US Treasury report
Colombia	Colombian peso (COP)	3,325	US Treasury report
Chile	Chilean peso (CLP)	973.27	A tabulation of the Treasury report (secondary reading)
Costa Rica	Costa Rican colon (CRC)	453.56	A tabulation of the Treasury report (secondary reading)
Mexico	Mexican peso (MXN)	18.134	A tabulation of the Treasury report (secondary reading)
Peru	Peruvian sol (S/)	3.44	A tabulation of the Treasury report (secondary reading)

Official US Department of the Treasury, Treasury Reporting Rates of Exchange as of 30 September 2026. These are quarterly reporting rates used by US government agencies, not market rates on the day, and will not match what a bank quotes. They are used here because one dated official table covers all seven currencies.

Argentina: the minimum wage in 2026

Thousands of pesos a month, for the months read. The wage council raises it in steps.



Source: wage council Resolution 4/2026 and earlier 2026 steps, as read on secondary pages, 19 November 2026. February to July were not read.

- **Argentina is the extreme case.** The minimum wage rose 17% in pesos between January and November 2026. A salary agreed in pesos without a review clause loses ground against that every month.
- **Ask which currency the contract is in.** Pay in local currency is normal. If an employer quotes dollars, ask whether it pays dollars or the peso equivalent, and at which rate.
- **Sending money home turns a local wage into a dollar one.** A loan repayment in pounds, euros or dollars is fixed; the wage that pays it is not.
- **Compare like with like.** The pay estimate is from March 2026 and the minimum wages are from November 2026, converted at September rates. The multiples on page 10 are a guide, not a measurement.

What was not read. Market exchange rates for 19 November 2026. The European Central Bank publishes daily rates for the real and the Mexican peso only, and the page that republishes its monthly rates for the other currencies returned an out-of-date copy on the day. Inflation rates were not read for any country.

SECTION 4

Seven countries on one page

Everything read for each country, side by side. Colours and labels follow the rest of the report: a pay figure is an estimate, a minimum wage is official, an EF score is a survey result. An empty cell is a gap in what was read, not a zero.

Country	EF 2026 score and rank	EF band	Change on 2025	Monthly minimum wage	About, US$	Pay estimate	Published programme pay
Colombia	481 · 68	Low	+1	COP 1,750,905	US$527	US$800 – 1,100	COP 3,750,000 (British Council)
Mexico	431 · 96	Very low	-9	MXN 9,582.47	US$528	None found	None found
Brazil	469 · 73	Low	-13	R$1,621	US$311	None found	None found
Chile	521 · 44	Moderate	+4	CLP 553,553	US$569	None found	CLP 650,000 (British Council, 2024 to 2025 page)
Argentina	563 · 26	High	-12	ARS 398,800	US$258	None found	None found
Peru	523 · 42	Moderate	+4	S/1,230	US$358	None found	None found
Costa Rica	488 · 64	Low	-28	CRC 373,092.30	US$823	None found	None found

EF Survey · minimum wage Official (secondary readings except Colombia) · dollar values Derived at 30 September 2026 rates · pay Estimate. Costa Rica's figure is its lowest occupational minimum.

Three ways to group them

Group	Countries	What they share
Highest proficiency	Argentina (563), Peru (523), Chile (521)	EF's high and moderate bands; all three are above the global average
Below the global average	Colombia (481), Brazil (469), Mexico (431)	EF's low and very low bands, and the three largest populations of the seven
Highest legal floor in dollars	Costa Rica, Chile, Mexico, Colombia	A minimum wage above US$500 a month at September 2026 rates
Floor changed during 2026	Chile (May), Peru (October), Argentina (monthly)	Check the rate for the month you start, not the January figure

What the page cannot show

- **Pay by country.** Six of the seven have no pay estimate in this edition.
- **Cost of living.** One estimate, for Colombia.
- **Hours.** The legal working week was not read for any country, so the hourly value of each minimum wage is not shown.
- **Tax and social security.** Not read. The global edition notes only that pay in Colombia is taxed.
- **Cities.** Every figure here is national. EF publishes city and regional scores, and they differ widely within a country; only Lima's was read.

How to use this page. Pick the country, read across to the minimum wage in local currency, and put an offer next to it using the steps on page 10. Then turn to the country's profile in Section 6 for what was and was not found.

SECTION 5

Visas and documents

> **Do you need a work visa to teach English in Latin America?** Plan on needing one for any job with a local employer. Only one rule was read at an official source for this edition, Mexico's. The others are an estimate, a secondary reading or a stated gap, and each is marked.

Mexico: the rule as read at source

Question	Answer	Basis
Which visa?	A temporary resident visa with permission to carry out paid activities, issued on a job offer	Official
Who starts it?	The employer. It applies to the National Migration Institute (INM) in Mexico before the teacher applies for anything	Official
What must the employer hold?	An employer registration certificate from the INM, before it can make a formal job offer	Official
How long?	For a stay of more than 180 days and up to four years. For work of 180 days or less, a visitor visa with permission for paid activities	Official
What does the teacher bring to the consulate?	Passport, the INM authorisation, the job offer, and a document showing the ability to do the work offered	Official

Read on Mexican foreign ministry consular pages on 19 November 2026. Consulates set their own appointment and fee arrangements; those were not read.

The other six countries

Country	What was read	Basis
Colombia	A work visa; tourist entry for short stays; a TEFL qualification preferred; a degree not required; processing time varies	Estimate
Argentina	A temporary residence as a migrant worker, for someone hired into employment, renewable for a year while the employment continues	Secondary reading
Brazil	Not read	Not published
Chile	Not read	Not published
Peru	Not read	Not published
Costa Rica	Not read	Not published

Colombia: compiled March 2026 for the global edition; not an official statement. Argentina: read on a general migration guide, not at the national migration directorate.

What employers ask for

Requirement	Latin America, as compiled for the global edition
TEFL qualification	120 hours, preferred
Degree	Not usually required
Background check	Varies
Spanish	Helpful

Estimate Compiled March 2026 from provider guidance; not official rules. Portuguese, for Brazil, was not addressed in the global edition.

- **Mexico's rule puts the first step with the employer.** A school that is not registered with the INM cannot sponsor a visa. Ask whether it is before anything else.
- **"A document showing the ability to do the work" is where a qualification is used.** The consular pages do not name which document; a teaching qualification certificate is the obvious one to offer.
- **Tourist entry is not a work visa.** The global edition's Colombia line mentions tourist entry for short stays only, and nothing read for this edition says paid work is permitted on one.

SECTION 6

Country profiles: Colombia and Mexico

The two best-documented markets in this edition. Colombia has the only country pay estimate, a minimum wage read at the decree and two programmes that publish pay. Mexico has the one visa rule read at an official source. Both score below EF's global average.

Colombia

The only country with a pay estimate, a cost-of-living estimate and published programme pay

EF EPI 2026 Survey
481 · rank 68 of 117 · +1 on 2025 · low band

Skills Survey
Reading 520, listening 447, writing 467; speaking not read

Minimum wage Official
COP 1,750,905 a month, about US$527; up 23% on 2025

Monthly pay Estimate
US$800 – 1,100; taxed; housing not included

Living costs Estimate
US$500 – 700 a month

Published pay Official
British Council assistants, about COP 3,750,000 a month (US$1,128)

Read it as. Colombia is where an offer can be tested most fully. The estimate of US$800 to US$1,100 is 1.5 to 2.1 times the minimum wage, and the British Council's assistant allowance is 2.1 times. Listening (447) is the weakest skill read, 73 points below reading. The score barely moved in 2026, up 1 point to 481, four below the global average. English UK records Colombian study travel down 28% in 2024. The visa line is an estimate: a work visa, with a TEFL qualification preferred and a degree not required.

Check before you accept.

- The monthly figure in pesos and the hours it covers, against COP 1,750,905.
- Whether the transport allowance is paid on top.
- Who applies for the work visa and who pays for it.

Not found for this edition. Official visa rules at source; the 2027 minimum wage, which Colombia normally sets at the end of December; hours and tax.

Read more from the Institute. Cost of living in Colombia for English teachers

Mexico

Lowest EF score of the seven; two minimum wage zones; the visa rule read at source

EF EPI 2026 Survey
431 · rank 96 of 117 · -9 on 2025 · very low band

Skills
Not read reliably for this edition

Minimum wage (secondary reading)
MXN 9,582.47 a month, about US$528; up 13% on 2025

Border zone (secondary reading)
MXN 440.87 a day, about US$739 a month

Monthly pay
No figure found

Work visa Official
Temporary resident with permission to work; the employer applies first

Read it as. Mexico scores 431, in EF's very low band and 54 points below the global average, after a fall of 9 points. On that measure it has the most ground to cover of the seven. The visa route is clear and starts with the employer, which must be registered with the National Migration Institute before it can make an offer. The minimum wage has risen quickly, 13% in 2026, and is 40% higher in the northern border zone.

Check before you accept.

- Whether the school holds an INM employer registration certificate.
- Which wage zone the job is in.
- The monthly figure in pesos against MXN 9,582.47, or the border rate.

Not found for this edition. A pay estimate; EF skill scores; consular fees and processing times.

SECTION 6

Country profiles: Brazil and Chile

The largest country and the highest single national floor. Brazil is the only Portuguese-speaking country profiled and has the widest skills gap read. Chile has the highest national minimum wage of the six countries that set one figure, and two programmes that place English speakers in classrooms.

Brazil

Largest source of study travel; the widest gap between reading and writing

EF EPI 2026 Survey
469 · rank 73 of 117 · -13 on 2025 · low band

Skills Survey
Reading 513, listening 438, writing 373, speaking 418

Minimum wage (secondary reading)
R$1,621 a month, about US$311; up 6.79% on 2025

Monthly pay
No figure found

Study travel
Largest source market in 2024, down 14% (English UK)

Work visa
Not read

Read it as. Brazil fell 13 points to 469 and sits in EF's low band. Its writing score, 373, is the lowest skill score read for this edition and 140 points below its reading score; speaking is 418. English UK names Brazil the largest source market for study travel in 2024. The minimum wage is the second lowest of the seven in dollars, so the regional pay estimate would be 2.6 to 3.5 times the floor, but no pay figure for Brazil itself was found.

Check before you accept.

- The monthly figure in reais against R$1,621.
- Whether the employer sponsors a work visa; the rule was not read.
- Whether Portuguese is expected. The global edition's requirement line mentions Spanish only.

Not found for this edition. A pay estimate; the visa rule; any programme that publishes pay.

Chile

Moderate band and rising; a floor raised in May 2026

EF EPI 2026 Survey
521 · rank 44 of 117 · +4 on 2025 · moderate band

Skills Survey
Reading 566, listening 511, writing 503; speaking not read

Minimum wage (secondary reading)
CLP 553,553 a month, about US$569, from 1 May 2026

Published pay Official
British Council assistants, about CLP 650,000 a month (US$668); page dated 2024 to 2025

Volunteer route
English Opens Doors, Ministry of Education; stipend and host family (secondary reading)

Work visa
Not read

Read it as. Chile rose 4 points to 521, in EF's moderate band. Writing (503) is the weakest of the three skills read, 63 points below reading. The British Council's indicative allowance of CLP 650,000 is 1.2 times the current minimum wage, on a page that describes the 2024 to 2025 posts, so treat it as a past figure. English Opens Doors places volunteers in public schools; the stipend reported for it, CLP 65,000 a month with housing and meals, is a volunteer's allowance and far below the minimum wage.

Check before you accept.

- Whether a post is a job or a volunteer placement.
- The monthly figure in pesos against CLP 553,553.
- The current British Council allowance, on its own page.

Not found for this edition. A pay estimate; the visa rule; the English Opens Doors stipend at source.

SECTION 6

Country profiles: Argentina and Peru

The two highest scores. Argentina is the only country of the seven in EF's high band and has the lowest minimum wage in dollars. Peru rose in a year when the region fell, and raised its minimum wage in October 2026.

Argentina

Highest EF score of the seven; a minimum wage that changes monthly

EF EPI 2026 Survey	Skills Survey	Minimum wage (secondary reading)
563 · rank 26 of 117 · -12 on 2025 · high band	Reading 599, listening 542, writing 556; speaking not read	ARS 398,800 a month, about US$258, from 1 November 2026
December 2026 (secondary reading)	**Monthly pay**	**Work route (secondary reading)**
ARS 406,400	No figure found	Temporary residence as a migrant worker, for someone hired into employment

Read it as. Argentina scores 563, rank 26 of 117, after losing 12 points. Listening (542) is the weakest of the three skills read. The minimum wage rose 17% in pesos between January and November 2026 and is still the lowest of the seven in dollars, about US$258 at the September rate. That makes any dollar comparison for Argentina fragile: the regional pay estimate would be 3.1 to 4.3 times the floor on one day's rate and a different multiple a month later.

Check before you accept.

- The salary in pesos and when it is next reviewed.
- The minimum wage for the month you start, not the figure in this report.
- Who applies for the residence permit.

Not found for this edition. A pay estimate; inflation; the residence rule at source; the minimum wage for February to July 2026.

Peru

Second-highest score; rose in a year the region fell

EF EPI 2026 Survey	Skills Survey	Minimum wage (secondary reading)
523 · rank 42 of 117 · +4 on 2025 · moderate band	Reading 561, listening 489, writing 522, speaking 495	S/1,230 a month, about US$358, from 1 October 2026
Before October (secondary reading)	**Monthly pay**	**Work visa**
S/1,130	No figure found	Not read

Read it as. Peru rose 4 points to 523. Listening (489) is its weakest skill and reading (561) its strongest, a gap of 72 points; EF's fact sheet gives the city of Lima a score of 553. The minimum wage rose to S/1,230 on 1 October 2026 under Supreme Decree 015-2026-TR, and the same decree is reported to provide for a further rise in 2027. Sources read earlier in the year still give S/1,130, which shows how quickly a published figure goes out of date.

Check before you accept.

- The monthly figure in soles against S/1,230, and the 2027 rate once it is confirmed.
- Whether the employer sponsors a work visa; the rule was not read.
- Where the job is: EF's regional scores for Peru range widely.

Not found for this edition. A pay estimate; the visa rule; the date and amount of the 2027 rise at source.

SECTION 6

Country profile: Costa Rica, and the rest of the region

> **The largest fall and the highest floor.** Costa Rica lost 28 points in EF's 2026 index, more than any other country read, and has the highest minimum wage in dollars of the seven, set by occupation.

Costa Rica

Minimum wages by occupation; a 28-point fall in EF's index

EF EPI 2026 Survey 488 · rank 64 of 117 · -28 on 2025 · low band	Skills Not read reliably for this edition	Lowest minimum wage (secondary reading) CRC 373,092.30 a month, about US$823; generic unskilled rate
Teacher's category Not read; skilled and professional categories are higher	Monthly pay No figure found	Work visa Not read

Read it as. Costa Rica fell from 516 to 488. It remains three points above the global average. EF names it among the three countries with the widest gap between men and women. Its wage floor works differently from the other six: the Ministry of Labour publishes a schedule of minimums by occupation, and the figure here is the lowest line on it. A teacher's legal minimum is whichever category the job falls under, which this edition did not read. The bottom of the regional pay estimate, US$800, is below even the lowest line at the September 2026 rate.

Check before you accept.

- Which occupational category the contract names, and the minimum for it.
- The monthly figure in colones against that minimum.
- Whether the employer sponsors a work permit; the rule was not read.

Not found for this edition. A pay estimate; the occupational category for teachers; EF skill scores; the visa rule.

The rest of the region

Country	What was read	Source
Honduras	Up 74 points in EF's index since 2019, the long-term gain EF singles out for the region	EF launch release, 18 November 2026
Ecuador, Uruguay and others	Nothing for this edition	Not read

Reading across the seven profiles

- **Every profile has a floor and a proficiency score.** Those two figures were found for all seven countries.
- **One profile has a pay estimate.** Colombia. Two have published programme pay: Colombia and Chile.
- **One profile has a visa rule read at source.** Mexico. Four have no visa line at all.
- **The gaps are the same in most countries:** pay, cost of living, working hours and tax.

The Institute's guide to qualifications covers Ecuador as well as the seven countries here: Best TEFL certification for Latin America. For where to live and work, see Top destinations to teach English in South America and Teach English in South America.

SECTION 7

Qualifications employers can verify

> **Which TEFL qualification can an employer in Latin America check?** A regulated one. A qualification on the Ofqual Register of Regulated Qualifications carries a number that any employer, consulate or verification service can search. That matters where a degree is not usually required, because the TEFL qualification is then the main document a teacher has to show.

CANONICAL DATA BLOCK · REGULATED QUALIFICATION REFERENCES

Qualification	Number	Level	Guided learning	Total qualification time	Awarding organisation
Level 5 Diploma in TEFL	610/1571/4	RQF Level 5	180 hours	382 hours	Highfield Qualifications, RN5219
Level 5 Advanced Diploma in TEFL	610/1573/8	RQF Level 5	300 hours	542 hours	Highfield Qualifications, RN5219

Confirmed by hand against the Ofqual Register of Regulated Qualifications on 1 September 2026 for the global edition. The two diplomas are separate specifications and are not to be combined.

Where Level 5 sits

The Regulated Qualifications Framework (England) runs from Level 1 to Level 8.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	**Level 5**	Level 6	Level 7	Level 8

A framework level describes the demand of a qualification; it is not a statement that any employer or country recognises it.

What employers in the region ask for

Requirement	As compiled for the global edition
TEFL qualification	120 hours, preferred
Degree	Not usually required
Background check	Varies
Spanish	Helpful

Estimate Compiled March 2026 from provider guidance; not official rules.

What the data in this report suggests a course should cover

- **Speaking, listening and writing.** Reading is the strongest skill in all five countries with skill scores. Of the skills read, listening is weakest in Colombia, Peru and Argentina and writing is weakest in Brazil and Chile.
- **A wide range of levels.** The seven countries span EF's high, moderate, low and very low bands.
- **Business English.** The global edition names it first among the region's demand drivers.

What a TEFL qualification is not, in this region

- **It is not a work visa.** Mexico's rule, the one read at source, turns on the employer's authorisation from the migration institute. The teacher shows a document proving the ability to do the work.
- **It is not a guarantee of pay.** No source read for this edition links pay to the level or hours of a qualification.

What is not claimed. The global edition withdrew the statement that Level 5 is "recognised across 39 countries", because no source supports it as a claim about employers. This edition makes no claim that any Latin American employer, ministry or consulate recognises or accepts a particular qualification. It states what can be verified: the register entry, the hours and the framework level.

SECTION 8

What to watch in 2027

What will change for teachers in Latin America in 2027? Mostly the floor. Colombia normally sets its minimum wage for the coming year at the end of December, Peru's October decree is reported to provide for a further rise, Argentina's wage council sets new steps through the year, and the next EF index will show whether the 2026 decline continues. None is a forecast; each is a published date, a reported provision or an open question.

Date	What	Status	Who it affects
Late December 2026	Colombia: minimum wage for 2027	Expected; not set when this report was read	Anyone starting in Colombia from January
1 January 2027	Mexico and Brazil: both changed their minimum wage on 1 January 2026	2027 rates not read	Anyone starting in either country
During 2027	Peru: a further rise in the minimum wage	Reported as provided for in Supreme Decree 015-2026-TR; date and amount not read at source	Teachers on contracts set against S/1,230
Monthly	Argentina: wage council steps	ARS 406,400 from December 2026; 2027 steps not read	Anyone paid in pesos
1 February (2024 date)	British Council language assistant applications	The 2027 deadline was not read; a university notice gave 1 February for the 2024 round	Applicants for Colombia, Chile and Argentina posts
November 2027	Next EF English Proficiency Index	Expected; EF has published each November	Shows whether Costa Rica's 28-point fall and the regional decline continue

Seven checks before you accept an offer in Latin America

#	Check	Where in this report
1	What is the monthly figure in local currency, and for how many hours a week?	Section 4, checking an offer
2	How does it compare with the legal minimum wage for the month you start?	Section 4, the legal floor
3	Is the salary reviewed during the contract? Three of seven floors changed after January in 2026.	Section 4, currency
4	If a dollar figure is quoted, which rate and which date?	Section 4, currency
5	Who applies for the work visa or permit, and is the employer registered to do so?	Section 5
6	Is the post a job, an assistant placement or a volunteer placement?	Section 4, pay
7	Can the employer verify your qualification on a public register?	Section 7

Four things this report expects to be asked and cannot answer

- **What does a teacher in Mexico, Brazil, Chile, Argentina, Peru or Costa Rica earn?** No figure was found that could be sourced.
- **What does it cost to live there?** The global edition has an estimate for Colombia only.
- **When do employers hire?** No dated source for hiring seasons was read for this edition.
- **Is it safe to go?** That is a question for your own government's travel advice, which changes and should be read on the day you decide.

Next edition. Gaps recorded for follow-up: pay for six countries; skill scores for Mexico and Costa Rica and speaking scores for three more; work visa rules at source for six countries; the legal working week and statutory extras; the teacher's wage category in Costa Rica; tax; market exchange rates on the day of reading; Ecuador and Uruguay.

SECTION 9

Methodology

This edition was compiled by the Research Team at The TEFL Institute. It is the Latin America edition of The State of TEFL 2027 and uses the same three-part basis as the global edition: official, market estimate, and survey or derived. Every figure is marked with one of them.

What was read for this edition, on 19 November 2026

Dataset	Read from	Primary or secondary
EF English Proficiency Index 2026: scores and ranks for seven countries; skill scores for five; regional findings	EF 2026 report, EF country pages and fact sheets (ef.com); EF launch release of 18 November 2026	Primary, read from search extracts
EF English Proficiency Index 2025: scores and ranks for the same countries	EF 2025 report and fact sheets	Primary, as above
Minimum wages, six countries	Named payroll, finance and news sites that cite the decree, law or resolution	Secondary
British Council language assistant pay, Colombia and Chile	British Council destination pages	Primary
Fulbright English Teaching Assistant award, Colombia	Fulbright US Student Program country page	Primary; the currency of the stipend was not captured
English Opens Doors stipend, Chile	A course provider's guide	Secondary
Mexico: temporary resident visa on a job offer	Mexican foreign ministry consular pages	Primary
Argentina: temporary residence as a migrant worker	A general migration guide	Secondary
Exchange rates, 30 September 2026	US Treasury Reporting Rates of Exchange: the report for three currencies, a tabulation of it for four	Primary and secondary

What was carried forward from the global edition

The Ofqual register references (confirmed by hand 1 September 2026); Market.us market figures (checked 1 November 2026); Colombia's 2026 minimum wage, read at the decree; English UK's study travel figures for 2024; and the March 2026 compilation of regional and Colombian pay, cost-of-living, visa and requirement estimates, which has not been re-verified and is labelled as an estimate wherever it appears.

Derived figures

- Change in EF score from 2025 to 2026, distance from the global average, and the gap between the strongest and weakest skill read.
- US dollar conversions, at the US Treasury reporting rates of 30 September 2026.
- Multiples of the minimum wage: a pay estimate or a published allowance divided by the floor.
- Mexico's monthly border-zone figure, scaled from the daily rate in the same proportion as the general rate.
- The percentage rise in Argentina's minimum wage, January to November 2026.
- Each is arithmetic on published or estimated figures, labelled as derived, and should be recomputed from the sources before being quoted as a statistic.

Limits

- **Six of seven minimum wages are secondary readings.** They were read on named pages that cite the legal instrument, not in the official gazettes. Peru's October 2026 rise appears in the two most recent sources read and not in older ones.
- **One country has a pay estimate; six have none.** The gaps are stated, not filled.
- **Skill scores are incomplete.** They were read from search extracts of EF's report. Mexico's and Costa Rica's could not be read reliably and are left out; speaking was read for two countries.
- **The exchange rates are quarterly reporting rates,** seven weeks old on the day of reading, and the pay estimate they are compared with is from March 2026.
- **EF scores are a self-selected sample.** They describe adults who took an EF test.
- **The Chile allowance is from a page describing 2024 to 2025 posts.**
- **No original survey.** No figure comes from a survey by the Institute or from the Institute's own customer data.
- **Not legal, tax or immigration advice.** Rules change and this report records what was read on a stated date.

Corrections. This edition uses the EF 2026 index; the global edition cites EF 2025 and is being updated. Later corrections will be recorded on the Institute's editorial standards page, and the web version of this report is the version of record.

SECTION 10

Sources, citation and disclosure

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How to cite this report. The TEFL Institute, The State of TEFL 2027: Latin America, published November 2026, teflinstitute.com/teflinstitute-com-research-state-of-tefl-2027. New datasets read 19 November 2026; qualification references confirmed 1 September 2026; market estimates compiled March 2026 and labelled as estimates.

Related guides from the Institute

This report is a data report on pay, minimum wages and visas. For where to live and work, see Top destinations to teach English in South America and Teach English in South America. For what each country accepts, see Best TEFL certification for Latin America.

About The TEFL Institute

The TEFL Institute (teflinstitute.com) is a TEFL course provider. Its Level 5 Diploma in TEFL and Level 5 Advanced Diploma in TEFL are regulated qualifications awarded by Highfield Qualifications and listed on the Ofqual Register of Regulated Qualifications. The Institute publishes The Hire Wire, a fortnightly report on TEFL hiring, and The State of TEFL, its annual market report, of which this is the Latin America edition.

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