



TESL MEd Student Handbook

2024–2025

Teaching and Learning English as a Second Language
Faculty of Education



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Welcome!

Welcome to the TESL program at the University of Alberta. This handbook describes the program and explains the procedures for successfully completing it. It is expected that all students and faculty in the program will keep this handbook as their major source of reference to the program. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the most recent copy of the handbook.

The person ultimately responsible for making sure that you know all the requirements for completion of your degree is you. The purpose of this handbook is to provide current information concerning the steps you must take to fulfill those requirements.

This handbook attempts to alert graduate students to the requirements for successful completion of their studies. Nevertheless, regulations of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS) are imposed by, interpreted by, and enforced by that Faculty, and our handbook is only a supplementary guide.

This handbook is only one of a number of documents with which students and faculty should be familiar. The contents of the following resources should be reviewed as well:

University of Alberta Calendar (<https://calendar.ualberta.ca>)

- Ensure that the current academic year has been selected

Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
(<https://www.ualberta.ca/graduate-studies/index.html>)

Funding of Graduate Students
(<https://www.ualberta.ca/graduate-studies/awards-and-funding/index.html>)

Faculty of Education - Education Student Services
(<https://www.ualberta.ca/education/student-services/graduate-students/index.html>)

Graduate Students Association
(<https://www.ualberta.ca/graduate-students-association/index.html>)

TESL Program Mandate

The purpose of the program is to provide people interested in teaching English as a second language (ESL) with the appropriate theoretical background and practical experience to teach English in Canada and overseas. Our students include experienced teachers and individuals new to ESL.

Program Description

The TESL Program is designed to provide for the development of competent teachers who have solid academic and research orientations and who are able to adapt to changing and diversifying roles of ESL teachers.

Our program emphasizes the importance of an understanding of both instructional and research principles. We feel that teachers must be helped to continue with their own professional development, and the best way we can do that is to not only introduce them to current research and theoretical models, but also to help them understand how to ask questions about the behaviours they observe in their classrooms, and to explore the possible ways in which those questions might be addressed.

The Faculty in the TESL program are active researchers who have ongoing contact within classrooms, and whose work is published in journals such as *Applied Linguistics*, *Canadian Modern Language Review*, *Language Learning*, *Language Testing*, *Modern Language Journal*, *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, *System*, *TESL Canada Journal*, *TESOL Journal* and *TESOL Quarterly*.

Course List: Master's of Education in TESL

Foundational Knowledge Courses

Upon examination of applicants' previous coursework, additional courses for important enrichment may be recommended (e.g., LING 101, EDPY 417, 516, 568). When registering for LING 101 or EDPY 417, students must request a message from their Advisor that confirms they have completed the prerequisites (or equivalents) for the class(es) they are requesting to be enrolled in and send their request to register to educ.info@ualberta.ca. Once they're registered, students must complete a [Course Extra to Degree](#) form (click the hyperlink). Then the completed Course Extra to Degree form must be signed by the student's advisor, forwarded to essgrad1@ualberta.ca and signed by a faculty representative, who will submit the form to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for approval.

LING 101: Introduction to Linguistic Analysis

An introduction to the central concepts of linguistics: linguistic categories and structure (phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics).

EDPY 417: Grammar of English for Teachers of Adults ESL

The aim of this course is to develop students' explicit knowledge of English grammar, which

provides the conceptual basis for grammar instruction. Emphasis will be placed on developing students' ability to provide explanations of the most important grammar rules for adult ESL and to design grammar focused activities.

EDPY 516: Foundations in English Language Teaching

This course includes a synopsis of theories and principles of second language learning, a historical overview of second language teaching, and an examination of cognitive and affective factors affecting learners' acquisition. Features of the learning context will also be discussed. Priority given to EDPY TESL Diploma, MEd, and PhD students. Students from other programs require consent of the TESL program. Students cannot receive credit for both EDPY 416 and EDPY 516.

EDPY 568: English Language Teaching Principles and Methodologies

Students will learn how to respond to adult ESL/EAL students' learning needs using current English language teaching principles and techniques, design lesson plans, evaluate resources, and assess learner progress. Priority given to EDPY TESL Diploma, MEd, and PhD students. Students from other programs require consent of the TESL program. Students cannot receive credit for both EDPY 418 and EDPY 568.

Required Courses

EDPY 500: Introduction to Data Analysis in Educational Research (or equivalent)

This course introduces students to data exploration, statistical analysis and interpretation. Students will also be introduced to the use of the computer for conducting statistical analyses. This course is intended to help students critically assess research in TESL and SLA.

EDPY 503: Qualitative Methods of Education Research (or equivalent)

An introduction to the theoretical perspectives, principles, processes, and methods of qualitative research. Prerequisite: EDPY 501 or equivalent.

Note: Students can take either EDPY 500 or EDPY 503 to fulfill program requirements; however, EDPY 503 may not be offered every year.

EDPY 501: Introduction to Methods of Educational Research

This course will introduce students to the fundamental concepts, principles, and techniques employed in educational and psychological research. The course also provides partial fulfillment of graduate ethics requirements.

EDPY 575: TESL Supervised Practicum

This course requires a minimum of 25 hours of participation, including 10 hours of full classroom responsibility at a local adult ESL institution.

EDPY 903: TESL Research Project

The objective of this course is to conduct practical research that will be of interest to the wider ESL teaching community. The students will demonstrate the ability to conduct independent research, synthesize information from different sources, and present it in a clear, user-friendly manner. Prerequisites: EDPY 501, and EDPY 500 or EDPY 503.

INT D 710: Ethics and Academic Citizenship (To be taken in the first term)

This [online](#), self-paced 6-hour course provides foundational knowledge of ethical principles and relevant university policies, including: academic integrity, plagiarism, research ethics, conflict of

interest, workplace ethics, and health. There are no instructional fees associated with this course. Course completion will appear on the student's transcript.

Note: Completion of EDPY 501 is also needed to fulfill the [Ethics and Academic Citizenship Requirement](#). For additional information about INT D 710 Ethics and Academic Citizenship and how to register, students should refer to the GPS website.

Elective courses

Students must complete at least five (i.e., 15 credits) 500-level (i.e., graduate) TESL option courses from the following¹:

EDPY 573: Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL)

This course acquaints students with a wide variety of CALL opportunities available for the ESL classroom; presents guidelines for evaluating CALL resources; and provides a framework for the effective integration of CALL into the ESL curricula.

Foundational Knowledge Course: EDPY 568.

EDPY 578: Teaching English for Academic Purposes (EAP)

This course will provide students with an overview of the theoretical principles, issues, and research related to teaching English for Academic Purposes, along with their implications for the adult, advanced proficiency EAP classroom.

Foundational Knowledge Course: EDPY 568.

EDPY 581: Psychological Aspects of Bilingualism and Bilingual Education

This course is an introduction to the study of bilingualism. Topics to be covered include: definitions of bilingualism; early childhood bilingualism; effectiveness of bilingual education; diglossia; and language loss.

Foundational Knowledge Course: LING 101.

EDPY 585: Teaching and Learning Grammar in Second Language Education

The objective of this course is to explore how a focus on grammar can be integrated into the communicative approach to language teaching.

Foundational Knowledge Courses: EDPY 417, 516 & 568.

EDPY 587: Teaching and Researching ESL Learning Strategies

This course provides students with the knowledge and skills to increase second language learners' metacognitive awareness and their knowledge and use of language learning strategies. Topics covered include helping learners plan, monitor and evaluate their language learning; and teaching listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar, retrieval, rehearsal, communication, translation, and test-taking strategies. Issues related to researching and assessing second language learning and use strategies are also explored.

Foundational Knowledge Course: EDPY 516.

¹ Not all of these elective courses are available every year; they are offered in rotation. Other courses not listed here may also be offered from time to time. Also, options from outside the TESL program will be available only with the written approval of the student's TESL advisor.

EDPY 588: Teaching English as an International Language

In order to decide what to teach and how to teach English in a foreign language setting, the teacher must have a clear understanding of the socio-cultural, political, and educational factors that influence pedagogical decisions. In this course relevant concepts from language planning, sociolinguistics and classroom research are explored.

Foundational Knowledge Course: LING 101.

EDPY 590: Classroom Research Issues in Second Language Learning

This course provides deeper coverage of some of the theoretical issues in second language acquisition that are introduced in other courses. Topics include: different approaches to research in the language classroom, the effectiveness of form-focused instruction and of strategy training, and the impact of learner characteristics.

Foundational Knowledge Course: EDPY 516.

EDPY 591: Teaching Literacy and Reading to ESL Learners

This course is an introduction to selected theories and factors that affect the teaching of reading to ESL learners, both those who are limited in their L1 literacy and highly educated individuals.

Practical approaches to reading instruction will be a focus of the course.

Foundational Knowledge Courses: LING 101 & EDPY 516.

EDPY 593: ESL Assessment and Evaluation

This course deals with the basic principles of assessment of ESL students' language development. Students will learn the basics of test design, in addition to learning about standardized tests such as the TOEFL. They will also gain an understanding of the Canadian Language Benchmarks.

Foundational Knowledge Course: LING 101.

EDPY 594: Teaching Pronunciation to ESL Learners

In this course the students will become acquainted with the main research associated with second language pronunciation acquisition and instruction and the sociolinguistic features of accent.

Foundational Knowledge Courses: LING 101 & EDPY 516.

EDPY 595: Settlement/Adjustment Issues for ESL Immigrants to Canada

In this course students will examine the factors external to the ESL classroom that affect both ESL students and teachers. Immigration policy, federal and provincial funding policies, curriculum issues, and cultural influences will be explored.

EDPY 597: Selected Topics in Teaching English as a Second Language

These courses provide study in greater depth of a variety of issues related to second language acquisition, among them second language learning and teaching, learner language, and individual differences.

EDPY 575: Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) Supervised Practicum

This practicum is designed to provide EDPY TESL Master's students with an opportunity to observe and teach in an established ESL program for adults.

Practicum Guidelines (EDPY 575)

The minimum number of hours in the practicum is 25, with no fewer than 10 hours of full responsibility for teaching an adult ESL class. Students are encouraged to spend more time in

their placement, if possible. Note that students' practicum placements are determined by the TESL program practicum facilitator. Students should be aware that many hours of preparation are necessary in addition to the actual class contact time. They should take this into account in planning their term schedules.

Students are encouraged to keep clear at least three consecutive mornings per week to accommodate their practicum. The timing of the practicum will vary, depending on the individual placement. Details will be provided at the first practicum meeting. Note that the practicum course (EDPY 575) includes 25 supervised hours in an adult ESL classroom.

- Effective September 2017, TESL Canada Professional Standard Three certification requires a 50-hour practicum in a supervised adult ESL/EFL classroom (30 hours of classroom observation + 20 hours of supervised individual practice teaching). Therefore, those students who wish to apply for TESL Canada certification will need to enroll in an additional practicum course (EDPY 599) or see the [TESL Canada Instructor Certification Manual](#) (available from the [TESL Canada Website, tesl.ca](#)) for alternative potential options.

TESL Capping Project Guidelines (EDPY 903)

The primary goal of the capping project (CP) is for students to demonstrate their in-depth knowledge and practical expertise in a specific area of the TESL/TEFL discipline. The CP should build on students' prior learning/coursework in a meaningful and productive way. Identifying a topic, developing a proposal, and completing a capping exercise are intellectually demanding and labour intensive activities. Students must situate their CP in a suitable theoretical framework that provides the rationale for their work, whether they conduct a teaching-oriented or a research-oriented CP. Examples of CPs include (but are not limited to) research translation projects such as materials development or curriculum development, conceptual analyses, integrative literature reviews with recommendations for practice, or materials evaluations. The CP will demonstrate the student's ability to create an original piece of scholarly work, synthesize information from different sources, and present it in a clear, concise, user-friendly manner.

NOTE: Please ensure that you are going to be able to finish the project within your last two terms in the program. No extensions will be granted beyond April.

The projects will be approximately 25 pages in length. Examples are available from your advisors. The range of capping project topics undertaken by TESL students is very broad (see [examples](#)). Many students have presented their work at conferences and/or published reports of their research in TESL publications.

Graduation

On Completion of all requirements

At the completion of the program, students must apply online for graduation. There are two convocations each year, normally held in June and November. Students must apply for graduation on Bear Tracks in accordance with the deadlines published in the Academic Schedule. Students are responsible for the application process and for ensuring that deadlines are met.

Note: All applications for convocation are subject to review and approval by the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research. Applying to graduate on Bear Tracks does not guarantee convocation.

Discipline and Professional Conduct

In addition to the [Code of Student Behaviour](#), the TESL Program endorses the ethical guidelines of the Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language (ATESL). Students in the program should familiarize themselves with these standards. The ATESL documents are available at <https://www.atesl.ca/resources/ethical-guidelines/>.

The program encourages students to become student members of ATESL (<https://www.atesl.ca/>) and other professional organizations (e.g., ESL-C [<http://www.eslcata.com>] of the Alberta Teachers' Association) as a way to learn more about current issues in the field.

Because of its support for the codes of ethics and guidelines documents of the university and professional associations, the TESL Program takes very seriously any allegations of unprofessional or unethical student conduct. Allegations will be investigated and findings will be taken into account in decisions concerning a student's continuation in the program.

The TESL program involves working with ESL students. TESL graduate students who are found to be unsuitable for working with ESL students or do not meet the academic standards set by the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies can be asked to withdraw from the program. Graduate students who fail the practicum must have the permission of the Program Coordinator to re-register in the TESL practicum.

Becoming a TESL Professional

By entering a graduate program in TESL, you have taken the first step towards becoming a TESL professional. However, your required coursework is only the first step. A true professional becomes an active participant in the teaching/researching community. The following is a list of activities in which you should be involved over the course of your time here at the University of Alberta:

- attendance at talks relevant to TESL/SLA in Linguistics, Psychology or Modern Languages & Cultural Studies
- membership in ATESL
- attendance at ATESL local meetings
- presentation at an ATESL local meeting
- attendance at the ATESL provincial conference and TESL Canada conferences
- volunteering at the ATESL conference
- presentation at an ATESL provincial conference or faculty colloquium
- attendance at a research conference (e.g., CAAL/ACLA, SLRF, AAAL, TESOL)
- participation in a research project
- submission of an article to a professional newsletter
- volunteering for ATESL at either the local or provincial level
- attendance at TESL Brown Bag seminars
- submission of an article to the TESL Canada Journal or other peer-reviewed journals

- applications for scholarships (full-time students only)
- participation in skill development that may assist you in your teaching (e.g., computer course, Toastmasters, etc.)
- serving on the TESL Student Group executive

Of course you are not expected to do everything on this list, but the more involved you become, the more likely you are to make connections that will be helpful to you in your teaching.

TESL Canada Professional Certification

For information on TESL Canada professional certification, please visit <https://tesl.ca/certification/tesl-canada-professional-certification.html> and contact TESL Canada.

Graduate Student Services

Your advisor does not have the ability to assist you with completing administrative tasks such as manual course registrations or how to enroll in courses on Bear Tracks. However, the Faculty of Education has staff who can assist students with administrative tasks such as registration (edreggrad@ualberta.ca), leaves (essgrad1@ualberta.ca), etc. Please consult the material you received during student orientation to determine the appropriate person to contact for assistance.