

English as a Second Language Services (ESL) at UMSL: Information for Faculty

English as a Second Language Services
560 Clark Hall; phone 516-5186
www.umsl.edu/divisions/artscience/forlanglit/languages/esl.html

Why is it important that faculty be familiar with the ESL services at UM-St. Louis? At some point, almost all faculty members will instruct foreign-born students. Some of these students, who are still developing their English skills, may suffer academically and may rely heavily on peers and the instructor to pass the class. While international students complete an English Diagnostic Exam upon arrival at UMSL, permanent residents usually do not and may not be aware that these courses are available to them. Instructors can refer students to the ESL Coordinator, Denise Mussman, who will arrange appropriate supports for each.

Language Services (available to the UMSL community without charge)

Writing Lab – 409 SSB (314- 516-5950) Reference books, computers and tutorials for every stage of the writing process. No appointment necessary. Open Sunday-Friday.

Writing Workshops – 30 minute lessons on grammar, writing skills and research writing are offered. Contact David Linzee at 516-5950 for more information.

Language Lab – 555 Clark Hall (314-516-6242) Language materials and tutorials in ESL, Japanese, French, Spanish, German and Chinese. For schedule or to make an appointment, call or visit Jim Karlake.

ESL Assessments- 560 Clark Hall. Call 314-516-5186 to make an appointment with the ESL Coordinator. The ESL Diagnostic Test determines levels in writing, grammar, listening and speaking skills.

The ESL Program

The University of Missouri-St. Louis offers thirteen courses in ESL as well as other language services. Our classes are at intermediate and advanced levels. They are designed to improve active English skills and lead to academic success for undergraduate and graduate students. Courses are taken concurrently with regular academic courses and may span more than one semester. All ESL instructors are experienced and have earned MA degrees in teaching and linguistics.

Why would a non-native speaker with strong English skills or a TOEFL score need more help?

Despite strong fluency in English, it is common for a second language speaker to have difficulties with writing, vocabulary, accent, pronunciation or editing for grammar. Recognize that language skills required for success in higher education are often challenging, even for native speakers. In addition, there are cultural differences in how language is used to organize ideas in writing and in presentations, to take turns in conversations, to participate in class discussions, and to convey various teaching methods.

Limitations in language can affect grades, career success, cultural adaptation, and more importantly, the level of confidence one needs to overcome difficulties. In the U.S, seeking help is a sign of strength and recognition; it is not regarded as remedial or as a weakness. Training in language skills provides a lifelong boost.

How does a student or faculty member know which course to take?

At UMSL international students take an English Diagnostic Exam which assesses how a student uses his or her English skills. This test is required for most incoming international students and is highly recommended for permanent residents. Academic departments may require ESL testing and ESL courses of permanent residents and foreign-born faculty. Other tests, such as TOEFL, evaluate receptive skills, such as listening and vocabulary. The test covers note-taking, interpreting ideas, essay writing, editing, and speaking skills. Results show which courses are required, recommended or exempted based on the individual's level in each area as well as his or her needs in the intended course of study.

Graduate students who will instruct undergraduate classes are required to take the International Teaching Assistant (ITA) Seminar or seek exemption from the course before beginning a teaching assignment as the instructor of record.

ESL Courses - All classes are three-credit hours unless indicated

For help with speaking, pronunciation and presentations:

ESL 3201 ESL Listening and Speaking Skills

This intermediate-level course focuses on listening and speaking practice and developing skills needed for everyday situations as well as academic purposes.

ESL 4301 Conversation and Pronunciation – conversational skills, pronunciation and accent work, presentations, cultural excursions, and building fluency.

ESL 4307 Advanced Pronunciation and Accent Reduction, for those who have completed 4301 or are fluent in English – pronunciation, accent reduction, academic speaking activities such as leading and participating in a discussion and giving presentations.

Ideal for graduate students, TAs, and faculty!

ESL 5400 Seminar for International Teaching Assistants – teaching strategies, organizing and delivering presentations, accent reduction, understanding cultural differences in teaching. (This 2-hour class is required of ITAs and is at no charge.)

For help with listening, note-taking and test-taking skills:

ESL 3201 ESL Listening and Speaking Skills

This intermediate-level course focuses on listening and speaking practice and developing skills needed for everyday situations as well as academic purposes. (May be a pre-requisite for ESL 4302)

ESL 4302 Advanced Listening and Note-taking – practice and strategies of note-taking during lectures, recognizing how lectures are organized, vocabulary building and test taking.

For assistance with reading, writing and grammar:

ESL 3203 Intermediate ESL Reading and Writing and
ESL 4303 Advanced ESL Reading and Writing – reading skills (including a novel) and vocabulary, essay writing, organizing ideas, vocabulary, and editing.

English 1110 Freshman Composition for International Students and
English 3110 Advanced Expository Writing for International Students – advanced readings, writing essays and research papers.

ESL 3205 Intermediate ESL Grammar and **ESL 4305 Advanced ESL Grammar** – understanding and using the grammar of American English, including, but not limited to verb tenses and forms, article usage, count/non-count nouns, and sentence structure.

ESL 4603 Research Paper Writing Workshop for International Students -the entire process of writing effective research papers, including getting started, organizing ideas, citing sources and avoiding plagiarism. (2 credit-hour course-may be paid for by Graduate School)

For other linguistic needs:

4390 Special Readings in ESL – Designed for individual tutorials or to meet special needs, such as continued accent reduction, survival English, presentation skills, or test preparation): Make arrangements by contacting the ESL Coordinator.