

Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) Certificate

The **Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) Certificate program** is an 18-credit graduate-level program designed for Wisconsin licensed teachers who wish to expand their expertise to effectively support English learners (ELs) in K–12 settings. The program prepares educators to teach English with intentionality, cultural responsiveness, and a deep understanding of second language acquisition, while fostering inclusive classrooms where students' home languages and cultures are viewed as assets to learning.

Grounded in principles of equity, linguistic diversity, and culturally responsive teaching, the program emphasizes instructional approaches that both support English language development and ensure access to grade-level academic content. Candidates learn to design and implement instruction that builds on students' linguistic and cultural knowledge rather than replacing it, promoting additive bilingualism and academic success.

Coursework and field-based experiences prepare teachers to meet the needs of diverse English learners across grade levels and content areas. Candidates develop practical skills in language development, assessment, collaboration, and instructional adaptation to support multilingual learners in inclusive educational environments.

Aligned with national TESOL standards and Wisconsin Teaching Standards, the program prepares educators to serve as knowledgeable, reflective, and effective practitioners in multilingual classrooms.

Completers of the program are eligible for the Wisconsin English as a Second Language (ESL) license (1395).

Program requirements

Admission

Applicants for admission must:

- Meet all UWL graduate application requirements. (<https://catalog.uwlax.edu/graduate/admissions/#apply>)
- Hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution in education.
- Have an overall undergraduate grade point average of 2.85 or higher on a 4.00 scale.
- Provide a resume that documents at least one year of full-time regular teaching experience in a K-12 classroom and current teaching position in a K-12 classroom.
- Provide evidence of teaching license or certificate (i.e. copy of teaching license).
- Provide documentation of prior learning in a world language other than English.
- Complete a successful criminal background check (initiated by UWL).

Criminal background check

The WI Department of Public Instruction (DPI) requires that candidates for admission to a teacher education, administration, or pupil services

program successfully pass a criminal background check (CBC) as one criterion for admission. By applying for admission to one of these programs, candidates agree to provide the necessary personal information to UWL in order to initiate their CBC and to complete their portion of the process prior to the deadline specified in their admission letter. Program candidates are responsible for all costs associated with their criminal background check(s).

Out-of-state applicants

This program may meet other states' licensing requirements. An applicant's state may or may not require that the applicant get a Wisconsin teaching license to be endorsed for their program of study. The Wisconsin licensing process may include taking coursework in Native American Studies (ACT 31). The applicant should check with their state licensing board prior to applying to ensure they understand the appropriate pathway to meet their state's licensing requirements.

Curriculum

The graduate TESOL Certificate Program is aligned with Wisconsin Teacher Standards (WTS), Wisconsin DPI TESOL Standards, and CAEP/ TESOL (ESL) Standards.

(18 credits)

Code	Title	Credits
ENG 534	Introduction to Linguistics: Theory and Application	3
EDU 610	Second Language Acquisition: Research and Applications	3
EDU 645	Teaching English Learners	3
EDU 680	TESOL Methods I: Language Learning through Content	3
EDU 681	TESOL Methods II: Teaching and Assessing Language	3
EDU 780	TESOL Practicum	3
Total Credits		18

Program completion and eligibility for certification

Eligibility for ESL-English as a Second Language (1395) certification is contingent upon:

- Completion of all Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages Program coursework, associated experiences, and artifacts.
- Cumulative graduate grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher.
- Completed DPI employment verification form (<https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/licensing/f1613.pdf>) indicating at least 3 years of employment as the teacher of record in K-12 schools or hold a WI Lifetime Educator license.