



ONTARIO UNIVERSITY REGISTRARS' ASSOCIATION

2011 Conference

March 6-8 - Deerhurst Resort

Benefits of Studying in the EAP Program at the University of Guelph

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Introduction

- the English Language Certificate Program (ELCP) is an English for academic purposes (EAP) program designed to prepare English language learners for university studies.
- International students choose to study in this program instead of taking one of the standard English proficiency tests (e.g., IELTS or TOEFL) to prove their English proficiency for admission to undergraduate and graduate degree studies at the University of Guelph
- The purpose of this presentation is to discuss the benefits international students gain by studying in this EAP program.

Student Clientele



Students in the ELCP:

- Are 18 years old or older
- Have completed secondary school or undergraduate studies with strong marks
- Have an academic goal to study at the undergraduate or the graduate level
- Approximately 65% of students are from China, 15% from Saudi Arabia, 10% from Japan and Korea, and the remainder from other countries
- Typically 150 students registered in the program each semester



Curriculum

The ELCP is an intensive EAP program.

- Students have 25 hours of class a week, and typically study 15 to 20 hours a week independently doing essays, assignments, preparing presentations, etc.
- Semesters are 14 weeks long, with three semesters offered a year
- Students may enter from beginner level to advanced level. A beginner level student would need to study up to five semesters of English; an advanced level student could complete the program in one semester
- Most students study two to three semesters



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Program Features

- Small classes (typically fewer than 15 students in a class)
- Highly qualified & experienced teachers (most instructors have a masters in teaching English or a masters in applied linguistics plus several years of teaching in an EAP program)
- Conversation practice with university students
- Library access
- Athletic membership
- Help with degree applications
- Wide assortment of socio-culturally-enriching activities



Program Features

- Small classes allow for greater opportunity for individualized feedback
- Students learn the norms and expectations of a Canadian learning environment
- Students who achieve an 80% overall average in the high intermediate level may take one Open Learning course, which gives them the opportunity to experience a university-level course before beginning their undergraduate studies



Certificate of English Proficiency

Successful completion of the Advanced Level earns the Certificate of English Proficiency, which meets the English proficiency requirements for University of Guelph undergraduate and graduate studies, as well as Wilfrid Laurier University (undergraduate studies)

About 20 to 30 Certificate earners enter the University of Guelph each semester after successful completion of the Certificate of English Proficiency.

Proven academic success

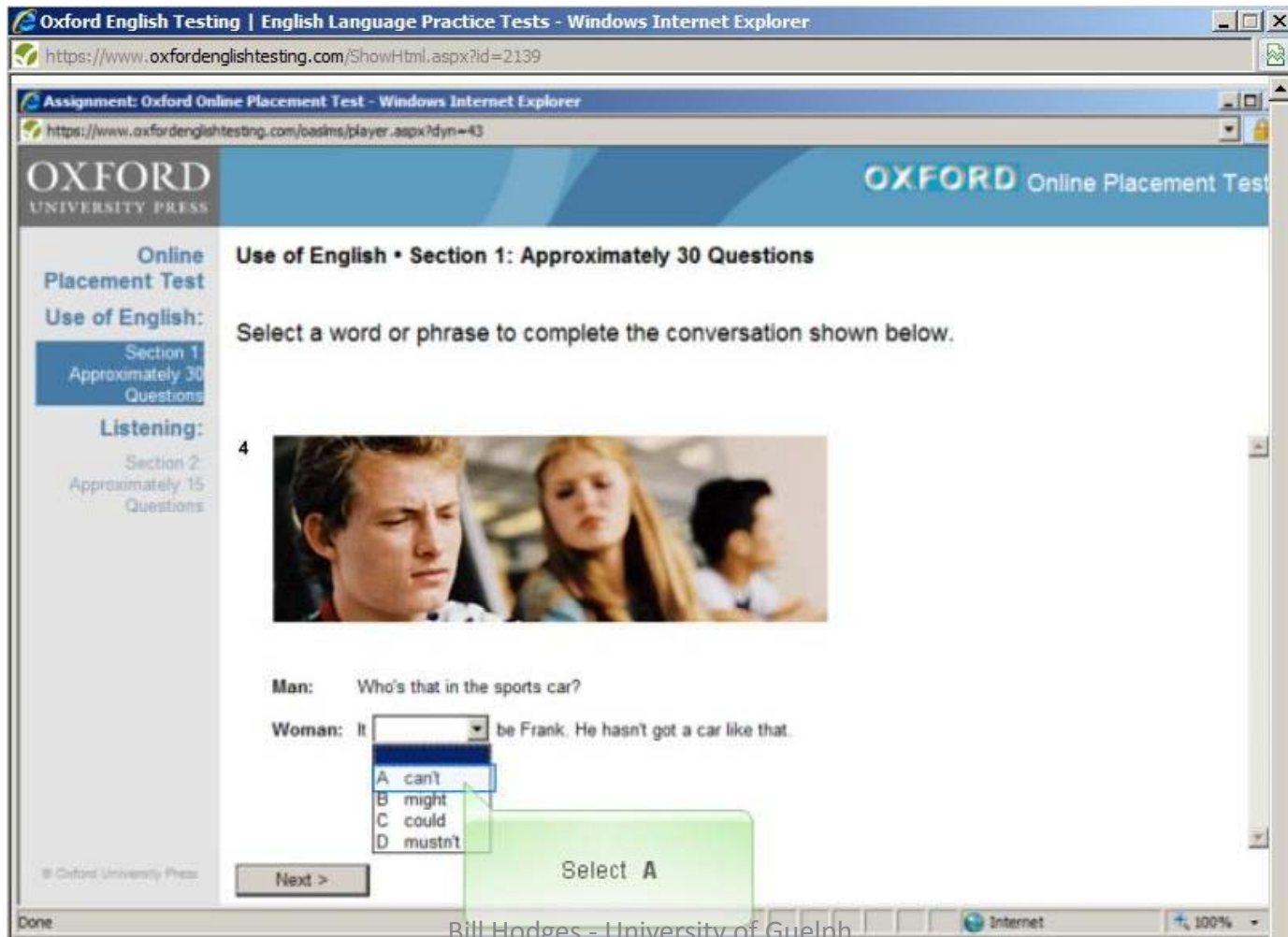
A four year study showed that Certificate earners have achieved marks of B+ or higher in undergraduate and graduate degree programs at University of Guelph.

Average Cumulative Score – ESL	82.12
Average Cumulative Score – Open Learning	81.20
Average Cumulative Score – Degree Undergrad and Grad	79.31
Average Correlation Score	0.96

Placement Testing

- New students entering the program are placed using a combination of two tests, the Oxford online placement test and a timed Written test
- The Oxford online placement test is a multiple choice test that consists of two parts: Use of English and Listening. It provides an overall score that is benchmarked to the Common European Framework of Reference (which can be related to other standardized tests such as IELTS)

Oxford Online Placement Test (OOPT)



The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the Oxford Online Placement Test interface. The browser title is "Oxford English Testing | English Language Practice Tests - Windows Internet Explorer". The address bar shows the URL "https://www.oxfordenglishtesting.com/ShowHtml.aspx?id=2139". The page title is "Assignment: Oxford Online Placement Test - Windows Internet Explorer" with the URL "https://www.oxfordenglishtesting.com/oasims/player.aspx?dyn=43".

The page features the Oxford University Press logo and the text "OXFORD Online Placement Test". A sidebar on the left lists the test sections: "Online Placement Test Use of English: Section 1: Approximately 30 Questions" (highlighted) and "Listening: Section 2: Approximately 15 Questions".

The main content area is titled "Use of English • Section 1: Approximately 30 Questions" and contains the instruction: "Select a word or phrase to complete the conversation shown below." Below this is a video player showing a scene with three people. A question number "4" is visible to the left of the video.

The video shows a man and a woman in a conversation. The man asks, "Who's that in the sports car?" The woman replies, "It be Frank. He hasn't got a car like that." A dropdown menu is open below the blank space, showing the following options: "A can't", "B might", "C could", and "D mustn't". A green box highlights the option "A can't" with the text "Select A" written inside it.

At the bottom of the page, there is a "Next >" button and a copyright notice "© Oxford University Press". The browser status bar at the bottom shows "Done", "Internet", and "100%".

The OOPT

- students answer multiple-choice and/or fill in the blank type questions designed for efficiency
- the OOPT is a computer adaptive test
- it provides a score that places students in a CEFR level (see handout)
- for more information, visit <https://www.oxfordenglishtesting.com/>

Written test for placement

- students have 30 minutes to write an essay in response to a prompt
- the essay is marked holistically and is used primarily as a check for the OOPT; it is also used to help make placement decisions for students on the border between levels.

What can Certificate earners do?

(please see handout) According to the CEFR, students with this level of proficiency can . . .

UNDERSTANDING

- Listening: I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.
- Reading: I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular attitudes or viewpoints. I can understand contemporary literary prose.

What can Certificate earners do?

SPEAKING

- Spoken Interaction: I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. I can take an active part in discussion in familiar contexts, accounting for and sustaining my views.
- Spoken Production: I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest. I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.



What can Certificate earners do?

WRITING

- Writing: I can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to my interests. I can write an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view. I can write letters highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences.

What skills do our learners develop?

The CEFR descriptors describe proficiencies, but not skills. In contrast, the ELCP students develop and practice many of the skills that they will need to be successful at university, such as:

- Critical thinking skills (e.g., analysing text and organizing it in a table, making inferences)
- Research paper writing (e.g., identifying appropriate resources; collecting information and reading texts for summarizing/paraphrasing; synthesizing the information)
- Making formal presentations and/or seminars
- Working collaboratively in pairs (e.g., peer feedback) or in groups (e.g., for group presentations)

What skills do our learners develop?

- Develop time management skills (encouraged by instructors or offered through workshops and individual counselling)
- Become familiar with and understand academic integrity
- An understanding of the academic rigour of university, i.e., the importance of studying and reviewing regularly, the workload expectations (regular assignments, quizzes)
- An understanding of the university 'culture' (e.g., a better understanding of the instructor-student relationship; that students can express reasoned disagreement with authority; that learning is not just instructor-centred)

What skills are needed to achieve a high score in IELTS/TOEFL/etc.?

- A high level of English proficiency
- Good test taking skills; in particular, an ability to quickly respond to test prompts
- Other?

How well do these skills relate to success in university? (The answer may depend on how one defines 'success'.)

Socio-cultural related research – What are their needs?

It's important to recognise that non-native English speakers' biggest challenge is becoming adjusted to social and cultural situations. According to Myles and Cheng (2003, p. 248) the greatest hurdle for many students is “to become acculturated into a new academic and cultural community.” Specific psycho-social challenges may include:

- Making new friends
- Loss of social status
- Understanding the rules that apply in specific social situations

Adapting to a new environment includes understanding a new sociocultural system. Typical sociocultural constructs characteristic to a community include “the value of intellectual property, self-reliance, and the right of individuals to refuse a request” (Hinkel as cited in Myles and Cheng, 2003).

How the ELCP addresses these needs

The ELCP and similar EAP programs help international students improve their understanding of the education culture in which they are undertaking their studies. “This affects many aspects of student performance including, for example:

- how students relate to their lecturers
- how they participate in a seminar
- how they organize their writing to present a logical argument
- their willingness to develop and express their own ideas or to disagree with a lecturer
- how they use resources and acknowledge references, and
- how they fit into the university community.”

Source: <http://www.monash.edu.au/lls/China/learning/ingram2.xml>

Students' feedback on the ELCP

Student feedback has been elicited at the end of every semester. Some selected comments we have received:

- “Now I learned how to write a research paper and different strategies for giving a presentation”
- “I feel more comfortable when I'm talking with native speakers.I'm writting better. Now it is easire to understand what the others are saying. And it is also more easy to read more complex texts.i'm also more alert to grammar”
- “My skills improved in many ways especially in getting familiar with some technical ways of note taking lectures; how to understand, analysis and summarize reading materials; witting academic essay, research papers, and more of what is related to academics.”

Students' feedback on the ELCP

- “Apart from getting prepared for University in English, it creates the opportunity to make friends for new students who come from other country recently. since students are few in number in each class we were able to get familiar with each other soon that create sense of familyhood and sharing of experiences.”
- “The instructors gave me a lot of opportunities to improve our English skills. For example, XX (instructor name) gave us opportunities to do some interesting activities, such as debates. We can involve in them totally.”
- “my writing has become much better and i have gained confidence to go into the undergraduate study.”

Research into students' perspectives of an EAP pathway program

- Most of the research that has been done has examined international students' progress in tertiary rather than EAP pathway programs
- One study conducted in an EAP program in Australia found that readiness to study in university goes well beyond the achievement of a high EP (Dooley, 2010)
- According to Murray and O'Loughlin (2007, p. 10) "preparatory programs that allow for direct entry are meeting the needs of students . . . through a more comprehensive development of English language and academic preparation skills required as opposed to simply gaining a test score minimum."

Course Outlines – Advanced Level

- courses mirror the expectations professors might have in terms of scheduling, due dates, grade breakdown, number of assignments, etc.
- students receive a course outline for each of the five courses, at each of the ten levels
- courses are intensive and students are expected to complete several small assignments each week in addition to one major assignment in each course

Advanced Level Assignments -- Examples

Formal Presentation & Your Participation/Feedback (25%)

You will do a 20-minute Power Point presentation on a topic of your choice that you have researched. This 20-minute presentation should include the following: an introduction, an outline of your presentation, a thesis statement, a body: main points and supporting details, a conclusion of what you have found in your research, full bibliographic details using APA style, and time for your classmates to ask questions and discuss the material you have presented. You should include a handout of your presentation, with the references you used (minimum 3), and discussion questions.

Advanced Level Assignments

Short Report Writing:

You will write a short report based on observations and data that you have recorded over a period of time. Writing the report follows the writing process: outlining, drafting, feedback/editing/revising, and re-drafting. The outline and note cards are worth 7.5% each of your final mark. Each draft of your essay is worth 50% of the final mark. You will receive feedback on your first draft which you are then expected to apply to your second draft.

Advanced Level Assignments

Reading Project

15%


You will be required to read 1 journal article related to your area of academic interest. You will write a summary of the article, a list of field-specific vocabulary, and a critical response to the article.

Listening Journals (25%)

In Week 1, 2, 4, and 5, you will listen to at least one academic listening, approximately 20 minutes in length, in the computer lab. You will take notes of the content and your reaction to it.

Afterwards, you will use your notes to answer a few questions, namely summarize the main points and supporting details and your reaction to what you heard. Then depending on our class time/schedule you may share your answers with a small group of classmates as part of your oral commentary in speaking class.

Samples of resource materials

- scanned examples of texts
- audio samples from lectures and exercises
- Reading textbooks contain selected (abridged at lower level and unabridged at higher levels) readings from university textbooks; assignments at higher levels include requirements to read journal articles for summary and/or critique. Students are also expected to do extensive reading (news articles, magazines, books, etc. for pleasure)
- Listening exercises contain an assortment of listening types (lectures, dialogues, news, etc.). This example is from Level 7 Listening course 



Samples of Exams

- The exams are a component of the final grade (typically 30-40%)
- exams are held during a short exam week at the end of teach term
- Exam questions reflect the kind of task types that students face in their course and textbook work, i.e., multiple choice, fill in the blank, short answer, and discussion question. → see Level 9 Reading exam in handout
- Exams at higher levels include short essay questions → see Level 9 Writing exam in handout



Samples of student work online

Blended learning* options available using D2L


- written posts/peer feedback/essays/etc.
- oral comments/journals/responses/etc. → listen to samples (see handout)
- components accessed online at <http://courses.general.open.uoguelph.ca/>

*Definition: 'The integrated combination of traditional learning with web based on-line approaches' (Oliver and Trigwell 2005: 17)

Samples of student work online – News Journal Assignment (Level 7)

- News Journal Listening Assignment (instructor's handout)
- News Journal Evaluation
- News Journal Feedback (instructor)
- Menglu Li's News Journal (transcribed and feedback provided by Fanyi Wei) 
- For comparison Level 8 student (same assignment) 

Samples of student work online – Oral Commentary (Level 7)

- Oral Commentary Assignment (instructor's handout)
- Oral Commentary Model
- Oral Commentary Evaluation
- Anne's Oral Commentary (audio) 

For further discussion

1. What is your experience working with international applicants? What challenges do you have with assessing applicants' English proficiency based on EP scores alone?
2. Have you any anecdotal evidence of students completing an EAP bridging program similar to Guelph's ELCP? If so, what challenges or successes have these students had?
3. What specific skills (academic and/or sociocultural) would you like to see international skills have before beginning university studies?

In conclusion

- The English Language Certificate Program is an intensive EAP program that prepares students for university by simulating the university experience
- Students who complete the program are able to conduct research, write essays, make presentations, and understand academic integrity
- Students who have completed the Certificate have gone on to succeed in degree studies at the University of Guelph (and Wilfrid Laurier University . . .)



Thank you

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