

Division of Plant Sciences English Language Training Resources and References for International Students

As an international student, you may find that you need assistance in developing your English language skills. Perhaps you wish to serve as a teaching assistant to satisfy the graduate teaching requirement, which is described below. Perhaps, you find that additional training is needed to help you in your classes. The following sections describe the Division teaching requirement, the steps you need to take to become certified to serve as a teaching assistant, and the campus-wide resources to assist you with improving your conversational and written English skills.

There is a Division of Plant Sciences requirement for many graduate students to complete teaching experience. Any graduate student who is completing their Plant, Insect and Microbial Sciences degree in the following Graduate Program Areas must complete the teaching requirement: (1) plant biology & genetics; (2) plant microbiology & pathology; or (3) crop, soil & pest management. Also, any graduate student who is completing a degree under two of the department-based programs must satisfy the teaching requirement: (1) agronomy; or, (2) plant microbiology & pathology.

The teaching requirement may be satisfied in one of several ways:

- (1) Assist your faculty advisor or another Division faculty member as a TA for any Division class. This opportunity is available to students after their first complete semester at MU. As an international student, you must complete the ONITA orientation and the SPEAK test before you may serve as a TA. These steps are explained further below.
- (2) Enroll in PS 9087 and give one extra seminar (beyond what is required for your degree).
- (3) Enroll in another graded seminar series on campus and give a seminar. In this case, you must provide the title of the seminar and the abstract of your seminar to the Director of Graduate Studies before you speak. The extra seminar can't be a duplicate of one given in the PS 9087 class.
- (4) Prepare and deliver an extension program. If you elect to satisfy the requirement in this way, approval by the Director of Graduate Studies is required before the presentation.

INTERNATIONAL TEACHING ASSISTANT PROGRAM (ITAP)

1. Introduction to ITAP

ITAP offers both language assessments and Orientations for New International Teaching Assistants (ONITA). General information about ITAP may be found at this web page:

<http://gradschool.missouri.edu/student-development/college-teaching/international-teaching-assistants/>

2. TA Orientation and the Speak Test

The ONITA orientation sessions are offered ONLY before Fall and Spring semesters. It is a three-day orientation. Visit this web page to find out about requirements, dates and other details:

<http://gradschool.missouri.edu/student-development/college-teaching/international-teaching-assistants/teaching-development/orientation.php>

If you miss the ONITA orientation for a semester in which you need to serve as a TA, you must first take the Speak Test to test your English abilities. The Speak Test is administered by the ITAP office and provides an evaluation of your English language skills in order to advise faculty about the level of your participation in class. The Speak Test is administered at Rock Bridge High School here in Columbia. If you do not have transportation, the bus schedule is at the bottom of the page on:

<http://gradschool.missouri.edu/student-development/college-teaching/international-teaching-assistants/policy-assessment/language-assessment-registration.php>

In order to register for the Speak Test, you need to complete the Oral Presentation Form and the Personal Data Sheet. Take the completed forms with you to Rock Bridge High School. The forms are located at

<http://gradschool.missouri.edu/student-development/college-teaching/international-teaching-assistants/policy-assessment/language-assessment-registration.php>

The Speak Test Registration form may be found at:

<http://gradschool.missouri.edu/student-development/college-teaching/international-teaching-assistants/policy-assessment/>

After attending the Speak Test, you must prepare an OPT Exam (Oral Proficiency Test) which is described at this web page:

<http://gradschool.missouri.edu/student-development/college-teaching/international-teaching-assistants/language-development/assessment-prepare.php>

To prepare for the OPT exam, you will need to ask a faculty member, two students (freshmen preferably), the ITAP representative and yourself to meet at a mutually agreeable location. You must prepare a 5-7 minute presentation. The purpose of this evaluation is to make sure that students can comprehend and ask questions of their understanding of the subject of your presentation..

3. *English Language Courses Offered by ITAP*

ITAP also offers courses to assist International students with improving their English language skills. The application form as well as course descriptions are found at this web site:

<http://gradschool.missouri.edu/student-development/college-teaching/international-teaching-assistants/language-development/courses.php> .

The ITAP courses are:

1. ELSP 004, Oral Communication

ELSP 0400 emphasizes the development of intelligibility in spoken English. Through individual, pair and group activities in both formal and informal contexts, students work on improving pronunciation, delivering oral presentations, and practicing discussion techniques. Each student also meets one-on-one with the course instructor to work on individual pronunciation problems (including specific sounds, word stress, sentence rhythm and intonation). This is a regularly offered course with admittance based on the consent of the ELSP program director, who determines the appropriateness of the student's enrollment in the course. ITA screening is not a prerequisite for enrollment.

Graduate students who have scored an NR or 1 on the ITA screening test should be advised to enroll in the summer IEP, where they will receive more hours of language training, addressing a broader range of problem areas and providing more intensive practice.

The ELSP 0400 course is graded on an S/U basis and appears on a student's university transcript as a three-credit-hour course; however, the credit hours do not count toward fulfilling graduation requirements. The course meets five days per week for two hours each day. For Summer 2008, the course met M-F, 8:40-10:30 a.m., from June 10 to July 25. In order to register for the course, students obtained a permission number from the ELSP office (208 McReynolds Hall).

For more information on the ELSP 0400 course, please contact:

Irene Juzkiw
Director of the ELSP
Phone: 882-7523
Email: juzkiwi@missouri.edu

2. EdLPA 7302, Tools for Teaching American Students, (Fall & Spring)
3. EdLPA 7303, Communication and Culture for American College Teaching (Fall & Spring)
4. EdLPA 9437 Instructional and Communication Strategies for Effective College Teaching (Fall & Spring)

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT ANY ENGLISH TRAINING CLASSES WHICH REQUIRE PAYMENT OF TUITION WILL NOT BE COVERED BY YOUR FEE WAIVER, IF YOU HAVE ONE.

4. *Other Training Resources Offered by ITAP*

Other resources and training listed on the ITAP site can be found at:

<http://gradschool.missouri.edu/student-development/college-teaching/international-teaching-assistants/language-development/community-resources.php>

THE LEARNING CENTER WRITING LAB

The Learning Center Writing Lab offers free, fifty-minute writing consultations for graduate students. Graduate may come in for help with short papers, seminar reports, letters or vitas. Make same day appointments at 882-2496 at the Student Success Center.

ELSP (English Language Support Program)

You may wish to take an intensive English Program for a semester. Just remember that the costs must be incurred by the student.

INTENSIVE ENGLISH PROGRAM (IEP)

Each summer, MU offers two English language programs designed to help international graduate students improve their ability to communicate in English. A number of international graduate students have enrolled in these summer programs and found them to be very helpful. Students who plan to take the ITA screening test administered by ITAP or who have had difficulty passing the test may find these programs to be especially useful.

Most graduate students have little free time to improve their English during fall and spring semesters. Consequently, a department that has a student with a low score on the ITA screening test may find the summer, when students are likely to have more free time, to be a very good time for the student to work intensively on improving his or her command of English.

The curriculum and activities of the special section are designed to be relevant to all international graduates with deficiencies in their oral/aural skills. Areas of emphasis are presentation skills, pronunciation, intonation, listening, academic and field-specific vocabulary, idioms, functions of English, and oral grammar. There are a minimum of twenty-five hours of instruction per week, each student meeting with five instructors daily. The class size is kept small (about 10 students) so that the faculty can meet frequently with the students one-on-one to provide feedback. The course is very time and labor intensive for the students. Students are expected to spend two to four hours each evening preparing for the classes. Since the course is so intensive, students are

not permitted to be concurrently enrolled in other MU classes, and it is strongly recommended that they not have other major demands on their time.

Admission to the special IEP section is open to all international graduate students although priority is given to those who have had an assistantship at MU or who wish to pass the ITA screening offered by ITAP. (Some graduate departments encourage newly accepted students to consider enrolling in the summer session even if they have already met MU's English language requirement because the departments believe the program helps the students be more successful in their graduate studies.) Especially good candidates for the special IEP section are those who have taken the ITA screening tests and received scores of 1 or 2.

Fees and Waiver of Non-resident Portion of Fees

The non-resident fees for the Summer 2008 session (including the education, student activity, recreation facility, information technology, and health fees) was \$2,600.

As a service to MU's graduate departments, the IEP will waive the non-resident portion of the summer IEP education fee for students who have had and will have assistantships. In order to be eligible for a waiver of the non-resident portion of the summer session IEP fees, the student must ask the department to confirm in writing that he/she had an assistantship during the previous fall or spring semester and will have an assistantship in the following fall semester. Students who are eligible for the waiver of the non-resident portion of the IEP fees pay at the resident rate. The total resident IEP fees for Summer 2008 (including the educational, student activity, recreation facility, information technology, and health fees) was \$1,180.

If you are interested in this program, please contact:

Larry P. Francis
Director, Intensive English Program
University of Missouri-Columbia
Email: FrancisL@missouri.edu
Phone: 573-882-7523

Campus Resources for International Students

1. English Language Support Program: Intensive English Program
 - 208 McReynolds: 882-7523.
 - <http://iep.missouri.edu/>
2. Writing Center
 - 100 Student Success Center: 882-2496
 - Same day help for writing projects (up to ten pages)
 - <http://learningcenter.missouri.edu/>

3. Language Partners Program
 - 229 Brady Commons: 882-6621.
 - International Women's Support Group
 - <https://web.missouri.edu/~umcstudentlifeweb/women/resources.php>
4. International Student and Scholar Services
 - International Center, N52 Memorial Union: 882-6007
 - <http://international.missouri.edu/iss/>
5. International Students' Career Services
 - 1 Student Success Center: 882-2170.
 - <http://career.missouri.edu/ISCS/>
6. Asian Affairs Center
 - N49 Memorial Union: 882-6902.
 - <http://asia.missouri.edu/>

Literacy Action Corps of Columbia, Missouri

You are encouraged to call the Literacy Action Corps at (573) 442-4280. They have volunteer tutors to help with basic listening, speaking, reading, writing or math skills needed to solve the problems you face in daily life and school. You will learn one-on-one with a tutor at a time best for you and the tutor.

<http://lac.columbia.missouri.org/>

Social Science Statistics Center

Statistics help – The Social Science Statistics Center provides graduate students with assistance with projects, theses and dissertations such as:

1. Software Consulting: Statistical Software Support Outreach
2. Statistical Consulting
3. Advanced Statistical Consulting

Go to: <http://sssc.coas.missouri.edu> for more information about their services.

MU Counseling Center

The Counseling Center assists MU students with concerns that interfere with their experiences at MU. Services include individual, couples and group counseling; crisis intervention; biofeedback and stress management; testing; outreach presentations; and consultation to university departments, faculty and staff.

<http://counseling.missouri.edu/>

Division of IT: IT Training
SAS and SPSS Training

The Information Technology Division offers short courses in SAS (Statistical Analysis System) and SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences).

1. SAS: Syntax Basics
2. SAS Base Programming Certification, Parts I and II
3. SAS Base Programming Certification, Part I
4. SAS Base Programming Certification, Part II
5. SPSS: Basics
6. SPSS: Intermediate

Descriptions of the classes offered can be found at:

<http://doit.missouri.edu/training/catalog/programming.html>