Teaching English as a Second Language (MA)

This program is offered by the School of Education. It is available online, at the St. Louis home campus, and at select U.S. and international campuses.* Please see the Campus Locations and Offerings section of this catalog for a list of campuses where this program is offered.

Program Description

The master of arts in teaching English as a second language (MA in TESL) at Webster University is designed for individuals who seek to develop the English skills of non-native speakers living either overseas or in the United States. The program allows candidates to develop a solid theoretical background in critical aspects such as culture, language structure, first and second language acquisition theory, curriculum and materials development, teaching methodology, assessment and research, while preparing them to become effective language teachers.

The MA in TESL offers two tracks:

- ESL/EFL education emphasis – designed to meet the needs of future educators of adults and/or teaching English as a foreign language overseas. In this case, prior teaching experience is not required;
- K-12 English language learner (ELL) education emphasis – designed to meet the needs of existing content area educators interested in expanding their knowledge of teaching ELLs. In this case, a certificate of license to teach is required.

*The ESL/EFL education emphasis is available online and at the St. Louis, Athens, Bangkok.** Webster University at Uzbekistan State University of World Languages, and Webster University at Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Language campuses. The K-12 ELL education emphasis is available online and at the Kansas City and St. Louis campuses.

As part of the MA in TESL – the K-12 ELL education emphasis, we offer the Missouri ELL Certification, an optional 21 credit-hour certificate issued through Missouri’s Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). The certification is designed for preK-12 teachers working with non-English speakers in regular, bilingual or English Language Learner (ELL) U.S. classrooms. A valid Missouri permanent or professional certificate of license to teach (participants in the TESL program at Webster may be working toward the initial certificate, but will not receive the ELL certificate until the basic certificate is awarded) and three courses (which may be undergraduate credit) of Psychology and/or Education of the Exceptional Student, Teaching Reading in Content Fields and Reading Assessment and Interventions are required in order to obtain the certification.

A teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) certificate* may also be issued alone or in conjunction with the MA in TESL degree – the adult education emphasis. This program is designed for students interested in teaching overseas in both adult and K-12 settings. Students seeking this graduate certificate must have earned a recognized baccalaureate degree and meet the admission and acceptance criteria, as outlined in the graduate program’s Academic Policies. Students may receive the Webster University TEFL certificate by completing a minimum of 21 credit hours.**

*All students pursuing the Missouri ELL certification or the Webster TEFL certificate will be considered degree-seeking students and will have the option to pursue one of the MA in TESL tracks within 5 years from the start of their TESL coursework.

**Students cannot pursue both the Missouri ELL certification and Webster TEFL certificate within the same MA program.

***Students completing their degree at the Bangkok campus are required to complete a minimum of 36 credit hours for the MA in TESL. There are two options: (1) complete all requirements for the MA in TESL in addition to TESL 5750 Special Institute Final Writing Project, or (2) complete all requirements for the MA in TESL in addition to TESL 6250 Thesis for a total of 12 credit hours for the thesis.

Learning Outcomes

Program Goals – The following program goals are built on a conceptual framework of knowledge, implementation and reflection.

Candidates will demonstrate knowledge of:

- The English language system, its components (i.e., phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, etc.) and issues of linguistic variation (i.e., dialects, discourse, slang, humor, etc.).
- The major theories, key concepts and research in first and second language acquisition (SLA).
- Modern and traditional teaching approaches, as well as the legal processes and policies that have influenced the English as a Second Language field.
- Multicultural aspects and personal variables (i.e., background experiences, values, beliefs, gender) that affect the process of language acquisition and cultural integration.
- Effective learning and communication strategies.
- Curriculum design and appropriate materials/textbooks.
- Current and historical aspects of assessment design and implementation, as well as their implication for various stakeholders.

Candidates will practice in their classroom:

- Various standards-based instructional strategies to support effective educational practices that value individual and cultural differences.
- Standards-based curriculum designed on modern teaching theories and meaningful, authentic content and language materials (i.e., experiences that model social and academic contexts by integrating all language skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing).
- Multiple culturally-informed, valid, reliable, authentic, pragmatic and non-biased assessment techniques that measure learning progress and teacher/program/content effectiveness.
- Technology-centered activities that promote content and language learning, following a constructivist model that allows ample language input and practice.

Candidates will reflect on:

- The roles educators take in collaboration with colleagues, school administrators, paraprofessionals, parents and community members to advocate for the needs of their community of learners and their direct access to resources.
- Personal growth through on-going participation in personal development activities.
- Effectiveness of instructional and assessment approaches in the classroom with the view of achieving equitable education for their ELL students.
Teaching English as a Second Language (MA)

• Curriculum appropriateness in compliance with national and regional standards, as well as program expectations and student diverse needs, preparedness, resources and ability.
• The need to support and encourage ELL students and families in their journey of social, cultural and linguistic accommodation.

K-12 ELL Education Emphasis
33 Credit Hours
Required Courses (24 credit hours)

• TESL 5230 Second Language Acquisition * (3 hours)
• TESL 5139 English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Methods * (3 hours)
• TESL 5220 Curriculum Development in Second Language Classrooms* (3 hours)
• TESL 5350 Language and Culture * (3 hours)
• TESL 5030 Language History, Planning, and Policy * (3 hours)
• TESL 5311 Principles and Practices of Language Testing * (3 hours)
• TESL 5730 Materials Development in Language Classrooms (3 hours)
• TESL 5040 Practicum in ESOL (3 hours)
• TESL 5720 Teaching English Pronunciation * (3 hours)
• TESL 5710 Grammar for ESL/EFL Teachers (3 hours)
• TESL 5730 Materials Development in Language Classrooms (3 hours)
• TESL 5750 Special Institute in TESL (3 hours)
• TESL 6250 Thesis (3-12 hours)
• TESL 6900 University Thesis Requirement (0 hours)

*Course contains a key assessment for data collection purposes.

Electives (9 credit hours)

• COMM 5199 Teaching Writing
• COMM 5280 Written Communication (3 hours)
• COMM 5340 Language Arts Seminar: Teaching Language and Language Issues (3 hours)
• TESL 5311 Principles and Practices of Language Testing (3 hours)
• TESL 5730 Materials Development in Language Classrooms (3 hours)
• TESL 5040 Practicum in ESOL (taken at the end of the program) * (3 hours)
• COMM 5530 Technology and Teaching (3 hours)

• COMM 5440 Introduction to Linguistics (3 hours)
• EPSY 5510 Psychosocial Aspects of Migration (3 hours)
• EPSY 5490 Seminar in Immigrant and Refugee Experiences (3 hours)
• EDTC 5630 Advanced Topics in Classroom Technologies (3 hours)

Missouri ELL Certification
21 Credit Hours

All students pursuing the Missouri ELL certification or the Webster TESL certificate will be considered degree-seeking students and will have the option to pursue one of the MA in TESL tracks within 5 years from the start of their TESL coursework.

Required courses (21 credit hours)

• TESL 5230 Second Language Acquisition (3 hours)
• TESL 5220 Curriculum Development in Second Language Classrooms (3 hours)
• TESL 5139 English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Methods (3 hours)
• TESL 5350 Language and Culture (3 hours)
• TESL 5030 Language History, Planning, and Policy (3 hours)
• TESL 5311 Principles and Practices of Language Testing (3 hours)
• TESL 5720 Teaching English Pronunciation (3 hours)
• TESL 5710 Grammar for ESL/EFL Teachers (3 hours)
• TESL 5730 Materials Development in Language Classrooms (3 hours)
• TESL 5040 Practicum in ESOL (3 hours)
• TESL 5311 Principles and Practices of Language Testing (3 hours)

Admission

Students who are interested in applying to this degree program should also see the Admission section of this catalog for general requirements.

Admission Requirements

• Receipt of official transcripts from the baccalaureate granting institution.
• Undergraduate cumulative GPA of 2.5 or higher.
• Non-native speakers need to pass TOEFL, paper-based score of 575 and above (International students – see graduate catalog).
• Native speakers two semesters of a foreign language (with a grade of B or better) is strongly recommended.

Teaching English as a Second Language (MA)
Teaching English as a Second Language (MA)

• Essay: Describe your teaching philosophy in terms of the kind of knowledge and values that will make a teacher a more effective English as a second language/English as a foreign language instructor.

Send all admissions materials to:

Office of Admission
Webster University
470 E. Lockwood Ave.
St. Louis, MO 63119

Completed application files will be reviewed by the Graduate Department of Education.

Advancement to Candidacy

Students must complete 12-15 hours or core TESL coursework at the beginning of their program of study and maintain a minimum of a 3.0 GPA (B average).

Required Coursework for Advancement to Candidacy (6-9 credit hours)

• TESL 5230 Second Language Acquisition
• TESL 5220 Curriculum Development in Second Language Classrooms
• TESL 5139 English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Methods

Other Coursework toward Advancement to Candidacy (3-6 credit hours)

• TESL 5350 Language and Culture
• TESL 5030 Language History, Planning, and Policy
• TESL 5311 Principles and Practices of Language Testing

The candidacy requirements are the same for both the K-12 ELL education emphasis and the ESL/EFL education emphasis.