

BC TEAL Position Statement (April 2013)

Academic and Degree-granting Credit for English for Academic Purposes Courses in Postsecondary Education

In British Columbia and Canada, English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses serve an increasingly large number of international and domestic students from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Not all institutions recognize EAP courses as bearing academic credit for use as degree-granting credit. Advanced EAP courses in English for Academic Purposes programs that fulfill English language proficiency requirements for entry into post-secondary programs of study are academically rigorous, and students in them develop the English language skills necessary for success in the cognitively demanding academic context found in the post-secondary education system.

English for Academic Purposes courses are not a remedial or preparatory pre-requisite for academic study, rather they are a co-requisite in that they mirror and amplify the academic activities students encounter in higher education. Students as adult learners in EAP programs at the post-secondary level are already high school graduates and EAP study involves acquiring advanced language ability, understanding cultural contexts, learning discipline specific rhetorical patterns, applying referencing styles, developing critical thinking skills, setting successful study patterns, implementing learning strategies, evaluating core concepts, and gaining effective research skills.

Rationale:

- Just as students from English speaking backgrounds are awarded academic credit for courses in additional modern language study (e.g., Spanish, Chinese, German and Japanese), students from non-English speaking backgrounds should receive the same credit recognition since EAP is an equivalent form of additional modern language study for students from diverse language backgrounds.
- EAP courses are cognitively demanding and go beyond remedial communicative language study.
- Receiving credit for EAP courses increases student motivation.
- Advanced EAP courses that fulfill the English language requirements for entry into post-secondary studies at English-medium institutions are situated in rigorous academic programs that are comparable to those at the first year level.

BC TEAL supports the granting of academic credit counting towards the completion of post-secondary programs of study at English-medium institutions of higher education for students from non-English speaking backgrounds who complete EAP courses that meet the standards and criteria for degree credit courses.

References

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