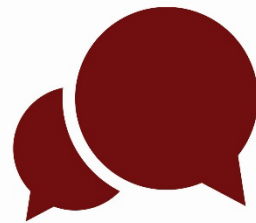


# English Language Proficiency Program

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**Center for Teaching Excellence**  
*Texas A&M University*



**English  
Language  
Proficiency**

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COMMUNICATE IN THE CLASSROOM



**TEXAS A&M**  
UNIVERSITY.

# Participants will review...

- Policies related to English Language Certification;
- How to confirm a TA's certification status;
- Best practices for TA preparation and selection;
- Services offered by the CTE-ELP program;
- Requirements for conditionally-appointed TAs;
- Procedures for requesting an early retest of the ELPE;  
and
- Important upcoming dates



# Purpose

The Center for Teaching Excellence's English Language Proficiency (CTE-ELP) program is a linguistic service provided to international instructors who wish to improve their spoken English proficiency.



# Philosophy

Everybody has an accent.

Our goal is not to eliminate accents, but for the instructors we serve to be “comfortably intelligible” (Linda Grant, author of *Pronunciation Myths and Well Said*).

We envision a linguistically diverse campus in which all instructors communicate effectively, fluently, clearly, and confidently. They share their expertise, participate in the TAMU community, and enrich those around them. They are respected and valued by the students they teach; those students in turn are more prepared to live, work, and interact in a global society.



# Texas State Law

Sec. 51.917. FACULTY MEMBERS; USE OF ENGLISH.

(2) "Faculty member" means a person who teaches a course offered for academic credit by an institution of higher education, including teaching assistants, instructors, lab assistants, research assistants, lecturers, assistant professors, associate professors, and full professors.

(b) The governing board of each institution of higher education shall establish a program or a short course the purpose of which is to:

(1) assist faculty members whose primary language is not English to become proficient in the use of English; and

(2) ensure that ... all faculty members are proficient in the use of the English language, as determined by a satisfactory grade on the "Test of Spoken English" of the Educational Testing Service or a similar test approved by the board.

From <http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/ED/htm/ED.51.htm>



# Who must be certified?

Per OGAPS, graduate assistants having “contact” with students for a course (as teacher/recitation leader/lab assistant, holding office hours, explaining graded homework) are GATs.

International GATs, GAIs, and GALs must be English-language **certified**, not just **verified**.



# English Language Proficiency Levels

Test scores automatically place students into level; updated weekly

<http://ogaps.tamu.edu/New-Current-Students/English-Language-Proficiency/English-Language-Proficiency-Certification>

	Global Standardized Tests			Locally Administered (on Texas A&M campus) Exam
Level #	TOEFL speaking section	IELTS speaking section	PTE speaking section	English Language Proficiency Exam (ELPE) (not administered by CTE-ELP)
1	≥26	≥8.0	≥85	≥80
2	23-25	7.0-7.5	75-84	75
3	<23	<7.0	<75	<75



# Alternative Certification

Not automatic; department vouches for the student's communication skills and submits request to OGAPS

<http://ogaps.tamu.edu/OGAPS/media/media-library/documents/ELP/ELP-Alternative-Certification-Form.pdf>

- Earned bachelor's after 4 or more years of study in the U.S.
- Or if a citizen of an approved country <http://admissions.tamu.edu/international/graduate>

American Samoa	Ghana
Anguilla	Gibraltar
Antigua and Barbuda	Grenada
Australia	Guyana
Bahamas	Ireland
Barbados	Jamaica
Belize	Liberia
Bermuda	New Zealand
British Virgin Islands	Nigeria
Canada (except Quebec)	Saint Kitts and Nevis
Cayman Islands	Saint Lucia
Dominica	Trinidad/Tobago
Federated States of Micronesia	Turks and Caicos Islands
Gambia	United Kingdom





# Confirming proficiency level

- Go to [howdy.tamu.edu](http://howdy.tamu.edu) and select “Reports” from the main header bar.



- Select the certification report for your college.

PWS_ELP_CERTIFICATION_AR
PWS_ELP_CERTIFICATION_BA
PWS_ELP_CERTIFICATION_DN
PWS_ELP_CERTIFICATION_GB

# Who can teach (i.e. be a GAT, GAI, or GAL)?

Can teach	Cannot teach
<b>ZE</b> = Native English speaker	<b>ZV</b> = Verified, not certified
<b>ZA</b> = Certified by alternate means	<b>ZW</b> = Alternatively verified
<b>Z1</b> = Certified	<b>ZN</b> = Not verified
<b>Z2</b> = Level 2 Cond Certified (1 Semester only) [with conditions]	

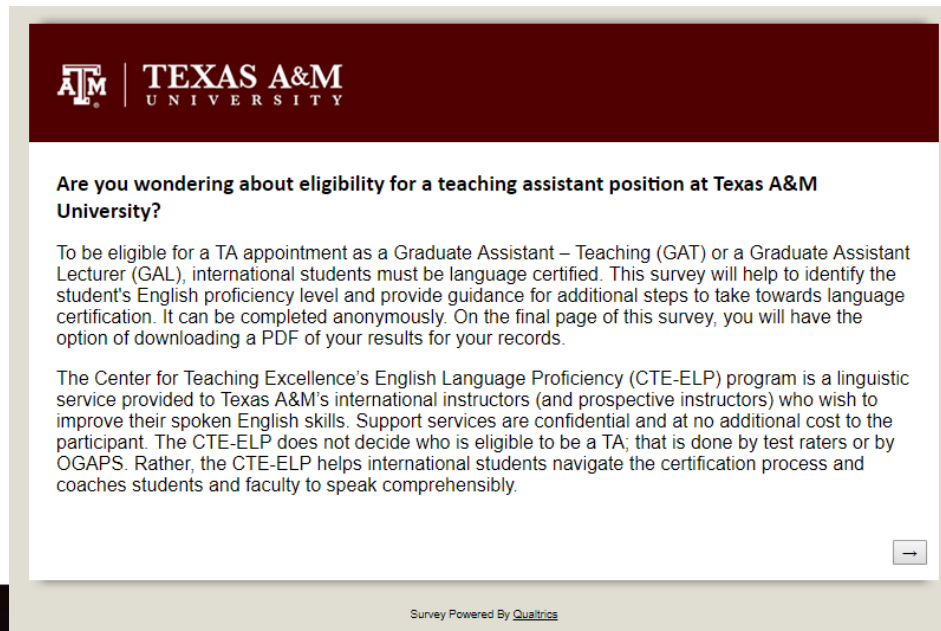



# Unsure of a student's eligibility?

Try our new tool at

cte.tamu.edu -> Graduate Student Support -> English  
Language Proficiency

You can check your eligibility or that of your student using an [interactive questionnaire](#).



 | TEXAS A&M  
UNIVERSITY

**Are you wondering about eligibility for a teaching assistant position at Texas A&M University?**

To be eligible for a TA appointment as a Graduate Assistant – Teaching (GAT) or a Graduate Assistant Lecturer (GAL), international students must be language certified. This survey will help to identify the student's English proficiency level and provide guidance for additional steps to take towards language certification. It can be completed anonymously. On the final page of this survey, you will have the option of downloading a PDF of your results for your records.

The Center for Teaching Excellence's English Language Proficiency (CTE-ELP) program is a linguistic service provided to Texas A&M's international instructors (and prospective instructors) who wish to improve their spoken English skills. Support services are confidential and at no additional cost to the participant. The CTE-ELP does not decide who is eligible to be a TA; that is done by test raters or by OGAPS. Rather, the CTE-ELP helps international students navigate the certification process and coaches students and faculty to speak comprehensibly.

[Next](#)

Survey Powered By [Qualtrics](#)



# Best Practices in TA Preparation & Selection

- Notify prospective International Teaching Assistants (ITAs) of English language certification requirements and procedures well before the semester of their potential appointment, preferably during the admissions process.
- Advise newly admitted students to report to campus as early as possible before their first semester to take advantage of training opportunities, sit for the ELPE, and adjust to life in College Station.
- Any international graduate student who may eventually teach should be encouraged to take the ELPE at the first available opportunity, preferably before or during their first semester at TAMU.

Adapted from: UT Austin's International Office ESL Services

<https://world.utexas.edu/esl/students/intl-teaching-assistants/department>



# Best Practices in TA Preparation & Selection, ctd.

- When possible, give international graduate students a semester to work on communication skills, adjust to the culture, and observe undergraduate classes before appointing them to positions with student contact.
- Consider hosting ELP training that is customized for prospective ITAs in your department. \*Departmental TATEP reports must include “a description of the method of training for international TAs.” (<https://ogaps.tamu.edu/Faculty-Staff/New-Teaching-Assistant-Training-and-Evaluation-Pro>)
- Give TAs a description of what duties and responsibilities an appointment in your department entails. Will these duties entail contact with students? If so, certification is required. This includes grading if the TA is expected to respond to student questions or explain course expectations.

Adapted from: UT Austin’s International Office ESL Services

<https://world.utexas.edu/esl/students/intl-teaching-assistants/department>



# Best Practices in TA Preparation & Selection, ctd.

- Avoid putting newly arrived TAs in freshman sections (no rookies with rookies).
- If conditionally-appointed TAs are given student contact positions, assign them a more experienced TA as a mentor or provide an upper-division undergraduate as a consultant.
- Have a pool of certified TAs to make last-minute staffing easier.
- Check with your HR Liaison to ensure that any international student with the title code GAT, GAI, or GAL has certification.

Adapted from: UT Austin's International Office ESL Services

<https://world.utexas.edu/esl/students/intl-teaching-assistants/department>



# CTE-ELP services available to:

- international TAs
- faculty of all ranks
- as space permits, any international student

Required for conditionally-appointed TAs (TAs with marginal oral English proficiency [Level 2] who have contact with students) and for TAs with emergency deferral of certification

Optional for all others

At no additional cost (funded by international student fees)



# Services

## Diagnosis, Instruction, and Practice Opportunities

### 1. Diagnosis

- a. Listening comprehension
- b. Fluency
- c. Intonation
- d. Phrasing & Linking
- e. Word Stress
- f. Vocabulary
- g. Grammar
- h. Pronunciation





# Services

## 2. **Instruction** – emphasis on

- a. Pronunciation high-impact topics (suprasegmentals)
- b. Functional vocabulary for the classroom/lab/office hours

## 3. **Practice opportunities**

- a. Face-to-face
  - i. Practice groups for instructors
  - ii. Conversation partnerships with American undergrads
- b. Referral to other linguistic resources “Additional Resources” pdf available at <http://cte.tamu.edu/Graduate-Student-Support/English-Language-Proficiency/CTE-ELP-Additional-Resources>
  - ex. Writing Center
- a. Referral to other CTE programming on pedagogy



# Getting started with the CTE-ELP

- Clients begin with an Intake Assessment - a 45-minute diagnostic interview
- Clients return for an Intake Follow-up consultation to receive feedback on:
  - strengths,
  - weaknesses,
  - and recommendations for improvement
- Clients select additional activities or agree to those recommended
- Feedback and recommendations are formalized in an “Individual Improvement Plan”
  - Confidential
  - Voluntary for most, but obligatory for conditionally-appointed TAs



# CTE-ELP Services

Activity	Description	Target Audience	Registration
<b>Private Consultations</b>	Participants build upon pronunciation proficiency and fluency through strategic readings, practice motor control of the vocal tract, and receive feedback about their progress.	Conditionally-appointed TAs  (Other groups as appointments are available)	Contact consultant
<b>Language Laboratory</b>	Participants develop listening discrimination of English pronunciation, knowledge of the features and manipulation of the vocal tract, and automaticity.	All groups	<a href="http://swan.tamu.edu/cte">swan.tamu.edu/cte</a>
<b>Practice Groups</b>	Participants rehearse functional language for instruction; learn to anticipate and repair common communication breakdowns; develop peer support, supra-segmental skills, and fluency; and cultivate an awareness and appreciation for diversity and cultural differences.	Conditionally-appointed TAs  (Other groups as space permits)	<a href="http://ers.tamu.edu/">ers.tamu.edu/</a> and search “English Language Proficiency”

# CTE-ELP Services

Activity	Description	Target Audience	Registration
<b>Teaching Observation</b>	Participants receive observation and feedback from an ELP Consultant to assess their linguistic performance in action. They additionally practice self-assessment skills.	Conditionally-appointed TAs  (Other instructors as time permits)	Contact consultant
<b>Conversation Partnerships</b>	Participants develop fluency and an awareness & appreciation for cultural difference in the classroom through an application of pronunciation knowledge via authentic dialogue with a native speaker of English.	Conditionally-appointed TAs  (Other groups as appointments are available)	Contact lab
<b>Pronunciation Workshops</b>	Participants develop phonological awareness and familiarity with CTE-ELP services.	All groups	<a href="https://ers.tamu.edu/">ers.tamu.edu/</a>
<b>Videotaped microteaching</b>	Opportunity for clients to teach a micro-lesson in front of a video camera and receive feedback from a consultant as well as the opportunity to self-reflect	Current TAs and students scheduled to take upcoming ELPE	Contact consultant

# Language Lab



# Language Lab

- Native Accent by Carnegie Speech
  - Web-based
  - Tracks active usage
  - Confirms correct pronunciation
  - Creates unique path for each user based on diagnostic
  - For conditionally-appointed TAs and for faculty
- American Speech Sounds for Academics
  - Installed on 5 workstations in the language lab (LAAH 232)
  - Listening discrimination and pronunciation exercises
  - Teaches academic vocabulary
  - For any graduate student
- Google Speech-to-Text
- Small library of resources for language learners



# Practice Groups



# Practice Groups

- 1 hour per workshop, 10 workshops in the series
- High-impact pronunciation topics
- Functional language for instructors
- Interaction
  - with peers for support and community
  - with experienced TAs for advice
  - with undergrads for listening practice and mutual respect





# Private Consultations



# Private Consultations

Work on unique challenges in a discreet setting

- articulation of difficult phonemes
- grammar instruction
- feedback on speech
- formative assessment before retesting



# Conversation Partnerships



# Conversation Partnerships

## Conversation partners

- 30 minutes, once a week
- English-dominant domestic undergrad volunteers
- discussion topics provided weekly, encouraging cross-cultural understanding and empathy



# Workshops

## Register at [ers.tamu.edu/CTE](https://ers.tamu.edu/CTE)

- ELPE Overview
- Lunch and Discussion for Liberal Arts International TAs (LAITA)
- Linguistic Diversity
- American English Vowel System I & II
- Effective Communication in an International Setting I & II
- Academic Communication Skills: Office Hours
- Resources for Improving your English while in College Station



# Conditionally-Appointed TAs

A one-time, one-semester conditional appointment is allowed for graduate students with Level 2 proficiency only if

1. they begin participating in the CTE-ELP program by the end of Week 2 of the semester;
2. they participate in the program 5 hours/week; and
3. they retest and achieve a Level 1 score by the end of the semester



# Conditionally-appointed TAs receive...

- Individualized instruction using a variety of delivery methods
- Regular feedback from ELP Consultants
- Reports documenting their participation (at midterm and final)
- Waivers to retest the ELPE before three months have elapsed (with approval by CTE-ELP Consultants after a review of the student's progress)



# Retesting for Certification

- A student may retake the TOEFL, IELTS, or PTE at any time to achieve English Language Certification.
- All international students are eligible to retake the ELPE once every three months.
- Conditionally-appointed TAs only may request approval from the CTE-ELP program to retest the ELPE before three months have elapsed.





# Deadline for early ELPE retest requests

Requests to retest the ELPE before 3 months have elapsed must be made through the CTE-ELP program 7 business days before the exam is scheduled.

e.g. If the ELPE is scheduled for April 6, the student's appointment to request a retest should be scheduled no later than Thursday, March 28.



# Waiver for Early ELPE Retest

**CENTER FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE**  
Office of the Dean of Faculties and Associate Provost



## Waiver to Retest the English Language Proficiency Examination form

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student UIN: \_\_\_\_\_

CTE-ELP Consultant Name (Print): \_\_\_\_\_

CTE-ELP Consultant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Please allow the student listed above to retest the English Language Proficiency Exam. I attest that the student meets the following criteria:

- The student is presently conditionally certified at proficiency level 2;
- The student is currently serving as a Teaching Assistant;
- The student has been consistently participating in CTE-ELP instruction and following the prescribed proficiency improvement plan; and
- The student has made demonstrable gains in language proficiency.



# Recommended English Language Proficiency Process

Take ELPE or another recognized exam

Level  
**1**

Achieve Level 1  
*Language Certified*  
CTE-ELP Optional

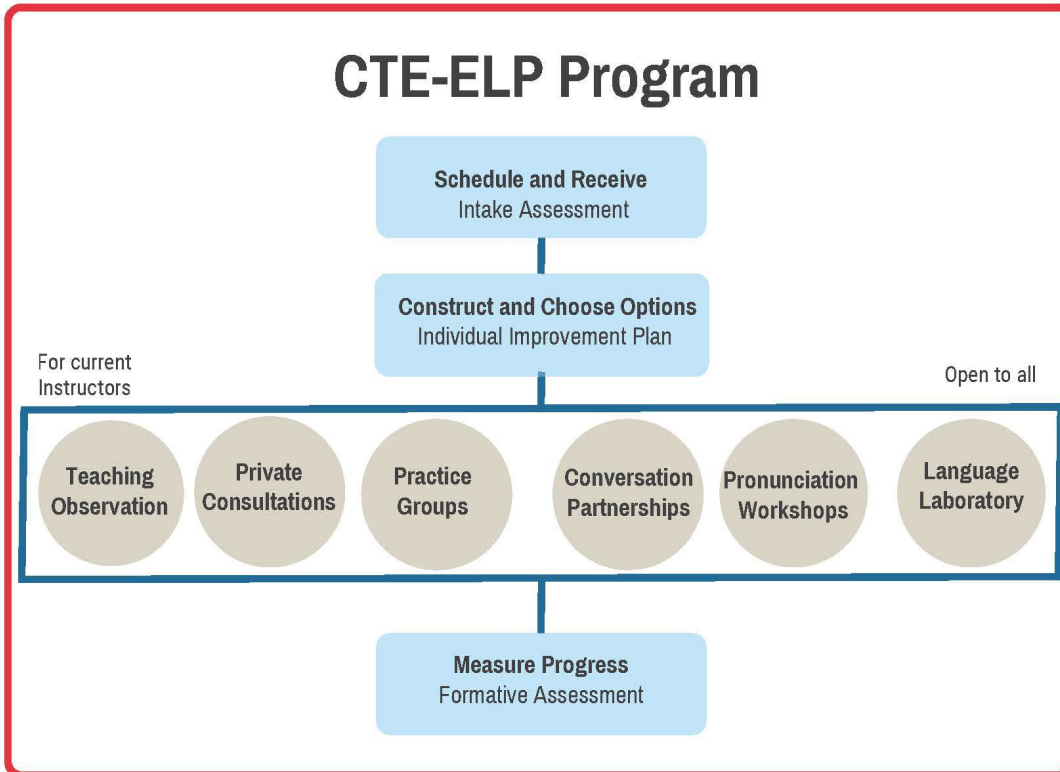
Level  
**2**

Achieve Level 2 with  
conditional TA appointment  
**CTE-ELP Program Required**

Level  
**2**

Level  
**3**

Achieve Level 2 or 3  
No TA Appointment  
CTE-ELP Optional



Re-take ELPE or another recognized exam



# Priority Groups for CTE-ELP instruction

Table 2. Priority groups for CTE-ELP instruction

Priority	Graduate Students or Instructors	Currently Teaching	Proficiency Level(s)
Conditionally-appointed TAs	Graduate Students	✓	2
Future TAs	Graduate Students	-----	2 & 3
Certified instructors (of all ranks)	Instructors (including certified TAs)	✓	1
Everyone else	Graduate Students	-----	-----



# Feedback from clients:

- from international faculty: “eye-opening”
- from an international TA: “Thank you so much for all your help. The interactive sessions with you have helped me become aware of how I speak, and have enabled me to notice other people's speaking patterns as well. I walked out of your office with new learnings, every single time!”



# Upcoming ELPE test dates

- Sept. 28
- Oct. 19
- Nov. 16
- Dec. 7

Note: Testing Services, not the CTE-ELP, administers the ELPE. Registration closes one week prior to the test.

Dr. Suzanne Droleskey & the CTE provide an in-depth preparation to the ELPE each August and January.

In the other months, the CTE-ELP offers a shorter ELPE overview to all test takers who have registered at least ten days before the test.



# Advice for Spring 2020 teaching assistantships

- Graduate students must reach Level 1 (or Level 2) by the start of the semester
- Use eligibility questionnaire to find out their official level now
- Recommendation: Attempt the ELPE no later than October. This allows for another chance in January
- Participate in CTE-ELP programming between now and January



# How to contact us

- Resource table during lunch today
  - Printed flyers
  - Particular questions
- [cte@tamu.edu](mailto:cte@tamu.edu)
  - We can email you digital flyers to circulate
- 979.458.3966 Pronunciation Lab





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Thank You.

Questions?



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