

REQUEST FOR ENTITLEMENT TO PLAN M.A. IN TESOL
University of Wisconsin
September 2007

1. Need for an M. A. in TESOL—Student and Market Demand

The TESOL Major and Minor Program at UWRF was created in 2000 in response to the dramatic increase in the number of English language learners in the West Central Wisconsin and Twin Cities Metropolitan region. While our undergraduate program continues to grow and to produce new elementary and secondary teachers to meet the regional need for ESL teachers, the need for an M.A. in TESOL has also grown, currently being met by only one other program in the UW System—UW-Oshkosh—on the eastern side of the state.

The population of students needing instruction in English as a Second Language has been rapidly increasing with the rate of Limited English Proficient (LEP) student enrollment in Wisconsin and Minnesota reaching 132.9% and 210% respectively during the ten-year period of 1992-2002.

According to *Pioneer Press* (16 February 1999), “demand for teachers is growing in a region that includes Minnesota and six other Midwestern states.” A recent report in the Minneapolis *Star Tribune* (30 June 2007) indicated the vast increase in the immigrant population in one Twin Cities suburb—Burnsville—alone “where one student in eight—1,229 of 10,339—has limited proficiency in English” in contrast to seven years ago when one student in 33 needed ESL instruction.

In Wisconsin, the demand for ESL teachers is far from being satisfied, too. In 2005, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction conducted a project, *Supply and Demand of Education Personnel for Wisconsin Public Schools*, that identified “areas of extreme undersupply” and listed ESL as one of them.

The Supply and Demand 2005 report also uses another kind of data to demonstrate the situation in the ESL area in Wisconsin: the number of emergency licenses. “Wisconsin’s Department of Public Instruction issues emergency licenses to individuals when school districts cannot find a licensed candidate to fill a vacancy” (p. 26), and in 2005 the number of emergency hires in the field of ESL and bilingual education reported to DPI by school districts was 104 (p. 61). The 2005 Report shows that 86 one-year special licenses in ESL alone were issued during 2004-05, 17% of all secondary special licenses issued in the state that year.

As a result of the high demand, the TESOL Program at UWRF has been steadily growing. If the program continues to grow at the rate it was growing in the past 5 years (at an average of 5.4 students per year), in the next five-year period we can foresee an increase of student enrollment from 50+ to 75-80 TESOL Majors and Minors.

While the current TESOL Major and Minor prepare undergraduate students for work in this field, the M.A. in TESOL would provide a program for prospective students already in possession of a B. A. or a B. S.

The M.A. in TESOL is designed to attract four different and diverse groups:

(1) in-service teachers seeking both an M.A. and expertise in working with an increasing population of LEP students

- (2) students already possessing a B.A. or B.S. degree but without Teaching Licensure
- (3) international students who are seeking an advanced degree in TESOL combined with the opportunity to improve their English skills while studying in an English speaking environment
- (4) students already possessing a B. A. or B. S. who are interested in graduate study in language and linguistics

2. Learning Outcomes and Brief Overview of the Curriculum

The M.A. in TESOL has been designed to provide options for in-service teachers possessing Licensure, graduate students seeking both an M.A. and Licensure, and international students seeking both an advanced degree and the opportunity to study in an English-speaking environment.

A. Learning Outcomes

Students completing the TESOL M.A. degree will be able to:

- teach English as a Second Language (ESL) or English as a Foreign language (EFL)
- recognize and discuss the fundamental components of English language study— phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics
- apply their knowledge of English phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics to specific ESL/EFL teaching situations
- understand both language acquisition and language learning and use techniques promoting both acquisition and learning in the classroom
- evaluate, design, and adapt instructional materials for specific language groups
- understand and use linguistic and language learning theories and the methods based upon these theories
- understand and use current teaching practices and techniques
- adapt current teaching practices and techniques to suit ESL learners from different cultural backgrounds, age groups, and language backgrounds
- create lesson plans and syllabi for specific age, cultural, and language groups
- comprehend the important relationship between language and culture as well as develop sensitivity and respect for non-native cultural and language groups
- interact with non-native speakers in an instructional setting

B. Brief Overview of the Graduate Programs for Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)

Admission to the program requires a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution, an overall undergraduate grade point average of 2.75 (on a 4.0 scale) or an average of at least 2.90 based on the last 60 semester credits (90 quarter credits) of the undergraduate program.

Candidates must also have completed 6 semester hours of a foreign language, the high school equivalent, or proven proficiency in a foreign language is required of all students pursuing a TESOL major. This foundation requirement is not included in the number of credit hours needed for the major proper.

Non-native speakers of English are required to obtain a TOEFL score of at least 550 on the paper exam or 213 computer-based score.

1. Master of Arts in TESOL

The MA/TESOL degree is designed for professionals who currently hold a license or certificate in ESL or bilingual education and for those who want to teach in countries around the world or in Adult Basic Education (ABE) positions in Wisconsin and Minnesota.

Plan A, 36 credits—Thesis Plan

Plan B, 36 credits—No thesis

2. Licensure Program

The MA in TESOL can be taken independently or in conjunction with K-12 licensure for the State of Wisconsin. ESL Licensure is a K-12 teaching License. It includes **36 credits** in Education and TESOL.

Graduate students are required to have a **PI 34 statutory coursework evaluation**, a review of a candidate's undergraduate courses which will indicate any courses that the state of Wisconsin requires and which the candidate has not completed during his or her undergraduate program.

a. Initial Licensure in ESL

This program is designed for persons who have earned a baccalaureate degree at an accredited institution and desire a teaching license in ESL.

b. ESL Additional License

Teachers who hold a current Wisconsin 6-12, 9-12, or K-12 subject area license, a Wisconsin 1-6 or 1-8 license, or a current Minnesota elementary, secondary, or K-12 license qualify for the ESL additional licensure program.

3. M.A. in TESOL and the Institutional Mission, Strategic Plan, Goals, and Objectives

Relation to Select Mission of the University of Wisconsin-River Falls -- 4 Examples

- 1. The university offers liberal arts programs and degrees to meet regional needs in the arts, humanities, mathematics, natural and physical sciences and social and behavioral sciences. The liberal arts also strengthen and broaden programs in the agricultural sciences, teacher education, and business administration.*

The curriculum in TESOL represents the best of Liberal Arts education. It provides students with the specialized knowledge in language that they need to serve English language learners, but it also requires that they have a well-rounded education that includes all the disciplines represented by the liberal arts: history, philosophy, music, art, literature, sociology, psychology, and so on.

2. *The university continues to develop inter-institutional relationships in cooperative research, graduate training and undergraduate programs within the state, region and world. As a border institution, the University promotes interstate cooperation.*

The department has worked with the College of Agriculture, Food, and Environmental Science to develop a course in ESL in the Dairy Industry that has reached a far-flung audience in the state through distance education. The department is involved in an ESL consortium with Eau Claire and Stout to support the Eau Claire Summer Language Institute. We are also developing a program with Shi Hsin University in Taiwan that will involve both faculty and students working with students in Taiwan and at UWRF on their English speaking and writing skills. It will be a wonderful opportunity for the program. We have established relationships with Artek Children's Camp in the Crimea, where UWRF TESOL students can teach English from 6 to 9 weeks during the summer. We are also in negotiation with Pusan University of Foreign Studies in South Korea for exchange of students: PUFs graduate students to study at UWRF and our students to study and teach in South Korea.

3. *The university provides students opportunities to develop an appreciation of the richness and diversity of American culture and is committed to representing this diversity in its staff and student body.*

The very nature of TESOL involves the appreciation of the diversity of American culture. Students and faculty are drawn to this program because they have a love of language and a desire to teach others whose first language is not English. TESOL students will be working either in education or business with people from various cultures and language groups. In their course work, in their observation hours, the tutoring practicum, and student teaching, TESOL students probably work with more diverse people than any other program on campus.

4. *The university provides public service by using its resources to address problems and concerns throughout the state and region. Special emphasis is placed on cooperative extension, extension and economic development outreach.*

The outreach alluded to above of the Dairy Workers ESL and the Western Wisconsin ESL Consortium are examples. But the best example of "outreach" is the training we are providing our students to enter the community and provide services that immigrant populations in Minnesota and Wisconsin require not only in schools but in businesses as well. One of our TESOL students intends on returning to her home in northern Minnesota to work in an industry with a majority Mexican workforce. Others have intentions of working in community organizations with immigrant populations. And a couple of our students of Hmong ancestry are serving their community as educators.

4. UWRF Master's Degree in TESOL in relation to other academic programs in the UW System, the region, and the nation.

A comparison of the proposed UWRF M.A. TESOL with those offered elsewhere demonstrates the strength of this degree. While some programs offer little more than an ESL techniques course with perhaps a course in multicultural education and a few in language and linguistics, our program is comprehensive. A student graduating with this degree will be well qualified to teach in American public schools, adult education, or internationally.

UW System: No other campus in the University of Wisconsin System offers a Master's degree in TESOL. UW-Madison and UW-Stevens Point offer a graduate Certificate in TESOL, designed for people who want to teach English as a Foreign Language abroad. UW-Eau Claire and UW-Platteville offer graduate credits in TESOL that lead to ESL licensure. UW-Oshkosh has a graduate degree in Curriculum and Instruction that leads to ESL licensure as well as a Bilingual/Bicultural licensure minor. UW-River Falls' MA in TESOL will be the only M.A. in TESOL in the System.

Region: Several universities in Minnesota have TESOL programs. Hamline's program has three different tracks: TESOL certification (a ten-week program), certification for teachers of adult ESL (a 12-credit program), and state licensure in ESL. The University of Minnesota has two master's programs offering M.A. and MEd. Degrees in ESL in their Institute of Linguistics and Asian and Slavic Languages and Literatures and College of Education. St. Cloud State also offers an M.A. in English with TESOL concentration. Minnesota State University-Mankato offers an M.A. in English (TESOL tract). Both of the latter schools are at least a two-hour drive from River Falls.

National: UWRF's M.A. program is consistent with the requirements of the best degrees offered across the country. When we market our program, especially to international students, our degree will be appealing to any student wishing to achieve an M.A. in TESOL.

5. Unusual resources required

Because we currently have both an undergraduate TESOL major and minor, the structure for this program, the facilities, and the faculty needed to conduct this program are already in place. The FTE faculty who currently teach TESOL courses are at present also assigned to teach General Education courses. With their reassignment to graduate teaching, those courses would be reassigned to adjunct faculty. While the library has adequate numbers of books, periodicals, audiovisual, and database resources, these will be need to be supplemented by an increase in the library budget of approximately \$2,000. S&E requirements will be met primarily through internal reallocation within the English Department, though an additional computer for administrative and research needs is required at a cost of \$1200.