

**Center for Teaching Excellence-English Language Proficiency (CTE-ELP)
Instruction and English Language Certification**

All international graduate students whose native language is not English must meet minimum English proficiency standards. **To achieve admission**, international graduate students must attain English proficiency **verification**. To become eligible to teach in positions such as Graduate Assistant-Teaching, Instructor, Lecturer, etc., the State of Texas requires that international graduate students attain English proficiency **certification**.

The Center for Teaching Excellence-English Language Proficiency (CTE-ELP) program is a valuable resource for those who have not obtained the required score on global standardized tests or the Texas A&M University locally-administered exam to receive certification.

A. English Language Certification prior to enrollment

To attain English Language Certification, an ITA must attain a Level 1 score on the speaking section of either the TOEFL, IELTS, or PTE as outlined in table 1 below.

Table 1. Cut scores for prospective International Teaching Assistants

Level #	Global Standardized Tests			Locally Administered (on Texas A&M campus) Exam
	Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) speaking section	International English Language Testing System (IELTS) speaking section	Pearson Test of English (PTE) speaking section	English Language Proficiency Exam (ELPE)
1	≥26	≥8.0	≥85	80
2	23-25	7.0-7.5	75-84	75
3	<23	<7.0	<75	65

Level 1 students are Language Certified and eligible for teaching assignments with no further language-related requirements.

Level 2 students are eligible for conditional teaching assignments of one semester only but must simultaneously participate in the Center for Teaching Excellence English Language Proficiency (CTE-ELP) instruction and achieve a certifying score on the ELPE by the end of the semester.

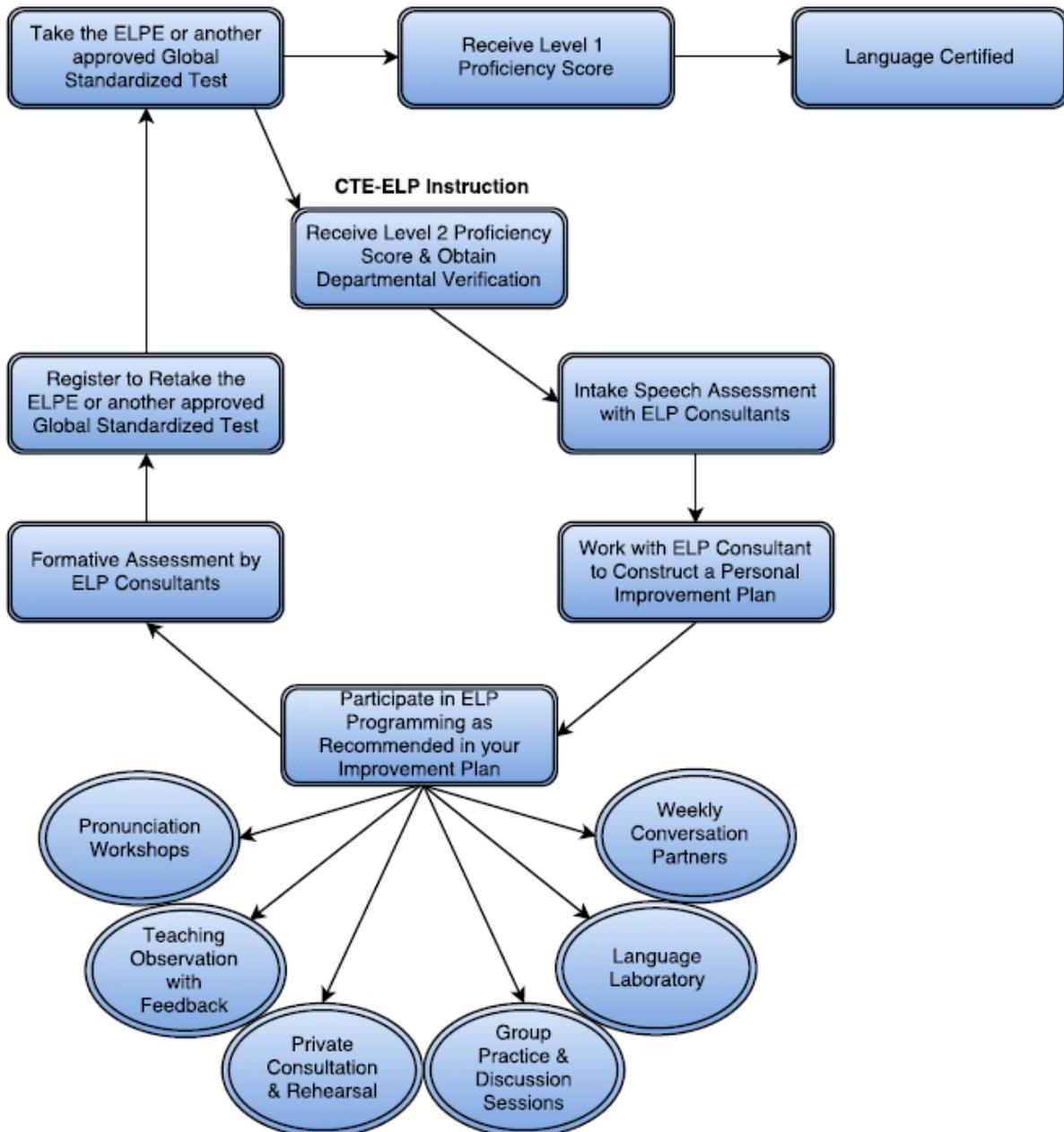
Level 3 students are ineligible for teaching assignments and should participate in spoken language training (such as that provided by the CTE-ELP program) to assist them in meeting English language proficiency requirements.

A Level 2 or 3 student who retakes the TOEFL, IELTS, or PTE and achieves a Level 1 score is considered Language Certified once the updated score has been registered by the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies.

B. On-campus English Language Certification for enrolled graduate students

The on-campus pathway to Language Certification for enrolled graduate students is detailed in figure 1 below. The path begins with either a) the English Language Proficiency Exam (ELPE), which is administered by Testing Services (<https://dars.tamu.edu/Testing/ELPE>), or b) one of the Global Standardized Tests indicated in Table 1 above.

Figure 1. Pathway to English Language Certification for enrolled graduate students



The ELPE consists of three tasks designed to assess the language demands associated with college level instruction. These tasks are:

1. a reading, which targets careful language production;
2. a presentation, which targets formal, planned language production; and
3. an interview, which targets casual, extemporaneous language production.

A prospective ITA who scores an 80 on the ELPE is Language Certified and thus eligible for teaching assignments with no further language-related requirements. For students scoring below 80, the Center for Teaching Excellence - English Language Proficiency (CTE-ELP) program provides oral proficiency instruction. Because CTE-ELP instruction is required for students who have Level 2 Proficiency and are currently serving as ITAs but optional for all others, CTE-ELP programming is subject to availability and priority as outlined in table 2 below.

Table 2. Priority groups for CTE-ELP instruction

Priority	Graduate Students or Instructors	Currently Teaching	Proficiency Level(s)
<i>Group 1</i>	Graduate Students	✓ (with departmental verification*)	2
<i>Group 2</i>	Graduate Students	-----	2 & 3
<i>Group 3</i>	Instructors (including Level 1 ITAs)	✓	1
<i>Group 4</i>	Graduate Students	-----	-----

*Students with Level 2 Proficiency are not considered Group 1 until they have submitted a departmental verification form signed by their supervisors confirming that they are currently serving as Teaching Assistants. Group 1 students must contact the CTE-ELP program to begin their instruction no later than week 2 of each semester.

C. CTE-ELP programming

Group 1 participants begin with a diagnostic assessment of their oral proficiency skills via an intake interview with the English Language Proficiency Consultants. The results of this diagnostic are then used to construct a personal improvement plan. Each plan is based on individual needs established during the diagnostic assessment and encompasses specific recommendations for activities detailed in table 3.

Table 3. CTE-ELP improvement activities

Activity	Description	Correspondence to ELPE	Target Audience
Private Consultation and Rehearsal	Participants build upon pronunciation proficiency and fluency through strategic readings, practice motor control of the vocal tract, and receive feedback about their progress.	Task 1: Reading (careful language production)	<i>Group 1</i> (<i>Groups 2 & 3 as appointments are available</i>)
Language Laboratory with Pronunciation Software	Participants develop listening discrimination of English pronunciation, knowledge of the features and manipulation of the vocal tract, and automaticity.	Task 1: Reading (careful language production)	<i>Groups 1-4</i>
Group Practice & Discussion Sessions	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.	Tasks 2 & 3: Presentation and Interview (formal, planned and casual, extemporaneous language production)	<i>Group 1</i> (<i>Groups 2 & 3 as space permits</i>)
Teaching Observation with Feedback	Participants receive observation and feedback from an ELP Consultant to assess their linguistic performance in action. They additionally practice self-assessment skills.	Task 2: Presentation (formal, planned language production)	<i>Group 1</i> (<i>Group 3 as time permits</i>)
Weekly Conversation Partners	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.	Task 3: Interview (casual, extemporaneous language production)	<i>Group 1</i> (<i>Groups 2 & 3 as appointments are available</i>)
Pronunciation Workshops	Participants develop phonological awareness and familiarity with CTE-ELP services.	Task 1: Reading (careful language production)	<i>Groups 1-4</i>

D. Progress Assessment and Re-examination

Group 1 participants receive regular formative assessment from English Language Proficiency Consultants during their time working with the CTE-ELP program. Twice each semester (at midterm and final), they receive a report documenting their participation and progress, which they can share with their advisers. Once students become eligible to do so, they can retake the ELP and certify their proficiency.

Students are eligible to retake the ELPE once every three months per OGAPS policy. Group 1 students only may request to retake the ELPE before three months have elapsed but must do so through the CTE-ELP program. Requests are granted only if students are following their individual improvement plan and have made demonstrable progress in oral proficiency. Students granted permission to retake the ELPE before three months have elapsed will receive a waiver from the CTE-ELP program which they can take directly to Testing Services to schedule their exam. Requests to retest the ELPE must be made through the CTE-ELP program 7 business days before the exam is scheduled. For example, if the ELPE is scheduled for Saturday 12 August, the student's appointment to request a retest should be scheduled no later than Thursday 3 August.

Most workstations in the Language Laboratory are designated for Group 1 use, but at least one station each semester is available to Groups 2-4. Likewise, all stations that are unoccupied and have not been reserved will be available on a walk-in basis for Groups 2-4.

Groups 2 and 3 also have access to other CTE-ELP services as space and time permit. For example, they may be assigned Conversation Partners, participate in Group Practice & Discussion Sessions, or receive Private Consultation if appointments are available after all Group 1 participants have been served.