English Language Institute

English Language Institute (ELI)

For the non-native speaker of English, The University of Alabama English Language Institute (ELI), a part of Capstone International, offers two types of year-round English-language programs: The Intensive English Program designed for individuals seeking intensive English study, and Special Programs, designed for groups desiring highly-specialized curricula. In addition, the ELI has two programs for students enrolled at The University of Alabama: the International Teaching Assistant Program, which trains and evaluates international graduate teaching assistants, and the Academic Support Program, which provides opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students who may want or need additional English-language instruction.

For more information about any of the ELI programs, contact The University of Alabama, English Language Institute, Box 870250, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0250; visit eli.ua.edu; call (205) 348-7413; fax (205) 348-9266; or email info@eli.ua.edu.

Intensive English Program

The Intensive English Program (IEP) is designed for individuals who need to learn English as a second language. The program focuses on preparing students for academic success, both in English-language proficiency and cultural awareness, for undergraduate and graduate study at The University of Alabama.

Six levels of study, from beginning to advanced, are available. Each level consists of a minimum of 20 hours of class per week. Sessions lasting six-eight weeks are available six times per year in January, March, May, June, August and October. Students may begin their English study at the beginning of any one of these sessions.

An ELI student wishing to enter an undergraduate degree program at The University of Alabama may meet UA’s English proficiency requirements either by obtaining the required TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) score or by completing Level 6 with a minimum grade point average of 3.0 in Levels 4, 5 and 6. Conditionally admitted students who meet certain conditions (minimum TOEFL score and GPA) become eligible to enroll in undergraduate courses while completing their ELI program of study. In such cases, the number of UA courses that an eligible student may take is determined by the ELI.

Students pursuing graduate study must complete Levels 4, 5 and 6 with a minimum GPA of 3.5 to meet English proficiency requirements. In certain cases, the Graduate School, the ELI and the student’s academic department may together grant permission for a student who has completed Level 4 or higher with a minimum GPA of 3.5 to enroll in one graduate course per semester while completing the ELI program of study. The specific course must be approved by the instructor and department prior to enrollment.

Students who apply for admission to UA and meet the academic and financial qualifications to enter the University but do not meet the English proficiency requirements may be admitted conditionally or provisionally. Such students will not be eligible to begin an academic program and will be required to register for full-time study in ELI until they meet the TOEFL requirement or satisfactorily complete the ELI program as outlined above.

Intensive English Program Courses

Structure: Levels 1 to 6

Structure courses provide students with the basic grammatical structures they will need to communicate effectively in English in four language skill areas: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Each structure course emphasizes communication, both comprehension (listening and reading) and production (speaking and writing). Structure courses meet five hours per week.

Speaking/Listening: Levels 1 to 6

ELI courses in Speaking/Listening provide students with the opportunity to improve their listening and speaking skills and to gain confidence in using English to communicate orally. Students practice appropriate conversation management skills, receive instruction on problem areas of pronunciation and learn useful vocabulary. These activities are carried on through a variety of classroom exercises that focus on the everyday situations students are likely to encounter while adjusting to life in the United States. Speaking/Listening courses meet six hours per week.

Reading/Writing: Levels 1 to 6

The Reading/Writing curriculum of the English Language Institute is designed to provide students with both the skills and the practice that are necessary for them to develop satisfactory reading and writing skills in English and eventually to function successfully in U.S. university courses where extensive academic reading and essay writing are required. Skill instruction along with accessible, varied and challenging tasks invite students to invest their time and energy in constructing meaning from written texts, responding to those texts and producing writings of their own. Students will acquire new vocabulary and develop effective reading strategies for different types of tests. Working on closely-related reading and writing assignments, students will develop proficiency in understanding what they read and in thinking, drafting and revising their own ideas by working through the writing process with input from their classmates and teachers. Reading/Writing courses meet nine hours per week.

Culturally Speaking Class

Through the Culturally Speaking class, ELI students meet regularly with American students to converse in English in relaxed surroundings. Culturally Speaking provides a comfortable way for ELI students to form friendships with American students and to practice their English.

Culture and Language Exchange Program

The Culture and Language Exchange Program matches the ELI students with UA students who are studying the ELI student’s native language. Once matched, these pairs or groups of students meet as often as they like for conversation practice in both English and in the particular foreign language.

ELI Special Programs

ELI Special Programs consist of a variety of programs designed for groups of participants with mutual goals and concerns who desire highly-specialized, intensive curricula. Such programs are typically designed for international English teachers, students whose international universities have approved curricula for credit, international graduate students preparing to enter universities throughout the United States, and business professionals who wish to improve their overall effectiveness in English or to concentrate on specific skills such as written communication.

An organization wishing to participate in such a program should clearly define the goals of its group and keep in mind that program enrollments typically require a minimum of 10 participants. Financial sponsorship for the above programs may come from ministries of education, embassies, corporations, private philanthropic organizations, U.S. or other government sponsoring agencies or the individual participants themselves. Programs may be offered at any time of the year and typically range in length from two to six weeks.

Academic Support Program

The ELI Academic Support Program provides opportunities for UA undergraduate and graduate students who may want or need additional English-language instruction. At the graduate level, ESL support courses in written and spoken English are available free of charge to full-time international graduate students each fall and spring semester. In addition, the ELI Study Center and the UA Language Resource Center are available for individualized language assistance.

International Teaching Assistant Program

The International Teaching Assistant Program (ITAP) provides training and evaluation for international students with graduate teaching assistantships. Participation in the ITAP program is mandatory for all non-native English-speaking GTAs and graduate assistants who have instructional responsibilities at the University.

Contact the ELI

To obtain more information about any of the above ELI programs, contact The University of Alabama English Language Institute, visit the ELI website (eli.ua.edu) or contact the ELI at Box 870250, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0250; telephone (205) 348-7413; fax (205) 348-9266; or email info@eli.ua.edu.