
Listserv Summary: International Teaching Assistants

August 2015

An inquiry was made to the listserv regarding policies and procedures around international teaching assistants.

Summary of Responses

There were eight respondents to this inquiry; representatives from Emporia State University, the University of Utah, the University of Lincoln-Nebraska, the University of Kentucky, the University of Michigan, Iowa State University, Texas Tech University, and Yale University.

1. What, if anything, is done at your university for the preparation of International Teaching Assistants?

- Seven of the eight universities required that teaching assistants pass one or more English language proficiency test. Specific tests mentioned include:
 - SPEAK test (with representation/scorers from the institution and department) (2)
 - IBT speaking score of 25-30 (1)
 - CaMLA (1)
 - OECT- Oral Proficiency Interview and TEACH simulation (mini-lecture) (1)
 - ITA Presentation Test- teaching simulation test (2)
 - MELAB Listening Comprehension Test (1)
 - Other language screening, not specified (2)

- Five of the eight respondents indicated that they were required to attend orientations or trainings on-site prior to teaching at their institutions.
 - Institute for International Teaching Assistants: Two-week intensive training focused on instructional strategies, classroom management, active learning, English pronunciation and intonation, and cross-cultural communication (1)
 - Three-week summer workshop (no details given) (1)
 - Workshops on “working at teaching;” several departments have their own training courses. (1)
 - Training required; no details given (2)

2. If something is done, who teaches it?

- ESL Centers or language institutes on-campus (3)
- Specific International Teaching Assistant program staff (1)
- Staff from the Office of Graduate Studies with pedagogical experience (1)
- Undergraduates who are employed as “classroom consultants” and provide feedback (1)
- Academic Communication Program (1)

3. What are the logistics (cost, credit, time commitment, etc.)?

- University of Utah ITAP is coordinated through the Graduate School, registration is done by the student’s home department. If additional classes are required, these are conducted through ESL.
- University of Lincoln-Nebraska’s training takes place over a two-week period for approximately 6 hours a day. There is no cost to the student or the graduate program and students do not receive credit.
- University of Kentucky courses count as regular production of credit hours for A&S, who operates the Center for ESL.
- University of Michigan’s costs for the ITA training program are within the college/unit budgets. Courses that are taken for English proficiency are for credit.
- Texas Tech refers ITSs through the academic department, follow-up courses are run through ESL