

VOCATIONAL ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (VESL) TEMPLATE

INTRODUCTION

The Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL) Template must be completed by institutions offering VESL program/courses to supplement and augment ACCET Document 3.1 – Analytic Self-Evaluation Report (ASER), which incorporates the ACCET Standards for Accreditation (Document 2). The template expands upon the ACCET Standards specifically referenced herein by adding Specific Field Criteria and Supplemental ASER Questions/Statements, in order to elicit a more relevant and valid self-evaluation of the institution and to emphasize those standards where unique characteristics are identified.

VESL PROGRAMS/COURSES

Vocational ESL courses or programs serve postsecondary students whose native language is not English, whose primary residence is inside the United States, and whose purpose for training is to enhance their professional/job-related skills and opportunities. English as a Second Language (ESL) is the main subject being taught in these programs. Institutions must identify vocational language and employment-related needs of students prior to enrollment and may admit only students who need instruction in English in order to facilitate use of existing knowledge, training, or skills in the search for gainful employment. Institutions must demonstrate that: (1) instruction will lead to a certificate and (2) students will receive placement assistance upon completion of the program.

SPECIFIC FIELD CRITERIA & SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS/ STATEMENTS

STANDARD I - MISSION

The institution has a mission that is compatible with the ACCET mission, scope, and standards.

- A. Mission Statement: The institution clearly states its mission, thereby providing a definitive basis upon which to deliver and assess the education and training programs in an ethical, quality management environment. The reasons for offering the education and training are consistent with the institution's mission and are documented by either a needs assessment or market experience.**

Specific Field Criteria for Vocational English as a Second Language: Programs teaching vocational English as a Second Language to non-native speakers define their mission by identifying the institution's student mixture. The institution's programs are classified as (1) English for Vocational Purposes (EVP), for stand-alone instructional programs or programs taught in conjunction with a technical or vocational program leading to English competencies for mainstreaming into the American job market; and/or (2) English for Specific Purposes

(ESP), for stand-alone instructional programs leading to English competencies in a specific vocation and/or profession.

Supplemental ASER Questions/Statements for Vocational English as a Second Language:

- Describe the institution's VESL programs as related to the definitions provided above (EVP/ESP). How do these programs support the institution's mission?

STANDARD IV - CURRICULA

The institution's curricular design, materials, and outcomes measurements follow sound educational practices.

- A. Educational Goals and Curricular Objectives: The institution's programs and courses have appropriate educational goals and objectives. The curricular content and learning experiences are preplanned and present a sound, systematic, and sequential educational methodology. Sufficient and appropriate knowledge and skill elements are included to ensure adequate preparation for the expected performance outcomes in the specific program or course for which the students enroll.**

When required as part of a program, an externship/internship or other training-related work experience is based on a preplanned outline of the specific knowledge, skills, and experience to be acquired.

Specific Field Criteria for Vocational English as a Second Language: All VESL programs define specific objectives by sequential performance levels. Each level consists of clearly delineated language skills as well as communications functions that support the vocational needs of the targeted student population. Student-to-instructor ratios for programs are maintained at a level commensurate with the training presented.

Supplemental ASER Questions/Statements for Vocational English as a Second Language:

- Describe how the curricular objectives specifically address the vocational needs of students.
- Describe how the institution determines that the vocational elements of the ESL curriculum present sufficient and appropriate knowledge and skill elements.

- B. Program/Instructional Materials: Program materials, including syllabi, lesson plans, instructional guides, and texts demonstrate the appropriate scope, sequence, and depth of each program or course in relation to the stated goals and objectives. Instructional materials, including supplementary textbooks, software, learning activities, visual aids, electronic links, and other teaching tools support the goals and objectives. All materials are up to date, readily available, and facilitate positive learning outcomes.**

Specific Field Criteria for Vocational English as a Second Language: All instructional materials are up to date and appropriate to the institution's system of sequential performance levels. EVP programs include general instructional materials within the academic scope of the program that focus on the employment-related needs of the students enrolled. ESP programs include materials which focus on the identified vocational language and employment-related needs of the students enrolled.

Supplemental ASER Questions/Statements for Vocational English as a Second Language:

- From among the list of primary and/or supplemental texts/instructional materials, identify and elaborate on those texts/materials that specifically address the vocational elements of the curriculum.
- What is the institution's policy on teacher-made instructional materials? How are non-textbook instructional materials (pictures, games, newspaper and magazine articles, websites, etc.) integrated into lesson plans and utilized to support the published curriculum? Who has oversight of this process in order to ensure quality of the educational experience?

C. Performance Measurements: Performance measurements are written and are periodically evaluated and updated to ensure instructional effectiveness. The institution has a sound, written assessment system that contains a set of defined elements, such as a grading scale, weighting factors, tests, quizzes, reports, projects, attendance, and/or participation, which are appropriately related to the performance objectives of the program or course.

Specific Field Criteria for Vocational English as a Second Language: Both initial assessment and proficiency exams are employed for the evaluation of performance standards. A valid and reliable instrument is used for the initial assessment of all enrollees for placement into appropriate levels. A valid and reliable test instrument that is nationally recognized is also used for an external validation on the acquisition of language proficiency, at a minimum, in fulfillment of the institution's exit requirements.

Supplemental ASER Questions/Statements for Vocational English as a Second Language:

- Which testing instrument is used for initial assessment to determine the applicant's English skills for placement into skill levels? If this instrument was developed in-house, describe the process by which it was developed. Either way, explain how test results are correlated to the proficiency levels embodied in the institution's own system of sequential performance levels.
- State the criteria used for determining a student's eligibility for advancement to the next performance level in terms of observable performance objectives.

- Provide a clear statement and documentation of the institution's use of in-house achievement examinations and outside proficiency examinations and any relationship between the two examinations.

D. Curriculum Review/Revision: The institution uses effective and systematic procedures, including completion and, if applicable, placement results to continuously monitor and improve the curriculum. The written procedures include soliciting feedback from relevant constituencies, such as faculty, students, graduates, employers, and advisory/certification boards. The procedures focus on a comprehensive review of the curriculum as it relates to the expected learning outcomes.

Specific Field Criteria for Vocational English as a Second Language: Policies and procedures exist that ensure that current methodologies, theories, and materials are evaluated.

Supplemental ASER Questions/Statements for Vocational English as a Second Language:

- Provide evidence that the institution has examined current methodologies, theories, and materials as part of its curricular review process. Describe any changes made to the institution's curricula as a result of this review.
- How does the institution stay current on issues relating to pedagogical theory and methodology within the ESL profession?

STANDARD V - METHODS, FACILITIES, AND EQUIPMENT

The institution utilizes appropriate and effective instructional methods and other resources to ensure sound instructional delivery.

A. Instructional Methods: Instructional methods encourage active and motivated responses from participants. Policies and procedures are in place to ensure that the curricula are followed and that there is consistency of application by all instructional staff. The instructional methodology is consistent with contemporary training industry standards and appropriate to the educational goals and curricular objectives, facilitates learning, and serves the individual learning needs and objectives of participants. Instructional methods provide encouragement, challenges, and learning opportunities for all enrolled participants, taking into account different backgrounds, learning abilities and styles, and prior levels of achievement.

Specific Field Criteria for Vocational English as a Second Language: Instructional methods include interactive teaching strategies that recognize various modalities of learning (e.g. visual, audio, and kinesthetic), learning styles and cultural backgrounds. Instructors demonstrate knowledge of students' learning styles and are able to modify instruction as appropriate. Institutions employ classroom methods in which instructor use of language is minimized and student use of language is maximized.

Supplemental ASER Questions/Statements for Vocational English as a Second Language:

- Provide an example of how a particular lesson addressed students' individual needs, whether relative to learning modalities, learning styles, or cultural background.

STANDARD VI - INSTRUCTIONAL PERSONNEL

- A. Qualifications of Instructional Personnel:** Instructional personnel possess the appropriate combination of educational credential(s), specialized training and/or certification, work experience, and demonstrated teaching and classroom management skills, which qualifies them for their training assignments.

Specific Field Criteria for Vocational English as a Second Language: The institution maintains written policies that define the minimum levels of education, training, and experience required of instructors. Instructional staff have, at minimum, a bachelor's degree with ESOL teaching experience or a bachelor's degree in teaching ESL or a foreign language with ESOL teaching experience. Instructional staff also demonstrate near-native proficiency in English.

- C. Instructor Orientation and Training:** The institution develops and implements a written policy for the effective orientation and training of instructional personnel to ensure a consistent, high level of instruction. The institution has an effective policy for the continued professional development of instructional personnel that is systematically implemented, monitored, and documented.

Specific Field Criteria for Vocational English as a Second Language: Continuing education and in-service training include in-house workshops and seminars as well as membership in regional and/or national/professional organizations. Reasonable provisions are made for faculty to attend conventions, meetings, and workshops held by these organizations. Participation is documented.

STANDARD VII - ADMISSIONS

The institution recruits and enrolls only qualified participants who can reasonably be expected to benefit from the education and training services and provides student services appropriate to their needs.

- B. Enrollment:** The institution's policy for enrollment is clearly stated, defined, and in compliance with statutory, regulatory, and accreditation requirements. Reliable and regular means are utilized to ensure that, prior to acceptance, all applicants are able and qualified to benefit from the education and training services. The enrollment process is preplanned, effective, and regularly monitored by the institution to ensure its integrity.

The institution provides in its enrollment agreement or contract full disclosure of the rights, obligations, and responsibilities of all parties, including (1) all costs stated in clear

and explicit language, and (2) cancellation and refund policies that comply with statutory, regulatory, and accreditation requirements. The written enrollment agreement or contract is furnished to appropriate parties before any payment or obligation is made.

Specific Field Criteria for Vocational English as a Second Language: The institution sets and maintains the following minimum English language entry requirements: (1) basic literacy skills in both the applicant's native language and in English; (2) oral communication skills at the pre-beginner to beginner level, with the ability to handle job-related routine entry-level tasks; and (3) comprehension skills to include the understanding of simple learned phrases and limited vocabulary. These abilities are documented through standardized placement tests. In addition, enrollment documents (including enrollment agreements and catalogs) are provided in a language the student understands; or the institution verifies and attests that the translated content is understood by the enrollee. For stand-alone EVP and/or ESP programs, verification of pre-existing knowledge, training, or skills that qualify a student for enrollment eligibility is documented.

Supplemental ASER Questions/Statements for Vocational English as a Second Language:

- Provide copies of the institution's written policies and procedures for assessing applicants based upon the established minimum entry requirements.
- Describe how the institution insures that applicants understand the enrollment documents, including the enrollment agreements and catalogs, providing supporting documentation as applicable.
- Provide sample copies of documentation representative of the institution's methods for recording prior employment or training experiences that form the basis for each applicant's set of knowledge and skills.
- Describe how each applicant's set of knowledge and skills are evaluated relative to their stated, personal vocational objectives, for EVP programs, or to the stated vocational objectives of the program, for ESP programs, to determine their eligibility for enrollment.

STANDARD VIII – EVALUATION AND DOCUMENTATION

The institution utilizes appropriate methods of evaluation to ensure that outcomes are consistent with the mission and goals. The institution maintains all required documentation.

- A. Student Progress: The institution uses effective means to assess and record the progress of participants. Semester credits, quarter credits, clock hours, and/or continuing education units are used to denote the successful completion of the education and training services provided. Assessment results are documented consistently in accordance with institutionally established performance outcomes and are communicated to all participants. Participants are informed of their progress on a regular and timely basis.**

Institutions required under explicit regulatory authority to assess student progress utilize sound written policies and procedures that clearly describe the institution's requirements for satisfactory academic progress.

Specific Field Criteria for Vocational English as a Second Language: Assessment standards include documentation of both the in-house and external standardized examinations. Students' progress to the next performance level is determined by the institution's prescribed measures of competency, which must include reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

Supplemental ASER Questions/Statements for Vocational English as a Second Language:

- State the criteria used for determining a student's eligibility for advancement to the next performance level in terms of observable performance objectives.
- Indicate the impact on the overall grade/assessment of both in-house achievement exams and external proficiency exams.

E. Completion and Placement: Written policies and procedures are followed that provide an effective means to regularly assess, document, and validate the quality of the education and training services provided relative to completion and placement rates, as applicable.

- **Completion: The number of participants who complete the programs and courses in which they enroll is consistent with the benchmarks established by the Accrediting Commission.**
- **Placement: Institutions offering vocational programs provide job placement assistance to graduates and document the results to enhance the effectiveness of the training services provided. The quality of such programs is validated by positive training-related outcomes consistent with the benchmarks established by the Accrediting Commission.**

Specific Field Criteria for Vocational English as a Second Language: All vocational ESL programs, including EVP and ESP, document both completion and placement according to this standard. The institution's graduates are placed in employment appropriate to their skills, work experiences, and/or prior training. ESP programs show evidence that their students are placed in the fields specifically related to their vocational training.

Supplemental ASER Questions/Statements for Vocational English as a Second Language:

- For EVP programs, provide copies of the written policies and procedures demonstrating how the institution determines the nature of a training-related placement relative to the information obtained at the admissions stage concerning each student's pre-existing knowledge, training, or skills, as well as their stated, personal vocational objectives.