

# Faculty Handbook

EAP Student Information  
for UPEI Faculty

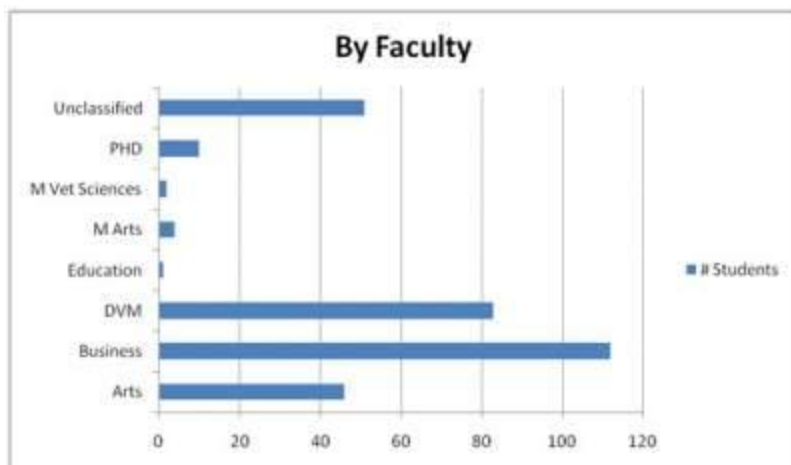
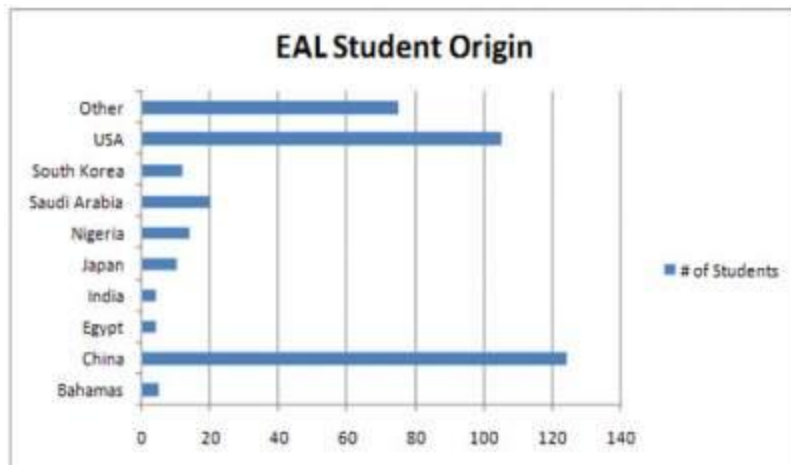
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## International Students: Who are they?

With international students from over 50 countries on campus, UPEI is gradually becoming more culturally diverse - and exciting! About 9% of our student population comes from beyond Canada's shores. This includes:

- exchange students who are here for one or two semesters
- DVM students, primarily from USA
- students in 2+2 and 1+3 programs offered in partnership with foreign universities
- students who are here to study English and complete a degree



- Approximately two-thirds of these students speak English as a second or additional language (ESL/EAL)
- A growing number of new permanent residents to PEI are also in this category

Although practicality requires the use of labels to define programs and describe our students, even the terms “English as a Second Language (ESL)” or “second-language learner (L2)” are somewhat misleading, since English may be a third or fourth language for some students. Thus, the term English as an Additional Language (EAL) is becoming more commonly used.

## **The English Academic Preparation (EAP) Program**

- EAP is a non-credit English language program designed to enable students who are close to having the required English skills for admission to move to full-time degree studies as soon as possible.
- An academic support program that functions as a bridge to credit courses, EAP allows some students to begin their degree program while perfecting their English and learning the skills required in “western” university culture.
- The number of credit courses allowed increases incrementally, as students’ English proficiency improves.
- Based on the foundational premise that a second language is learned most effectively when used as the medium to convey information of interest and relevance to the learner, EAP curricula closely approximates authentic first-year university content, tasks and assignments.
- Primary focus is placed on mastering academic writing and presentation skills.
- EAP facilitates the integration of ESL students into the campus community and reinforces students’ sense of competence and confidence.
- Evaluation is based on mastery; outcomes are designed to enable students to meet the academic standards and requirements of the University.
- EAP Writing was made a pre-requisite for English 101 in December 2005 and for Business 101 and Global Issues 151: Critical Thinking & Writing in 2008.

It is important to remember that EAL students have a perfectly good language in which they are fluent, perhaps even gifted. Many of these students may be used to excelling in whatever they undertake. Even so, they tend to view themselves as poor English speakers, rather than gifted bilingual or multi-lingual people.

The transition to university in a new culture and language can be very challenging -- for everyone: students, faculty, counselors, residence and host families. Sometimes, cultural mores make asking for help virtually impossible for these students, resulting in them suffering through this transition alone. Sometimes the opposite is true, and students become overly-dependent on a sympathetic mentor.

If students receive appropriate support in the first few critical weeks and months, they will be successful because most are incredibly strategic learners. Like domestic students, they can be overwhelmed at the enormity of the freedom being on their own for the first time brings. Many of their stories are inspirational. This information is provided to assist you in guiding them through the challenge that they have undertaken.

## **English as an Additional Language (EAL) Students Admission Standards at UPEI**

Students accepted are academically qualified in their native language; but, they do have varying degrees of English proficiency. There are three “categories” of EAL students:

Unconditional Status

Conditional Status:

- A. Full-time EAP (25 hours/week)
- B. Part-time EAP + some credit courses

Unconditional Status: Students who have an English proficiency score (EPT) above the minimum established by Senate, or students who have studied in English for 4 years (UPEI Calendar 2010-11, p.41) are admitted unconditionally. (Many African students are in this category). Tests being what they are, this score does not always mean these students are completely proficient, especially in writing. Once admitted unconditionally, these students are not required to do English Academic Preparation (EAP), unless as a condition of academic probation, but a section of EAP could certainly be recommended.

Conditional Admission: Students who do not meet the English requirement may be admitted to a degree program + the EAP bridging program, with the condition that they achieve the minimum English proficiency requirement within 2 years: their course-load is restricted until they do. The number of credit courses allowed increases incrementally as students’ English proficiency increases. Mastering academic writing takes longer than the other skills, so students may take 2 or 3 levels of EAP Writing before they are allowed to move to English 101. They do this while taking several credit courses.

## **Assessment and Placement**

The English assessment instrument used at UPEI is the CanTEST, developed and validated by the University of Ottawa in 1986 to evaluate students for university admission (<http://www.cantest.uottawa.ca/>) Results are reported as a “band score” meeting a defined set of descriptors. The score range is 1-5, with 4.5 required for unconditional admission to Canadian undergraduate programs (approximately 73%). On average, students progress half a band width per semester. For example, someone entering with 3.5 will likely achieve 4 after 12 weeks.

The CanTEST English Placement exam is comprised of 3 sections and takes 2.5hours to complete:

1. Listening comprehension - 30 minutes
2. Reading comprehension - 50 minutes
3. A one-page essay on a general topic - 60 minutes

Speaking skills are measured through an informal interview, though, if required, a formal interview is sometimes conducted.

## **How EAP Students are Evaluated**

Evaluating the work of EAL students can present a special challenge. There is no special University policy regarding evaluation of EAL students. As with all issues of academic assessment and evaluation, responsibility and judgment lies with individual professors, in consultation with their department and dean.

Research shows that it takes 5-7 years to achieve fluency in academic English to compete on par with native English-speaking students. (Collier, 1987; Klesmer, 1994; Cummins, 1981a) To hold students in ESL classes until they are fully proficient is unrealistic and impractical. This is why programs such as EAP have been developed that use authentic first-year university-level content to bridge the transition to full-time academic study in English medium universities.

Experience shows that allowing students to begin taking courses for credit as soon as possible offers the best degree of motivation, challenge, and success. This requires a degree of tolerance on the part of professors while students perfect their skills and learn “western” academic writing styles. But, it is a fine balance, that also requires setting boundaries so that you don’t find yourself over-helping and becoming burned out. You can expect a lot of mistakes, but gradually fluency does improve. It just takes time. As with our domestic students, we expect that they will be competent academic writers at the completion of their undergraduate (some would say master’s) degree; not at the beginning.

Plagiarism is a serious hazard for EAL students for several reasons: limited vocabulary makes paraphrasing extremely difficult; culturally embedded learning styles impede critical thinking skills. Many students have never been taught to write a critical paper, or have been taught that the appropriate way of showing understanding is to regurgitate the knowledge of authorities and experts. When plagiarism occurs, the most likely cause is a lack of understanding of correct referencing conventions. Students may be referred to the Writing Centre for a tutorial.

Many professors use peer review as an integral part of the writing/learning process. Students may have great difficulty knowing what to address in their EAL partner’s writing. Guidelines developed by the University of North Carolina Writing Centre provide a good resource. [http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/esl/esl\\_student\\_tips.html](http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/esl/esl_student_tips.html)

The Faculty Development Office facilitates discussion forums, workshops and provides resources in conjunction with the EAP Office and the Writing Centre. Requests are Welcome!

## **How EAP Students Compare with Non-EAP Students**

### **Average Marks by Level of Courses for EAP Students (2004-2009)**

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100 level	200 level	300 level	400 level	Overall
66.9	72.7	72.3	74.0	69.5

### **Average Marks by Level of Courses for Non-EAP Students (2004-2009)**

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100 level	200 level	300 level	400 level	Overall
70.0	73.7	76.8	79.9	72.5

Source: Statistical Report, Office of the Registrar, January 2010

## **Cultural Thought Patterns**

Many times the problems of ESL students are not with writing or thinking, but are more cultural in terms of modes and patterns of thinking. ESL students' weaknesses can be related, in many cases, to differences in cultural communication norms and expectations. It is important to be aware that the conventions of an ESL writer's language can vary drastically from what English speakers consider correct and effective. From: "A Manual for Writing Centre Tutors": Tutor.edu; <http://ww3.montreat.edu/tutor/9.htm>

Kaplan (1966) even went so far as to diagram discourse patterns reflecting different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. <http://www2.aasa.ac.jp/~dcdycus/LAC98/FEB98/BROWN298.HTM>

A good American article on cultural differences in writing styles is available at <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~writing/materials/student/special/esl.shtml>

For an interesting Chinese perspective, see a paper by Master's student Lan Zhong, University of Windsor at: <http://www.yorku.ca/yorkint/global/conference/canada/papers/Zhong-Lan.pdf>

## **Content and Instructional Strategies**

International students have a diversity of experience and world views. The challenge is to embrace and encourage the inclusion of this valuable resource, yet not put students "on the spot". University professors can play a central role in opening up opportunities for international students to relate to their peers. Some considerations when assessing course syllabi in terms of possibilities for internationalization are outlined by M. Lenina Arenas-Fuentes in the University of Regina's 2005 "International Students: A Resource Guide for University Educators" p.21:

1. Rethinking course goals in terms of internationalization (e.g. how can course objectives be more inclusive to incorporate local through global issues).
2. Examining the kinds of readings assigned to students that reflect diverse points of view.

3. Rethinking assignments so that they encourage students to think beyond national borders.
4. Using the representative diversity of the student demographics in the classroom as a teaching tool; allowing students to use their own experiences to dialogue about the multiple perspectives on content topics.
5. Using your own research, study abroad, international consulting and conference attendance as a faculty member to enrich and enliven a course.
6. Inviting visiting international faculty members, colleagues or students with international experience as guest speakers or panelists

## **Incorporating International Development Week into your Syllabus**

We try to highlight the achievements of our international students and provide opportunities to share their knowledge and experience with the community during International Development Week, which takes place annually during the 2nd week of February. The IDW committee organizes a schedule of events. Professors are invited to integrate the theme of international week into their syllabi, and encourage students to take part in IDW events. Your participation is welcome.

For information, contact us.

- Chair Christian Lacroix, Dean of Science at 566-0320 or
- Suna Houghton, International Projects Coordinator at 894-2842

<http://www.upei.ca/internationalization/>

## **Some Practical Teaching Tips**

English second language speakers in your class? Here are a few teaching tips that they will appreciate.

- Write unusual words(e.g. “craze”) and key words on the board, since most ESL students have a much higher reading comprehension than oral comprehension; use a visual, or give a handout when lecturing.
- Put your lecture notes and study questions on electronic reserve or on a web-page.
- Don’t erase too quickly; PRINT (many students are not familiar with cursive writing).
- Give as much context as possible to overcome cultural gaps. Identify political figures by position as well as name, since international students will not know that Robert Ghiz is the

Premier of PEI, for example. They may not understand even recent North American pop culture references.

- Give rationale for learning a concept or skill: e.g. I have 3 objectives for having you watch this TV news broadcast: 1) to paraphrase main idea and supporting details; 2) to enable you to keep up with world news; 3) to practice discussion skills.
- Turn on closed captioning when watching a video.
- Try to vary language to enable comprehension instead of speaking more loudly, which we all have a natural tendency to do.
- Clearly communicate your expectations regarding assignments in written and spoken form .
- Clarify understanding by asking students to explain in their own words.
- Provide sample tests and examples of the work you want.
- Paraphrase key points using different words each time to help clarify meaning.
- Be aware that some cultures do not share the same level of eye contact, speaking proximity, and mannerisms and are often painfully self-conscious about their English speaking skills.
- What may appear as boredom or inattentiveness may be information overload or lack of comprehension. Try to re-connect emotionally rather than by asking a question which, having “zoned out”, they won’t be able to answer.
- Cultural differences affect writing styles. You may have to explain the expectations of western writing style.
- Articles and prepositions are very difficult even for advanced ESL writers, but do not hamper comprehensibility, so should not be penalized.
- Many international students are exceptionally bright and skilled but need extra support or prodding to take part because of lack of confidence in the language. As reluctant as these high achievers may be at first, they light up when they realize that their participation is welcome and will appreciate your encouragement.
- Pointing out meta-cognitive strategies empowers ESL students - e.g. use of mnemonic devices, summarizing, skimming and scanning, paraphrasing, active listening.
- Explain your organization of information if you do not follow the traditional introduction, key point, summary/conclusion method of presentation.
- Culture shock is inevitable and may exhibit as depression, anger, or illness. Encourage students to read about it and seek counseling from the International Student Advisor.

- Let students know what resources are available to help them: e.g The Writing Centre; assistance upon request at the library; EAP classes; tutoring; academic and personal counseling, and international student advisement, all available through Student Services.

With thanks to the Center for Academic Planning & Support, New Hampshire Community Technical College for some of these tips.

Online intercultural resource. For information on other cultures and customs, please click [here](#)

## **Support Services for EAP Students**

- The Writing Centre located in the Webster Centre for Teaching & Learning, RL 225 is open Monday - Friday from 10-4 for appointments and for drop-in consultation from Sunday to Thursday from 3 - 7 p.m.

- Student Services offers a wide range of academic advisement and counseling services; staff members have experience and expertise in issues affecting international students. Joy Ikede & Erica Stanley are the International Student Advisors. James Reddin is a counselor with experience in cross-cultural counseling .

- The Buddy Program ( International Student Connections Program) matches new international students with local students and international “veterans” who assist in a successful transition to UPEI.. Coordinated by a senior UPEI student.

- Volunteer tutors are members of Students for Literacy, alumni, & friends who assist students with pronunciation practice and filling cultural gaps encountered in readings or lectures. Coordinated by Cathy Gillan, EAP Manager.

- Society of International Students organizes social and cultural events and represents the interests of international students on the Student Union.

## Contacts Available for Assistance

### Social Support, Immigration & Housing

Joy Ikede & Erica Stanley - International Student Advisors, Student Services  
Student Centre, Rm# 243

Phone: (902) 894-2823

<http://www.upei.ca.upei.ca/studentervices/international>

### Emotional or Academic Counseling

James Reddin - International Student Counselor, Student Services  
Student Centre, Rm# 241

Phone: (902) 566-6067

<http://www.upei.ca/studentervices/counseling>

### Faculty Professional Development

Barb R. Campbell - Director, Faculty Development Office  
Robertson Library, Rm#225

Phone: (902) 566-0743

<http://www.upei.ca/webstercentre/fdo>

### Resources & Advice on Language Issues

Catherine Gillan - EAP Manager  
Christina Perry - EAP Assistant Coordinator  
Courtney Moore – SFL Student Assistant  
Robertson Library, Rm#220

Phone: (902) 894-2817

### Writing Help Centre

Erin Casey - Writing Centre Coordinator  
Robertson Library, Rm#217

Phone: (902) 628-4320

<http://www.upei.ca/webstercentre/writing>

### Fun Opportunities to use English

International Students Connection Program

Coordinator - [buddy@upei.us.ca](mailto:buddy@upei.us.ca)

Student Centre

Phone: (902) 566-0530

<http://www.upei.ca/studentervices/international/buddyprogram>

### SIS Events & Representation

Society of International Students

c/o Student Union

Student Centre

Phone: (902) 566-0530

[http://www.upei.ca/studentervices/international/iss\\_events](http://www.upei.ca/studentervices/international/iss_events)