



**Distance Education Unit and College of Education**

# **Protocol for Working with the **ELT** Community and Observations Across CERTESL for students in the University's CERTESL courses**

**NOTE TO SASKATOON-AREA CERTESL STUDENTS:**

Request forms to visit the Saskatoon Open Door Society (SODS) are to be submitted directly to SODS.

Request forms to visit a Saskatoon K-12 school are to be submitted to the CERTESL Program Office, University of Saskatchewan, Room 464, 221 Cumberland Ave. N. or fax (306) 966-5590.

Forms submitted after the deadline dates below to either SODS or CERTESL will not be accepted.

Term 1: September 3 (adult and K-12 placements)

Term 2: January 5 (adult and K-12 placements)

Spring and Summer: May 4 (**adult** placements only)

*NOTE TO K-12 PDCEAL STUDENTS enrolled in CERTESL classes: Please submit the general K-12 classroom observations request form provided to you by the PDCEAL program to the Curriculum Studies Office in the College of Education following the schedule indicated by the PDCEAL program office. As experienced teachers planning to remain in the pre-K-12 school system, you need only observation orientation, not practicum orientation.*

## Contents

### Part 1: Protocol for Working With the ELT Community

Introduction to Working with the ELT Community.....	3
Why You Need to Arrange Placements .....	5
Types of Agencies in Which You May Observe.....	6
Contact with Adult English Language Training Delivery Agencies .....	8
Contact with K–12 Schools .....	11
Pre-K–12 Schools in Saskatoon .....	11
K–12 Schools Outside of Saskatoon .....	12
Contact with ELT Practitioners .....	13
Contact with English Language Learners (ELL’s).....	13
Letters and Forms.....	16

### Part 2: Observations Across CERTESL

Instructions for Observing Across CERTESL .....	20
Who Can I Observe? .....	20
When Can I Observe? .....	21
How Will I Demonstrate my Observation Time?.....	21
Special Notes .....	22
Documentation of Observation Form.....	23
Sample Observation Report.....	24
Observation Report Form .....	26

## Part I: Protocol for Working with the ELT Community

### Introduction to Working with the ELT Community

Courses in Teaching English as an Additional/Second Language (TEAL or TESL) at the University of Saskatchewan, both in the CERTESL program and in the College of Education's Curriculum Studies department (ECUR), have become very popular. Because your most important learning will come from English language learners (ELLs) and teachers, practical assignments that draw you into contact with these most important resources people are a feature of the program.

To complete our classroom- and interview-based assignments successfully, you will need to make contact with English language learners, school divisions, teachers or delivery agencies. These groups value your efforts to gain professional expertise in English Language Teaching (ELT), so most have been very cooperative in the past. By following the enclosed instructions, you will help to ensure a continued good relationship between students of the University and these groups. Some of the points below may seem obvious to you and we raise them here simply as reminders. Others will be new points that you may not have thought of before.

**MOST IMPORTANT: The teachers who agree to share their classrooms and expertise with you are granting you a privilege. Please demonstrate an attitude that lets them know you understand this and appreciate it, when you make requests, when you participate in observations and interviews, and when carrying out all the requirements of your practicum. If you are not able or willing to project this attitude towards your future colleagues, you may not be well-suited for the English language teaching profession.**

In addition, please note that as an observer, volunteer, or practicum student, you do not represent the host agency in any way. Make sure that you understand all relevant protocols of the host agency and that you follow them carefully.

#### Adult Program Placements

If you want to work with **adults**, you can make direct contact with EAL delivery agencies for adults and follow the instructions that follow. Each agency has a limited number of placement opportunities and you are encouraged to call early. If you plan to work with younger learners, you will need to respect the chains of responsibility in your local school system.

If you hope to observe in an agency which is reluctant to accept you because they have no policy in place for observations, feel free to share this information with them in order to help them develop an approach that works for their particular agency.

Some potential host agencies prefer it if initial contacts are made by the program in which a student-teacher is training. Unfortunately, because CERTESL students live in so many places, the CERTESL program cannot make initial contacts. However, if an agency tells you they cannot accept you as an observer or practicum student unless they are first contacted by a CERTESL program representative, please email our Academic Coordinator who will be happy

to contact an appropriate person at that agency on your behalf. Make sure you include the person's name, the agency's name and location, and both a phone number and an email address.

Some host agencies require teacher-trainees to make a formal commitment to volunteer in return for the privilege of observation. Volunteering constitutes excellent professional development, so you should welcome such requirements as opportunities. If the venue in which you observe does not have such a requirement, please offer your help anyway, because language *learners* will be your most important *teachers* throughout your career in the language teaching field.

### **Pre-K-12 School Placements**

**As noted on the cover, if you are a PDCEAL student, pre-K-12 school placements must be arranged through the Curriculum Studies office of the College of Education.**

Most **pre-K to Grade 12** school systems have policies and procedures in place for student-teachers and other observers. These policies absolutely must be respected because most students in such school systems are legal minors (children and teens who are under the legal age of consent). If you are a CERTESL student or an Education undergraduate taking ECUR 291 or 391 as an elective within your degree program, school division contacts **MUST** be made first with the office of your regional Board of Education, unless you are already employed by that Board or are in the process of completing a pre-K-12 practicum or internship placement within a Bachelor of Education program within the host school. Having a previous acquaintance with a particular teacher or school is not grounds for making arrangements directly with the school; the board office must be aware of non-board personnel who will be in direct contact with their learners.

If you wish to conduct your observations in the **pre-K–12 systems in Saskatoon**, procedures are different. If you are a CERTESL student or education undergraduate and are not employed by the Saskatoon Public or Catholic Boards, you will make your initial contacts through the CERTESL Program Office. The Saskatoon school boards host large numbers of College of Education and CERTESL students who come into their classrooms and therefore require a centralized means of keeping all observations organized and fairly distributed through their schools. **It usually takes three weeks to arrange pre-K–12 placements in the Saskatoon Public and Catholic school board jurisdictions, so you must submit your request form in accordance with the deadlines on the cover of this booklet.**

Instructions and forms concerning placements in pre-K–12, whether in Saskatoon or elsewhere, can be found in this protocol document.

For ethical reasons, you must not conduct interviews of anyone under the age of 18 without first obtaining parental permission. Most schools send permission forms for matters like school excursions to parents, so obtaining permission may not be as complicated as it sounds provided the school agrees to cooperate. Once you have been put in touch with a teacher through the required procedures, please check with the principal of the host school regarding parental permission for interviews if this is what you need as part of an assignment. If permission is not forthcoming, you will need to explore alternatives with your instructor.

Pre-K-12 placements are usually unavailable during the Spring/Summer Session.

## Why You Need to Arrange Placements

Your program includes the following activities that will require you to spend time in ELT or ELD (English Language Development) classrooms.

- **Observation Across CERTESL (see Part 2 for full instructions).** This consists of ten hours of classroom-based observations that you must carry out before you can register for either TESL 42 (Supervised Practicum) or TESL 43 (Professional Project). You will not be allowed to register in 42 or 43 until your records of these observations have been submitted to the CERTESL Program Office. The Academic Coordinator will examine your reports and provide some feedback. If you are planning to seek TESL Ontario accreditation later on, your Observations Across CERTESL **must** take place in an adult venue and ideally should be split between at least two different types of venue, at least one of which should be a government-funded Settlement English program for immigrant learners such as LINC, pre-LINC literacy, workplace-based English classes, or ELT. ECUR-TEAL students who do not plan to enter CERTESL do not need to do all of these observations, but are well advised to do as much observation as they can because it is an excellent form of professional development.
- **Specific assignments** that you will carry out in various CERTESL classes require observations or interviews with ESL teachers or students. You may let some of your Observations Across CERTESL do double duty as raw material for these assignments.
- **TESL 42 (Supervised Practicum)** must be taken by all TESL Canada and TESL Ontario certification candidates as well as by all CERTESL participants who do not have either substantial, documented, relevant prior teaching experience or B.Ed. degrees. TESL 42 consists of ten guided observation hours and ten supervised practice teaching hours, in addition to academic coursework on teaching practice and classroom-based research and the ten hours of classroom observation that must be completed prior to the practicum or project courses.

**A Practicum Additional Hours module is also required for most candidates who intend to seek TESL Ontario accreditation or, for those who start training after August 2017, Standard II TESL Canada certification (the application form is located on the CERTESL website).** The Practicum Additional Hours Module adds another ten guided observation and ten supervised practice teaching hours. An exception to the Additional Hours requirement is allowed to those candidates who started their training in a TESL Canada-Standard I recognized program that included practica of ten observation and ten supervised teaching hours in adult venues.

If you will be taking TESL 42, consider your Observations Across CERTESL a good opportunity to become familiar with the kinds of venue in which you might like to teach. Your observations are also a chance to scout for potential local supervising teachers for your practicum. Your chances of finding a suitably qualified local supervisor will improve if the qualified people in your area know who you are and are sure of your genuine interest in their students. Don't hesitate to volunteer at interesting venues as well as observe, both to improve your learning and to become known and welcome at the venue.

## Types of Agencies in Which You May Observe

For the ten hours of Observation Across CERTESL that you will carry out prior to enrollment in TESL 42 (Supervised Practicum) or TESL 43 (Professional Project), you can choose to observe any kind of program in which classes have at least five ESL, EFL or ELD students – **unless you plan to apply later for TESL Ontario accreditation.**

All 30 observation hours required for **TESL Ontario** accreditation are regarded as part of your practicum, and hence the programs and teachers you observe must meet the basic conditions for your practicum: the classes must be EAP, general ESL, or federally/provincially funded classes for adult learners in noncredit programs. At least 50% of the practicum hours must be located in Canada. The teachers must have training at least equivalent to that required for TESL Ontario accreditation, and they must have at least three years of adult ESL teaching experience.

TESL Ontario also requires that observations take place in at least two different types of adult programs, of which one should be a LINC, pre-LINC literacy or ELT program (see the list below for a translation of these acronyms). Many Ontario students choose to do their pre-**TESL 42** observations in one type of venue and their **TESL 42** observations in another. Other Ontario students choose to observe in two or three different types of venue before their practica so that they can judge the type of venue that is best suited to them for their practicum. This approach to observation also works well for non-Ontario CERTESL student-teachers.

TESL Ontario prefers that certification candidates spend at least two, and preferably at least five, hours of their observation time in a type of program other than the one in which their practicum teaching and the bulk of their observations are conducted. At least five observation hours must be carried out in the class that you will be teaching during the practicum because you must know the students before you start to teach them.

If you are planning to seek Standard I certification by TESL Canada, your ten pre-practicum Observations Across CERTESL hours may take place in either adult or K-12 venues and in fact there are many advantages in observing the commonalities and contrasts among a wide range of learner ages. However, for student-teachers starting their training after August 2017, Standard II certification by **TESL Canada** requires that a full 30 hours of observation including your Observations Across CERTESL take place in adult program contexts.

If you are not concerned with either TESL Ontario or TESL Canada credentialing, you may seek placements in any of the following settings, but only the adult settings apply to TESL Ontario and TESL Canada.

**Pre-K-12 Schools** This is a term used to refer to ordinary schools serving children and teens. Depending on the community, you may find full-time EAL classes with a focus on ESL (English as a Second Language), EFL (English as a Foreign Language, if you are located overseas or in Quebec), or ELD/ESD (English Language Development or English as a Second Dialect, if you work with Aboriginal Canadian learners who do not have a strong grasp of academic English). You may find resource programs that pull a small group of learners with English language learning needs out of their home rooms for a few hours each week; “submersion” programs in which students spend all or most of their time in the English-first-language home room, hopefully with the support of a good educational assistant; or part-time programs in which students attend regular classes part of the day and ELT classes for the other part. Classes may be made up entirely of

immigrants and refugees, entirely of international students here temporarily, entirely of aboriginal students born in Canada, or a wild mixture of ethnicities and needs. If you find a placement in a K-12 school, please note that you should be observing actual ELT classrooms, whether part-time or full-time, or a resource room class with at least five students. In Quebec, a CEGEP may be regarded as a K-12 venue as a substantial percentage of CEGEP students are under 18 years of age.

**Cram Schools (juku, hogwan, etc.)** Found mainly in East Asian countries such as Japan, Korea or Taiwan, these are after-school EFL programs attended mostly by junior high and high school students who are under parental pressure to earn high English scores on university entrance exams. Some cram schools serve elementary school learners as well.

**LINC** LINC stands for “Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada.” Probably the most common type of adult ESL program in most provinces, LINC programs are federally-funded and assure immigrants and Convention refugees of basic to intermediate-level instruction in English language skills. LINC programs are delivered by a wide range of agencies, including settlement agencies, ethnic and multicultural councils, public and private colleges, school boards, immigrant women’s advocacy groups, and some private language schools. Pre-LINC literacy programs, which meet the needs of ESL learners who are not literate or numerate in their first languages, are generally treated as being part of LINC programs. (NOTE: Many agencies are beginning to refer to these classes as CLB rather than LINC.)

**ELT** Enhanced Language Training enables learners who have completed their allowable funded LINC hours to increase their English skills to a level closer to that needed to find work in their own fields. It also enables some learners who are not eligible for LINC with language training options. An employment orientation component is usually a strong feature of ELT programs. (Note that the term ELT is not used in all provinces for this type of program; programs with other names such as English for the Workplace may have the same focus.)

**EAP** English for Academic Purposes (university or college preparation) courses are usually offered in connection with senior high school, university or college-based ESL or EFL programs. EAP can include both comprehensive university preparation and such specialized courses as advanced writing or TOEFL, CanTEST, IELTS or TOEIC preparation. Note that for TESL Ontario and TESL Canada purposes, EAP observations should not take place in a high school program and learners should be 18 years of age or older.

**EAL/ESL Communication or Conversation** These types of courses are usually designed for people who are taking English for personal interest rather than settlement, employment or academic purposes, although this type of course can also be offered to meet practical needs of learners who no longer qualify or have never qualified for federal or provincial funding. These are most commonly offered by private language schools, ethnic or multicultural community centres, and some colleges or universities.

**ESP** English for Special Purposes is a term that covers a wide range of special topic courses related to specific fields of employment or personal interest, such as business, banking, medicine or travel. Usually these are delivered in an EFL rather than an immigrant or academic preparation language-learning environment. However, some ELT programs may accurately be described as ESP, especially if they are designed to meet needs of a particular employment group.

**Bridging Programs** A number of program types fall under this label. Bridging can include specialized programs for professionals or skilled tradespeople who are “bridging” back into their proper callings following immigration. It can also include programs for young adults (ages 16 to 21) who have serious limitations in academic skills and need to “bridge” into the practicalities of adult life as well as language. The second type of program can be found in some high schools, but because this type of program is not teaching high school curriculum and not preparing learners for high school graduation, it can meet TESL Canada and TESL Ontario’s definition of “adult” programming as long as the majority of learners are age 18 and over. Finally, some adult English for Academic Purposes programs provide “bridging” classes that give advanced learners experience and support for mastering content in regular university courses; students in these courses may receive formal credit for an academic course taken as part of the bridging program.

**Workplace or Vocational English Programs** Some employers sponsor ESL programs specifically for immigrant and/or migrant workers in their plants. Occasionally these programs are open to spouses of such workers as well as the workers themselves. As long as this type of program is taught by suitably qualified instructors, it can be used for practicum purposes. Unfortunately, because many of these programs are in rural locations where trained English Language teachers are not available, not all venues are able to engage such individuals.

**Volunteer English Programs** These may be run out of a number of venues, with religious institutions, community agencies and libraries being perhaps the most common venues. Often (though not always) taught by volunteers with little or no training, this type of program may be very informative to you but if the teacher is untrained, his or her classes do not meet the standard necessary for TESL Ontario or the future Standard II TESL Canada observations, and the teacher does not meet the standard necessary for your eventual practicum regardless of where you plan to become certified or accredited. The same types of venues may run professionally-led programs as well as volunteer-led programs; make your professional certification needs very clear when discussing possible placements with such a venue.

## Contact with Adult English Language Training Delivery Agencies

As you have seen, there are many kinds of English language teaching institutions and agencies in a variety of locations. There are also many English language teacher training programs whose students need practicum placements. As the menu of recognized training programs has expanded, competition for observation and practicum placements has become a challenge in some locations. Observation placements are generally easier to find than practicum placements because the level of responsibility for teachers is less. Start checking out practicum placement possibilities early in your program. If you discover your location to be one of the more difficult ones, contact the CERTESL Academic Coordinator early for guidance.

Keeping these things in mind, the following ideas may help you make initial contact and build a good working rapport with EAL delivery agencies:

1. Identify the types of students with whom you would eventually like to work. Then do some research to find out which English Language programs in your region work with these types of learner groups.

2. Find out if an agency has continuous intake of learners, or when their term begins and ends. For example, it is not advisable to request a placement with an agency in August if their classes don't even begin until mid-September; for observations, contact them again at the start of September, and for practicum, please arrange it before their summer break begins. Don't expect delivery agencies to be able to accommodate your presence until after the first week of the term, once students and teachers have settled into a routine, and definitely don't expect them to accommodate you during the intense week prior to term exams.
3. Find out if there is a particular person with whom you should be speaking. Most agencies have a specific staff person, usually in a supervisory position, who should be the first person to deal with possible observers.
4. Once you have identified the correct person to talk to, identify yourself by name. Ask if she or he has time to talk to you. They may direct you to a specific teacher or student, or they may handle the request personally. If the contact doesn't have time for your right away, you can set up an alternative time.
5. After confirming that the time is right to talk, tell the person what course you are taking (identify the course by number and title.) For example, say: "My name is Mary Jones. I am enrolled in the CERTESL program at the University of Saskatchewan and I am taking the course ECUR 291 – Introduction to TESL." Ask if they are familiar with the program before you go on. Give a brief explanation if required and feel free to share our web address. "I am contacting you because I need to observe ESL classes and students and talk with their teachers as part of my required teacher training coursework." Give a short explanation of your most immediate assignment which requires teacher or student contact, and ask if you might be able to arrange observations and/or an interview with one of their teachers and/or students.
6. Ask if they have any requirements of you. Some institutions require that you commit to volunteer work in exchange for allowing you to enter classrooms and work with learners. Others have no such expectations.
7. A school or agency may not be able to accommodate you. If this happens, simply thank them for their time and turn to another agency. **They do not owe you their time and they are not obliged to give you access to their students**, so please don't imply that they do! If you cannot find an agency that will help you, contact your instructor immediately. He or she may be able to assist you.
8. Act professionally at all times during your contact with a school or agency. Thank the agency, administrators, and learners or teachers (or both) once you have completed your work with them. A card is sufficient thanks.
9. Respect the confidentiality of the agency and its learners absolutely, at all times. Do not include names of people or agencies in written assignments and reports, except in the context of the signature sheets needed to document your observation and teaching hours. If you are looking for field trip venues in connection with practicum teaching, consult your local supervising teacher about your host agency's protocols for external contacts. Do not represent yourself as belonging to the agency unless you are an employee of the agency; you are a guest.

**Remember: these schools and agencies are going out of their way to help you and are not obligated to do so.** Be very polite and considerate in order to maximize your chances of cooperation. Also be very respectful of their policies, and of the privacy rights of their staff

and students. This is a matter of basic professional manners. We expect students in this program to behave professionally, and it is in your own best interest to do so.

**Very serious breaches of professional manners may merit the early termination of a practicum, or even suspension from our program.**

#### **Observations at the Saskatoon Open Door Society**

If you are in the Saskatoon area and wish to carry out required work for CERTESL courses in a setting that involves adult ESL learners or immigrants, you may be considering the Saskatoon Open Door Society as an option for placement. If so, please note that special steps must be taken to obtain a placement due to the number of students requesting this experience and the Society's desire to control classroom interruptions to ensure effective learning for its students.

**It is not appropriate to contact Saskatoon Open Door Society teachers directly.**

Instead, you should begin by submitting the Saskatoon Open Door Society CERTESL student request form at the end of this document to the Manager, Education & Training with a covering letter. The deadlines for applications to the Saskatoon Open Door Society for each term are listed on the cover of this document. Those deadlines are firm. You will be required to undergo some specific orientation if you are accepted as an observer, or later in your program as a practicum student, and you will be responsible for familiarizing yourself with protocols for observers, volunteers and practicum students at the agency.

Send your request to Manager, Education & Training, Saskatoon Open Door Society, 247-1<sup>st</sup> Ave. N, S7K 1X2. Because of the tight timelines, you might want to fax 306-653-4404 to the attention of the Manager, Education & Training, or even to deliver it personally.

#### **Observations at the University of Saskatchewan Language Centre**

As the academic home of the CERTESL program and Saskatoon's largest employer of teachers who meet or exceed TESL Canada and SCENES certification standards, USLC is also a popular observation venue for Saskatoon area residents in the CERTESL and TEFL programs and in the College of Education's ECUR-TEFL courses.

Over the years, USLC has evolved a particular protocol for responding to observation and practicum placement requests. Even if you are acquainted with a USLC teacher who is willing to cooperate with you, please route your official request through the Assistant Director of the Centre. USLC's concern is that requests are fairly distributed between instructors to ensure that everyone does his or her share and no-one becomes burned out because of too many observers. USLC also needs to ensure logical timing that does not detract from key events such as start-of-term orientations and exam periods.

Make your request by phoning the Assistant Director at (306)966-4354.

## Contact with K–12 Schools

If you wish to carry out work for CERTESL courses in a setting that involves children or teenagers, you will almost certainly be attempting to do so in the K–12 school system. As noted above, because the students you observe will be minors (under the legal age of consent), **proper protocols must be followed** when making contact in order to request observations, interviews or practicum teaching access.

As noted above, protocols are different depending on whether you are a CERTESL student or a PDCEAL student. If you are a PDCEAL student, please contact the Department of Curriculum Studies at [eal.inquiries@usask.ca](mailto:eal.inquiries@usask.ca) if you have not yet obtained the protocol document and request forms for the PDCEAL.

Because the privacy and security of students under the age of 18 is extremely important, you may be required to undergo and pay for a police check prior to being allowed into K-12 schools in school divisions that have and enforce such policies. Make sure that you check out such requirements when you initially request your placement.

This K–12 section is divided into two subsections: procedures for pre-K–12 schools in Saskatoon, and procedures for schools outside of Saskatoon.

### Pre-K–12 Schools in Saskatoon

If you plan to carry out your school-based work in Saskatoon, special protocols have been developed which must be followed because of the large number of University of Saskatchewan students that visit Saskatoon schools. You are competing not only with other CERTESL trainees, but with all the students of the College of Education including student-teachers in the PDCEAL program.

Unless you are an employee of the school division in which you hope to observe, or are carrying out observations during a College of Education internship placement in the particular school, you must **fill out the form at the end of this document** entitled “CERTESL Request to Visit a Saskatoon School.” Two copies are provided: one for students who hope to visit schools in the Public system, and one for students who hope to visit schools in the Catholic system. Deliver the completed form to the Centre for Continuing and Distance Education Office, Room 464, Williams Building, 221 Cumberland Ave. N. Saskatoon S7N 1M3. You may fax it to the attention of the Certificates Administration Office at 966-5590 or send a scan to [certificates.admin@usask.ca](mailto:certificates.admin@usask.ca). Our office will then forward your request to one of the two school divisions. A school division representative will get in touch with you when the placement has been arranged.

**DO NOT** contact the school division directly if the reply is slow. Contact our front office at (306) 966-5563 and we will follow up with the school division.

The deadlines for applications to Saskatoon K-12 Schools are listed on the cover of this document.

Please note that the Saskatoon Public Board of Education will require that you undergo a police check if you want to do individual tutoring of students who are not under the direct supervision of a classroom teacher. If you merely want to observe, a police check will not be necessary.

In general, Saskatoon’s school divisions are supportive of teachers and teaching assistants who are in the process of acquiring TESL credentials, but they need your full cooperation in order to distribute requests fairly and appropriately. If you are an employee of the school

division, you probably have your own contacts, but please **let your school division's EAL coordinator know if you are carrying out observations within the division**. The coordinator must also know who is doing practicum supervision and teaching within the division's EAL program, so **consult the EAL coordinator before you start your hunt for a supervisor within your school division**.

If you are a school division employee and your normal hours of work are the same as those of the EAL class in which you have been given a placement, you may be able to obtain permission for the necessary hours of professional development leave from your superintendent or director.

### **K–12 Schools Outside of Saskatoon**

Near the end of this document **we have supplied a sample letter and sample form that you might use to request a placement** in a K-12 school outside of Saskatoon. Note that in the large majority of School Divisions (Boards of Education), **it is not appropriate to contact teachers directly** unless you are already an employee of the same school division. Instead, you should begin by contacting the office of the Director of Education for your local School Division to request information about the division's particular policies and procedures. If you wish to find a placement in a band-controlled school (First Nations), then contact the office of the Director of Education for that band. You should do this by phone initially to determine if it is even possible to arrange a placement, but you should always confirm in writing.

School divisions are likely to want to know the following:

- the nature of your training program, course and assignments and your expectations (do you wish just to observe, to tutor students, to interview students, to become a classroom volunteer?) Feel free to copy and share the instructions we provide you in this document and in your course syllabuses with division staff.
- how many times and for how long you wish to visit the school.

**Be flexible and respectful.** School divisions may not be able to meet all your needs, and their own students' needs must come first.

A sample letter is included later as an example of how you might wish to approach a school division, along with a form you may wish to fill out and enclose. Some parts of the sample letter may not be appropriate for your circumstances, so edit it as you wish. It is simply intended as a guide.

You should allow two to three weeks from the time of your written request until you receive a response. This is why you should start with an exploratory phone call. You do not want to wait three weeks for a "no."

If you are an employee of the school division, you probably have your own contacts. If your hours of work are the same as those of the EAL program, your superintendent or director may be willing to approve PD time for classroom observation purposes, as it is to your Board's advantage to assist teachers and educational assistants in learning to work effectively with English language learners.

## Contact with ELT Practitioners

During your pre-practicum observations and course assignments, you will be involved in two types of contacts with instructors: contact when observing their classes, and consultations or interviews you will conduct.

ELT teachers and administrators are busy people. However, when you get them talking about their favourite topic, they will be accommodating. Like all of us, ELT practitioners are of all types and temperaments. Following these points should facilitate your work with this group.

1. Identify yourself by name. Tell the practitioner what program and course you are taking; identify the course by number and title, and describe the assignment.
2. Ask if it would be possible for you to work together on the project, be it visiting their class or conducting an interview. Ask if he or she has any requirements of you, such as participating as a conversation partner or assisting with monitoring of small group work. Such requirements are a good thing; you learn more if you can engage actively with students.
3. Set up mutually agreeable times to carry out the work, and be sure to keep your appointments.
4. If the practitioner cannot accommodate you, simply give your thanks and turn to another practitioner. If you cannot find anyone who will help, contact your instructor. He or she may be able to assist.
5. Act professionally at all times. Ensure confidentiality.
6. Thank the practitioner once you have completed your work. As mentioned earlier, a card is sufficient thanks.

## Contact with English Language Learners (ELL's)

Whether or not a school division or adult program provides your initial introduction to learners with whom you will work, your contact with ELL's requires the greatest cultural awareness and sensitivity on your part. Learners are individuals with a variety of personalities, cultures, and background experiences. While some have had a relatively easy adjustment to life in North America, for others the adjustment has been difficult and the experiences leading up to their immigration have been traumatic.

If you are working in a classroom, ask the teacher if he or she has any suggestions regarding which learners to work with. Do not just pick a learner on your own; the teacher should facilitate the contact. If the learner is under the age of 18, you may have to follow additional protocols in accordance with school division policies.

Many books have been written on working with people from different cultures. When using such books, be careful of stereotyping that may appear in them. No culture is a monolith; every village, age group, gender and social class has its variations.

Some agencies have print resources as well as excellent intercultural orientation sessions that you may make arrangements to attend. You can refer to books and other resources, but

for starters our best advice is to pay attention, be observant, listen, and think before you speak.

1. Identify yourself to the learner(s) by name. You should probably write down your name so that they will feel more comfortable when trying to pronounce it. However, be aware of the learners' levels of literacy before you do this, and don't press them to read your name back to you.
2. Tell the learners why you are working with them. Explain the course you are taking. If the learners are sufficiently advanced, you may wish to identify the course by its title. Also describe the assignment.
3. Ask if it would be possible for you to work together on the project. Ask if they have any requirements of you.
4. Set up mutually agreeable meeting times to carry out the work.
5. If the learner(s) cannot accommodate you, simply give your thanks and try elsewhere. If you cannot find anyone who can accommodate you, contact your instructor immediately. He or she may be able to assist.
6. Act professionally at all times. Be sure that you keep learners' names confidential and let them know that you will not use their real names on assignments unless they want you to. Do not create sound or video recordings without their explicit consent, even for tutoring purposes.
7. Show genuine interest in the learner(s), but do not press for answers if a learner is not willing to supply them to you. Tell the learner(s) that they only have to answer questions that they are comfortable with.
8. Pay attention, be observant, listen, and think before you speak:
  - Paying attention means being aware and alert, particularly to cultural signals. Don't pressure learners too much. Find out about learners from their instructors if you can so that you are prepared for your work with them. Some questions you might ask of instructors relate to cultural specifics (for example, some cultures hold eye contact longer than others; certain body language in some cultures is offensive, etc.).
  - Observing means watching body language, eye contact, and general comfort level with each question, comment, and response.
  - Listening means hearing what the learner has to say. You may wish to feed back what the learner has said to you by repeating his or her statements in other (simple) words to make sure that you have heard and understood correctly and that the learner has nothing else to add.
  - Thinking before you speak means a number of things. First, it means not speaking until you have given sufficient time for the learner to think about the answer and respond. A waiting time of two or three seconds is **not** enough. 10 to 15 seconds is more realistic. You may need to rephrase or repeat your question, as silence may mean that the learner does not understand your question or pronunciation.
  - Thinking before you speak means enunciating clearly, slowing your speech by pausing slightly (but not unnaturally) between phrases (not individual words), and slightly (not unnaturally) exaggerating intonation. It does **not** mean speaking more loudly than normal.

- Thinking before you speak means picking not only your words but also the complexity of your sentences so that the student will understand you, without feeling that you are insulting his or her intelligence.
  - Thinking before you speak also means asking yourself if the question you are about to ask or the comment you are about to make is too intrusive, considering what the learners' past experiences might have been.
9. Thank the learner once you have completed your work. As mentioned above, a card is sufficient thanks.

Good luck with your community contacts! We know that you will benefit from the experience.

**Saskatoon Open Door Society  
CERTESL/ECUR-TESL Student Placement Request Form**

Students: This form is your application for a Student Observation/Volunteer placement at the Saskatoon Open Door Society. Please submit your application to the attention of the LINC program as soon as possible, preferably before the official starting day of your term of study.

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Course name and number \_\_\_\_\_

Course instructor \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Course requirements \_\_\_\_\_

Availability times \_\_\_\_\_

**With permission to fulfill my course requirements at Open Door, I agree to:**

1. Attend an orientation session regarding the Language Training Unit and policies related to observers, volunteers and practicum students.
2. Submit a current Canadian Police Information Center certification (done within the last 3 months) to indicate no criminal record.
3. Commit to volunteer/assist in an ESL class for 10 additional hours if my course requirements are to observe or teach for 10 or more hours.
4. Respect the confidentiality of the students in my assignments and outside the classroom.
5. Submit a copy of my assignments to the Open Door teacher(s) whose class I observed.

Signature of student \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

<b>For Office Use Only</b>	
Date placed _____	CPIC <input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher _____	Orientation _____
Class/level _____	Assignment received <input type="checkbox"/>
Date completed _____	Comments attached <input type="checkbox"/>

**Sample Letter for CERTESL/ECUR-TESL Students Seeking  
K-12 Placements Outside of Saskatoon**

Jane Doe  
1234-1234th Street  
City, Province PostalCode

Date

Name and Address  
School Division

Dear Mr./Ms. NNN:

As I explained to YYYY on the phone recently, I am a student in TESL <name of course>, a course in the Certificate in Teaching English Language (CERTESL) program of the University of Saskatchewan [or in the College of Education of the University of Saskatchewan, as appropriate.] To complete one of the assignments for this course, I need to do some work/conduct an interview/observe a class in an ESL (EFL, EAL, or ELD) classroom setting. When I spoke to YYYY on the phone, I was informed that this would not be a problem. Therefore, I am writing to make a formal request and to describe in greater detail the nature of my assignment and what I would like to do in the classroom.

The details of my course requirements are attached. I understand that you may have difficulty meeting all the specific details of my request, so I'd like to assure you that I can be flexible in this respect and would appreciate discussing this with you or one of your staff in order to make arrangements that meet your needs.

Thank you for your help in this matter. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Encl.

**CERTESL/ECUR-TESL Student Request Form to Visit a K-12 School Outside of Saskatoon**

Students: please use this form to provide information to the school division with which you are arranging visitation permission.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Course Name and Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (h): \_\_\_\_\_ (w) \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe briefly the nature of your assignment:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Check the following where appropriate. I wish to:                      Observe \_\_\_\_\_

Teach/Tutor Students \_\_\_\_\_ Interview Students \_\_\_\_\_ Interview Teachers \_\_\_\_\_

How many times do you wish to visit the class? \_\_\_\_\_

How long will each visit be? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you undergone a police check? \_\_\_\_\_ If not, are you willing to do so? \_\_\_\_\_

I have the following special requirements. (This is where you may indicate if you wish to work with particular age or ethnic groups, if you have a physical disability, if you wish to ask the school division to restrict circulation of personal information such as your phone number, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are there particular times or days that are best for you?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are there any times or days that are impossible for you?

\_\_\_\_\_

**CERTESL/ECUR-TESL Request Form to Visit a Saskatoon K-12 School**

Students: please use this form to provide information to Centre for Continuing and Distance Education about your request for visitation permission.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Course Name and No: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (h): \_\_\_\_\_ (w) \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe briefly the nature of your assignment: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Check the following where appropriate. I wish to: Observe classes \_\_\_\_  
Teach/Tutor Students \_\_\_\_ Interview Students \_\_\_\_ Interview a Teacher \_\_\_\_

How many times do you wish to visit the class? \_\_\_\_\_ How long will each

visit be? \_\_\_\_\_ Do you have a preference for a public or separate

school, and if so, which? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you undergone a police check? \_\_\_\_ If not, are you willing to do so? \_\_\_\_

I have the following special requirements. (This is where you may indicate if you wish to work with particular age or ethnic groups, if you have a physical disability, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are there particular times or days that are best for you?

\_\_\_\_\_

Are there any times or days that are impossible for you?

\_\_\_\_\_

Please sign below indicating that we have your permission to share this form with the school where you will be working. If there is information you do not wish made public in this fashion, please contact (306) 966-5563.

\_\_\_\_\_

## Part 2: Observations Across CERTESL

### Instructions for Observing Across CERTESL

Students in the CERTESL program are required to complete a total of 10 hours of classroom observation before applying to enroll in either the practicum (TESL 42) or the professional project (TESL 43/ECUR 493). This is to ensure that you have opportunities to observe how teachers apply language teaching theory in their classroom teaching and to experience the actual dynamics of the classroom in preparation for your practicum. During the practicum, you will have additional opportunities to observe teachers and peers.

This section explains how you will complete these observation hours as your work through the CERTESL program toward the practicum.

As outlined in the online *CERTESL Handbook*, you should have access to students to complete your courses. Even if at certain times you will not have access to English language learners (for instance, if you live in a particularly remote area with little access to English language learners), you will still not be admitted to the practicum or project unless you have at some time found ten hours to observe in a language classroom prior to taking the practicum and to document and report on your observations.

### Who Can I Observe?

There is a range of classrooms in which you can observe, from elementary, to secondary to adult in Canada or elsewhere. You can observe in LINC programs offered by settlement agencies, libraries, or community colleges. You can observe in private or public language programs, or in post-secondary programs for international students. You can observe in Canada or in another country. Read your *Protocol* document for a more comprehensive list, keeping in mind restrictions imposed by your professional accreditation or certification objectives.

We strongly prefer that you observe in an English language classroom. However, if you meet **three conditions**, you may observe for no more than 4 hours in a foreign language classroom (e.g., French, Spanish, German, Cree, etc.):

- if you can speak enough of the foreign language to understand the teachers' instruction to students
- if you do not need to use those observation hours to meet TESL Ontario's requirements
- if you are not in a position to obtain an observation placement for the full ten hours in an English language classroom.

You will gain the most from your observation if the teacher that you observe has some formal training in the field of language teaching and at least 2 years of experience.

You may not use peer observations or videotaped lessons as part of this requirement.

If you plan to apply for TESL Ontario accreditation or, after September 2017, for TESL Canada Standard II certification, you will need to conduct these observations in an adult program environment. If you are not planning to apply to TESL Ontario or for TESL Canada Standard II, you may observe students of any age during these pre-practicum observations. TESL Canada Standard I certification prospects may observe students of any age at this stage; however, their practica have to be carried out entirely with adult learners, and you may wish to apply Standard II provisions just in case you decide later to obtain the Standard II credential.

### **When Can I Observe?**

You can observe at any time prior to enrollment in the practicum. At least two hours need to occur during enrollment in ECUR 291 and ECUR 391. While it is recommended that you observe for at least two hours during each course you take before the practicum or project, you may also do all of your pre-practicum/pre-project observations at one time (although this is not the best idea as it tends to reduce the benefit of reflective learning). If possible, you should not do all of your observation during ECUR 291 and ECUR 391, but spread it across your whole pre-practicum time in CERTESL. In this way, you will be able to observe how teachers apply the theoretical concepts introduced in all of the courses that you take prior to the practicum. However, if you have been granted special permission to take three courses during your first term in CERTESL in order to carry out your practicum or project during the second term, you will need to do all ten hours during the first term.

### **How Will I Demonstrate My Observation Time?**

You will document the hours that you have observed through the Documentation of Observation form and Observation Report Forms that follow. Please make as many copies as you need. You may want to keep these forms in a separate folder so as not to lose them over time. **You must submit them no later than the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to the month in which you start your practicum or project.** They will then be passed on to your academic advisor for feedback, and eventually to your University of Saskatchewan practicum instructor.

You have been supplied with a copy of a form to document each of your observation hours. It includes a place for the teacher(s) whose class you observed to sign. In order for the observation to be official, you must obtain a signature from the teacher in the class that you observed indicating that you have completed the observation.

You have also been supplied with the report form that you will need to complete for each period of observation. Two versions of the report form have been supplied for you at the end of this document. The first version is a sample copy of a completed form. The second is a questions-only version with space for you to respond; you may make as many copies of it as you need for your reports.

Please fill in one Observation Report Form for each lesson you observe. A lesson is defined as the period between one break and the next: usually as long as ninety minutes in an adult program context, and as short as forty minutes in an elementary program context, but NEVER as a whole day or half-day. If you observe for a whole morning or a whole day, treat each period before or after a break as one lesson; for instance, if you observe for four hours during which there are two breaks, you should fill out three forms.

You may write your reports by hand if your handwriting is legible, or you may type them. **When you have completed your reports on all ten hours, submit them to the CERTESL Program Assistant by computer scan (no photos please) to [certificates.admin@usask.ca](mailto:certificates.admin@usask.ca) or by fax to 306.966.5590. As long as they can be read, and as long as we receive them in time for you to register in TESL 42 or 43 (April 15, August 15, December 15), we're not particular about how you produce or submit them.**

Please make sure that you phrase your objectives clearly, that process information is adequate to support your comments and suggestions, and that you are providing **different** theory-practice links for each report. If your reports are not reasonably thorough and clear, they may be returned to you for rewriting.

### **Special Notes**

If you choose to take TESL 43: Professional Project instead of TESL 42: Supervised Practicum, you will still need to complete in advance 10 hours of observation to ensure that you have seen how teachers apply theory and to experience the actual dynamics of the language classroom.

If you received transfer of credit for courses taken at another educational institution and would like to have guided observations carried out at that institution counted as Observation Across CERTESL hours, you must demonstrate that you observed in an actual language classroom (not just observation of peer teaching) as an official part of your previous training program. You must indicate the number of hours observed and confirm that through a letter from the teacher where you observed or from a staff member at the previous training program.

Other observations done before you enrolled in ECUR-TEAL or CERTESL courses will not be acceptable because the Observations Across CERTESL are opportunities for you to apply the theory that you learned in your CERTESL courses to classroom practice. If you did not carry out observations with explicit reference to and guidance from a TESL training program, therefore, they will not be counted.

If you have specific questions, contact the CERTESL Academic Coordinator.



## Observation across CERTESL: Demonstration of Observation Form

Please complete this form as you progress through your observations. Print so all entries are legible. The signatures of the teachers you observe will demonstrate that you have completed the required number of pre-TESL 42/43 observation hours (10). Space for five entries have been provided below. You may need to make another copy of this page, depending upon the number of lessons you observe to make up ten hours.

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Your Student Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates and hours of observation	Name(s) and location(s) of institution	Signature and printed name(s) of teacher(s)	Contact phone number(s)

\*Don't forget to fill in the Observation Form each time you observe in a classroom.

## Sample CERTESL Observation Report

To be completed by the CERTESL student teacher:

Student name (printed) and signature:

**Naomi Hayakawa**

*Naomi Hayakawa*

Type of program observed and location:

part-time morning LINC program for recent adult immigrants to Canada in Saskatoon, SK. Level 2 (high beginner-low intermediate.) Students are between 30 and 60 years of age.

Number of hours observed: 1.25 hours (75 minutes)

**For your observation period, list the following:**

Topic(s)/theme(s) of the lesson, expressed in terms of **communicative purpose** (e.g., making a doctor's appointment, winter clothing, etc.)

**ask and give information about a person's childhood**

Objectives of the lesson taught:

**Main (terminal, content) objective: Students will ask and respond to questions about their childhoods using "wh" words and past tense**

**Enabling objective: Students will form questions using "wh" words (who, what, where, when, why, how)**

**Enabling objective: Students will use simple past tense accurately in questions**

Describe three things about the lesson that you found effective.

- **I liked the way the teacher introduced the lesson by giving information about her own childhood**
- **the teacher modelled the task for the students**
- **she knew and used the names of all students**

Explain two to three things you might you have chosen to do differently.

- The teacher is very good at drawing and often drew to demonstrate the meaning of words such as skating. I am not such a good artist, so likely I would use more mime to demonstrate activities.
- I would have repeated more key phrases because the newer students had trouble picking out main points.
- Students might benefit from some homework on the topic because there wasn't enough class time to explore all their ideas or to do much writing. The instructor says most of the students have jobs or child-care responsibilities so a lot of homework isn't a good idea, but I think some of them might appreciate the option.

Explain three things you observed in this classroom that connect to theoretical concepts you covered in your CERTESL courses. Briefly list three connections between what you observed in the classroom and what you have covered in your course readings.

Module 1 of ECUR 291 describes the LINC program, and I was able to see how it works. I was impressed by the way the teacher was able to deal with students from different backgrounds and with varying language proficiency levels and literacy skill sets.

In module 3 of ECUR 291, I read about the role of the "affective filter" in language acquisition. In this lesson, I saw that the teacher made the learners comfortable by using their names, modeling the activity and sharing relevant information about her own life. The atmosphere seemed relaxed, so students were willing to experiment with the new language.

In module 1 of ECUR 391, I learned about the model of lesson organization: presentation, practice and production. I was able to see the first two stages in this lesson. The teacher planned to work on the last phase after the break (see next report).

## **CERTESL Observation Report Form**

### **To be completed by the CERTESL student teacher:**

Student name (printed) and signature:

Type of program observed, location, level and age range of learner group:

Number of hours observed:

### **For your observation period, list the following:**

Topic(s)/theme(s) of the lesson, expressed in terms of **communicative purpose** (e.g., making a doctor's appointment, winter clothing, etc.)

Objectives of the lesson taught:

Describe three things about the lesson that you found effective.

Explain two to three things you might you have chosen to do differently.

List three things you observed in this classroom that connect to theoretical concepts you covered in your CERTESL or other TESL training courses. Explain the connections between what you observed in the classroom and the particular modules and concepts you have covered in your course readings. Please cite modules and course numbers.