



University of Toronto

OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT AND PROVOST

TO: Committee on Academic Policy and Programs

SPONSOR: Edith Hillan
CONTACT INFO: edith.hillan@utoronto.ca

DATE: September 15, 2004 for the meeting on September 22, 2004

AGENDA ITEM: 11(a)

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

School of Continuing Studies: Proposal for a new certificate program, Certificate in Continuing Studies in English Communication for Postdoctoral Fellows, effective September 2004.

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

The Committee has general responsibility for monitoring new certificate programs that have open admission but may be targeted to particular professional and quasi-professional areas.

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:

Under the University's Policy on Diploma and Certificate Programs, certification programs in continuing education are to be approved by the relevant divisional council and reported to AP&P for information. Programs at the School of Continuing Studies are developed and approved through the School's normal processes. Because the School does not have an academic council as such, the School requested that its certificate programs also be reviewed and approved at the level of the Provost's office. Accordingly, the Provost's office has reviewed this program proposal.

HIGHLIGHTS:

The need for English language courses for postdoctoral fellows (PDFs) was identified by the PDFs themselves. The Office for Postdoctoral Fellows, SGS, approached SCS with a request to design and provide instruction for an initial cost-recovery course. Following the success of the resulting Academically Speaking course, the office for PDFs requested that SCS offer a certificate program specifically geared to PDFs. Offering a certificate would 1) attract the PDFs who most need English support, and 2) would acknowledge attempts by these individuals to improve their English facility while completing their research in a way that could enhance their curriculum vitae.

FINANCIAL AND/OR PLANNING IMPLICATIONS:

There are no new/additional financial resources required to implement the new program.

RECOMMENDATION:

For Information.



July 5, 2004

Dr. Mary Cone Barrie
Director
School of Continuing Studies
University of Toronto

Dear Mary,

Under the University's Policy on *Diploma and Certificate Programs*, certification programs in continuing education are to be approved by the relevant divisional council and reported to the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs for information. Programs at the School of Continuing Studies are developed and approved through the School's normal processes. Because the School does not have an academic council as such, the School had requested that its certificate programs also be reviewed and approved at the level of the Provost's office and this request had been granted.

Currently, you are seeking approval for one new certificate program. I have reviewed and approve the following program:

Certificate in Continuing Studies in English Communication for Postdoctoral Fellows

This program will be reported for information to the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs at its first meeting in September 2004.

Sincerely,

Vivek Goel
Vice-President and Provost

cc. Susan Pfeiffer, Dean School of Graduate Studies



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VICE-PRESIDENT
AND PROVCST

University of Toronto - School of Continuing Studies

PROPOSAL for

Certification in Continuing Studies

in English Communication for Postdoctoral Fellows

Submitted by: Mary C. Barrie
Director, School of Continuing Studies

Date: Monday, June 28, 2004

158 St. George Street
Toronto, Ontario M5S 2V8

Certification in Continuing Studies in English Communication for Postdoctoral Fellows

1. The Need

The need for English language courses for postdoctoral fellows (PDFs) was initially identified by the PDFs themselves. Their need for language support could not be met by the Office of English Language and Writing Support, School of Graduate Studies (SGS) as those courses were designed specifically for graduate students. As a result, one of mandates of the recently established Office for Postdoctoral Fellows, SGS, was to locate a source for English language study: of the 1,600 postdoctoral fellows at the University of Toronto, up to 50% are not native speakers of English. The PDF Office approached the English Language Program, School of Continuing Studies with a request to design and provide instruction for an initial cost-recovery course.

The first course, Academically Speaking (36 hours of instruction), was first offered in September 2003. It was publicized by the Office for Postdoctoral Fellows and within a week, 27 students had registered - more than double what had been expected. In the winter term 2004, the Office for PDF asked that we offer Academically Speaking again, as well as an additional course in pronunciation. In this second round, 46 PDFs enrolled in Academically Speaking and 16 registered in Pronunciation.

Following this success, the office for PDFs asked that we offer a wider range of courses specifically geared to the PDFs.

Interest in Certification

The request for a certificate program came from the Office for Postdoctoral Fellows at the School of Graduate Studies. The reasoning was as follows: offering a certificate would 1) attract the PDFs who most need English support and 2) would acknowledge the attempts of these individuals to improve their English facility while completing their research in a way that could enhance their curriculum vitae. As well, certification acts to improve learning by enhancing motivation, and by strengthening a sense of satisfaction and completion.

Recognition of Quality

The English Language Program currently offers three certification courses: Academic Preparation (full- and part-time) Effective Communication for Professionals (full- and part-time) and Language Training for EFL Teaching (full-time only). Each of these certificate programs has been highly successful. Academic Preparation, in particular, has been recognized by the University of Toronto. Successful completion of the highest level meets the language facility requirements for entrance into the University's undergraduate and graduate programs.

To date, the PDFs have been very satisfied with the courses offered. With regard to their own improvement, 85% have indicated strong improvement and 10% have indicated some improvement. 100% of PDFs felt the courses met or exceeded their expectations in terms of quality of instruction and usefulness of course content, and all agreed with the statement "I would recommend this course to my postdoctoral colleagues."

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2. Program Overview: The English Language Program

Since 1968, the University of Toronto's School of Continuing Studies has offered English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction to almost 25,000 international and community students, professionals, and travellers. The English Language Program academic staff have long been nationally and internationally recognized leaders in the ESL field. In particular, program tutors and instructors pioneered the adoption of the Communicative Language Teaching Approach and the development of performance-based testing. Today, thirty staff members maintain these high standards of academic excellence.

We currently offer three certification programs (Academic Preparation, Effective Communication for Professionals, and Language Training for EFL Teaching) and a wide range of general English courses to between 1500 and 3000 full-time and part-time students per year at the St. George campus, the UTM campus and in Markham. We have agreements with twelve universities in Japan, Mexico, Taiwan and Korea to offer language classes that are credited by the home institution. Over the past five years, approximately one hundred University of Toronto graduate students have registered in full-time and part-time ELP courses.

Student Profile

Our students themselves are perhaps the most distinctive feature of our Program. Our full-time students are most often international students from a wide range of diverse cultures (Asia, South and North America, Europe, and the Middle East and Africa) and often with disparate goals (for example, to enhance their academic status, to improve job prospects, to study in English-based universities and colleges, to work [usually temporarily] in Canada, or simply to travel). Most are university-educated and 25% are professionals. Up to 20% of our full-time students wish to continue their degree studies at the University of Toronto. Still in their twenties, they are excellent language learners: intelligent, highly-motivated, ambitious and adventurous. They are seeking a prestigious, rigorous, university-based ESL program.

Our community-based students, more culturally diverse than the full-time students, are most likely to be university-educated professionals who have been in Canada for 1–5 years and who are either seeking professional promotion or professional re-licensing, or want to continue their academic studies, usually at the graduate level.

The postdoctoral fellows, similarly, represent a very large cultural diversity. They tend to be in medicine (including pharmacy and dentistry), engineering and other sciences. In general, they want to be more confident speakers in both informal and formal academic situations. Goals for speaking include "to be able to speak properly when teaching a course or organizing a meeting", "to communicate efficiently in academic discussions", "to speak with the professors and faculty members" and "to communicate with other researchers". Similarly, their writing concerns range from informal writing (emails, memos) to formal academic writing (reports, summaries, data commentaries).

Instructors

All of our instructors have a B.A. and post-graduate Teaching English as a Second Language certification; over 60% of the instructors hold graduate degrees. As well, every teacher has several years of teaching experience in Canada and abroad. Teachers participate in in-house training workshops and are encouraged to keep up with current publications and to participate in professional conferences. Of the current thirty instructors, 90% are employed by the University of Toronto as ESL Instructional Staff. Teachers are encouraged to be involved in all aspects of the Program including curriculum, materials and policy development, teacher training, and administration. At the end of each course, teachers are evaluated by students and are most often rated as "excellent" and acknowledged as "extremely knowledgeable", "dedicated", "approachable", "supportive" and "culturally sensitive". Please see the attached bios for instructors involved with postdoctoral fellows.

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Approach

Our teaching methodology is based on two key principles fundamental to the Communicative Approach to teaching and learning. The first principle is that one learns a new language by actually using that language in a meaningful way. Although learning rules and structures is a significant aspect of acquiring a language, as important is one's ability *to do* in the new language; that is, to use the language to communicate and to think. Our classes are very dynamic and engaging. Students learn English by talking and writing about their lives, their ideas and their experiences, and by reading and listening to authentic materials.

The second principle is that learners learn in different ways, so they must be able to choose how they want to study English. To this end we offer a variety of learning tasks in each class. We also offer a wide range of full-time and part-time courses (academic, professional and general interest) varying in length from fifteen hours to three hundred hours. All classes include training on how to be a better language learner.

Teaching Statement

Our teaching approach is communicative, and within that approach, eclectic. Classes are skills- and strategies-based, and involve careful planning to ensure effective learning. For each course, students are provided with a course outline that is flexible in nature so the course can easily incorporate ongoing input from students. Students are actively encouraged to contribute to the overall course design and to each class. Our Resource Consultant, in collaboration with the instructors, chooses pedagogically sound teaching materials with the students' needs and interests foremost in mind. Activities serve to ensure dynamic, engaging, challenging classes. Each class begins with an outline of the day's learning objectives and concludes with a discussion of how that learning can be transferred to real-life situations. The students are offered both mandatory and optional homework assignments, and receive ongoing feedback from the instructor with regard to assignments and in-class performance. The course concludes with an assessment of each student's proficiency and improvement, and suggestions for further advancement.

Curriculum

Thorough curriculum guidelines, produced by a committee of instructors and the Program Coordinators, are used in all courses. The guidelines, specific to each course, cover each of the language skills (talking, listening, writing and reading) as well as grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary. Each skill is defined in terms of discourse type (interactional, instructional, informational, narrative and expository) and level (elementary, low intermediate, intermediate, high intermediate, and advanced). Each discourse type is then assigned skills and strategies most appropriate to successful communication at that level. These guidelines, loosely defined to encourage maximum flexibility, support the high-calibre, professional delivery of language learning and teaching.

Appendix A details each of the courses offered for postdoctoral fellows.

Placement for Postdoctoral Fellows

When enrolment numbers warrant more than one class, each PDF student is assessed (interviewed and/or asked for a writing sample) to ensure placement in the appropriate level.

Class Size

In order to encourage the customization of course content and teaching approach, and to allow for as much individual attention as possible, we schedule for small class size. Class size ranges from 10 -16 students.

Resources and Facilities

Our teaching materials are chosen to reflect our teaching approach and to meet the needs and interests of our students. In the courses for postdoctoral fellows, all materials are developed by the instructors based on the needs and interests of the students.

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The ELP has a very large, up-to-date library of teacher reference books. Each classroom has A/V equipment, including tape recorders, headphones and TVs/VCRs and a shared data projector. Fifteen computers are available to students from 8 am to 8 pm.

Quality Control

At the end of each course, students evaluate their classes and the instructors. Students consistently rate the ELP instructors between 3.3 and 4.0 on a scale of 4.0. Students identify the many positive characteristics of the instructors as “creative”, “energetic”, “knowledgeable”, “committed”, “approachable”, “involved”, “dedicated”, and even “inspiring”. The friendly, supportive atmosphere fosters an excellent language-learning environment. Instructors with a less than a “very good” overall rating have the opportunity to respond to the evaluations in writing and in discussion with the Director.

3. Registration Requirements

The School’s regular registration policies and procedures will apply. Registration requires completion of the School’s registration form and full payment of tuition. Students who complete seventy-two hours of in-class course work will receive certification in “Continuing Studies in English Communication for Postdoctoral Fellows”.

4. Certification Requirements

The Certificate will require the successful completion of a minimum of seventy-two hours of in-class study within a period of eighteen months. Classes currently offered are:

Academically Speaking	36 hrs
Academic Writing	36 hrs
Pronunciation	18 hrs
Interviewing Strategies	18 hrs
Networking Talk	18 hrs
Writing: Positions Search	18 hrs

5. Assessment

Evaluation is based on class performance and assignments. Courses are graded as “Pass” or “Fail”.

6. Appeals Procedures

In the event that a candidate contests the outcome of their mark, the candidate may employ the usual School of Continuing Studies Appeals Procedures.

7. Prior Learning Assessment

The English Language Program does not offer any prior learning assessment.

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8. Core Instructors and Staff

Lindsay Brooks (Instructor, English Language Program),

M.A. Second Language Education, OISE/UT, is an experienced ESL teacher and researcher in the area of language testing. Before coming to Toronto, she was the Assistant Coordinator of the Intensive ESL Program at the University of British Columbia, where she was also extensively involved in teacher training and leading professional development workshops. She has worked as a consultant and researcher for Cambridge ESOL and the Educational Testing Service. Lindsay teaches in the University of Toronto's Woodsworth College TESL Certificate, and is a lead practicum teacher. She is currently completing her Ph.D. in Second Language Education at OISE/UT and regularly presents on her research findings, especially in language testing, at conferences in Canada and the United States, Europe and Asia. One of her papers recently won an award for the best student presentation at the Language Testing Research Colloquium.

Carolyn Coté (Director, English Language Program),

B.A. and CTESL U of T, all M.Ed course work completed in Curriculum, OISE/UT is the Director of English Language Program at the School of Continuing Studies, University of Toronto. Since 1987, she has been teaching and leading academic and content-based ESL in the English Language Program. For four years, she also taught academic writing in the Faculty of Engineering (U of T). She led the development of curriculum guidelines (writing, reading, talking, listening, grammar, pronunciation & vocabulary) for the English Language Program as a whole, and for each stream (academic, professional and practical). Carolyn has been involved in ESL teacher training for ten years, during which time she has been a lecturer and a practicum trainer in the TESL Certificate Program at Woodsworth College, where she is currently Academic Coordinator of the TESL Certificate Program. She has developed placement tests for writing, talking and reading, and was Chief Reader for the writing component of the University of Toronto's Certificate of Proficiency in English Test (COPE). In 1990 she received the *School of Continuing Studies Award for Excellence in Teaching*. She has published and presented in the areas of content-based teaching, writing contracts, materials and resources, testing, and program management.

Marijke Wertheim (Instructor, English Language Program)

B.A. English & Political Science, Carleton University, M.Ed. Second Language Education, OISE/UT, began teaching ESL at the English Language Education Council in Tokyo in 1988. She has extensive teaching experience in the private sector, both in Canada and abroad, developing courses and materials for corporate clients, and has taught in our *Effective Communication for Professionals* certificate program. Marijke has designed and delivered language training courses for the House of Commons in Ottawa, and has researched and authored ESL texts for Citizenship & Immigration Canada. She is currently teaching in our *Academic Preparation* certificate course, for which she has developed and implemented an online writing and discussion forum, and has given conference presentations on teaching advanced academic speaking skills.

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Appendix A

Certificate in Continuing Studies in English Communication for Postdoctoral Fellows

Courses Offered 2004/2005

ACADEMICALLY SPEAKING

Typical students: Postdoctoral Fellows at the University of Toronto

Average number of students per year: 45

Fee: \$425

Number of required courses: two to four courses for a total of 72 hours

Number of course hours: 36

Number of hours to complete certification: 72

Focus: the development of students' conversational management strategies, basic discussion skills, and presentation skills in order to improve speaking in an academic teaching and research setting.

Learning involves:

- an analysis of individual communication ability (both accuracy and fluency) through teacher/peer/self feedback and personal voice recordings
- learning to manage conversation, discussion and presentation in terms of entering, interrupting, maintaining, supporting, querying, and exiting through role plays, dialogues, discussions and short presentations
- recognizing and using North American norms for interpersonal communication specifically in the academic setting, by:
 - engaging in one-on-one interactions
 - discussing interpersonal communication issues
 - developing the socio-linguistic awareness appropriate to common social and informal situations

Assessment: evaluation is based on classroom performance and assignments. A final grade of "Pass" or "Fail" is assigned.

Prior learning assessment: Yes No

ACADEMIC WRITING

Typical students: Postdoctoral Fellows at the University of Toronto

Average number of students per year: 45

Fee: \$425

Number of required courses: two to four courses for a total of 72 hours

Number of course hours: 36

Number of hours to complete certification: 72

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Focus: the development of students' writing strategies and skills to improve writing abstracts, proposals, grant applications, reports and journal articles.

Learning involves:

- improving fluency and accuracy in writing
- broadening one's range of syntactic structures
- honing editing and revision skills for both syntax and content
- gaining clarity and conciseness
- recognizing and producing a variety of academic writing styles
- employing self-evaluation and self-correction strategies
- building confidence

Assessment: evaluation is based on classroom performance and assignments. A final grade of "Pass" or "Fail" is assigned.

Prior learning assessment: Yes No

INTERVIEWING STRATEGIES

Typical students: Postdoctoral Fellows at the University of Toronto

Average number of students per year: 25

Fee: \$240

Number of required courses: two to four courses for a total of 72 hours

Number of course hours: 18

Number of hours to complete certification: 72

Focus: the development of skills and strategies needed for interviews for academic positions.

Learning involves:

- learning effective strategies, including compensation strategies, for communicating clearly in an interview setting
- developing the active listening strategies necessary for success
- analyzing their own communicative interaction through teacher/peer/self feedback
- evaluating videotapes and audiotapes of own speaking performance
- learning the strategies of appropriate and professional conversational engagement before and after the interview

Assessment: evaluation is based on classroom performance and assignments. A final grade of "Pass" or "Fail" is assigned.

Prior learning assessment: Yes No

NETWORKING TALK

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Typical students: Postdoctoral Fellows at the University of Toronto

Average number of students per year: 25

Fee: \$240

Number of required courses: two to four courses for a total of 72 hours

Number of course hours: 18

Number of hours to complete certification: 72

Focus: the improvement of students' ability to engage in conversational talk in academic situations: speaking with colleagues and professorial staff, and networking at conferences, workshops and presentations.

Learning involves:

- examining issues of appropriateness, including responsiveness and sensitivity, in a variety of conversational situations
- learning to provide context for listeners
- learning to introduce themselves, initiate conversation, and present themselves well in networking situations
- practicing managing casual conversations in terms of sustaining discourse continuity and dealing with unpredictable shifts in topic
- developing the active listening strategies necessary to engage in conversation
- gaining confidence in conversing with unfamiliar people

Assessment: evaluation is based on classroom performance and assignments. A final grade of "Pass" or "Fail" is assigned.

Prior learning assessment: Yes No

PRONUNCIATION

Typical students: Postdoctoral Fellows at the University of Toronto

Average number of students per year: 25

Fee: \$240

Number of required courses: two to four courses for a total of 72 hours

Number of course hours: 18

Number of hours to complete certification: 72

Focus: a diagnostic approach to pronunciation problems. After identifying the main features of English pronunciation, students complete, with their instructor, a thorough analysis of their speech. The instructor then recommends exercises specific to each students' problems.

Learning involves:

- acquiring an overview of the sound system, rhythm and intonation of English
- identifying individual speech strengths, problems and specific solutions
- improving clarity and accent
- monitoring their own speech

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Assessment: evaluation is based on classroom performance and assignments. A final grade of “Pass” or “Fail” is assigned.

Prior learning assessment: Yes No

WRITING: POSITION SEARCHES

Typical students: Postdoctoral Fellows at the University of Toronto

Average number of students per year: 25

Fee: \$240

Number of required courses: two to four courses for a total of 72 hours

Number of course hours: 18

Number of hours to complete certification: 72

Focus: the development of the writing skills needed for seeking academic positions (email correspondence, cover letters, curriculum vitae and other documentation necessary for position searches).

Learning involves:

- learning the format and organization of the various types of writing for position searches, including curriculum vitae and supporting documentation
- gaining skills in using language effectively in written correspondence
- improving fluency and accuracy in writing

Assessment: evaluation is based on classroom performance and assignments. A final grade of “Pass” or “Fail” is assigned.

Prior learning assessment: Yes No