



October 2016

TESOL Connections

Keeping English language professionals connected

TESOL Initiates Revision of the P–12 Professional Teaching Standards

In August 2016, TESOL International Association brought together an expert panel of educators to begin the process of revising the TESOL P–12 Professional Teaching Standards (TESOL, 2010). The standards are performance-based, developed by TESOL, and used by the Commission for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) to assess programs that prepare and license P–12 ESL educators across the United States. The revised standards will undergo a period of revision and public review before being submitted to CAEP for final approval in late 2017.

CAEP and the National Recognition Process

CAEP is a professional accrediting agency that reviews departments, schools, and colleges within a higher education institution with a focus on strengthening P–12 student learning. Just as CAEP approves the TESOL standards used for accreditation, CAEP's accrediting standards and processes are recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

TESOL has been a member of CAEP (formerly known as NCATE, The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education) since 1999. The first version of TESOL's professional teaching standards were approved by NCATE in 2001 followed by the first revision of the standards that went into use in 2009. Per CAEP guidelines, the standards used for accreditation must be revised every several years. Pending approval by CAEP, the revised standards will be available for programs to adopt beginning January 2018. Programs will have through the end of 2019 to adjust their programs to the new standards and reports due during that time period will have the option to use either the old or the new standards. Starting spring 2020, all programs must start using the new TESOL standards.

Institutions wishing to become nationally recognized must align their programs to the standards and submit a program report in order to become accredited. Institutions receive accreditation from CAEP every 5–7 years. Program approval is contingent on assessments presented by programs showing candidates' skills, knowledge, and dispositions in terms of teaching English language learners. Programs in institutions submit program reports to be reviewed by TESOL for National Recognition 3 years prior to the scheduled CAEP accreditation visit. The duration of the National Recognition depends on when programs receive the status in comparison to the current CAEP accreditation visit. Since 2007, TESOL has averaged reviewing 40–50 program reports a year. There are currently 124 nationally recognized TESOL programs in 28 states.

The Revision Process

In anticipation of the next revision, TESOL began regularly "taking the pulse" of the field to ensure the next version of the standards would lead teacher education programs to address the needs of teachers now. In February 2013, TESOL held its first convening of ESL teachers and administrators, education experts, researchers, and thought leaders from Maryland and the District of Columbia to start a conversation on how the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) were changing the roles of those who teach ESL. From this meeting, "Implementing the Common Core State Standards for English Learners: The Changing Role of the ESL Teacher" was published. The convening paper summarizes the findings of the meeting and provides recommendations for better supporting ESL teachers with the implementation of new content standards for students.

The following year, a professional paper, "Changes in the Expertise of ESL Professionals: Knowledge and Action in an Era of New Standards," was commissioned to build on the 2013 convening paper and to further discuss the shifting landscape surrounding the CCSS and their implications for building and enacting teacher expertise. Continuing to foster this dialogue, a second convening was held in September 2015 that focused on two

overarching themes: (1) how to strengthen English language teaching professionalism and (2) how to make connections between teacher training programs and K–12 schools. The outcome of this second convening was the published paper, “The Preparation of the ESL Educator in the Era of College- and Career-Readiness Standards,” which was conceived with the thought of informing the field in terms of where it needs to go in order to prepare and support ESL teachers and using this information to shape the forthcoming revision of the TESOL P–12 Professional Teaching Standards.

To spearhead the revision process, TESOL convened a group of experts representing teacher education programs and P–12 teachers. The experts—Anita Bright, Portland State University; Anne Marie Foerster Luu, Montgomery County Public Schools; Vivian Lindhardsen, Columbia University; Karen Nemeth, Language Castle LLC; and Lorraine Valdez Pierce, George Mason University—are being led through the revision process by TESOL’s CAEP Coordinator, Diane Staehr Fenner. The group met in August 2016 to draft revised standards that address the changes in the field since 2007 and that meet CAEP’s requirements for standards.

The drafted standards will go through two review cycles—one calling upon leadership entities within TESOL and specific experts in the profession and the second open to the public. The public review is anticipated to take place by January 2017. The review will be announced in TESOL’s electronic publications, *TESOL Connections* and the *English Language Bulletin*. Following the final review, a session will be held at the 2017 TESOL Convention & English Language Expo in Seattle, Washington, USA. The session will introduce the differences from the current standards to the revised standards and address the transition to using the newly revised standards. Institutions interested in seeking national recognition or reapplying for national recognition may sign up for the webinar “Preparing Your ESL Licensure Program for CAEP Review,” scheduled for 26 October at 1 pm EDT.

Reference

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). (2010). *TESOL/NCATE standards for the recognition of initial TESOL programs in P–12 ESL teacher education programs*. Alexandria, VA: TESOL.