

Rationale

In developing the Standards for Short-Term TEFL/TESL Certificate Programs, the expert group adapted information from the Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA) Standards for English Language Programs and Institutions (2014), the TESOL/CAEP Standards for P–12 Teacher Education Programs (TESOL, 2009b), and the TESOL Standards for ESL/EFL Teachers of Adults (TESOL, 2008).¹ These three sets of standards exemplify best practice in English language teaching and administration.

The CEA standards are based on U.S. Department of Education regulations for accrediting agencies. TESOL International Association, in partnership with the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), developed the TESOL/CAEP Standards for P–12 Teacher Education Programs for U.S. primary- and secondary-school systems. These standards are currently under review to be revised by 2017. The TESOL Standards for ESL/EFL Teachers of Adults were developed for use in a variety of settings in both ESL and EFL contexts. In adapting the standards listed above for specific programs, careful consideration was given to ensure that the Standards for Short-Term TEFL/ TESL Certificate Programs will be culturally appropriate for the countries where they will be used, and that the individuals and institutions who will use the standards will understand and accept them (see Kuhlman & Knežević, 2013).

Organization and Program Management Standards

The Organization and Program Management standards include standards in four domains: (1) mission statement, (2) program length and structure, (3) administration, and (4) candidate services. Although there has been some research on the effectiveness of short-term TEFL/TESL training programs in ESL/ EFL teacher preparation (e.g., Borg, 2005; Brandt, 2006; Hobbs, 2013), the effectiveness of short-term TEFL/TESL certificate program organization and program management has not yet been a topic of a significant amount of research. Therefore, in addition to research in the field of TESOL, the rationale also includes applicable theory from such fields as business administration and adult education.

Mission Statement

Organizations managing and operating short-term TEFL/TESL certificate programs, like other institutions, require a formal mechanism for conveying the organization's purpose, values, and beliefs to both an internal and external audience. Mission statements not only support the long-term plans of an organization but also serve as guidance in day-to-day operations (Mullane, 2002). Accordingly, the mission can offer a clear guide to administrators and **personnel** in working toward shared goals, setting priorities, making plans, and allocating resources (Cochran, David, & Gibson, 2008). As the organization grows or changes, or as changes are made in the field, the organization needs to have periodic reviews and revisions of the mission statement (David & David, 2003).

Program Length and Structure

The program length and structure of a short-term certificate TEFL/TESL program must support the program mission and **learning outcomes**. It is essential that the program be long enough to support candidate learning and a sense of efficacy in the classroom. TESOL International Association recommends a minimum of 100 instructional hours plus supervised practice teaching experience and classroom observation components (TESOL, 2009a). The supervised practice teaching is understood to be a vital opportunity for TEFL/TESL candidates to acquire the knowledge and skills they need to be effective language teachers and foster their ability to succeed in the classroom (Faiz & Valeo, 2012; Richards & Crookes, 1988). Supervised practice teaching must be based on careful planning and followed by some debriefing. The supervising instructor guides the candidate throughout his or her practicum experience.

¹ In developing the Standards for Short-Term TEFL/TESL Certificate Programs, the expert group also reviewed other program standards including NEAS Standards and Criteria for ELT Centres; ACCET: Standards for Accreditation; and British Council: Accreditation UK.

Administration

Short-term TEFL/TESL certificate programs require administrative policies and procedures that adhere to standards in seven key areas: (1) administrative structure and policies; (2) recruitment policies; (3) candidate qualifications; (4) admission and enrollment policies; (5) personnel policies; (6) finances; and (7) facilities, equipment, and supplies.

In all areas of administration, it is necessary that the policies and procedures be in line with the mission of the program and transparent to employees, candidates, and other stakeholders. Transparency is “characterized by visibility or accessibility of information especially concerning business practices” (“Transparent,” n.d.). Additionally, policies and procedures should be conducted in an ethical manner following acceptable standards of conduct (Banks, 2003). It is also important that all administrative policies be evaluated regularly to ensure that program resources are sufficient to implement the program effectively, that program activities are being conducted as intended, and that the program is achieving its goals (Lawton, Brandon, Cicchinelli, & Kekahio, 2014). As described by Shin (2012), a greater factor in student achievement than the individual instructors’ abilities is an academic culture that enables instructors to apply the teaching methods they were trained to use.

Candidates accepted into a short-term TEFL/TESL certificate programs need to have the experience, background, and skills to be successful in the program and to meet their goals upon completing the program. Accordingly, candidates should have adequate postsecondary education and English proficiency to complete the program and feel competent in the classroom. The Standards for Short-Term TEFL/TESL Certificate Programs stress the need for candidates to serve as language models for the English learners in their classes. Additionally, research has shown a correlation between teachers’ sense of efficacy and their language proficiency (Chacón, 2005). The more that proficient teachers evaluate themselves in the four skills (i.e., speaking, listening, reading, and writing), the greater their sense of efficacy in the classroom.

TESOL International Association reviewed a number of language proficiency models when developing its standards on the level of proficiency needed to successfully teach others a second or foreign language. As each model approaches evaluating language proficiency differently, TESOL International Association drew from a number of models to create standards that address language proficiency more universally. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL; 2013) describes a proficiency level at which teachers can speak spontaneously in the classroom, provide rich language input to allow for language acquisition, and interact with students in the target language. The TESOL Standards for ESL/EFL Teachers of Adults (2008) say that for teachers to be good language models for their students, they must be able to speak English with accuracy and fluency on a variety of topics, manage complicated social tasks, support their opinions, explain content in detail, and hypothesize on topics they are familiar with (TESOL, 2006). Along those lines TESL Canada, using the Canadian Language Benchmarks (Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2012), requires that certificate applicants be able to understand complex, extended discussions or presentations; to discuss detailed complex information and opinions; to understand a range of complex texts in some unpredictable contexts and on some unfamiliar topics; and to write formal and informal texts of some complexity for a range of purposes. Similarly, the Common European Framework (Council of Europe, 2011) describes speakers as proficient when they can express ideas fluently and spontaneously and use language effectively for social, academic, and professional purposes.

Candidate Services

Candidate services include all services that support candidates in learning and meeting their academic and professional goals. Both academic and nonacademic assistance is essential in providing holistic student support (Morgan, 2012). In the case of short-term TEFL/TESL certificate programs, candidate services should include providing candidates with clear policies and guidelines about all aspects of the program, advising on both academic and nonacademic issues as needed, and offering a formal mechanism for lodging complaints about any aspect of their educational program.