



## Sample TESOL Job and Program Titles and Descriptions

There are many acronyms related to the teaching of English language learners, and it is important that all stakeholders know what acronyms mean. Ensuring that acronyms are used appropriately within the school system can help to clarify understandings and avoid confusion. This document aims to provide some sample titles and descriptions that schools can use.

### Terms

Throughout this document, these acronyms will be used:

**ELL** English Language Learner

**TESOL** Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

**ESOL** English for Speakers of Other Languages

Note: There are alternate terms for ESOL, which have very similar meanings. Schools may substitute these terms for “ESOL” in their job and program descriptions.

ESL English as a second language

EAL English as an additional/academic language

ENL English as a new language

### Jobs and Titles

Schools with ELLs need educators trained in TESOL. The number of such personnel, the extent of their training, and their job descriptions will vary depending on the context.

**TESOL Professional/Expert/Specialist:** This is someone who has been through a TESOL education program which meets the TESOL K–12 Professional standards<sup>1</sup>, and who may have a Master’s degree in TESOL. This person can create programming, train teachers to meet the needs of ELLs, teach English to ELLs, and supervise assessment systems and data.

*A TESOL Professional who has a Master’s degree in TESOL can be responsible for all programming and training in the school related to helping ELLs learn English. (Note that the TESOL Professional is not a social worker, but a language acquisition specialist.)*

<sup>1</sup>See TESOL K–12 Professional standards: [https://www.tesol.org/docs/books/the-revised-tesol-ncate-standards-for-the-recognition-of-initial-tesol-programs-in-p-12-esl-teacher-education-\(2010-pdf\).pdf?sfvrsn=2](https://www.tesol.org/docs/books/the-revised-tesol-ncate-standards-for-the-recognition-of-initial-tesol-programs-in-p-12-esl-teacher-education-(2010-pdf).pdf?sfvrsn=2)

**ESOL Teacher/Instructor:** This person's job may be *only* to teach the English language to ELLs, and not to create overall programming or train other teachers. However, this person should still have TESOL training through a program which meets the TESOL K–12 professional standards. This teacher's training may be at the level of a certificate or endorsement, rather than a Master's degree. If the ESOL teacher is expected to teach a content area while teaching English, make sure he or she has the proper endorsement to do so.

*An ESOL Teacher with a certificate/endorsement in TESOL (sometimes called ESL/ESOL/ELL instruction) can provide quality instruction for ELLs in different types of ESOL programs.*

**ESOL Aid:** This person may be hired to work under a TESOL Professional or ESOL Teacher. Usually this work would entail working with small groups of ELLs under the direction of the TESOL Professional or ESOL Teacher, so that students can be separated for appropriate instruction at different language levels. This teacher could also sit with ELLs in regular classrooms to help them understand the content, if this type of instruction is supervised by a TESOL Professional or ESOL Teacher, and the ESOL Aid has received training for this.

*An ESOL Aid (sometimes called an ESL/ELL Aid) with some training provided by a TESOL Professional can work one-on-one or in small groups with ELLs, alongside an ESOL teacher, to facilitate delivery of instruction at the appropriate language levels. ESOL Aids may be hired because they speak the native language of the ELLs. With appropriate training in how to utilize the native language, such bilingual ESOL aids can be a valuable school resource.*

## A Note about Expectations

TESOL personnel at any level should have appropriate numbers of students in appropriately designed programs so that they are able to use their training and do their work effectively. For example, even a highly trained TESOL Professional will not be able to meet the needs of 60 ELLs, each of whom he/she sees only once or twice a week. No amount of training can make up for an ineffective program.

## Naming Programs and Classes

**Programs:** A *program* intended to help ELLs learn English is not a single class, but rather a collection of *all* of the purposeful ways in which English learners will acquire English through school experiences. These might include times when ELLs are pulled out of regular classes for work with ESOL professionals/teachers, times when ELLs are in content classes which are designed specifically for ELLs ("sheltered classes"), and/or times when ELLs are left in mainstream classes, but where the content-area teacher has been trained by the TESOL professional to purposefully help the ELL develop both language and content.

Some possible program names might be:

ESOL Program: "English to Speakers of Other Languages Program"

ESL Program: "English as a Second Language Program"

ELL Program: "English Language Learning/Learner Program"

(This term is not preferred, as it can cause confusion when the *learner* and the *program* have the same name.)

**English language classes:** These are classes where ELLs go to specifically learn the English language. Such classes should be part of an overall ESOL Program.

Some possible English language class names might be:

ESOL Class: “English to Speakers of Other Languages Class”

ESL Class: “English as a Second Language Class”

ELD Class: “English language development class”