



Joint Position Statement on Governance for English Language Instruction at Institutions of Higher Education

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Institutions of higher education must constantly search for ways to provide high-quality instruction in the most economically efficient manner possible, including exploring alternatives to existing administrative structures and modes of delivery. Because English language instruction is often seen as an ancillary service rather than as part of the core education provided by institutions of higher education, it is frequently scrutinized for ways to cut costs. Increasingly, university-governed intensive English programs (IEPs) are also seen as means to increase general revenues through the recruitment of more full-tuition-paying international students and the offering of special nondegree programs.

As universities re-evaluate and make decisions about how to administer university-governed English language programs, it is crucial that they be aware of the standards for instructional practice and program administration developed by professional associations such as TESOL, the American Association of Intensive English Programs (AAIEP), and the Consortium of University and College Intensive English Programs (UCIEP), as well as accrediting bodies such as the Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA) and the Accrediting Council for Continuing Education and Training (ACCET), that they seek highly qualified instructors with advanced degrees in the field, and that they promote the full integration of English language instruction programs into the university curriculum as a whole.

In evaluating alternatives for English language instruction, institutions of higher education need to be extremely cautious about proposals that foreground economic benefits over assurances of educational quality. When in discussions with potential external partners, it is vital that administrators consult all stakeholders in the academic community in order to be aware of the potential impact on existing programs. All governance at institutions of higher education must be transparent, and it is crucial that academic standards be upheld and not undermined by financial interests. Otherwise, decisions can be made that impact the quality of curricula, faculty, and staff that can lead to a loss in academic integrity for programs. Moreover, these situations lead to a loss of overall professional status for IEP faculty that denigrates the field of English language education.

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Joint AAIEP, TESOL, and UCIEP Position Statement on Governance for English Language Instruction at Institutions of Higher Education

TESOL and its colleague associations strongly advocate for the integrity of all programs that provide English language instruction as well as partnerships and governance structures that support standards of instructional content and delivery. English language instruction, in its various modalities of delivery, is a key component for the success of international education programs at institutions of higher education. TESOL recommends that higher educational institutions recognize and value the importance and role of the English language programs not only in academic preparation and international student recruitment, but also in economic value. A program devoted to the integrity and standards of the profession brings value to the institution far beyond immediate economic gains.

TESOL urges communities of higher education in general to engage in dialogue about ways to promote English language competency and better serve multilingual and multicultural students. TESOL further urges its members working in higher education settings to be proactive in promoting awareness of professional practices and standards. The rapid globalization of higher education means that these students must be explicitly considered as part of strategic plan discussions, accreditation reviews, and discussions of institutional effectiveness. Ultimately, a university gains the greatest intellectual and economic benefit from programs that lead to the long-term retention and wider participation of multilingual students, not just short-term tuition payments.