

Project Opportunity Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What does ESLs, ELL and LEPs stand for?

A: ESLs means English as a Second Language student, an ELL is an English Language Learner, and LEPs stands for Limited English Proficiency student. These terms are used interchangeably and usually apply to students whose first language was not English and are currently learning English. The terms ESL and ESLs are used most often in Maine to refer to English as a second language programs and students.

Q: In Maine, who are ESL students, what languages do they speak and where do they go to school?

A: ESL students are mostly native born Mainers, immigrants, refugees and migrant workers. Students born in Maine that do not speak English as their primary language usually come from Native American and Franco American heritages. The ESL student population speaks languages from over 100 language groups. These students are dispersed throughout the state with larger populations in the Portland, Lewiston-Auburn and traditionally French and Native American speaking areas.

Q: How many students in Maine's public schools are ESL students and how fast is the population growing?

A: There are roughly 5,000 ESL students in Maine which is a 19% population increase from 1994 to 2005.

Q: Does the Project provide instruction to individuals to help them learn English as their second language?

A: No. Project Opportunity does not work directly with ESL students to improve their English skills. The Project provides training to education professionals and paraprofessionals in Maine's K-12 public schools as well as pre-service teachers at the University of Maine to assist them in pursuing ESL endorsement.

Q: What type of work does an ESL endorsed educator do and how does an ESL endorsement affect my employability in a K-12 public school in Maine?

A: Teaching ESL is a growing specialty in Maine's public school systems. Participation in this field varies from part- to full-time ESL instruction and/or tutoring, or in addition to mainstreamed classroom instruction. An ESL endorsement not only provides an opportunity for an individual to

work in a new and rewarding capacity, but it may also improve their employability in the Maine public school system because each school district with ESL students is required to have an ESL endorsed teacher on staff. .

Q: What is the process for a student in a non-ESL teacher preparation program or a current teacher to obtain an ESL endorsement?

A: Current teachers and students in non-ESL teacher preparation programs must meet the requirements of the Maine Department of Education Eligibility for Endorsement 660: English as a Second Language Pathway 2:

- (a) Earned a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university;
- (b) Holds a valid Maine provisional or professional teaching certificate with a K-3, K-8, 5-8, 712, or K-12 endorsement;
- (c) Completed a minimum of 15 semester hours in English as a Second Language coursework;
- (d) Completed an approved course for "Teaching Exceptional Students in the Regular Classroom";
- (e) Passed content area assessment in accordance with Me. Dept. of Ed. Reg. 013; and
- (f) Passed pedagogical knowledge and skills assessment at the appropriate grade level, in accordance with Me. Dept. of Ed. Reg. 013, or successful completion of an approved alternative professional studies program.

For more information visit <http://www.maine.gov/education/cert/index.html>.

Q: What classes does Project Opportunity suggest for an ESL endorsement?

A: If you are pursuing teacher certification or already teacher certified, you are required to obtain fifteen (15) credit hours in ESL coursework to earn your ESL endorsement. The five (5) courses that Project Opportunity suggest are:

ELL 470 / MLC 598 - Methods: The Teaching of English as a Second Language: This course includes the basic principles underlying ESL pedagogy, current trends in ESL, techniques for the teaching of students at different levels, and the teaching of minority students.

ELL 475 / MLC 598 - Curriculum and Development in ESL/EFL Contexts: This course helps students to develop an understanding of the principles of syllabus design and curriculum development. We will examine various types of syllabi as well as the principles for grading content, tasks, and objectives. The course also looks at language literacy skills, curriculum adaptation for language minorities, and the reading and writing process within the curriculum.

ELL 480 / MLC 598 - Testing and Assessment in ESL/EFL Contexts: This course helps students develop an understanding of second language evaluation and assessment. It examines the various types of evaluation instruments and procedures available, helps students develop reliable and valid evaluation instruments, and explores language minority student placement and diagnosis.

ELL 485 / MLC 598 - Aspects of English Language Acquisition: This is a practical course that focuses primarily on the understanding of the phonological and grammatical aspects of the English language not only from the perspective of the ESL teacher, but from the language learner as well. Through reading and discussion, students will learn more about why we say what we say in English, explore various techniques and methods for teaching English grammar and pronunciation, and analyze the language of non-native speakers through recorded interviews. The course is based on the premise that English language teachers must really know the difficulties and intricacies of their own language in order to teach it

ELL 491 / MLC 598 - Multiculturalism and Diversity: This interactive course is designed for educators to develop an understanding and appreciation of diversity in all its aspects. Through it we will develop methods to incorporate multiculturalism into curriculum and to explore diverse approaches to pedagogy. The inclusion of ethnicity, culture and values reflects the pluralistic nature of the United States and fosters the acceptance and tolerance of ethnic, racial or cultural differences. Multicultural Education views cultural differences positively and seeks to teach all students the contributions of diverse groups to the ongoing development of American culture and the recognition that American society is culturally pluralistic and globally connected.

Q: When are classes offered?

A: Information about class offerings is available on the websites of the University of Maine Student Records (<http://studentrecords.umaine.edu>) and Project Opportunity (<http://www2.umaine.edu/projectopportunity/Courses.htm>).

Q: What is the Scholarships for Maine's Future Teachers program?

A: The competitive two-year scholarship program supports individuals in a teacher training program at the University of Maine. The program provides a variety of assistance to selected applicants to help them complete their teaching certification and English as a Second Language endorsement coursework.

Q: Is speaking a foreign language a requirement to take classes or apply for the Scholarship for Maine's Future Teachers program?

A: No. It can be beneficial to have experienced the process of language acquisition in an academic environment but knowing a foreign language is not required to take the classes or apply to the Scholarships for Maine's Future Teachers program.

Q: What major should I be working toward to qualify for the scholarship program?

A: Applicants need to be in an undergraduate or graduate teacher preparation program leading to state certification at the time they apply. These programs include Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, Secondary Education, Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.) or Master of Education (M.Ed.). Project Opportunity encourages applicants from all concentrations within these programs to apply. Applicants studying Early Childhood Education must be committed to working in Maine's K-12 public school system.

Q: Do the ESL endorsement classes count toward my degree?

A: For most teacher preparation programs, the ESL endorsement courses usually do not count, but some courses may count as general education credits. For some self-designed majors and master programs, there is a possibility that the ESL endorsement courses will be applied to your degree. All potential applicants are encouraged to talk with their advisor for specifics about their program and final approval for ESL coursework to count toward their degree.

Q: Do I have to have a teaching degree and be certified to obtain an ESL endorsement?

A: No. Eligibility for Endorsement 660: English as a Second Language can be established by individual who is not teacher certificated by completing Endorsement Eligibility Pathway 3:

- (a) Earned a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university;
- (b) Completed a minimum of 24 semester hours in English as a Second Language coursework;
- (c) Completed an approved course for "Teaching Exceptional Students in the Regular Classroom";
- (d) Passed content area assessment, in accordance with Me. Dept. of Ed. Reg. 013;
- (e) Passed Basic Skills Test in reading, writing and mathematics, in accordance with Me. Dept. of Ed. Reg. 013;
- (f) Passed Pedagogical knowledge assessment and skills at the appropriate grade level, in accordance with Me. Dept. of Ed. Reg. 013, or successful completion of an approved alternative professional studies program; and
- (g) Completed one academic semester or a minimum of 15 weeks of full-time student teaching, or a combination of part-time and full-time student teaching in an amount equivalent to 15 weeks in this endorsement area at the specified grade level. This requirement shall be waived upon

completion of one full year of successful teaching under a targeted need certificate, a conditional certificate, or a transitional endorsement in this endorsement area at the specified grade level.

For more information visit <http://www.maine.gov/education/cert/index.html>.

Q: Does the Project provide training for individuals who want to teach in a country where English is not the primary language?

A: No. The training that Project Opportunity provides is designed for individuals who will be educating students in English in a school in the United States of America . Teaching English in a country where English is not the primary language is considered teaching English as a foreign language.

Q: Can I take training to teach English as a foreign language and apply it toward ESL certification?

A: Generally, no. Training to teach English as a foreign language usually does not qualify as ESL coursework and can not be applied toward ESL certification based on the three pathways outline by the Maine Department of Education. For more information please contact:

State of Maine Department of Education Certification Office 23 Statehouse Station Augusta, ME 04333-0023.

Telephone: 207.624.6603

Fax: 207.624.6604

E-mail: cert.doe@maine.gov

Or visit their website at <http://www.maine.gov/education/cert/index.html>