

Teaching Assistant Preparation in English (TAPE) Courses

What is TAPE?

The Teaching Assistant Preparation in English (TAPE) program is designed for prospective teaching assistants whose first language is not English and who need additional work on English communication skills. Entry to the program is determined by the SPEC test.

TAPE Course Policies

- In most cases, students who have not scored at least a C on the SPEC test will be required to take TA Preparation: Pronunciation, Fluency Building and Culture. Students who have received a C or above on the SPEC are eligible to take the Presentations course.
- Due to limited space availability, students are usually allowed to take only one TAPE class per semester.
- If your SPEC score indicated that you need to take a TAPE course, sign up immediately, as classes fill up quickly. If you wait too long to sign up, the classes will be full. If classes are full, you should put your name on a waiting list. As spaces become available (because of drops or no-shows), students from the waiting list will be offered a place in class.
- If you choose not to take a TAPE class, you will not be allowed to retake the SPEC until you have taken a TAPE class or until one year has passed since your last test. You will only be allowed to retest once without taking a class.
- If you have taken the SPEC test at least once and are eligible to take TAPE classes the following semester, it is recommended that you sign up the first day of registration. If you are currently taking a TAPE class and will be taking the SPEC after the first day of registration, you should still sign up while spaces are available. If you wait until you receive the results of your test, it is possible that the classes will be full. If you pass the test, you can simply drop the class.
- If you sign up for a class in a timely manner after taking the SPEC test for the first time, but you get put on a waiting list and no space becomes available in the class, you will be allowed to retake the SPEC test the following semester without taking a class. (You are encouraged to work with tutors in the ELC.) This rule only applies one time. If we offer you a space in a class and you turn it down, you lose the chance to be retested.
- Students who do not pass the SPEC test after taking a TAPE class will be given permission to register for another TAPE class by the ESL Programs Office. However,

you are not registered until you do it yourself through MyUI or go to the Registration Center. When you register you should not be asked for a permission code; if you are, please contact the ESL Programs office. Also, please note that this permission is only valid until two weeks before the start of the semester. If you have not registered by that date, your permission will be removed.

- If you drop a TAPE class two semesters in a row, you will not be allowed to register for a class the next semester. You will have to wait one semester before registering for another class.
- If you receive a failing grade (W) in a TAPE class, you will not be allowed to register for a class the following semester.

TAPE Course Descriptions

In most cases, students who have not scored at least a C on the SPEC test will be required to take TA Preparation: Pronunciation, Fluency Building, and Culture. Students who have received a C or above on the SPEC are eligible to take the Presentations course.

You may register for TAPE courses through MyUI. If you are asked for a permission code, contact the ESL Programs Office. Remember, you must have taken the SPEC test to enroll in a TAPE class.

- TAPE:5100 TA Preparation: Pronunciation, Fluency Building, and Culture
 - Pronunciation, Fluency Building, and Culture gives students the opportunity to attain greater fluency for teaching by making short presentations and participating in natural interactions about U.S. culture. It includes intensive work on pronunciation to help future teaching assistants attain maximum intelligibility. This class meets four times per week for 50 minutes.
- TAPE:5300 TA Preparation: Presentation Skills
 - Presentations emphasizes intelligibility of speech and clarity of expression in presenting material and responding to questions. Students practice giving lectures and improve their language skills by viewing and critiquing themselves and others on video recordings. Content material familiarizes international students with the culture of the U.S. classroom. This class meets three times per week for 50 minutes.
- TAPE:5330 TA Preparation: Orientation Program

- A four-hour orientation program will be required of all students who are certified at level A or B and are teaching for the first time.
- This orientation helps new teaching assistants understand the culture of the U.S. classroom and treats topics such as student expectations, teacher-student interactions, and understanding and answering student questions. Discussion focuses on suggestions for maximizing comprehensibility in spoken English. This course meets twice for 2 hours early in the semester.

Dropping TAPE Courses

The ESL Programs Office is committed to a fair policy on dropping courses and to communicating clearly with departments about all student requests to drop a TAPE course. Therefore, we have implemented the following procedures.

- To drop a TAPE course without charge, the drop must be processed no later than the end of the first week of classes. The full cost of the course will be assessed for any drops processed after the first week of classes.
- The ESL Office will not process any TAPE course drops without the consent of the DEO or departmental TAPE Program liaison. Consent must be sent to the ESL Office either by e-mail (esl-program@uiowa.edu) or on departmental letterhead with the appropriate signature.
- Remember, if you drop a TAPE class two semesters in a row, you will not be allowed to register for a class the next semester.