



1754 University Ave St. Paul MN 55104

ESL (English as a Second Language) Program Description

Program Goals

- To provide equitable linguistic access to all students and families by engaging in relevant academic instruction and modeling core UACS values to fully integrate in today's society.

Program Objectives

- To increase English language skills of students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) in areas of reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
- To increase the academic achievement of limited-English proficient students in the core academic subjects.

Program Description

Currently, 70 percent of the students enrolled in Universal Academy Charter School are identified as English Language Learners. These students are served by two ELL teachers who do target time pull outs and one ELL and TAs tutor who work in collaboration with classroom and content area teachers. The ESL program at Universal Academy Charter School offers a combination of individual or small group pull-out and push-in instruction to support English language development. Depending upon the grade level and the language proficiency level of the individual students, ESL services are provided to meet specific needs. ESL push-in and pull-out services are a part of the school-wide schedule, implemented to provide extra intervention support in addition to grade-level classroom instructional time. The English language teachers and the classroom teachers work closely together to plan an instructional program that is most

beneficial for the language and academic needs of each student. Additionally, the ELL tutors work with students in the mainstream classroom to support their learning in a content or mainstream class. Weekly quiz data informs these collaborative sessions.

A combination of strategies is used to teach English: whole language, phonics, oral language skills, cooperative learning, and integrated reading. Emphasis is placed on the development of the four domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing that align with WIDA Standards and Can Do descriptors.

UACS newcomer students are few. However, with changing demographics, we could anticipate more newcomer student enrollment in the future. It will be essential to identify students' native language literacy skills and educational experiences and to assess English language proficiency. The goal of the newcomer program would be to create paths to grade level content by teaching ELLs the language of content and literacy (Science, Math, Writing, and Reading).

All ELL students are required to take the annual ACCESS test that measures students' language development in reading, writing, speaking, and listening in English. ELL students who have been exited from the program do not take the ACCESS test.

Identification Criteria and Program Entrance

Universal Academy Charter School uses a uniform ESL identification process to identify ELL students. This is done through a Home Language Questionnaire and developmentally appropriate assessment practices. A student will be tested for ELL identification and services if:

- the student first learned a language other than English, or
- comes from a home where a language other than English is spoken, or
- does not use English as a primary language.

Program Entrance Screening Method:

Upon enrollment in Universal Academy Charter School during any point in the year, all families complete a Home Language Questionnaire within the application form. This form is available in English, Somali, and Spanish languages. If a language other than English is stated in

the Home Language Questionnaire, the office staff will notify the ESL teachers, and they will test the student with developmentally appropriate measures within 10 days of student enrollment.

Initial Language Proficiency Assessment:

The MODEL test is the primary tool used for initial placement purposes. MODEL is a detailed assessment of English language proficiency in the four domains of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The test also assesses the students’ social and instructional language, the language of language arts, the language of mathematics, the language of science, and the language of social studies.

New to the school students who are identified as ELL students are tested using the MODEL test. Students with a composite score between 1.0 – 4.9 on the MODEL are served according to Table I on page 3.

Communication Initiatives

Families will receive notification of ELL program enrollment, assessment results, and exit requirements within 30 days of student enrollment at the beginning of the year and two weeks after the enrollment of the student in a program during the middle of the school year. Parents reserve the right to refuse ELL services for their child through written notification of the school.

Students with a language other than English on the HLQ and who have been identified as English Language Learners (ELL), will be coded in MARSS as LEP-Y. The ELL team will send this information to the MARSS coordinator as soon as assessments are complete.

Table 1 – ELL Scope of Service	
Levels 1 – 1.9	Students receive services for 50-60 minutes a day, 4 days a week as well as 60 minutes daily in the mainstream or content class.

Levels 2 – 4.9	Students receive services for 50-60 minutes a day, 4-5 days a week.
Level 5	Students exit according to the established exit criteria.

ELL Instructional Services Period

As described in Table 1 above, students’ language proficiency scores will inform the amount of ELL services received. Teachers will do any/all of the following during the ELL lesson delivery: build background knowledge/vocabulary, use simple and direct language, develop highly structured and scaffolded lessons to ensure a gradual release of responsibility, use non-linguistic supports: pictures, video clips, and hands-on activities to present lessons.

Exit Criteria and Reclassification

ELL students receive ongoing assessments to ensure progress, to determine the level of service and to inform whether the student is ready to be exited from the ESL program. The primary exit measure is the annual ACCESS test or the MODEL test. Students are exited from the ESL program if and when they score:

- A composite language proficiency score of a 5.0

Other formal measures are considered to inform exit decisions. They include but are not limited to:

- Grade level proficiency on the MCA III test in Reading;
- Teacher judgment;
- Parent input;
- NWEA (Measure of Academic Progress) reading scores; and
- Writing samples.

Students exit from the ESL program based on proficiency in all areas of language – listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Reclassification of exited students in MARSS happens at the beginning of the next school year, after the student has been exited from service the previous school year. The names of exited

students are emailed to the MARSS coordinator who inputs the changes into MARSS. Reclassification determines the change of students' status from LEP-Y to LEP-N.

Communication with Parents

The state forms notifying the parents of any child entering an ESL program are given to families annually. Forms with the student's most recent language proficiency score and a description of the student's programming and services are sent in a sealed envelope addressed to the parent annually. The Program Description is shared with parents at conferences and upon request. This document is posted on UACS website and updated annually.

Parents and families always have the right to refuse the ESL program. This must be done in writing and a copy of the refusal must be kept in the student's cumulative folder with a copy in the student's ESL file.

Professional Development

As we have a high population of ELLs in all of our classrooms, it is important for all classroom staff be aware of how to best scaffold their lessons and provide comprehensible input for all students. Classroom teachers and support staff receive trainings on language acquisition and strategies for English language learners from the ESL teachers and have the option to attend seminars on best practices for teaching English Language Learners throughout the year.

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