

Graduate Faculty Membership Criteria for the MA in TESOL Program

(approved by vote of MLLL faculty on 11-6-24)

I. The **MA in TESOL Steering Committee** consists of six people: five voting members and a financial representative. At least two of the voting members must be tenure-stream faculty in the department of Modern Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics. The others may be drawn from other departments and colleges at OU. All voting members will have experience relevant to language teaching. Ideally, one representative will come from the Graduate College. The Steering Committee will elect the Chair of the Committee from among the five voting members. The Chair shall serve a two-year term. Reappointment to additional terms is possible. The Steering Committee shall review the qualifications of the faculty for membership and direction of comprehensive exams and make recommendations for appointment to the Dean of the Graduate College and the Dean of the Dodge Family College of Arts and Sciences.

II. Criteria for Ranking of Graduate Faculty Membership

- **RM1 Criteria**

For the MA in TESOL Program, RM1 Status could involve the following:

- Instructing program courses
- Serving on the MA in TESOL steering committee

Persons who may hold the RM1 Status are:

- Faculty who hold a Ph.D in Applied Linguistics, Second Language Acquisition/Studies/Pedagogy, Linguistics, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, World Languages Education, or a closely related field
- Faculty who hold a regular (tenured, tenure-track, or ranked renewable term) faculty member position at the University of Oklahoma
- Faculty who have had language-related teaching experience for a minimum of 2 years

- **RM2 Criteria**

For the MA in TESOL Program, RM2 Status could involve the following:

- Instructing program courses
- Serving on and chairing the MA in TESOL steering committee
- Chairing the non-thesis master's committees for the comprehensive exams.

Persons who hold the RM2 Status are:

- Faculty who hold a Ph.D in Applied Linguistics, Second Language Acquisition/Studies/Pedagogy, Linguistics, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, World Languages Education, or a closely related field
- Faculty who hold a regular (tenured, tenure-track, or ranked renewable term) faculty member position at the University of Oklahoma

- Faculty who have had language-related teaching experience for a minimum of 2 years.
- **RM3 and RM4 Criteria – Not Required**
 - These statuses are not required by the MA in TESOL program although there are graduate faculty teaching for the MA in TESOL program and serving on the steering committee who hold an RM 3 or RM 4 graduate faculty status.
- **Special Member (SM) Criteria**

For the MA in TESOL Program, SM Status could involve the following:

 - Instructing program courses
 - Serving on the MA in TESOL Steering Committee
 - Serving on the non-thesis master's committees for the comprehensive exams

Persons who may hold the SM Status are:

- Individuals who hold a Master's or doctoral degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages; OR a doctoral degree in a related field such as Teaching English as a Foreign/Second Language, Curriculum Design, Second Language Acquisition/Studies/Pedagogy, Applied Linguistics, World Languages Education

AND

- Possess at least 5 years of relevant teaching experience, as determined by the MA in TESOL Steering Committee

III. MA in TESOL Program's Criteria for Excellence in Graduate Teaching and Graduate Student Mentorship:

The MA in TESOL program's instructor contracts are renewed each year based on the following evidence, which specify the minimum acceptable standards of teaching and mentoring:

- **Syllabus Review:** The MA in TESOL Steering Committee examines syllabi before each course, and we often meet with instructors to debrief and discuss improvements after the conclusion of their course.
- **Course Reflection Survey Review:** The MA in TESOL Steering Committee examines the Course Reflection Surveys closely, and, where warranted, we conduct course observations and provide mentors for our faculty to follow up on issues noted in the CRSs.
- **Grade Checks:** The MA in TESOL Steering Committee checks in with each instructor about students' grades in the middle of each semester to identify any

struggling students and work with the instructor to ensure there is a support plan for the student(s)' success.

- **Collaboration Focus:** The MA in TESOL Steering Committee organizes regular meetings of the instructional faculty to discuss how course instructors can better collaborate and connect curricula.

IV. Procedures for Rescission of Graduate Faculty Appointments and Reduction in Graduate Faculty Privileges

- *Reasons for Considering Rescission or Reduction of Graduate Faculty Privileges in the MA in TESOL Program*
 - Substantiated student dissatisfaction and/or complaints as noted in the CRSs and from direct communication with the Steering Committee
 - Unwillingness to modify course content to be appropriate for student and program needs
 - Continued tardiness in communicating feedback and grades to students
 - Lack of prompt communication with the Steering Committee
 - Absenteeism in class
- *Options for Remediating Issues That Could Lead to Rescission or Reduction of Graduate Faculty Privileges in the MA in TESOL Program*
 - The Steering Committee gathers all available evidence (e.g., from the instructor, from students, from written communication, etc.), discusses, and creates a plan for remediation, if possible.
 - Either a Steering Committee member or the full Steering Committee meets with the instructor to discuss the issue(s) and communicate the Committee's expectations and/or options for the instructor to respond to.
 - The Steering Committee nominates one of its members to serve as the instructor's mentor for the purpose of helping that instructor improve the issue noted.
 - For each situation, the Steering Committee puts their expectations and options for remediating the issue in writing and sends to all relevant persons.
 - If these written expectations are not met or the given options are not responded to, we do not renew the instructor's contract with the MA in TESOL program and will recommend rescission of graduate faculty status to the Graduate College.

Appendix: Rationale for TESOL Practitioners as Program Instructors

The goal of OU's MA in TESOL program is to produce practitioners, not research-active academics. Our program prepares students to go into the field of *English language teaching* (to speakers of other languages), either here in the US or overseas. The practical and applied side of the program is its essence and could not be achieved without the experience of seasoned practitioners in the field.

When OU created the MA in TESOL program, we also included experienced practitioners to serve as co-equals on the MA in TESOL Steering Committee, and as such, evaluators of everything that happens in the program, from hiring faculty, admitting students, and evaluating student success.

Including practitioners means that the MA in TESOL program benefits directly from their expertise and experience in the fine details of the field. This is particularly essential when it comes to our internship course (taught by practitioners) and equally important when we both compose and evaluate our students' comprehensive exams.

With TESOL practitioners on our MA in TESOL Exam Committees we gain essential, pragmatic experience and can accurately assess the responses to questions related to the application of a TESOL degree. We can say with certainty that the MA in TESOL program would be weaker without the critical input from practitioners.

All our practitioners have achieved a Master's degree in TESOL, which is justified by the position of the national TESOL organization quoted below:

The position of the [national TESOL organization](https://www.tesol.org/) is that the MA in TESOL is the terminal degree as can be seen from the following summative statement - "It is TESOL's position that a Master's degree in TESOL (or related area) can be considered the terminal degree for teaching positions in English as a second, foreign, or additional language."

For the complete statement issued by the TESOL organization, see the PDF below - <https://www.tesol.org/media/areeyynr/terminaldegree.pdf>

Approved by graduate dean, March 11, 2025.