

Level I Designation Policy

Overview:

Due to the nature of enrollment at an international school, each grade level at IAS is composed of students with a diverse range of English proficiency. Subject teachers are responsible for meeting the needs of all their students, including those who may struggle with the standard curriculum due to gaps in their English language development and/or other specified individual needs.

To ensure that all students are provided challenging learning opportunities and fair assessment standards, the school has created the designation “Level I” to describe courses that are delivered at a level more basic than the standard curriculum. Students who take a Level I course are those deemed unable to complete the standard curriculum due to their current English proficiency level or other specified individual needs.

Students in grades 1-10 identified as English Language Learners (ELLs) will receive additional English language support. The aim of the ELL program is to provide Level I students with extra class hours in English, bolster their English skills at a faster pace, and eventually provide enough experience for them to be placed within the standard curriculum.

Definitions:

ELL: A student learner descriptor accepted worldwide as “English Language Learner”; language skills and acquisition designation that equates to “less than proficient” in spoken and written production with the English language; equivalent to a CEFR level range of A1.1 - B2.

ESL: English as a Second Language; used to describe the program offered at IAS in which ELs take additional classes in English in accord with their CEFR level.

CEFR: Common European Framework for Reference for languages. Designates students’ language proficiency from A.0 (beginner) to C.2 (advanced).

Level I: A course designation that coincides with a modified curriculum and assessment forms within the subject, established in accord with the needs of the student.

Level II: A course designation that equates to the standard school curriculum and assessment forms.

Procedures:

Placement exam: New students to IAS who demonstrate less than proficient English are given a placement exam at the time of enrollment. The exam is administered and assessed by the ESL Program Coordinator, in conjunction with an informal conversation with the student. Students who do not meet the minimum requirement for passing the exam are given the conditional designation of ELL.

Assessment period: During the first two weeks of school, the ESL Program Coordinator in conjunction with English language subject teachers will use lesson time to further evaluate the English proficiency of conditional ELLs. By mid-September, designations for ELL will

be confirmed. Students deemed eligible for ESL instruction at that time cannot switch out of the program during the year. Leaving the ESL program mid-year is extremely rare and would be a decision made by the ESL Program Coordinator, administration and ESL teachers.

Adjustments: At any time during the first semester, subject teachers may report evidence for a student who is best suited placement within the ELL group. The fall mid-semester reporting period and faculty meeting is an ideal time to confirm ELL and Level I designations. Responsibility for the Level 1 designation lies with the subject teacher and accord with the ESL Program Coordinator and Administration.

ESL Program:

Students designated as ELL receive additional classes in English language, ranging from 5-6 class hours per week. Within the first two weeks of school, ESL teachers further assess their students according to the CEFR model, A1.1 - B2.2, and work in consort with the ESL Program Coordinator to group the students according to their proficiency, taking into consideration the student's age and maturity. Typically, 4-7 groups will be established, ranging from beginner to upper-intermediate.

ESL class hours occur within the regular school timetable. Therefore, ELLs must be pulled from other classes within the curriculum to meet their English language needs. The priority for which subjects an ELL may be pulled from is as follows:

- The regular English classes
- The regular MFL classes (Modern Foreign Languages: PSL, French, German)
 - In order for ELLs to focus on strengthening their English language proficiency, they are exempt from these language courses.
- Elective classes in English Language Arts (i.e., Creative Writing, Creative Performance, Drama)
- Elective classes in the Humanities (where proficient spoken and written English is required; i.e. Projects, GP)
- Elective classes in the Sciences
 - Beginning with grade 7, the science curriculum consists of three classes (Chemistry, Biology and Physics). ELLs have the option to choose one science subject in which to not participate. This is to be done officially with both parent and ESL Program Coordinator approval. This is mainly designed for ELLs between the levels A1-A2. Ideally, over the years students will select the same subject. Furthermore, there is no switching once the school year has begun.

ELL students are not to be pulled from their classes within the core SMI and CAS departments.

ESL Schedule

Changes to the main schedule affects the ESL schedule. Therefore, it is necessary that adjustments be made to the ESL schedule throughout the year. All teachers and students are expected to reference it and adjust.

Level I Curriculum:

Discretion is provided subject teachers in the formation of their modified Level I curriculum. Subject teachers may use differentiation strategies, such as leveled readings, simplified response work and alternative assessment forms to meet the specific language needs of the student. The core student expectations and learning objectives for the course are adjusted to their “minimum requirement”. Students’ efforts are to be assessed in equal or higher degree than the quality of their output.

Assessment:

English: ELLs are assessed at the conclusion of each term in accord with their CEFR designation. The subject “ESL” takes the place of mainstream “English” on all reports. The ESL teachers are responsible for related assessments and comments

ELLs who have successfully passed exams at the B2.2 level may be promoted into the standard English class.

Other Subjects: Remaining subject teachers assess their ELLs at the conclusion of each term in their subject field on the school grade report at Level I. This designation means that the student was assessed based on a modified curriculum designed to meet their specific language needs (see above).

Subject teachers are asked to take a “long view” towards the learning expectations of their ELLs, understanding that it takes a number of years for language acquisition to consolidate. The school’s design is that ELLs enter a supportive environment of accelerated growth in the English proficiency, and develop the confidence necessary to acclimate within the general curriculum.

Therefore, some leniency in assessment is expected in the Elementary and Middle School stages, to allow for diligent ELLs to develop their confidence without undue pressures or negative learning experiences. However, once a student reaches High School (grade 9), subject teachers may take a firmer line on their Level I assessment.

Promotion Policy:

ELLs must pass their ESL/English and Math classes in order to be considered for promotion to the next grade. Passing results of these two courses, in consort with academic diligence demonstrated in their general studies, ensures the student to be promoted to the next grade level. Academic diligence is defined as having earned passing grades at the Level I curriculum level.