



English as an Additional Language (EAL) Policy

2026-2027

English as an Additional Language (EAL) Policy

Abbey College Cambridge

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This policy is reviewed on an annual basis

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This policy has been approved by SLT and adopted on behalf of the Governors and is addressed to all members of staff and volunteers and is available on the school's [portal](#). It is available to parents on request. It applies wherever staff or volunteers are working, including when this involves being away from the school.

Philosophy

For the vast majority of our students (only ~10% of students are native speakers), English is not their native language. As a result, ACC recognises the pivotal role that the EAL department plays in the development and success of our students both in and out of the classroom and is committed to developing and nurturing both the academic and language skills of all students in our care.

The EAL department at Abbey College is built on the following shared objectives, which we strive to achieve in all that we do:

- To ensure students have an **English language qualification** for the next stage of their education;
- To develop students' language skills to ensure they can fulfil their potential in their **A levels, IFP, GCSEs and pre-sessional courses**, including supporting subject teachers to help EAL students in their classes;
- To ensure students have the language they need to participate fully in **school and university life**, both in and out of the classroom;
- To promote **wider reading**;
- To foster a **positive attitude towards language** learning and English.

High Quality EAL Provision

The EAL department exists to ensure that high quality EAL support is available to all international students who need it. All of our EAL teachers are qualified to postgraduate diploma level in English language teaching, either DELTA or DIPTEFLA, and/or have QTS, and are highly experienced in teaching EAL and preparing international students for the challenges of studying in the UK.

In terms of quality assurance and on-going professional development, we are members of BAISIS (British Association of Independent Schools with International Students) and IATEFL (International Association for Teachers of English as a Foreign Language).

The EAL team is led by the Head of English under the guidance of the VP Academic and AP Academic.

Pre-arrival assessment

All international students for whom English is not their first language will have their English language level assessed prior to being offered a place. The school uses the online assessment test created for schools by Oxford Placement Test to aid admission.

As this test can be taken several months before they arrive in the UK, all students are also tested on arrival using appropriate testing materials for their entry point (i.e. IELTS test materials for entry into Year 12). This test data is then used to inform setting.

Process

Academic Preparation Course (APC)

ACC offers a full-time APC of either one, two or three terms and applicants who have not achieved the required level of English (IELTS 4.5 for GCSE, IELTS 5.0 for IFP and IELTS 5.5 for A-Level) are encouraged to sign up to this course. The curriculum of this course is largely EAL-focused but with regular opportunities to engage in the community, and also experience a linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative education and the wider school curriculum is also represented on the course.

The APC English syllabus is based around achieving Cambridge Assessment's B1 Preliminary for Schools and, where this is achieved, B2 First for Schools. Students follow a course-book, which provides a lexical and grammatical syllabus as well as a skills- and functions-based syllabus, and this is supplemented with a wider reading programme of graded readers and related supplementary activity.

The scheme of work for English is divided into strands for three teachers and can be effectively delivered by two or three members of staff. Where possible, students are entered for the B1 and B2 exams at the Cambridge Open Centre and receive the qualifications formally, although our internal assessments are also based on these qualifications.

IGCSE

Students joining our One- and Two-Year GCSE courses are enrolled onto either First Language iGCSE or Second Language iGCSE, depending on native language.

Students holding GCSE/IGCSE Second Language qualifications, whatever grade, will still be required to attend IELTS classes on A-Level and IFP courses.

The qualification for the course is CAIE IGCSE English as a Second Language and this qualification is the basis for all the assessments. IGCSE students follow a topic-based syllabus with grammar and lexis integrated within it. The texts and tasks used for teaching are often based around the tasks used in the exams themselves. Supplementary materials for grammar and lexis are also used and independent reading is strongly encouraged.

Topics covered on the course include key global issues such as conservation, sustainability and the environment as well as more personalised topics like friends, family, hobbies and creativity. The topics also link to the curriculum in the form of careers, the past, and science and technology.

GCSE

For our domestic students in Y9 we deliver a course of both Literature and Language designed to dovetail between their previous setting and ACC, preparing them for AQA GCSE English Literature and English Language in Y10 and Y11.

Sixth Form

EAL classes for A-Level and IFP are streamed across the two year groups so that students may be placed in a class with students of a similar level of English.

All international students whose first language is not English will be expected to attend classes in EAL. Exceptions will be made only where we are fully satisfied that the student's command of English is already of an exceptionally high standard and that s/he has a formal qualification in English at a standard that is sufficient to meet the academic entry requirements of good UK universities - i.e. 7.5 IELTS overall with at least 7.0 in each section.

Year 12

Year 12 EAL provision consists of exam preparation and academic language development, to ensure that students are well prepared for the IELTS examination.

Our "Higher" ability Y12 students will aim to sit an IELTS test by the end of the first term, with many succeeding in attaining the required level of IELTS to be removed from ongoing English classes.

Our "Mid" ability Y12 will aim to sit IELTS and be removed from classes by the end of the academic year.

Our “Low” ability Y12 will sit an IELTS test at the end of the academic year, but we fully expect to continue their English mastery, in classes, in Y13.

If students arrive with an IELTS exam which exceeds the requirements (or an equivalent exam), they may be given the option to drop EAL provision.

Year 13

The EAL programme in Year 13 this year is based on IELTS preparation of those students who have not yet secured an IELTS test result at the required level.

Support

- 1) All staff at Abbey are aware of the collective responsibility for students’ language development in addition to their primary role as subject teacher.
- 2) Whilst it is desirable for all students to speak English at all times in the classroom, we recognise, in line with current EAL research, that there may be occasions where teachers may guide students to draw on or use their first language to promote further understanding or to support students’ well-being. Use of first language without teacher permission must be treated as a behavioural issue, in line with the behaviour policy.
- 3) All teachers are encouraged to use a standardised English marking code to ensure consistency across the school in the marking of English as an additional language. A copy of this can be found in Appendix A. There is a more detailed version for Sixth Form students for use by Sixth Form EAL teachers.
- 4) A level subject teachers should ensure that their teaching and learning resources, and their classroom delivery are accessible to students of IELTS 5.5. Teaching and learning resources for Pre-sessional and GCSE should be at a level appropriate to the make-up of the class, which is likely to be lower than IELTS 5.5 and may be more mixed-level.
- 5) This collaboration between the EAL departments and the other subject departments is facilitated and led by the ‘EAL Links’ - i.e. one EAL teacher is assigned to each department. They then work with this department during EAL-focused INSET and can also attend subject meetings as an EAL representative if the focus is appropriate. This will be led and managed by the Heads of EAL.
- 6) The EAL provision includes the ‘Wider Reading Programme,’ led and managed by the EAL Department. At GCSE and pre-sessional level, students read appropriately graded readers,

sometimes as a whole class and sometimes individually; in the Sixth Form, students are advised which books to read for their level of English.

7) The EAL Department will take a lead in Staff CPD to develop staff awareness of delivering content to EAL students.

8) The EAL Department will provide extra-curricular activities to support the language development of our students and also provide guidance on which activities to attend for a particular language need.

Appendix A: Correction Code (Basic Version)

SP	Spelling	<i>They were having an intense <u>arquement</u>.</i>
V	Use advanced vocabulary	<i>The place looks <u>nice</u>.</i>
P	Punctuation	<i>However_ there are also many disadvantages.</i>
T	Tense	<i>Last weekend time <u>goes</u> really slowly.</i>
SV	Subject verb agreement	<i>The author suggest_ that the character is changing.</i>
Prep	Preposition	<i>It depends <u>from</u> the weather.</i>
S/PL	Singular / plural	<i><u>Our life are</u> easier nowadays.</i>
A	Article	<i>I need to find_ job.</i>
Gr	Grammar	<i>The food there <u>are</u> cheap and delicious. I like <u>listen</u> to music. Many people were <u>kill</u>.</i>
L	Linker needed	<i>Rich people could wear expensive clothes_ Poor people couldn't afford nice clothes.</i>
^	Missing word	<i>While we_ waiting for the movie to start, we chatted.</i>
(...)	Leave this out	<i>It's <u>a</u> half past six.</i>
WW	Wrong word	<i>As we flew over the mountain, we <u>observed</u> snow.</i>
WO	Word order	<i>We <u>go sometimes</u> to the cinema.</i>
✓	Good	
✓✓	Excellent	
//	New paragraph	

Appendix A: Correction Code (Sixth Form Version)

SP	Spelling
V	Use more advanced vocabulary
P	Punctuation
T	Tense
SV	Subject verb agreement
Prep	Preposition
S/PL	Singular / plural
A	Article
Gr	Grammar
L	Linker needed or incorrect
^	Missing word(s)
(...)	Leave this out
WW	Wrong word

WO	Word order
WF	Word formation
C/UC	Countable/uncountable noun
Act/Pas	Active or passive voice
coll	Collocation
?	Meaning not clear
Rep	Unnecessary repetition
Style	Wrong style/register
UN	Sounds unnatural
coh	Cohesion (e.g. referencing, relative clauses, etc.)
//	New paragraph needed
✓	Good
✓✓	Excellent