

Spanish for Specific Purposes Certificate (SSPC)

(www.uab.edu/foreignlang/ssp)

Most Frequently Asked Questions

Below you can find the answers to the most frequently asked questions about the UAB Spanish for Specific Purposes Certificate (SSPC). If you do not find all the information that you need, please contact the program director, Dr. Lourdes Sánchez-López (email: lourdes@uab.edu; Phone: 205-934-8281). Note: You can also refer to the *Spanish for Specific Purposes Certificate Student Manual* (www.uab.edu/foreignlang/ssp).

1. What is Spanish for Specific Purposes?

Spanish for Specific Purposes courses are designed for regular as well as non-traditional candidates¹. The objective of this certificate is not only to fulfil UAB students' academic needs for their future career but also to reach out to local professionals. The courses are content-, vocabulary- and culture-based. Students learn the vocabulary, language and cultural background that they will use in their professional field through extensive practice in class and beyond the classroom as well.

2. What does SSPC stand for?

SSPC stands for Spanish for Specific Purposes Certificate.

3. What is a certificate? Why is a certificate different from a major or minor? Why would I want to obtain a certificate instead of a major or minor?

The UAB Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures is offering the certificate program to be able to meet the demand for professional level Spanish in the community. Certificate credentials are common in Europe in language schools and academic institutions. These programs are successful and they offer a way to gain specific expertise without enrolling in a traditional degree program that may have general education requirements that do not apply to the learner's targeted skills.

4. Will I obtain official UAB documentation accrediting my SSPC?

Yes, upon successful completion of all the SSPC requirements, candidates will receive an official UAB Certificate of Completion, which will be recorded on their transcript.

¹ In this program we use the term "non-traditional student" with the meaning of "enrichment enrollee", as opposed to "regular student", one who is seeking a degree as well as a certificate.

5. What are the credentials of the SSPC director and instructors?

The SSPC director and all instructors are faculty members in the UAB Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures. They all have academic background, as well as years of experience in SSP.²

6. What are the requirements for the SSPC?

Regular and non-traditional students must fulfill these requirements:

- a. Have the Spanish pre-requisites specific to each SSP class (a minimum of SPA 102 or equivalent).
- b. Enter with and maintain a minimum of 2.8 GPA in Spanish courses.
- c. Submit an application (HB 407) and receive formal acceptance to the SSP program.
- d. Obtain a B grade or above in all SSP courses³.
- e. Complete a minimum of 18 credit hours of SSP classes in the UAB Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, of which a minimum of 12 credits must be at the 300 level (3 regular classes and a foreign language internship)
- f. Complete a successful SSP Internship (3-6 credit hours) as part of the credit hour requirements.
- g. Complete a successful exit interview in Spanish (Intermediate-Mid or above by ACTFL guidelines)⁴.
- h. In addition to all the requirements specified above, non-traditional students will: Have a minimum of 12 credit hours of successful college level work (grade C or above in all courses), with the following distribution (minimum): at least 6 credit hours in Area 1 (English Composition), at least 3 credit hours in Area 2 (Arts and Humanities), and at least 3 credit hours in Area 4 (Social Sciences).

7. Which SSP courses are offered in the certificate?

The UAB *Spanish for Specific Purposes Certificate* offers the following courses (for a complete description of each course, as well as the pertaining Spanish pre-requisites, please visit section 7, page 5 of the Spanish for Specific Purposes Certificate Student Manual <http://www.uab.edu/foreignlang/ssp.html>):

SPA 180-Elementary Spanish for Health Professionals
SPA 280/NUR 380-Intermediate Spanish for Health Professionals
SPA 206-Intermediate Spanish for the Professions
SPA 304-Phonetics and Phonemics
SPA 313-Advanced Business Spanish
SPA 314-Spanish Translation and Interpretation
SPA 380/NUR 481-Advanced Spanish for Health Professionals
FLL 333-Foreign Language Internship
SPA 390/490-Study Abroad

8. What time of the day are these classes offered?

SSPC classes are usually offered in the early morning, at the noon hour or late afternoon. Classes are also offered in the evening.

² The SSPC Director is Lourdes Sánchez-López, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Spanish. The current SSPC faculty is: María J. Centeno, M. A. (Spanish for Health Professionals); Belita Brooks Faki, A.B.D. (Spanish Translation and Interpretation); Sheri Spaine Long, Ph.D. (Internships); Malinda Blair O'Leary, Ph.D. (Spanish for the Professions); Lourdes Sánchez-López, Ph.D. (Business Spanish and Internships). You can read their profiles at (www.uab.edu/foreignlang). However, other Spanish faculty from the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures may teach these or other courses in the future.

³ Students will be able to retake courses for a higher grade.

⁴ American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages proficiency guidelines can be found at <http://www.actfl.org/files/public/Guidelinespeak.pdf>

9. Which SSP courses are currently offered and will be offered in the near future?

Please, visit our website periodically (<http://www.uab.edu/foreignlang/ssp>) for updates on the SSPC academic year and semester calendars.

10. How often are SSP courses offered?

Most SSP courses are offered once per academic year. Some courses may be offered more than once per academic year due to popular demand. Please, refer to the SSPC webpage for current and future course offerings (<http://www.uab.edu/foreignlang/ssp>).

11. How long will it take me to complete my certificate? How accessible is this program if I work?

The pace at which you will go through the program depends on you. You can take one class per semester or more, depending on your professional and personal obligations. Remember that the program requires a minimum of 18 credit hours (6 classes) to completion. It is important that you schedule advising sessions with the program director regularly to discuss your class options, and to ensure that you go through the program as quickly as possible.

12. What is the cost of the certificate?

Every SSP class is the equivalent to 3 credit hours. Please, refer to the UAB Office of Undergraduate Admissions in order to find out the cost of tuition per credit hour (Hill University Center, Room 260 1530 3rd Avenue South Birmingham, AL 35294-1150 Telephone: 1-800-421-8743 or (205) 934-8221; Website link to tuition chart <http://main.uab.edu/Sites/apply/accepted/41509/>). In addition, each course will require textbooks and other educational materials.

13. What is the difference between a student or a professional with a SSP certificate compared to a Spanish language student without one?

A Spanish for Specific Purposes Certificate graduate will have the linguistic and cultural background needed to function in the professional health-related and business-related worlds. In addition, all graduates will have had participated in field-related internships, which will have provided them with field experience before employment.

14. Are SSPC students fully and immediately capable to interact with Latinos/Hispanics in the workforce, or do they need an experienced mentor?

SSPC graduates will be able to function successfully in the language at the intermediate level, and they will be able to understand the cultural issues related to their professional field. If a student would like to expand his or her linguistic competence, he will be able to enroll in more advanced regular Spanish classes. In addition, all SSPC graduates will be invited to participate in our weekly SSPC conversation tables free of charge (during academic year only), so that they can maintain their level of fluency.

15. Which companies in the Birmingham area may benefit from their employees participating in this program?

Any hospital, clinic or health-care personnel that deals with Hispanic patients will benefit from this program. In addition, any company, business or law firm that currently works or would like to establish a business relationship with their Hispanic counterparts or potential clients will benefit from this program. Finally, any educator who has Latino/Hispanic students and would like to communicate with their families appropriately and understand their culture better will benefit from this program.

16. Will I receive monetary compensation while working on an SSPC internship?

No, the SSPC internship (FLL 333) is a service learning class outside the classroom setting. Students will gain professional experience while practicing their Spanish skills.

17. Can I do my internship at my place of work?

Yes, you can do your internship at your place of work, given that you fulfill the specific tasks and language component assigned by your internship instructor.

18. I am a Spanish major and must fulfill my Study Abroad requirement. Is the internship in addition to this major requirement?

Yes, FLL 333 is a requirement for the SSPC.

19. Are there other certificates similar to this one in the US? How about outside the US?

The UAB Spanish for Specific Purposes Certificate is the only one of its kind in Southeastern United States. There are similar programs at the *The University of Northern Iowa*, and in other countries such as Spain, Mexico or the United Kingdom. In addition, some examples of related certificates in higher education Institutions are:

La Salle University (Translation and Interpretation)
Mays Business School at Texas A&M University (Latin American Business)
Michigan State University (Business Spanish)
NYU (Medical Interpreting)
San Diego State University (Translation and Interpretation)
San Francisco State University (Translation and Interpretation)
Temple University (Business Spanish)
UNC Charlotte (Business Spanish)
University of California Riverside (Translation and Interpretation)
University of Wisconsin (Business Spanish)
University of Wisconsin-Madison (Spanish Studies for Business Majors)

20. Can local businesses be involved in the intern placement process?

Yes, definitely. Local businesses interested in participating as a “SSPC Intern Host” should contact program director Lourdes Sánchez-López (lourdes@uab.edu or 205-934-8281). In addition, the “SSPC Intern Host” will have the opportunity of interviewing potential interns and participating in the selection process.

21. How do I register for the Spanish for Specific Purposes Certificate?

For a step-by-step description of how to register, please refer to section 4 of the *Spanish for Specific Purposes Certificate Student Manual* (www.uab.edu/foreignlang/ssp).

22. Where can I find an application form?

You can download an application form from page 3 of the Application Process and Procedures document (www.uab.edu/foreignlang/ssp).

23. How can I make make sure that I register for the class that will fulfill my specific needs?

If you are not sure that the class for which you registered is the appropriate one for you, please make an appointment with program director Dr. Lourdes Sánchez-López (lourdes@uab.edu or 205-934-8281) to discuss your specific language needs.