



TESOL Degree and Certification Scholarships

www.uab.edu/education/esl/empower

The EMPOWER program is a federal grant which provides tuition support (pays tuition and fees) at the University of Alabama at Birmingham toward graduate degrees in education and ESOL certification for selected practicing teachers and pre-service teachers, currently teaching in partnering districts. Coursework and additional professional development in partnering schools address all aspects of multilingual learners' (MLs) educational experiences, with an emphasis on promoting authentic family engagement to advance ML learning and school readiness.

- **Eligibility:** The program is geared to teachers currently teaching (or paraprofessionals currently serving in schools). Participants need to be working in one of the partner school districts while completing the degree program.
 - **Additional eligibility requirement to be eligible for Cohort B:** One must currently hold a B-level or A-Level certification in any field (elementary, secondary, or special education), from ALSDE and eligible to take either the traditional Master's ESL certification/degree track or the EdS-TESOL certification/degree track. More information about the degree tracks is available at <https://www.uab.edu/education/esl/eds> and in the degree track informational packet posted at <https://www.uab.edu/education/esl/information-packets>. Persons who do not currently hold a B-level or A-Level certification in any field (elementary, secondary, or special education), from ALSDE, are applicable for cohort C/may apply to be considered for cohort C, during the cohort C application period, see details below.
- **Class format:** All of the classes are online, although, a few classes have a few in-person required activities. All grant participants are required to attend an in-person grant program orientation, before their first semester.
- **Course plan:** 1 or 2 classes during Fall and Spring semesters and 2-3 classes in the summers. *See Cohort B Example Course Plan, below*
- **Program length:** The MA Ed takes 6 semesters/2 years (Spring, Summer, Fall, Spring, Summer, Fall) to complete. The EdS track takes 7 semesters to complete.
- **Costs and tuition support for traditional Master's in ESL:** The program usually covers tuition and fees for 8 of the 10 classes which are usually taken in the traditional MA Ed in ESL degree program track (usually the first 8 classes).
 - Participants pay for: ☐ Tuition and fees for the 2 classes not covered by the grant
 - ☐ Books for all classes
 - ☐ Other fees such as an internship fee and a graduation fee. Fees range from \$50-100
- **Costs and tuition support for Educational Specialist in TESOL:** The program usually covers tuition and fees for 8 of the 12 classes which are usually taken in the Educational Specialist in TESOL degree program track (usually the first 8 classes).
 - Participants pay for: ☐ Tuition and fees for the 4 classes not covered by the grant
 - ☐ Books for all classes
 - ☐ Other fees such as an internship fee and a graduation fee. Fees range from \$50-100.
- **Cohort C only: Costs and tuition support for Alternative Master's (AMP) in ESL track:** The program usually covers tuition and fees for the classes which are usually taken in the Alternative Master's (AMP) in ESL degree program track. *More information will be available during the cohort C application period. Cohort C only*
- **Testing:** UAB School of Education no longer requires the GRE or MAT exams for application/acceptance into the MA/EdS ESL degree programs; therefore, it is *not necessary* to take the GRE or MAT. *Information regarding tests related to the Alternative Master's Program degree track will be added during the cohort C application period.*

Cohorts

There are 3 cohorts of grant-participants (all cohorts begin in the Spring Semester, which starts in January):

- Cohort A has already been selected and began in January 2023.
- Cohort B begins in January 2024. Cohort B has seats open for persons who will be taking either the traditional Master's in ESL or the Educational Specialist in TESOL degree track. Completed applications are due by September 18, 2023 (night).
- Cohort C begins in January 2025. Expression of interest deadline is May 1, 2024.

Due to the large number of interested participants and limited grant funding, not all applicants will be accepted.

Degree Tracks

Thinking about pursuing a graduate degree in ESL? Read this article: <https://www.uab.edu/reporter/know-more/programs-curricula/item/9622-ask-yourself-these-5-questions-before-choosing-an-esl-master-s-program>

All EMPOWER participants must meet the requirements for their respective degree. To determine which degree program/track fits you, please visit:

- Master's in ESL (Traditional Track): <https://www.uab.edu/education/esl/maed-esl>
- Alternative Master's Program (Alternative Track): <https://www.uab.edu/education/esl/maed-esl>
- Educational Specialist (EdS) in TESOL: <https://www.uab.edu/education/esl/eds>

It is important for participants to adhere to the course path with their cohort. Information and advising packets can be found here: <https://www.uab.edu/education/esl/information-packets>

If after reading all information on all the webpages listed above, if you have unanswered questions regarding the ESL degree programs/tracks, please direct these questions to Dr. Josephine Prado at jprado@uab.edu.

Grant-Partner School Districts

These are the districts that are a part of the EMPOWER program:

- Alabaster City Schools
- Birmingham City Schools
- Jefferson County Schools
- Pelham City Schools
- Shelby County Schools
- Tarrant City Schools

Moving between two districts: It is allowed to move between grant-partner school districts during the grant period, as long as each school you serve in is in one of the grant-partner school districts.

No current contract: If a person does not currently have a contract in a grant-partner school district, you may email an expression of interest for cohort C (*see details below*).

Cohort B Information

Cohort B Application period: June 1 – September 18, 2023

Cohort B only has seats for persons pursuing the following two degree tracks:

- Master's in ESL (Traditional Track)
- Educational Specialist (EdS) in TESOL

Persons pursuing the Alternative Master's Program (Alternative Track) are *not eligible* for Cohort B but may later apply for Cohort C, during the cohort C application period (see details on pages 3-4).

Eligibility for Cohort B: Applicants MUST be employed as a teacher or paraprofessional by a public school that is in one of the EMPOWER program's "partner school districts" (see list above) during the 2023-24 school year.

Cohort B (traditional Master's and EdS) Example Course Plan

This Course Plan is an example only and is subject to change.

SEMESTER	COURSE NUMBER	COURSE NAME	TUITION PAID BY GRANT:	TUITION SELF-PAID BY PARTICIPANT
Spring 2024	EESL 610	Second Language Acquisition	X	
Summer 2024	EESL 612	Curriculum, Programs, Policies	X	
	EESL 613	Teaching ESL in a Multicultural Society	X	
	EESL 615	Grammar and Linguistics for ESL Teachers	X	
Fall 2024	EESL 630	Methods and Materials for Teaching ESL	X	
Spring 2025	EESL 660	Effective Teaching and Learning	X	
	EESL 670	Engaging Families and Communities	X	
Summer 2025	EESL 640	Teaching ESL through Reading and Writing	X	
	EESL 690	Internship in ESL		X
Fall 2025	EESL 625	Phonology for ESL Teachers		X
	EESL 600	Capstone Project		N/A
ADDITIONAL COURSES REQUIRED IF PURSUING AN EdS IN TESOL				
Usually taken after courses listed above	EPR 594	Intro to Educational Research Design		X
	EPR 596	Intro to Qualitative Research Methods		X

Applying for Cohort B

Deadline: September 18, 2023 (night). Late-submitted applications will not be reviewed or considered.

Review the EMPOWER grant application form and prepare to apply: Read all information on this document before completing an application form. It is recommended that you review the online application form and work on preparing your application before the deadline. You cannot save your work and submit the form later – the form must be completed all at one time. You may only submit one application for Cohort B – the form will lock you out if you have already submitted/ you click on “submit”. To review an empty application form, click on the link, scroll through the form, then close the page – do not click on “submit.” If you accidentally submit an incomplete application and try but cannot access the form to complete the remaining parts, please email Aileen McElwain at aileenmc@uab.edu, before September 19th 9am.

If after reading all information on the EMPOWER webpage and on this document, and reviewing the application form, if you have an unanswered question, then contact Aileen McElwain at aileenmc@uab.edu.

Be prepared to upload your transcript(s): A section of the EMPOWER grant application form requires the applicant to upload a copy of the transcripts from their most recent degree. An unofficial transcript copy is acceptable for the application form.

EMPOWER Grant Cohort B Application Form: https://uab.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9Ky57yRtnNs5Fc2 read above before accessing the form

Cohort C Information

Application period: May 2024

Cohort C is the *final* cohort and has seats for persons pursuing the following three degree tracks:

- Master's in ESL (Traditional Track)
- Alternative Master's Program (Alternative Track)
- Educational Specialist (EdS) in TESOL

Eligibility for Cohort C: Persons employed as a teacher or paraprofessional by a public school in one of the EMPOWER program's grant-partner school districts during the 2024-2025 school year, will receive priority for selection for Cohort C.

Persons on Alternative Master's Program Track ONLY: If you would be earning your master's degree through the AMP degree track, then, it is OK for you to begin the AMP in ESL degree program in UAB's School of Education (take classes) before the EMPOWER Cohort C grant program start date of January 2025. You *would* still be eligible to apply for/participate in EMPOWER Cohort C even if you have already been taking classes at UAB on the AMP degree track. If you were selected/accepted into the grant Cohort C and were accepted to UAB graduate school, then, starting in January 2025, the grant would pay for any classes that you take from January 2025 on that will be included in the Cohort C AMP course list, up to 8 courses, during the life of the grant/Cohort C. It is recommended that you discuss this with EMPOWER Program Manager, Aileen McElwain aileenmc@uab.edu regarding details. NOT APPLICABLE TO PERSONS WHO WOULD BE ON THE TRADITIONAL MASTERS OR EDS TRACKS

Cohort C Estimated Timeline

May 1, 2024	Deadline for expressions of interest for cohort C (see below)
May 2024	A call for EMPOWER grant applications will be emailed to all persons who submitted an expression of interest in cohort C
mid-June 2024 (date TBD)	Deadline to submit an EMPOWER cohort C application
Early-July 2024 (date TBD)	All persons who completed an EMPOWER cohort C application will be informed if they were selected for the program.
Mid-July through August 5, 2024	Alternative Master's Program degree track only: Selectees on the AMP degree track must take the ESOL subject Praxis test* until receiving a passing score, which must be submitted by August 15, 2024. Note: it takes 2 weeks after taking the exam, to receive your score report. Passing this exam is a requirement for admission into UAB Graduate School for the AMP ESL degree program.
October-early Nov 2024	Selectees (1) Complete/submit an application to the UAB Graduate School, indicating which degree track selected, for ESL and (2) Attend an EMPOWER grant program orientation (in-person) and (3) Complete an EMPOWER Program Commitment Letter. One must be accepted to UAB Graduate School/ the graduate ESL program in order to participate in cohort C.
November 15, 2024	UAB School of Education's Graduate School/graduate program applications deadline
January 2025	Begin classes

*The GRE and/or MAT is no longer required for admittance into UAB's ESL MA Ed or EdS degree programs. To be accepted to the Alternative Master's ESL program, persons need to pass the ESOL Praxis test, before submitting their application to UAB Graduate School (a passing score report is required to be submitted with your graduate school/program application).

Expressions of Interest for Cohort C

If you are interested in applying for EMPOWER Cohort C, please email a statement of interest and answer the following questions, before May 1, 2024 to Program Manager: Aileen McElwain at aileenmc@uab.edu:

1. What degree(s) do you currently have? (*be specific, BS, MS, MA and the degree program(s)*)
2. Do you currently have a teaching certificate? If yes, exactly what type of do you have and what state? (*Examples: Class AA; Class A; Class B certification; Emergency... from what state?*)
3. How many (estimated) English Language Learners (ELLs) will likely be in the classroom(s) that you teach or serve in as a para-professional, in 2024-2025; in later school years?

4. What school (district and school) will you be serving in, in 2024-2025 school year? In what role? Will you be employed directly by the school district?
Note: Persons employed as a teacher or paraprofessional by a public school in one of the EMPOWER program's "partner" school districts during the 2024-2025 school year will receive priority for selection for Cohort C.
5. If you are a Pre-K teacher, do you teach in an Alabama First Class Pre-K program?
6. What grade(s) do you foresee yourself teaching in the future? PreK/Early elem./Late elem./Middle/High
7. **Please include a phone number and an email address that you will be checking during May 2024 and over summer 2024.**