

Frequently Asked Questions
Graduate program in SLED-TESOL

IMPORTANT: Please read the graduate catalogue closely and familiarize yourself with the academic policies found at the link below:

<https://catalog.cortland.edu/content.php?catoid=50&navoid=6648>

Part 1. Additional certification

1. What can I do with a master's in TESOL? What does it mean for the program to be called Non-certification?

Second language education in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) will prepare you to teach English language learners in virtually any setting (K-12, private schools, community colleges, 4-year colleges and universities, local community centers, abroad, etc.).

The program is called "non-certification" because it does not automatically lead to New York State K-12 certification, which public K-12 schools require. If you already have New York State certification in any teaching area, you will be eligible to apply for additional certification in TESOL on your own. Please contact the office of Career Services at SUNY Cortland (<https://www2.cortland.edu/offices/career-services/>) for more information regarding this additional certificate. You may also find more information following the New York State Education Department link below:

[NYSED Certification Requirements tool](#)

If you are not a New York State-certified teacher, our program will provide you with all the necessary skills for you to teach in any setting other than the public school system. If you have the goal of teaching in the public K-12 setting and do not have New York State initial teaching certification, our program is not for you. To accomplish this goal, you should look for a MAT (Master of Arts in Teaching) or MST (Master of Science in Teaching).

2. What is an additional certification in TESOL? What are the requirements? Will I be prepared to apply for this additional certificate once I finish my master's degree?

If you already have a NY State teaching certification in any area, you are eligible to apply for an additional certification in TESOL. Below are the requirements from NYSED:

[Pathway: Additional Classroom Teaching Certificate\(Must hold a valid certificate\)](#)

- [Holds a Valid Professional or Permanent Classroom Teaching Certificate](#)

- [Content Core - Major or Equivalent in One of the Liberal Arts & Sciences - 30 S.H.](#)
- [College Coursework - **Linguistics**](#)
- [College Coursework - **English Grammar**](#)
- [College Coursework - Language other than English \(including American Sign Language\) - 12 S.H.](#)
- [Pedagogical Core](#)
- [College Coursework - Teaching **Literacy** Skills Methods - 3 S.H.](#)
- [College Coursework - **Methods** of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages - 6 S.H.](#)
- [Content Specialty Test \(CST\) - ESOL or Safety Net ESOL](#)
- [Additional Education - Masters Degree](#)
- [Graduate Coursework **Content Core** - English to Speakers of Other Languages - 12 S.H.](#)
- [Paid, full-time Classroom Teaching experience - 3 Yrs](#)
- [Mentored Experience - 1 Yrs](#)
- [Workshop - Child Abuse Identification](#)
- [Workshop - School Violence Intervention and Prevention](#)
- [Workshop - Dignity For All Students Act](#)
- [Fingerprint Clearance](#)

IMPORTANT: Requirements for additional certifications are subject to change at any time. Please check the [Search NYSED Certification Requirements tool](#) for current requirements. The information above is meant to provide general guidance for pursuing additional certificates. NYSED has full discretion for approving any and all coursework for additional certificates.

To obtain an additional certification, the minimum grade requirement for ICC 620, ICC 624, ICC 621, and ICC 521 is B-. See link below for more information:

<https://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/ag.html>

3. How do I apply for an additional certification in TESOL? Do I have to apply after I obtain my master's degree?

You do not have to wait until you finish your master's degree to apply for this additional certification in TESOL.

If you have your initial certification, you already know what is involved in the process. The process of getting your additional certification is very similar with the main difference being you need to gather and submit all the documents (proofs of coursework, workshops, initial certification, test scores, etc.) to NYSED. Please go to "certification from start to finish" at

<https://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/certificate/certprocess.html> for more information. This means you need to request and keep all the transcripts and

other records yourself. For assistance, please contact Career Services Office at SUNY Cortland (<https://www2.cortland.edu/offices/career-services/>).

4. What is the foreign language requirement? How do I fulfill that requirement? Do I have to take foreign language courses at SUNY Cortland?

After you finish the TESOL master's program, you will have all the coursework required for this additional certificate. However, there is one exception: foreign language requirement. NYSED requires a total of 12 credit hours of college-level foreign language coursework **for additional certification in TESOL**. This is NOT a requirement for the graduate TESOL program. These courses DO NOT need to be taken in the same language. You may combine languages and levels (Spanish 102, French 101, Italian 101, Chinese 201, etc.); ASL is also accepted by NY State Ed. These undergraduate courses DO NOT have to be taken at Cortland; they can be taken in community colleges, or other institutions. Cortland offers Spanish courses (101 through 202) online during the summer and winter semesters.

For example, if you have taken SPA 101 and 102 for your undergraduate degree, you still need to take two more foreign language courses (or 6 more credit hours) at the college level (undergraduate level). These two courses can be in any language at any level except for SPA 101 or 102.

IMPORTANT:

You need to order the transcripts of foreign language courses from the institution where you take them and submit the transcript(s) to NYS Ed **when you apply for additional certification in TESOL**, so we recommend you keep it (them) in a folder that is easily identifiable.

Part 2. Registration

5. What do I do once I'm accepted?

You'll be notified by the Graduate Admissions office with an acceptance letter in the mail. The letter will provide detailed information on how to pay your deposit in order to secure a spot in the program. Once you pay the deposit, you will receive another letter from admissions with information on how to set up an account and get ready to register for classes.

6. How do I register for classes?

Register at: <https://www2.cortland.edu/offices/srrs/students/next-generation-registration> (No PINs needed.)

For registration assistance: contact Advisement and Transition (607-753-4726) or the Registrar's Office (607-753-4702).

NOTE: Advisement and Transition encourages all students to use *Schedule Builder* to create their schedule and register for classes. Helpful tutorial videos for *Schedule Builder* include:

Schedule Builder: The Perfect Schedule

<https://cortland.video.yuja.com/v/sb-build-schedule>

Schedule Builder: How to Register

<https://cortland.video.yuja.com/v/sb-register>

How To: Make Schedule Changes in Schedule Builder

<https://cortland.video.yuja.com/v/sb-schedule-changes>

7. How is the program structured? How many credits are there? What are the required courses?

In order to finish the program, you need to finish 8 required courses (24 credits), 2 electives (6 credits), and 1 course titled comprehensive exams (1 credit). More information on each course can be found here:

https://catalog.cortland.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=44&poid=7823

The 8 required TESOL courses are currently offered either in the Fall and/or Spring semester depending on demand. They are in general NOT offered during the summer or winter semesters.

NOTES: 1. ALL courses are online and are taught **A**synchronously. There are NO field placement hours in the program.

2. Our courses have **NO** prerequisites; you can take them in any order you like.

3. A description of each of the courses listed below along with their student learning outcomes can be found at

https://catalog.cortland.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=44&poid=7823&returnto=5827

The **eight required courses** are:

ICC 523 Integrating Technology in the Second Language Classroom
ICC 621 Linguistics for Second Language Educators
ICCC 623 Second Language Acquisition: Theory and Research
ESL 503 Second Language Testing and Assessment
ESL 522 Theory and Practice of Bilingual/Multilingual Education
ICC 521 Grammar for Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
ICC 620 Materials and Techniques for Teachers of English as a Second Language through content areas
ICC 624 Methods of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

You may choose **two electives** from the following options:

ICC 529 Special Topics (may be repeated provided the topic changes)
ESL 529 Special Topics (may be repeated provided the topic changes)
ICC 629 Special Topics (may be repeated provided the topic changes)
ESL 504 Literacy in the Elementary School
EDU 671 Issues in Foundations of Education
FSA 510 Teaching the Special Education Learner in the General Education Classroom
LIT 549 Literacy in the Secondary School
Other elective choices must be approved by the department.

8. How many courses and what courses should I register for each semester?

That's entirely up to you. Most students handle two courses per semester well. It all depends on your current time availability and personal time management skills.

PLEASE take into account your commitments (teaching full vs. part time, **first-year teaching**, subbing, family responsibilities, etc.) and the fact that graduate courses are **MUCH MORE** demanding than undergraduate courses. We **DO NOT RECOMMEND** that you take more than two courses, especially in your first semester.

9. What is DegreeWorks? How do I use it?

A short video that reviews *Degree Works* for graduate students is available at:

<https://video.cortland.edu/Watch/DW-for-grad-students>

KEEP TRACK OF THE COURSES you have already taken or need to take: Check your *Degree Works*: <https://cor.degreeworks.suny.edu/corDashboard/> .

a-Make sure to “refresh” the data (click the curved arrows right below **Worksheets** at the upper left-hand corner of the page).

b-Also click the green **PROCESS** button, making sure the *In-progress* and *Preregistered* classes boxes are checked.

10. How do I find out what courses are offered in a specific semester?

To find out what courses are offered in a certain semester, please go to:

<https://banner.cortland.edu/StudentRegistrationSsb/ssb/term/termSelection?mode=search>

Fall semester course schedule is usually available around mid-March and Spring semester course schedule is available mid-October.

11. Other questions on registration.

- a. Do I need a PIN? No.
- b. Do I need permission? No.
- c. Are there prerequisites? No.
- d. What to do when I encounter problems in registration?
Contact registrar's or the Helpdesk for technical issues.
If you need special permission, contact your advisor or the Modern Languages department office at 607-753-4303.
- e. How can I get into a class that is closed?
We do not overenroll a class once it is full. Please wait until the next time the class is offered.

Part 3. Graduation-related questions

12. What is the Comprehensive Exam (ICC 685) and when do I take it?

ICC 685 - Comprehensive Examination, is a SUNY Cortland Modern Languages Department exam you take at the end of your program as a culminating experience. ICC 685 is taken when all courses (including the electives) have been completed and a GPA of 3.0 or above is maintained. The content of the exam focuses on the core and specialized courses; the electives are not included. The Comprehensive Exam must be passed in order to earn the M.S.Ed. This is separate from the NYS Content Specialty Test required for the additional certification (see question 2).

Even though you register for ICC 685 as you register for all the other courses, this is not a course that will be taught throughout the semester. ICC 685 is offered either in the Summer (in late May or early June) or Winter (in December or January). You will receive study guides and instructions on how the exam is carried out on Brightspace once the online course is ready (in late March/early April for Summer, and in late October/early November for Winter).

Please email the graduate advisor before you register since the course requires special permission. Register for it like you register for a course once you receive the permission.

13. What do I do if I fail the comprehensive exam?

If you fail ICC 685, you must retake it the next time it is offered. According to the graduate catalogue, **ICC 685 shall not be taken more than three times.**

14. How do I apply for degree conferral?

Apply during your last semester of coursework at

<https://www2.cortland.edu/offices/srrs/students/degree-conferral-and-certification/>

15. What is the GPA requirement?

Please refer to the graduate student handbook for GPA requirement:

<https://catalog.cortland.edu/content.php?catoid=50&navoid=6648>

From the graduate handbook on GPA requirement:

The master's degree or certificate of advanced study is awarded to students who have an overall 3.0 grade point average. **To enroll in the thesis project or comprehensive exam**, a student must have achieved a 3.0 grade point average.

All students enrolled in a master's degree or certificate of advanced study program are required to maintain a minimum 2.8 cumulative grade point average in graduate work. Students whose cumulative grade point average remains below 2.8 for two consecutive terms of enrollment may be dismissed from the university. At the end of the first semester during which the student's grade point average falls below 2.8, they are notified that they are in danger of dismissal. The associate dean (from the school of the student's major) will make notification of dismissal in writing. No grade below C- will be counted toward a master's degree or a certificate of advanced study.

16. Is there fieldwork required in the TESOL program?

No fieldwork is required in the program.

17. How do I transfer credits from another institution?

If you plan on taking a course at another institution and have it transferred in, please consult your advisor before doing so to make sure the course is transferrable.

If you have taken a course at a different institution, please send the course syllabus to your advisor for evaluation.

Once your advisor approves the transfer, please fill out the permission/request to transfer graduate credit form below:

<https://www2.cortland.edu/offices/advisement-and-transition/transfer-credit-services/grad%20transfer%20credit.dot>, attach your transcript from the other institution and get the appropriate signatures.

From the graduate handbook on transfer:

Graduate students may transfer up to **six** credit hours of graduate work from another regionally accredited institution. This approval will be dependent upon when the course was taken and the applicability toward the student's program.

Transfer credit completed prior to enrollment at SUNY Cortland, or after matriculation at SUNY Cortland, must be approved by the student's graduate coordinator or advisor and Associate Dean. Once enrolled in a SUNY Cortland program, students interested in taking courses elsewhere and transferring those to their SUNY Cortland degree are advised to seek permission prior to enrolling in such coursework.

Only courses with a **grade of B** (3.0) or better will be transferrable. Transfer credit may be applied to the fulfillment of degree requirements, but is not computed in the grade point average.

18. Questions regarding financial aid/tuition/payment/reimbursement

TUITION/PAYMENT/REIMBURSEMENT? Contact the Student Accounts Office:

<https://www2.cortland.edu/cost-aid/student-accounts-office/>

FINANCIAL AID? Contact our Financial Aid Office:

<https://www2.cortland.edu/cost-aid/financial-aid/>

19. Errors in your Degree Works?

Courses are not showing? Advisor's name is not showing or is not correct? Only your undergraduate Cortland program is showing? Contact the Registrar's Office (607-753-4702).

NOTE: Before contacting the Registrar's office, make sure you have clicked the *refresh* arrows and the green **PROCESS** button. Sometimes, this is all it takes for *Degree Works* to get updated.

20. What if I need to take a leave of absence?

If, for whatever reason, you need to skip a semester, you must register for a zero-credit "course" to remain 'active' as a graduate TESOL student: **GRD 500**. If you have to skip one more semester, you must register for this "course" again. See below for forms needed for a leave of absence:

<https://www2.cortland.edu/offices/srrs/students/forms-and-documents#graduate-study-forms>

21. What do I do if I want to withdraw from a class? What do I do if I want to withdraw from the program?

All the necessary forms and policies can be found below:

<https://www2.cortland.edu/offices/srrs/students/forms-and-documents#graduate-study-forms>