



ESL Pathway Programs

Expanded Enrollment Opportunities for International Students with Lower English Levels

Brian Schueler
Research Associate

Olivia Rios
Research Manager

Daniel Gordon
Senior Research Manager

LEGAL CAVEAT

EAB Global, Inc. ("EAB") has made efforts to verify the accuracy of the information it provides to members. This report relies on data obtained from many sources, however, and EAB cannot guarantee the accuracy of the information provided or any analysis based thereon. In addition, neither EAB nor any of its affiliates (each, an "EAB Organization") is in the business of giving legal, accounting, or other professional advice, and its reports should not be construed as professional advice. In particular, members should not rely on any legal commentary in this report as a basis for action, or assume that any tactics described herein would be permitted by applicable law or appropriate for a given member's situation. Members are advised to consult with appropriate professionals concerning legal, tax, or accounting issues, before implementing any of these tactics. No EAB Organization or any of its respective officers, directors, employees, or agents shall be liable for any claims, liabilities, or expenses relating to (a) any errors or omissions in this report, whether caused by any EAB organization, or any of their respective employees or agents, or sources or other third parties, (b) any recommendation by any EAB Organization, or (c) failure of member and its employees and agents to abide by the terms set forth herein.

EAB is a registered trademark of EAB Global, Inc. in the United States and other countries. Members are not permitted to use these trademarks, or any other trademark, product name, service name, trade name, and logo of any EAB Organization without prior written consent of EAB. Other trademarks, product names, service names, trade names, and logos used within these pages are the property of their respective holders. Use of other company trademarks, product names, service names, trade names, and logos or images of the same does not necessarily constitute (a) an endorsement by such company of an EAB Organization and its products and services, or (b) an endorsement of the company or its products or services by an EAB Organization. No EAB Organization is affiliated with any such company.

IMPORTANT: Please read the following.

EAB has prepared this report for the exclusive use of its members. Each member acknowledges and agrees that this report and the information contained herein (collectively, the "Report") are confidential and proprietary to EAB. By accepting delivery of this Report, each member agrees to abide by the terms as stated herein, including the following:

1. All right, title, and interest in and to this Report is owned by an EAB Organization. Except as stated herein, no right, license, permission, or interest of any kind in this Report is intended to be given, transferred to, or acquired by a member. Each member is authorized to use this Report only to the extent expressly authorized herein.
2. Each member shall not sell, license, republish, distribute, or post online or otherwise this Report, in part or in whole. Each member shall not disseminate or permit the use of, and shall take reasonable precautions to prevent such dissemination or use of, this Report by (a) any of its employees and agents (except as stated below), or (b) any third party.
3. Each member may make this Report available solely to those of its employees and agents who (a) are registered for the workshop or membership program of which this Report is a part, (b) require access to this Report in order to learn from the information described herein, and (c) agree not to disclose this Report to other employees or agents or any third party. Each member shall use, and shall ensure that its employees and agents use, this Report for its internal use only. Each member may make a limited number of copies, solely as adequate for use by its employees and agents in accordance with the terms herein.
4. Each member shall not remove from this Report any confidential markings, copyright notices, and/or other similar indicia herein.
5. Each member is responsible for any breach of its obligations as stated herein by any of its employees or agents.
6. If a member is unwilling to abide by any of the foregoing obligations, then such member shall promptly return this Report and all copies thereof to EAB.

Table of Contents

1) Executive Overview	4
Key Observations	4
2) Program Design	5
Program Models	5
3) Student Demographics	9
Market Size.....	9
Additional Demographic Considerations	12
4) Curriculum	14
English Integration	14
Program Results	16
5) Program Operations	18
Tuition, Fees, and Housing	18
Administration and Organization	19
Weighing Private Providers	22
6) Research Methodology	23
Project Challenge	23
Project Sources	23
Research Parameters	24
Appendix A.	25

1) Executive Overview

Key Observations

Multiple models exist for ESL pathway programs at profiled institutions.

Profiled programs offer first-year experience, pre-college and English-intensive ESL pathway programs. Variations in curriculum, preparatory goals, program lengths, and administrative structures differentiate these three models. The ESL pathway program at **Institution C** combines an ESL pathway with the existing undergraduate curriculum to create a first-year experience program. The pre-college pathway program at **Institution E** combines a limited academic curriculum with ESL courses in a pre-college program model. ESL pathway programs at **Institution B** focus entirely on English instruction to provide an English-intensive ESL pathway program. These programs do not incorporate academic curricular elements.

A majority of prospective international students can benefit from ESL pathway programs, but many may lack academic or financial qualifications.

All profiled institutions use a score of 6.5 or higher on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test as a minimum threshold for direct entrance into undergraduate programs. Most students who take the IELTS fail to achieve these scores. In 2015, 69 percent scored below a 6.5 and would require additional English assistance to enroll in profiled institutions. However, many of these students may lack the financial resources or academic performance to qualify for conditional admission.

Integrating academic courses into ESL pathway program curricula speeds degree completion but limits English improvements. The first-year experience programs at **Institution C** and **Institution A** integrate English instruction into existing first-year academic curriculum. Students complete the first year of an undergraduate degree through these programs. One shortcoming of academic integration is a reduction of direct English instruction. Administrators at **Institution E** found that when the University's pre-college ESL pathway program substituted core ESL instruction for academic, for-credit, and tutorial courses, students did not maintain the same improvements in English proficiency.

Roughly 75 to 80 percent of participating students complete profiled ESL pathway programs and continue undergraduate studies. Contacts at **Institution C** estimate that 75 percent of students in the first-year experience ESL pathway program matriculate. Contacts note that students who fail to matriculate do so for a variety of reasons. Between eight and twelve percent fail academically, with others returning to their home countries, or transferring to other institutions.

First-year experience ESL pathway programs operate similarly to academic colleges, while programs more closely focused on English instruction operate within English language institutes. The director of the International English Center at **Institution D** directly oversees the institution's English-intensive pathway program. The center operates within the University's Division of Continuing Studies, a unit led by a college dean who reports to the provost. Profiled first-year experience ESL pathway programs feature administrative structures that differ from pre-college and English-intensive ESL pathway programs. The pathway program at **Institution C** operates as an independent academic college which reports directly to the provost.

2) Program Design

Program Models

Profiled ESL Pathway Programs Help Conditionally Admitted Students Meet English Language Requirements

Profiled English as a second language (ESL) pathway programs assist students with offers of conditional admission into university undergraduate programs. These students meet or exceed academic requirements for enrollment but have English skills that fall below minimum requirements. ESL pathway programs allow institutions of higher education to enroll these students and raise their English abilities to the level necessary for academic success.

Common Characteristics of Profiled ESL Pathway Programs



Conditionally Admitted

- All profiled programs serve conditionally admitted students.
- Participants meet all academic requirements for undergraduate admission with the exception of minimum English language requirements.



Undergraduate Focused

- All profiled programs serve international, undergraduate degree-seeking students.
- Students who successfully complete ESL pathway programs begin or continue undergraduate studies.



Internally Operated

- Although many ESL pathway programs operate through partnerships with third-party companies, all institutions profiled in this report own and operate the featured programs.

Multiple Models Exist for ESL Pathway Programs at Profiled Institutions

Profiled programs offer first-year experience, pre-college and English-intensive ESL pathway programs. Variations in curriculum, preparatory goals, program lengths, and administrative structures differentiate these three models. Some programs weave ESL pathways into the existing undergraduate curriculum. ESL pathway programs at **Institution C** serve as one example of the first-year experience model. Other programs also combine English language support with academic curricula but do not replace a student's first year of undergraduate studies. An example of this pre-college model of ESL pathway programs is the program at **Institution E**. A third model of ESL pathway programs focuses entirely on English instruction and does not incorporate academic curriculum into the program. The ESL pathway program at **Institution D** aligns most closely with this English-intensive program model. Intensive English instruction provided in this program helps students quickly improve their English skills to meet the University's minimum entry requirements.

Three ESL Pathway Program Models

First-Year Experience Program Models



- Students who complete first-year experience ESL pathway programs join the undergraduate population as second-year students.
- First-year experience programs include a full first-year academic curriculum. Students receive specialty course instruction, academic assistance, and ESL courses designed for English learners.
- Programs span two semesters, and may include summer courses.

Pre-College Program Models



- Students who complete pre-college ESL pathway programs join the undergraduate population as first-year students.
- Pre-college programs primarily offer ESL instruction with some integrated academic content.
- Programs last two semesters.

English-Intensive Program Models



- Students who complete English-intensive ESL pathway programs join the undergraduate population as first-year students.
- English-intensive programs focus exclusively on ESL instruction and do not incorporate academic content into the curricula.
- Programs lengths are shorter than other models. The shortest profiled programs last only two months. Program length may vary according to student English levels.

First-Year Experience ESL Pathway Programs Integrate English Support with Existing Academic Curriculum

First-year experience pathway programs provide a full freshman year experience tailored to help incoming students improve their English skills while simultaneously fulfilling freshman year academic requirements. The ESL pathway program at **Institution C** and the diploma program at **Institution A** serve as two examples of this program model. Students who graduate from these programs continue their undergraduate studies as second-year students.

First-Year Experience ESL Pathway Programs

Institution	Program Lengths	Academic Integration	Matriculation	Minimum IELTS Score
Institution A	8 months (2 semesters)	Yes, full time load – for credit	Enter university as second-year student	6.0
Institution C	11 months	Yes, full time load – for credit	Enter university as second-year student	5.0

Pre-College ESL Pathway Programs Combine English Support and Academic Experiences to Prepare Students for Undergraduate Studies

Institution A and **Institution E** offer ESL pathway programs that combine academic coursework with ESL instruction to prepare students to enter college as first-year students. The foundation program at Institution A includes a full academic course load at a pre-college level with English language assistance integrated into courses, but serves students at lower English levels than those enrolled in the diploma program. Courses in the foundation program do not count as credit towards a university degree at Institution A. The pre-college pathway program at Institution E provides students with fewer academic courses and more English-specific instruction compared to the foundation program at Institution A. Each semester, students in the pre-college program at Institution E take only one academic course that does count as college credit. Both programs serve students conditionally admitted to undergraduate degree programs. Students automatically begin their first-year of undergraduate studies after successfully completing these programs.

Pre-College ESL Pathway Programs

Institution	Program Lengths	Academic Integration	Matriculation	Minimum IELTS Score
Institution A	8 months (2 semesters)	Yes, high school senior curriculum - no credit	Enter university as first-year student	5.5
Institution E	8 months (2 semesters)	Yes, one academic class per semester - for credit	Enter university as first-year student	5.0

English-Intensive ESL Pathway Programs Concentrate on English Instruction for Rapid English Improvement

Institution E and **Institution D** offer ESL pathway programs that combine an intensive English experience with matriculation support. These programs focus exclusively on English language training and do not include academic courses. The English-intensive program at **Institution D** offers eight levels for students of varying English competency. Students receive level-specific instruction for an eight-week session, advancing to higher levels each session. As a result, program lengths vary depending on a student's English level. Participants also receive access to academic advisors to explore college majors and prepare for undergraduate courses.

The English-intensive program at **Institution E** is a short, but intensive program. Students take 30 credit hours of English courses per week to quickly improve their English skills. The program offers sessions in the summer, fall, and winter that prepare students for undergraduate enrollment in semesters starting in September, January, or May. Students who complete these programs enroll in the University as first-year students.

English-Intensive ESL Pathway Programs

Institution	Program Lengths	Academic Integration	Matriculation	Minimum IELTS Score
Institution B	10, 15, or 20 weeks	No – Exclusively ESL courses	Enter university as first-year student	5.5
Institution D	8 weeks to 12 months (multiple 8-week sessions as needed) ¹	No – Exclusively ESL courses	Enter university as first-year student	Any
Institution E	2 months	No – Exclusively ESL courses	Enter university as first-year student	6.0

Usage of Program Model Categories in this Report

This report will refer to profiled ESL pathway programs based upon these three categories to distinguish the differences and unique traits of each model.

1) The program offers multiple 8 week sessions. Students take these sessions in sequence until they have reached the minimum proficiency level necessary for their program. This usually takes between six months and one year.

3) Student Demographics

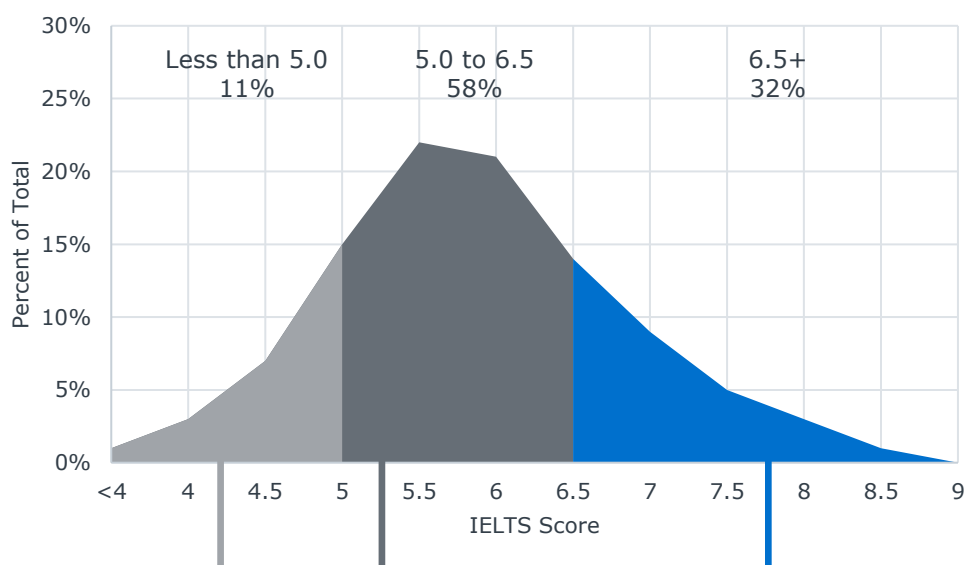
Market Size

Most Prospective International Students Could Benefit from ESL Pathway Programs

Contacts at **Institution A** emphasize that for students to succeed academically, their English level should be no lower than a score of 6.5 on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). All profiled institutions use a score of 6.5 or higher on the IELTS test as a minimum threshold for direct entrance into undergraduate programs. A score of 6.5 on the IELTS roughly approximates a score of between 79 and 93 on the TOEFL iBT.² Additionally, Institution A, **Institution B**, **Institution D** and **Institution E** set higher minimum English requirements for entrance into select academic programs. Institution E requires a minimum IELTS score of 7.0 for entrance into nursing programs and a minimum IELTS score of 7.5 for entrance into the College of Engineering.

Most students who take the IELTS fail to achieve these scores. Data from the 2015 cohort of IELTS tests shows that 69 percent of students who took the test for entrance into higher education programs three months or longer in length, scored below a 6.5. Only 18 percent achieved a score of 7.0 or greater.

IELTS 2015 Test Score Distribution: All Seeking to Enter Long-Term Higher Education Courses (3 Months or Longer)³



Unlikely to Succeed

Students who score below a 5.0 on the IELTS likely require more than one year of English instruction to consider higher education in English.

Pathway Program Prospects

The majority of prospective students (i.e., 58 percent) scored below a 6.5, but above a 5.0 on the IELTS. This group of prospective students could benefit from an ESL pathway program.

Eligible for Direct Admission

Profiled universities require students to achieve a score of at least 6.5 on the IELTS to qualify for admission. However only 32 percent of prospective students taking the IELTS in 2015 met or exceeded this standard.

2) Test of English as a Foreign Language, Internet Based Test Accessed Jan. 18, 2017. (ETS 2010, Pg. 13) https://www.ets.org/s/toefl/pdf/linking_toefl_ibt_scores_to_ielts_scores.pdf

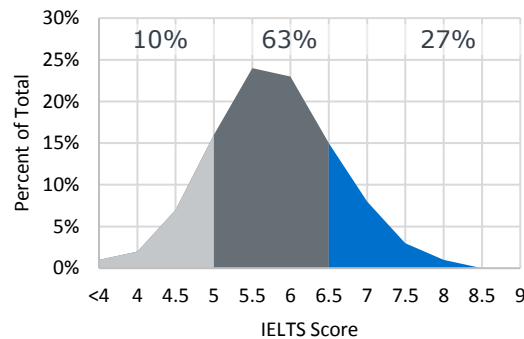
3) IELTS "Demographic Data 2015" Accessed Jan. 8, 2017. <https://www.ielts.org/en-us/teaching-and-research/demographic-data>

The Majority of Prospective Students in China, India, South Korea, and Saudi Arabia Require Additional English Assistance

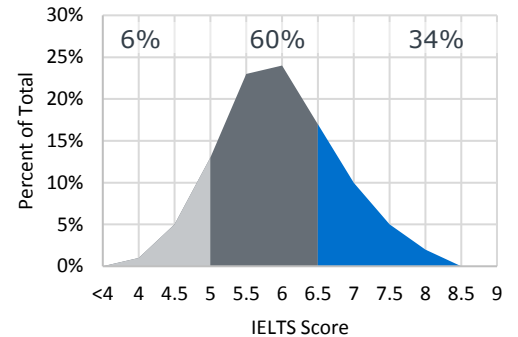
China, India, South Korea, and Saudi Arabia represent the top four countries of origin for international students who study in the United States. These four countries account for just over 60 percent of all international students in the US.⁴ Data from the 2015 cohort of IELTS tests shows that 55 to 63 percent of prospective students who took the IELTS test for entrance into higher education programs three months or longer in length fall into the ideal score range for ESL pathway programs.

IELTS 2015 Test Score Distribution: Country Comparisons

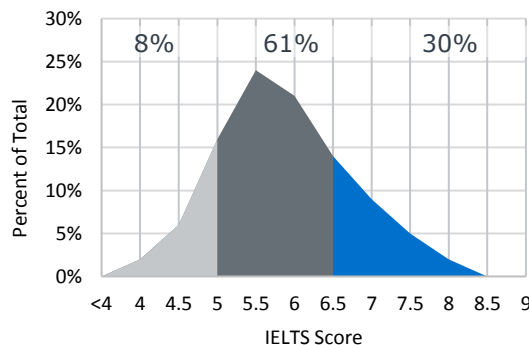
China (32.5% of U.S. Intl. Students)



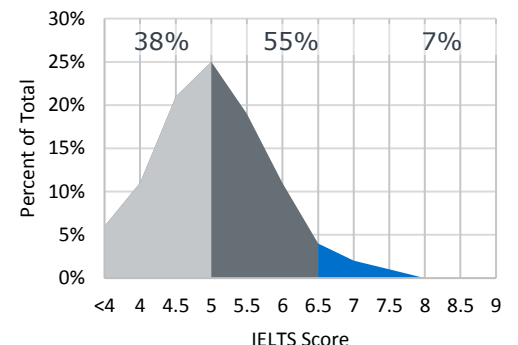
South Korea (5.4% of U.S. Intl. Students)



India (17.3% of U.S. Intl. Students)



Saudi Arabia (4.9% of U.S. Intl. Students)



Students Interested in STEM May Benefit from ESL Pathway Programs

Administrators at **Institution C** established an ESL pathway program to enroll greater numbers of international students interested in math and science. Institution C began actively recruiting international students in 1996. However, international enrollments did not impact all disciplines equally. International students recruited to the University disproportionately enrolled in the University's Faculty of Arts. Administrators identified English language competency as one reason that programs in science and math enrolled fewer international students than expected.

In 2014, leaders at the University established a pathway college with an investment of \$4 million (CAD) to serve international students who lacked the necessary English skills to enter regular academic programs directly.

4) Institute of International Education Inc. "Leading Places of Origin" Accessed Jan. 18, 2017. <https://www.iie.org/Research-and-Insights/Open-Doors/Data/International-Students/Places-of-Origin>

Most Profiled ESL Pathway Programs Enroll Students Whose IELTS Scores' Need Improvement of No More than 1.5 Points

While all profiled institutions require students to attain a 6.5 on the IELTS for direct entry, pathway programs hold varying minimum requirements. Contacts at **Institution C** set a minimum IELTS score of 5.0 for entry into the first-year experience ESL pathway program. Program leaders recently considered reducing their program's minimum threshold to an IELTS score of 4.5. Administrators speculate that significant demand exists among students with IELTS scores below 5.0. However, administrators rejected this proposal due to concerns about student quality and the amount of support that students would need to succeed. Contacts at Institution C and **Institution A** caution that the English progress and learning necessary to improve from scores lower than 5.0 on the IELTS to a score of 6.5 would be difficult to accomplish in one year.

Minimum IELTS Scores for Entry into Profiled ESL Pathway Programs

Institution	Program Model	Min. IELTS Score	Program Lengths	English Component
Institution A	First-Year Experience	6.0	2 semesters (8 months)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English instruction and support integrated into existing first-year undergraduate curriculum
Institution E	English-Intensive	6.0	2 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exclusively English instruction Thirty hours per week of English instruction
Institution A	Pre-College	5.5	2 semesters (8 months)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English instruction integrated into a pre-college academic curriculum
Institution B	English-Intensive	5.5	10, 15, or 20 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exclusively English instruction
Institution C	First-Year Experience	5.0	11 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English instruction and support in addition to the existing first-year undergraduate curriculum (30 credits) 12 credits of ESL instruction
Institution E	Pre-College	5.0	2 semesters (8 months)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primarily ESL instruction Students enroll in one regular undergraduate course per semester
Institution D	English-Intensive	Any	8 weeks to 12 months (multiple 8-week sessions as needed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exclusively English instruction

Modest Improvement

Major Improvement

All ESL pathway programs seek to improve English levels to the equivalent of a 6.5 score on the IELTS

Additional Demographic Considerations

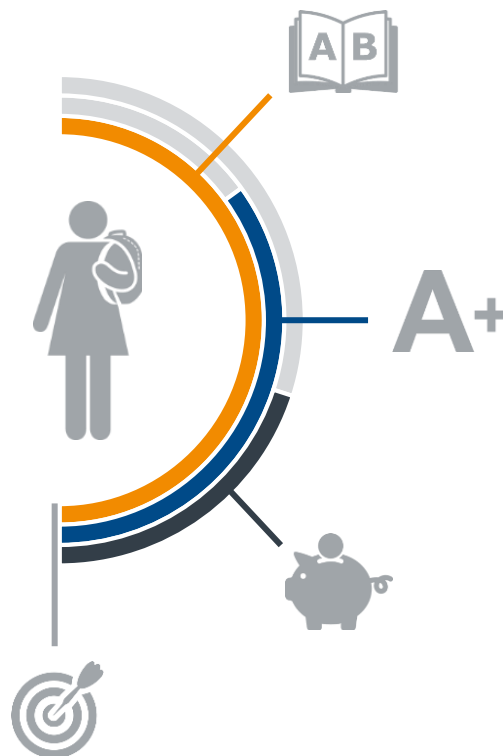
Demand for ESL Pathway Programs Exists but is Lower than English Test Distributions Indicate

Before the ESL pathway program at **Institution C** opened, recruiters projected high demand for the program. Initial projections predicted 300 enrollments in the first year of the program, 600 by the second, and 1,000 students by the third year. These early projections failed to materialize fully, but the program remains in demand. Almost 400 students enrolled in the program last year (the fourth year of the program).

Contacts explain that the market for ESL pathway programs is narrower than initially imagined. Like most international students, prospect students for ESL pathway programs must have ample financial resources to pay for the cost of these programs and an undergraduate degree. Prospects must also exhibit promising academic performance but exhibit deficiencies in their English level.

In many cases, students from wealthy families who display promising academic performance also have high English scores. As a result, though the majority of prospective international students receive IELTS scores acceptable for ESL pathway programs, many in this group are academically or financially ineligible.

Desirable Traits for ESL Pathway Program Prospects



Target Prospects Should Possess All Three Traits

English Scores Below Minimum Requirements

Most aspiring international students lack the necessary English skills to succeed in higher education courses taught in English.

Promising Academic Performance

Many students who struggle with English often struggle with other coursework as well. As a result, many students who fall below minimum English language requirements may also lack the academic experience necessary for higher education.

Ample Financial Resources

Academically qualified students who only lack English skills will also need access to ample financial resources to fund their studies and pay for the pathway program.

Ensure that ESL Pathway Program Prospects Exhibit Strong Academic Performance

Contacts at **Institution C** note that ESL pathway programs provide a useful method to enroll academically strong students with English deficiencies. However, they caution against relaxing academic requirements to increase student numbers. Contacts explain that where institutions have lowered academic enrollment requirements for ESL pathway programs, students have struggled to succeed in subsequent academic coursework.

Academic Safeguards at Institution E

5%

To ensure that students applying for the pre-college pathway program at **Institution E** exhibit

academic promise despite shortcomings in English skill, administrators require that applicant GPAs be five percent higher than the minimum required for regular undergraduate admission.

Administrators at the University vet students' academic transcripts to ensure that English language level is the only issue preventing enrollees from beginning undergraduate studies directly.

Leaders at **Institution E** also emphasize that ESL pathway programs should maintain high academic standards for incoming students.

Administrators require students to exhibit better grades in areas beyond English compared to other incoming students as a safeguard on academic quality.

Chinese Students Comprise the Vast Majority of ESL Pathway Program Enrollments

Contacts at **Institution C** estimate that between 60 – 70 percent of participants in the pathway program originate from China. Program leaders at **Institution A** estimate that across Australia, students from mainland China account for over 75 percent of pathway program enrollments. Chinese students comprise nearly 90 percent of all program enrollments at **Institution E**, the highest estimate across all profiled programs.

Students from South Korea previously represented a larger proportion of enrollments in pathway programs at Institution A. However this demographic has shrunk in recent years. Contacts at Institution A explain that falling populations and an abundance of local universities in South Korea have contributed to this decline.

Domestic-International Students in Canada

Many international students attend high school in Canada prior to entering higher education. Canadian institutions of higher education waive English testing requirements for these students if they have studied for four or more years, but many students do not meet this benchmark. Roughly half of students enrolling in pathway programs at **Institution E** previously studied in a Canadian high school for one to three years.

4) Curriculum

English Integration

First-Year Experience ESL Pathway Programs Integrate English Training into Academic Curricula

The first-year experience programs at **Institution A** and **Institution C**, and the pre-college ESL pathway program at Institution A offer students an academic curriculum with English instruction designed around the existing first-year academic curriculum.

Academic courses in the first-year experience program at Institution A address the same topics as those provided to all students. However, instructors teach these courses differently to focus on language improvement. Courses include sections that teach new vocabulary words related to the curriculum. Instructors also alter assessments to provide more opportunities to assess student English competencies.

In addition to integrating English into existing curricula, students at Institution C take an additional 12 credits of core English courses to supplement the English instruction provided indirectly through academic coursework.

Appendix A. provides additional detail regarding the curriculum structure for the ESL pathway program at **Institution C**.

English-Intensive ESL Pathway Programs Do Not Integrate English Training and Academic Curriculum

The English-intensive ESL pathway programs at **Institution B**, **Institution C**, and **Institution E** do not provide college credit courses in academic disciplines. Instead, these programs focus solely on improving the English skills of participants.

Although these pathway programs do not offer academic coursework, participating students may still engage with academic programs and opportunities in other ways. ESL pathway program administrators at **Institution D** invite academic advisors from all of the University's colleges to present to program participants once a semester. Each advisor discusses elements of the academic programs they advise and provides information to help students manage their transition into full-time undergraduate studies.

Program administrators also offer immigration and English advisors (i.e., academic advisors specific to the ESL program) to help students manage their immigration status and to monitor student improvement and progress in English.

Hybrid Models of Academic Integration Offer Intensive English Training with Limited Academic Elements

Students in the pre-college ESL pathway program at **Institution E** receive a total of 20 hours of instruction per week. These hours include ESL courses, one for-credit university course, and additional language and academic support. Core ESL courses comprise the vast majority of all credit hours for participating students.

Example Semester Curriculum for Students in the Pre-College ESL Pathway Program at *Institution E*

ESL Core Curriculum – 12 Hours per Week



Core ESL courses represent the majority of instruction in the pre-college ESL pathway program. These courses focus specifically on improving student English skills.

Macroeconomics – 3 Hours per Week



ESL pathway program participants participate in academic courses according to their chosen major or area of interest. These courses are not specific to the ESL pathway program, and most enrollees are undergraduates from the general student population.

English for Specific Purposes – 4 Hours per Week



Instructors provide English assistance and guidance specific to the for-credit courses students take. This instruction does not teach the material, but help students apply English skills to the curriculum. Courses meet twice a week for two hours each.

Course Tutorial – 1 Hour per Week



Program leaders organize course tutorials to provide an opportunity to review lecture materials. The ESL pathway program provides these tutorials specifically for program participants. These sessions meet once a week and are typically led by a teaching assistant.

Institution E's pre-college ESL pathway program provides five hours per week of language and content assistance to assist students in for-credit courses.

Academically Integrated ESL Pathway Programs Appeal to Chinese Students but May Dissuade Others

Contacts at **Institution D** note that students from China value ESL pathway programs that include for-credit academic courses. Many of these students are eager to get a head start in taking credit-bearing courses. Parents appreciate that students can make progress towards earning a degree in these programs.

Administrators note that academically integrated ESL pathway programs may actually dissuade students from Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern countries. In contrast to students from China, many students from Saudi Arabia and the Middle East who study abroad receive financial assistance and support from government scholarship

programs for international higher education. The Saudi Arabian Culture Mission and other major government scholarship providers prefer that students do not take for-credit courses and ESL training concurrently. Contacts speculate that this aversion stems from concern that students may perform poorly in academic courses while they improve their English skills. These poor grades could damage student academic records and standing. These different perceptions regarding academic integration into ESL instruction likely influence the demographic makeup of students who enroll in profiled ESL pathway programs.

Greater Academic Integration Reduces Student Improvements in English

While academic integration allows students to progress toward degree completion, reducing time spent in core ESL courses limits student improvements in English. Administrators at **Institution E** found that when the University's pre-college ESL pathway program substituted core ESL instruction for academic, for-credit, and tutorial courses, students did not maintain the same improvements in their English levels.

Administrators at **Institution A** also highlight that the shortcoming of integrating academic coursework into their ESL pathway programs is a reduction in direct English instruction. Contacts explain that based on their experience, the most important factor contributing to language improvement is the number of hours of direct English instruction. Contacts estimate that the progression from an IELTS 5.5 to an IELTS 6.5 requires a minimum of around 200 hours of direct English instruction. In Institution A's first-year experience and pre-college ESL pathway programs, students receive between 10 – 12 hours of English instruction per week, compared to as many as 30 hours per week in Institution E's English-intensive program. As a result, the English skills of students in the first-year experience program at Institution A improve more slowly compared to students in English-intensive ESL pathway programs.

Program Results

Roughly 75 to 80 Percent of Program Participants Matriculate into Undergraduate Courses from Most Profiled Programs

Program administrators at **Institution C**, **Institution D**, and **Institution E** estimate that around 75 to 80 percent of program participants successfully complete their programs and begin undergraduate coursework as planned. More than 90 percent of students at Institution A matriculate after completing the ESL pathway program. Smaller expected improvements in English levels (i.e. 0.5 IELTS score for the first-year experience program) may explain some of this difference.

Contacts at Institution C note that on average, only about eight to twelve percent of students enrolled in the University's first-year experience ESL pathway program fail their courses. Some students pass their academic courses, but do not continue studies at the University. These students transfer to other institutions of higher education or return to their home countries. Because changing academic majors at Institution C can be difficult, some students may also transfer and then re-enroll in the University to switch academic disciplines.

Estimated Matriculation Rates for ESL Pathway Program Participants

Institution	Program Model	Minimum IELTS Score	Program Lengths	Estimated Matriculation Rates
Institution A	First-Year Experience	6.0	2 semesters (8 months)	92%*
Institution A	Pre-College	5.5	2 semesters (8 months)	92%*
Institution C	First-Year Experience	5.0	11 months	75%
Institution D	English-Intensive	Any	8 weeks to 12 months (multiple 8-week sessions as needed)	75% - 80%
Institution E	English-Intensive	6.0	2 months	75-80%*
Institution E	Pre-College	5.0	2 semesters (8 months)	75-80%*
*Matriculation rate estimates provided as aggregated figures for all pathway programs at profiled institution				

ESL Pathway Program Graduates Exhibit Undergraduate Academic Performance Similar to Other Students

Administrators at **Institution C** track the performance of the first-year experience ESL pathway program with surveys and by evaluating the academic success of program graduates. They found that students who complete the program and matriculate into undergraduate coursework on average receive grades comparable to other international and domestic students.

5) Program Operations

Tuition, Fees, and Housing

Most Profiled ESL Pathway Programs Charge Tuition and Fees Similar to International Undergraduates

The first-year experience ESL pathway program at **Institution C** advertises tuition and fees of \$48,007 CAD (\$38,406 USD) for the program in the 2018/19 academic year in the arts degree path. Students in the engineering, management, and science degree paths pay slightly higher tuition (i.e., \$50,189 CAD; \$40,127 USD). Per-credit costs for the program are similar to those levied on direct-entry international undergraduate students, but because the program is longer, the overall price is higher.

ESL pathway programs at **Institution A** and **Institution E** also charge rates similar to those incurred by international undergraduates on a per-credit basis. However, because program models and lengths vary, the overall price of these programs range from \$7,356 USD for the English-intensive program at Institution E to \$21,600 for the first-year experience program at Institution A.

The English-intensive programs at **Institution D** and **Institution B** charge tuition and fees lower than those assessed on international students in undergraduate courses. The advertised annual cost of tuition and fees for international undergraduates at the institution totaled \$37,984 for 2017-2018. The total cost for five sessions of the ESL pathway program (i.e. two each in the fall and spring and one in the summer) totals just \$16,595 through fall 2019.

Figures for tuition and fees do not include room and board expenses.

Advertised Tuition and Fees for Profiled ESL Pathway Programs

Institution	Program Model	Program Lengths	Approximate Program Tuition and Fees*
Institution C	First-Year Experience	11 months	\$48,000 - \$50,200 CAD (\$38,400 - \$40,100 USD)
Institution A	First-Year Experience	2 semesters (8 months)	\$27,000 AUD (\$21,600 USD)
Institution A	Pre-College	2 semesters (8 months)	\$23,000 AUD (\$18,400 USD)
Institution E	Pre-College	2 semesters (8 months)	\$22,400 CAD (\$18,000USD)
Institution D	English-Intensive	8 weeks to 12 months (multiple 8-week sessions as needed)	\$3,300 - \$16,600 USD
Institution E	English-Intensive	2 months	\$9,200 CAD (\$7,400 USD)
Institution B	English-Intensive	10, 15, or 20 weeks	\$5,200-\$10,400 AUD (\$4,160 - 8,320 USD)

*Currency conversions conducted according to market exchange rates on January 18, 2018

Residential Life Experiences Help Forge Student Connections

Administrators require students enrolled in the English-intensive ESL pathway program at **Institution D** to live in campus housing. Contacts note that existing research on campus residential experiences demonstrates that students who live on campus have a greater sense of community and greater connection with the campus. This increased connection with campus and peers helps students in pathway programs prepare to matriculate into full undergraduate programs and acclimate to the institutional culture.

Contacts at **Institution C** highlight that requiring students to live in campus housing encourages participants to continue practicing English outside of the classroom. Dispersing international students throughout undergraduate residence halls with domestic students helps participants become more accustomed to using English in their day-to-day lives. Contacts note that in the absence of residential requirements, program participants tend to cluster into groups that share the same nationality or first language.

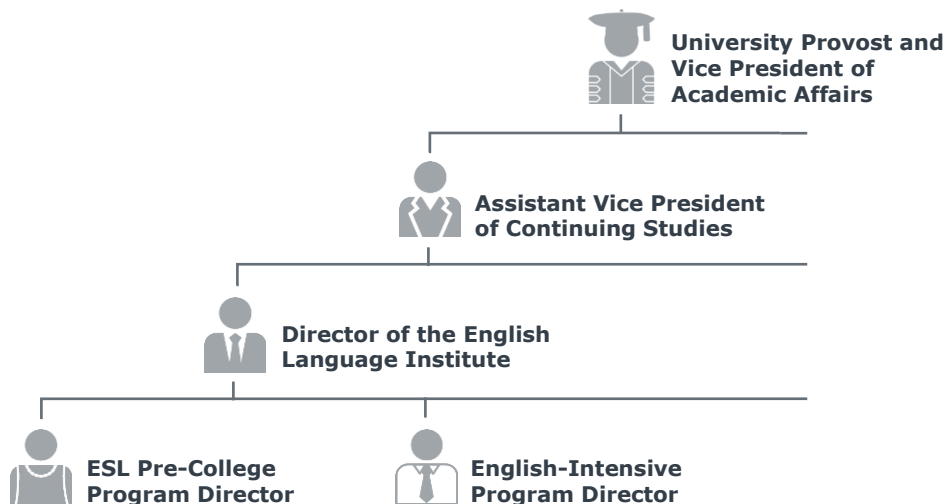
Not all profiled institutions require students to live in campus residence facilities. **Institution A**, **Institution B**, and **Institution E** do not require students participating in ESL pathway programs to live in campus residence halls.

Administration and Organization

Pre-College and English-Intensive ESL Pathway Programs Operate Within English Language Institutes

The pre-college and English-intensive ESL pathway programs at **Institution E** operate out of the English Language Institute, a department of the institution's School of Continuing Studies. Program directors report to the director of the English Language Institute, who reports to the Assistant Vice President of Continuing Studies. The Assistant Vice President serves as the leader of the School of Continuing Studies and reports to the provost.

Governance Structures for ESL Pathway Programs at *Institution E*



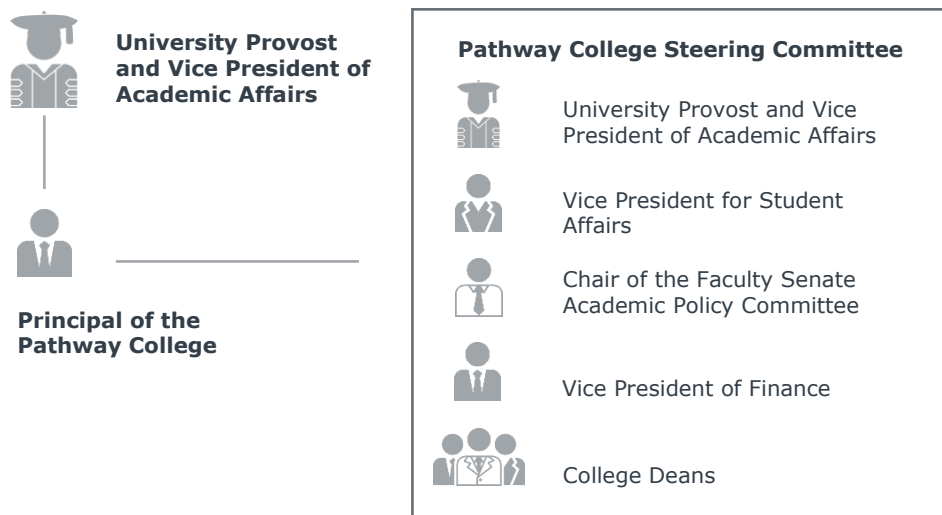
The director of the ESL Center at **Institution C** directly oversees the institution’s English-intensive pathway program. The center operates within the University’s division of continuing studies, a unit led by a college dean who reports to the provost.

Institution B’s English-intensive pathway program operates as part of the University’s Department of English Language Programs. One director oversees both the English Language Programs and the University’s Foundation Program. This director reports to the head of Institution B’s pathway college. The pathway college’s relationship with Institution B is unique. The head of the college holds the title of CEO, and reports only to the pathway college’s governing board, not to senior university leadership. The University does retain some influence and ownership over the pathway college with senior university leaders holding three seats on the college’s seven-seat board.

Senior Administrators Manage First-Year Experience ESL Pathway Programs Similar to Academic Colleges

Profiled first-year experience ESL pathway programs feature administrative structures that differ from pre-college or English-intensive ESL pathway programs. The pathway program at **Institution C** operates as an independent academic college which reports directly to the provost. In addition to the direct oversight provided by the university provost, the program receives advice and guidance from a steering committee that includes the provost, vice president for students, vice president of finance, the chair of the faculty senate’s academic policy committee, and deans from the colleges that offer courses in the program. Contacts report that this structure provides effective oversight for program operations and academics.

Governance Structures for *Institution C’s* First-Year Experience ESL Pathway Program



The ESL pathway program at **Institution A** began as a partnership with a private corporation. This partnership ended in 2014 when the University decided not to renew their contract with the company. University leaders replaced the ESL pathway program offered by the corporation with an internally operated program. To facilitate this transition, Institution A combined the new pathway program with the University’s English Language Institute to form a pathway college. The college reports to the university’s deputy vice-chancellor academic (i.e., chief academic officer).

Profiled ESL Pathway Program Organization Structures Split Academic and Operational Management

Leaders of ESL pathway programs at **Institution A**, **Institution C**, and **Institution D** oversee two deputy directors. One deputy director holds responsibility for program academics and faculty. This individual coordinates faculty members and oversees academic curricula. The other deputy director manages operational elements of the programs. At Institution C, this individual oversees staff who coordinate student development activities, program marketing, records and registration, and website development.

Leaders of ESL pathway programs at Institution A and Institution D also oversee other ESL programs and services. The head of Institution A's pathway college oversees a pre-college ESL pathway program, a first-year experience ESL pathway program, and the University's English Language Institute. The head of the ESL center at Institution D oversees all ESL programs, including the English-intensive pathway program.

Organization of the English-Intensive Pathway Program at *Institution D*



The ESL pathway program at **Institution E** utilizes a different organizational structure. The University's English Language Institute oversees many different programs, one of which is the ESL pathway program. The ESL pathway program's director reports to one of two deputy directors for the institute, who report to the institute's director. As a result, the program has a dedicated director, but falls lower on the institutional chain of command.

Profiled Administrators Operate ESL Pathway Programs Internally to Retain Greater Control of Program Quality

Administrators at **Institution C** chose to establish an ESL pathway program as an internal project partially due to concerns about program quality. Contacts explain that because the program offered a full first-year academic curriculum, college leadership needed faculty buy-in to ensure the program succeeded. The additional control and oversight that internal operation offered helped reassure faculty and other stakeholders concerned about quality.

Leaders at one institution strongly cautioned against partnering with private ESL pathway program operators due to a lack of quality controls used in recruiting by those organizations and their affiliates. Contacts note that some private providers contract with thousands of recruitment agents who present themselves as affiliates of the institution. This wide network of agents with access to the institutional brand led program leaders to grow concerned with how these individuals portrayed their institution and brand. Instead of utilizing private organizations with thousands of recruiters, the institution now contracts directly with a smaller number of trusted agents to meet international enrollment targets.

Investment in Internally Operated ESL Pathway Programs Presents Limited Risks

Institution C's investment to open an ESL pathway program represented a large expenditure. As part of the initiative, the institution built a new dormitory, additional classroom space, and hired instructors. However, administrators explain that the overall cost if the program failed would be small. The University could easily repurpose the new residence hall and classroom space to serve existing students. Additionally, because the instructors would teach high demand, first-year courses, they could also serve any student populations with little transition.

Institutions do not need to construct new residence halls and classrooms to establish an ESL pathway program. Some institutions may already have resources on campus necessary to establish a pilot program. These might include non-pathway ESL courses, academic courses with unfilled seats, and underutilized academic support. By leveraging existing capacity, the initial investment needed to pilot an ESL pathway program may be minimal.

6) Research Methodology

- Project Challenge** Leadership at a member institution approached the Forum with the following questions:
- What campus or extension academic programs do students in ESL pathway programs at contact institutions enter after completion of the pathway program? How do pathway programs facilitate these transitions?
 - What is the length of ESL pathway programs at contact institutions?
 - What curricular/extra-curricular elements (e.g., courses, activities, group events) do ESL pathway programs at contact institutions incorporate?
 - What department or office oversees and supports ESL pathway programs at contact institutions?
 - What are the most frequent origin countries for international students participating in ESL pathway programs at contacted institutions?
 - What trends do program leaders identify regarding program enrollment?
 - What motivations and goals do program leaders identify in students participating in their ESL pathway programs?
 - How do students interested in ESL pathway programs differ from students interested in intensive ESL programs?
 - How do ESL pathway programs market to potential participants?
 - What resources and staff do contact institutions commit to their ESL pathway programs?
 - What fees and tuition do students pay for ESL pathway programs at contact institutions?
 - What services do these tuition and fee dollars provide in addition to instruction (e.g., accommodations, meals, off-campus experiences)?
 - How many students in ESL pathway programs at contact institutions successfully transition into regular academic programs?
 - What challenges have program administrators at contact institutions encountered when developing and administering ESL pathway programs?

- Project Sources** The Forum consulted the following sources for this report:
- EAB's internal and online research libraries (eab.com)
 - National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (<http://nces.ed.gov/>)
 - ETS "Linking TOEFL iBT™ Scores to IELTS® Scores." Accessed January 18, 2018. (https://www.ets.org/s/toefl/pdf/linking_toefl_ibt_scores_to_ielts_scores.pdf)
 - IELTS "Demographic Data 2015." Accessed January 18, 2018. (<https://www.ielts.org/en-us/teaching-and-research/demographic-data>)
 - Institute of International Education, Inc. "2017 Open Doors Report ." Accessed January 18, 2018. <https://www.iie.org/Research-and-Insights/Open-Doors/Data/International-Students/Places-of-Origin>.

Research Parameters

The Forum interviewed ESL pathway program administrators at the following institutions

A Guide to Institutions Profiled in this Brief

Institution	Location	Approximate Institutional Enrollment (Undergraduate/Total)	Percent International	University Classification
Institution A	Australia	10,600 / 32,100	23.6%	Public Research University
Institution B	Australia	18,000 / 50,400	26%	Public Research University
Institution C	Canada	10,500 / 52,500	22.9%	Public Research University
Institution D	Western United States	5,600 / 27,600	9.4%	Public Research University
Institution E	Canada	5,900 / 46,400	11.9%	Public Research University

Appendix A.

Example Curriculum for the First Year Experience Program at *Institution C*

Course Schedule for ESL Pathway Participants Pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Applied Science

	Term 1	Term 2	Summer Term
Pathway Specific Programming	APSC 160 (3) APSC 172 (3) APSC 182 (3) LLED 200 (3)	APSC 173 (3) APSC 178 (4) APSC 183 (3) LLED 201 (3)	APSC 176 (3) APSC 179 (3) APSC 180 (3)
Required for all	PATH 150 (3) PATH 140 (4)	PATH 150 (3) PATH 140 (4)	PATH 151 (3)
PATH refers to courses offered through the pathway college			

Course Descriptions

APSC 160 (3)

Introduction to Computation in Engineering Design

Analysis and simulation, laboratory data acquisition and processing, measurement interfaces, engineering tools, computer systems organization, programming languages.

APSC 176 (3)

Engineering Communication

Purpose, audience, content, format, and tone are studied, as are team-based report writings and presentations. Community Service Learning projects are integrated into existing assignments.

APSC 172 (3)

Engineering Analysis I

Functions, limits, differentiation, applications of derivatives, integration, applications of definite integrals.

APSC 173 (3)

Engineering Analysis II

Integrals and transcendental functions, techniques of integration, applications of integration, polar coordinates, infinite sequences and series, vectors and the geometry of space, and partial derivatives.

APSC 178 (4)

Electricity, Magnetism, and Waves

Coulomb's law, electric field, Gauss' law, electric potential, conductors, capacitance, electric currents, resistance, DC circuits, magnetic fields and forces, sources of magnetic fields, electromagnetic induction, mechanical waves, electromagnetic waves, light propagation, geometrical optics.

Course Descriptions (continued)

APSC 179 (3)

Linear Algebra for Engineers

Systems of linear equations, Gaussian elimination, engineering application of linear algebra, matrix operations, special matrices, determinants, vector space, orthogonality, eigenvalues and eigenvectors, linear transformation.

APSC 180 (3)

Statics

Force vectors, Cartesian coordinate system, free body diagram, dot and cross products, forces equilibrium of particles, force and moment equilibrium of rigid bodies, analysis of trusses, frames and machines, friction, wedges, pulleys, and belts. Applications of linear algebra in statics.

APSC 182 (3)

Matter and Energy I

Thermometry, states of matter and phase change, ideal and real gases, 1st law of thermodynamics, 2nd law of thermodynamics, liquids, solutions.

APSC 183 (3)

Matter and Energy II

Atomic structures and bonding, solid crystals, chemical equilibrium, reactions in gas phase and in aqueous solutions, acid-base and redox reactions, kinetics of chemical reactions, thermochemistry, electrochemistry.

LLED 200 (3)

Introduction to Writing in Academic and Professional Registers

Examination of sociolinguistic knowledge and skills that are central to the production of academic and professional texts.

LLED 201 (3)

Critical Reading and Writing in Academic and Professional Registers

In this course, the heightened awareness of effective academic writing gained in LLED 200 is applied to a small research project that students design, implement and report on. Students receive explicit, critically-framed instruction in reading and writing academic reports, and individualized feedback on the draft sections of their research paper, including a research proposal.

PATH 140 (4)

Content and Language Enrichment Tutorials

Sustained language support for linked content courses in the pathway program. Students develop strategies for self-directed learning.

PATH 150 (3)

Sustainability and Engineering Design

Topics in sustainability, including the impact of technology on the environment and society, and fundamentals of engineering design.

PATH 151 (3)

Multidisciplinary Engineering Design Project

Design project that culminates in student-led project fair.

Example Weekly Schedule

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00 AM					
8:30 AM		APSC 182		APSC 182	
9:00 AM					APSC 172
9:30 AM		LLED 200	APSC 182	LLED 200	
10:00 AM					
10:30 AM					
11:00 AM			PATH 150		
11:30 AM					
12:00 PM					
12:30 PM					
1:00 PM	PATH 140		PATH 140		PATH 140
1:30 PM					
2:00 PM	PATH 150	APSC 172		APSC 172	PATH 140 (Overview of APSC 160 Content)
2:30 PM					
3:00 PM	APSC 182				
3:30 PM					
4:00 PM			APSC 182		
4:30 PM					
5:00 PM	APSC 160				
5:30 PM					
6:00 PM					