

# Final Assessment Report

## English Language Institute (EFAS and BASE)

### February 2019

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#### **Executive Summary**

External reviewers found the non-credit programs –English for Academic Success (EFAS) and Bridge to Academic Success in English (BASE) – delivered by the English Language Institute (ELI) at Renison University College to be in very good standing.

“Overall, we conclude that this program is in very good standing, not least because it appears committed to continuous improvement. It has improved significantly in response to a previous external review and delivers high-quality, student-centered instruction that brings a significant number of international students to our region and to UW.”

A total of 8 recommendations were provided by the reviewers. These recommendations revolved around enhancing the profile of ELI and its instructors, integrating ELI with the main campus and recognizing the role of ELI in internationalization, as well as working to improve program metrics. In response, the English Language Institute created a plan outlining the specific actions proposed to address each recommendation as well as a timeline for implementation. The next cyclical review for this program is scheduled for 2024-2025.

#### **Enrollment over the past three years**

	<b>EFAS</b>	<b>BASE (incl. iBASE)</b>
2017-2018	455	194
2016-2017	518	166
2015-2016	441	103

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#### **Background**

In accordance with the University of Waterloo’s Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), this final assessment report provides a synthesis of the evaluation of the non-credit programs that pathway into UW delivered by the English Language Institute and the ELI’s response. A self-study (Volumes I, II, III) was submitted to the Associate Vice-President, Academic on December 18, 2017. The self-study (Volume I) presented the program descriptions and learning outcomes, an analytical assessment of the programs, including the data collected from a student survey,

along with the standard data package prepared by the Office of Institutional Analysis & Planning (IAP). The CVs for each faculty member with a key role in the delivery of the programs were included in Volume II of the self-study.

From Volume III, two arm's-length reviewers were selected by the Associate Vice-President, Academic: Dr. Brendon Larson, Professor and Associate Dean – Undergraduate Studies in the Faculty of Environment, and Dr. Victoria Lamont, Associate Professor in the Department of English Language and Literature.

Reviewers appraised the self-study documentation and conducted a site visit to the University on March 1, 2018. The visit included interviews with the President of Renison University College, the Director of Non-Degree Programs and Student Affairs, the Assistant Directors of ELI, instructors, program managers, staff and current students, and the Associate Vice-President, Academic. The review team also had an opportunity to tour the facilities and to meet with the librarian and student services staff.

This final assessment report is based on information extracted, in many cases verbatim, from the self-study, the external reviewers' report and the program response.

### **Program characteristics**

**English for Academic Success (EFAS)**: The EFAS program consists of three 14-week terms running in the fall, winter, and spring as well as one 6-week summer intensive program (iEFAS). EFAS meets the English language requirement for both [undergraduate](#) and [graduate](#) studies and offers conditional admission to upper year studies.

**Bridge to Academic Success in English (BASE)**: This program is designed to create a pathway to undergraduate studies for the Faculties of Arts, Applied Health Sciences, Engineering, Environment, and Science. The BASE program consists of two 12-week terms, which run concurrently with the University of Waterloo's fall and winter terms. There is also a 7-week intensive summer program ([iBASE](#)).

### **Summary of strengths, challenges and weaknesses based on self-study**

#### **Strengths**

- Validated curricula that corresponds to standardized tests
- Dedicated ELI staff
- Variety of student leadership opportunities
- Excellent working relationships with campus partners

### **Challenges**

- Dependent upon existing University of Waterloo admissions framework
- ELI's goals and missions are often misunderstood
- Reliance on international students and therefore sensitive to global geopolitics and domestic policies that limit international student admissions (e.g., visa regulations)

### **Weaknesses**

- Lack of a formal student information system
- Lack of appropriate space and student resources
- Lack of reflection time for analysis regarding program improvements

### **Summary of key findings from the external reviewers**

The reviewers found that this program is in very good standing. It delivers high-quality, student-centered instruction that brings a significant number of international students to our region and to UW. The reviewers believe that the partnership of ELI with UW offers an exemplary model for other universities to follow. Both programs offer multilingual speakers a substantial learning experience that prepares them for success in all aspects of their academic program.

### **Program response to external reviewers' recommendations**

#### **Recommendations**

1. Develop a comprehensive plan to raise the profile of the ELI as a key agent of internationalization for UW.

#### **Response**

The Director will have meetings with Waterloo International, Registrar's Office, Student Success Office (SSO), and Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs to discuss messaging and establish key stakeholders. The ELI will work with the SSO to devise a communication plan aimed at providing information to the UW community highlighting the support systems in place for international students. Further communication strategies will be considered to increase awareness of the ways ELI can be a part of Waterloo's internationalization strategy, which would include discussions with those who are working on the strategic plan (internationalization) as well as individuals in various units (including Centre of Teaching Excellence) and across campus. Although the ELI was not included in initial discussions regarding Waterloo's internationalization issue paper, which is meant to be the first step in strategic planning, ELI is hopeful, through multiple meetings with individuals, as suggested by the reviewers, that the ELI will still be considered as part of Waterloo's upcoming internationalization strategy. An initial meeting with Waterloo International has taken place and a discussion with the Director

of the SSO has confirmed the desire for a shared communication plan. Meetings with the SSO will continue throughout the summer with the hopes of creating a joint communication plan in the fall of 2018.

2. Improve recognition of the important role of ELI instructors at Renison and for UW.

#### **Response**

Because the instructors in the ELI are considered staff, not faculty, inequities exist between instructors in ELI and those within credit-bearing programs. The Assistant Directors and Director are having discussions on how to incorporate research into ELI instructors' responsibilities in order to bridge some of the gaps. There is research happening within the ELI, but because it is done in addition to the instructors' full workload, there is no time for the research to move to the steps of publication and presentation. Currently the results of the research are used to improve the program and are not shared broadly within the field of international education. In EFAS, the plan is to investigate the feasibility of having one non-teaching term every two years to work on a special project or conduct research (as explained under program characteristics, EFAS operates over 4 terms: Fall, Winter, Spring and an intensive 6-week summer term). BASE runs in the fall, winter and summer, and so most instructors are on 80% contracts. There is a plan to investigate the feasibility of moving people to full year contracts to work on special projects (i.e. curriculum and program development) or conduct research within the added 20% of the contract. Once these plans have been fleshed out with Renison's Finance, they will be brought to the President of Renison for approval. If all goes as planned, HR could create new contracts for May 2020 to coincide with the new fiscal year.

3. Work towards resolving space limitations at the ELI.

#### **Response**

Gaining sufficient access to space is an ongoing issue for many units at the university. The ELI has obtained a great deal of new space since the last program review. However, with the growth of the ELI and Renison as a whole, space remains a concern, especially in the Fall term. Because language teaching involves many hours, and as such, many instructors, having adequate office space is problematic. Unlike regular faculty, full-time instructors as well as Program Managers share space in double or triple person offices. It would not be feasible to provide single offices for the number of teaching staff the ELI has. Because sessional instructors are integral to the work of the ELI, when the new space was given, a large sessional office with multiple desks and workstations was created. This space has been furnished with instructor feedback in mind. The major concern with this space is that it is in the basement, below the full-time instructors' space. This creates a feeling of inequity, which is understandable given the location of the office. Unless new space is built, it does not seem likely that the location of the current sessional office can change.

Although gaining more space for both offices and classrooms is a priority for the ELI, it is decided at the Renison Board level.

4. Refresh course names so that they better indicate their purpose.

**Response**

The BASE team and the EFAS team will work on renaming the courses to better reflect the course content. For example, all writing-focused courses are currently called “Writing Skills”, but it is suggested these courses have names that better reflect the content and level of the course, such as “Introduction to Academic Writing and Research Skills” (BASE) and “Effective Writing and Research in Academic Contexts” (EFAS). The course names have been approved within the unit and at CAPE Council to meet Renison’s regulations. The course name changes are scheduled for approval at March 12, 2019 SUC.

5. Further diversify the representation of students from different countries in BASE.

**Response**

Recruitment for the BASE program is a joint effort between Marketing and Undergraduate Recruitment at UW and Marketing and Recruitment at Renison. Because Renison’s recruitment efforts are already in non-English speaking countries, we have access to information about potential opportunities for new student markets and existing government scholarship programs. Leveraging the SENEYCYT scholarship programs offered through Ecuador and Panama provides a good example of how Renison and uWaterloo’s recruitment teams have been able to work together. For the past three admission cycles, stakeholders from Renison and uWaterloo have collaborated to maximize efficiencies and enhance diversity within the student population. To extend this collaboration beyond efforts in Panama and Ecuador, many factors need to be considered. In order to have a comprehensive strategy, the two teams would benefit from joint strategic planning. If it is agreeable to work together in other markets, they could complete a comprehensive scan of the international recruitment opportunities. From there, developing a strategic plan (3-5 year) for international recruitment for ELI and UW and presenting this plan to appropriate bodies at both Renison and UW would be the final steps before implementation of the plan. ELI’s Director, Assistant Directors, and instructional staff will be on hand to help with outreach as required.

Regarding the recommendation for recruiting from the immigrant population, there is an obstacle that could complicate this. English Language is not a program that receives government funding and so there are not separate, lower, domestic rates. Additionally, students are not entitled to OSAP for English language programs at universities.

6. Explore further co-curricular opportunities for BASE students, especially in some faculties.

**Response**

To start, the Director and Assistant Director have reached out to the incoming Chair of Social Development Studies (at Renison) to explore joint learning opportunities. The hope is to increase BASE student participation in Arts in partnership with SDS. A sessional instructor was hired by the SDS Chair who has experience in this sort of programming. A meeting with SDS and BASE staff to flesh out a joint learning opportunity took place on November 1, 2018. The ELI has also reached out to the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies in the Faculty of Environment to explore opportunities for possible collaboration. Considering how to strengthen ties with AHS will be required once student numbers become more stable. There are already such opportunities for BASE Engineering and Science students. These opportunities will continue to be strengthened.

The reviewers also suggested that the ELI have semi-regular meetings with “the group of Associate Deans who have a vested interest in the success of ELI”. The Director will inquire to see if there is interest from the Associate Deans to have such meetings.

7. Develop concrete ways for EFAS to integrate experiences at UW into its programming.

**Response**

The EFAS program is in the midst of a curricular review and it was recommended that “the EFAS program should continue to explore and develop concrete connections and student experiences with the UW campus.” ELI was pleased to hear that the reviewers felt that “many if not most instructors at UW would be quite open to classroom visits” for EFAS students in order for them to have authentic lecture experiences. To this end, the Assistant Director will investigate opportunities for EFAS students to observe lectures at UW and/or invite guest lecturers to EFAS. Additionally, ELI was excited to learn that UW is developing a syllabus repository which will help EFAS instructors learn more about the expectations of students once in degree studies. This information can aid EFAS instructors in creating assignments that ensure the students have the appropriate foundation before beginning degree studies.

ELI also expects to integrate EFAS programming into students’ experiences through structured volunteer opportunities at UW events/activities (e.g., You@Waterloo Day, Canada Day).

ELI is also seeking ways to leverage units at UW to help facilitate co-curricular programming (e.g., visits to academic departments/faculties for academic excursions related to assignments).

8. Improve program metrics leading up to the next review.

**Response**

One of the larger issues the ELI faces is the lack of a student information/management system. Everything from the creation of acceptance letters and class lists to the collection of marks and production of transcripts is done manually. At the end of each term, certain metrics such as student statistics (numbers, country of origin) as well as student satisfaction (survey results on classes and activities) are compiled manually as well. Since the ELI students, with the exception of BASE students, are not in Quest, it is not possible to pull statistics as is standard practice at UW. Also most of the EFAS students have guest ID numbers rather than Waterloo student ID so if/when they move onto main campus, they cannot easily be tracked. A long time goal of the ELI has been to find a software system that will help with all of these functions. The ELI requires dedicated assistance from IT and Finance in order to purchase optimal software. This has been made a priority by Renison's President, and so it is hoped that the software will be in place by the end of the calendar year (2019).

Once the software is in place, Student Services ELI (SSTELI) and ELI admin team will discuss the various metrics that should be considered. The Administrative Coordinator will gather the information. Discussions will happen within BASE and EFAS teams to get further input. ELI admin team will review and make a decision on what should be included and how the items will be measured. After a trial period of one year, ELI will review the metrics to ensure they are gathering the most useful information. Revisions will be made as required.

One additional item that would allow ELI to improve metrics, and thus, programming, extends beyond the capabilities of an in-house student information/management system. To date, it has not been possible to make meaningful comparisons between ELI students short/long term study success and that of direct admits with passing ELT scores. It is possible for other institutions to measure the impact of various pathways; however, there exist specific issues (e.g., with the way that students are coded upon admission) that makes it difficult for this university. Nevertheless, such comparative metrics could provide valuable information, not only for ELI, but also for the entire university.

**Implementation Plan**

	<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Proposed Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility for Leading and Resourcing (if applicable) the Actions</b>	<b>Timeline for addressing Recommendations</b>
1.	Develop a comprehensive plan to raise the profile of ELI as a key agent of internationalization for UW.	Have meetings with various units to discuss messaging and establish key stakeholders. Work with SSO on a communication plan.	Director	Implementation of the plan would begin in Spring 2019.
2.	Improve recognition of the important role of ELI instructors at Renison and for UW.	Investigate feasibility of adjusting contracts to provide time to expand research or special projects.	Director, Finance, President and HR	Contracts to be updated by May 1, 2020.
3.	Work towards resolving space limitations at the ELI.	In the upcoming strategic planning conversations at Renison, space issues at the College will be an item for discussion.	Strategic planning committee to Board of Governors and President to discuss possibility of building.	Upcoming conversations (2018/2019) with the Board of Governors to decide if plan to build is feasible.
4.	Refresh course names so that they better indicate their purpose.	Course name changes will go through the proper process as per UW policy.	Assistant Directors (renaming and rationale) Director (approval at CAPE council) Academic Dean and/or President (take to SUC and Senate)	Approved at SUC on March 12, 2019. Effective Fall 2020.
5.	Further diversify the representation of students from different countries in BASE.	Renison's Marketing and Recruitment office to initiate discussions to create a joint recruitment strategy with UW's Marketing and Undergraduate Recruitment team.	Manager and Senior International Recruitment Specialist at Renison, Associate Director, Marketing and Undergraduate Recruitment at UW.	Implementation of the plan would begin in Spring 2020.
6.	Explore further co-curricular opportunities for BASE students, especially in some faculties.	Work with appropriate people in faculties or departments to explore joint learning opportunities. Also inquire about having semi-regular discussions with Associate	Director/Assistant Director	May 2019



		Deans regarding ELI programming as it pertains to degree studies.		
7.	Develop concrete ways for EFAS to integrate experiences at UW into its programming.	Work with appropriate people on main campus to allow EFAS students to observe classes, participate in volunteer opportunities and visit academic units.	Assistant Director	Winter 2019
8.	Improve program metrics leading up to the next review.	Purchase student management software. Ascertain required metrics and means of collecting them. Implement, then review, and revise.	Administrative Coordinator and Student Experience Manager	Fully implemented by Fall 2021.

The Department Chair/Director, in consultation with the Dean of the Faculty shall be responsible for monitoring the Implementation Plan.

Date of next program review

2024-2025

Date

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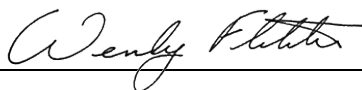
**Signatures of Approval**



March 21, 2019

Chair/Director

Date



March 21, 2019

AFIW Administrative Dean/Head (*For AFIW programs only*)

Date

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Faculty Dean

Date

**Note:** AFIW programs fall under the Faculty of ARTS; however, the Dean does not have fiscal control nor authority over staffing and administration of the program.



September 27, 2018

Associate Vice-President, Academic  
(For undergraduate and augmented programs)

Date

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Associate Vice-President, Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs  
(For graduate and augmented programs)

Date