

Universidad de las Américas, A.C.
Quality Enhancement Plan
Improving English Skills in Undergraduate Students

BACKGROUND

The *Universidad de las Américas, A.C.* has always been concerned about the quality of its English Program because it is a central component in the achievement of its Institutional Mission:

“To educate professionals with full mastery of English, capable of satisfying the requirements of corporations and productive projects in Mexico and the United States of America”

As the leader institution in Bilingual Education in Mexico, the Universidad de las Américas, A.C. understands that Language is our primary source of communication. It is the method through which we share our ideas and thoughts with others. There are several factors that make the English language essential to communication in our current time. First of all, it is the most common foreign language. This means that two people who come from different countries usually use English as a common language to communicate; it is also a useful and even necessary professional tool.

English is also essential to the field of education. At the university level, students in many countries study almost all their subjects in English in order to make the material more accessible to students. Because it is the dominant language in the sciences, most of the research will be written in it as well.

The current English program at the Universidad de las Américas, has 7 levels through which the student will develop advanced communication skills to achieve language proficiency to perform in professional bilingual contexts. The assessment results of the current English Program of the *Universidad de las Américas, A.C.* have shown that levels IV and V are the ones which require attention because they present a significant increase in the non-accreditation index, in addition the lowest average in group grades belong to those levels. The aforementioned facts give evidence that the students are not consolidating the required competencies for a bilingual professional performance.

TOPIC

The QEP of the *Universidad de las Américas, A.C.* seeks to improve student-learning outcomes through the implementation of a program, which allows undergraduate students improve their English Skills.

GOALS

- The General Goal of the QEP seeks for gradually increase by 10% the accreditation rate of the levels IV and V
- To carry out various intervention actions for the teaching of English that promotes the appropriate development of the four basic communicative competencies in both oral and written levels in that language in order to be able to perform in specific professional fields, and emphasize those identified as weaknesses: speaking and writing
- To acquire assessment tools and procedures that allows to verify the students’ progress regarding the expected learning outcomes for the English Program from the beginning to the end of the program.

MAJOR INTERVENTIONS

- Review of the actual English Program and the Language Center professor’s didactic, specifically in the identified target levels for the QEP.
- Adjustment of levels IV and V, including learning outcomes, as well as of the corresponding didactic.
- Integration of the students into two groups: the experimental one and the control one, for each of the aforementioned levels.
- Implementation of the proposed didactic in the experimental groups of each level during a semester term.
- Application of statistical tests to identify the statistical significance of the difference, if it is presented.
- Comparative analysis between experimental and control groups to determine if there are any statistical significant differences that can be related to the redesign in the program, didactic or professors.
- Adjustments to the institutional planning derived from the conclusion facts.