

ESOL... *Frequently Asked Questions*

1. Why has the name changed ?

From 2006 ESOL has changed to EAL English as an Additional Language to recognise that students bring many languages with them. English is therefore an additional language. In the senior school there is greater emphasis on using English for Academic Purposes (EAP)

2. Who can join ESOL classes ?

Students who do not use English as their first or home language may be eligible for ESOL classes. These students will normally be new to New Zealand and have been in New Zealand for less than four years. They are also students who require additional English language support.

3. Do all students have to take ESOL ?

All students must take either ESOL or English up to and including year 12 (NCEA level 2). ESOL follows the New Zealand English curriculum but the content is geared towards additional language learners. This means that students study vocabulary and grammar as well as reading books that are interesting and suitable.

4. How long does it take for ESOL students to gain academic language proficiency ?

Although students do progress differently depending on prior learning and motivation the research suggests that it takes at least seven years for students to gain the language skills necessary for academic study.

5. How can I get my child to speak English at school ?

All lessons are conducted in English so all students will have English as their language of instruction. Of course most of their friends will speak their home language. However, encouraging students to join co-curricular activities with natural English speakers will improve their English language.

6. How big are the ESOL classes ?

ESOL classes are deliberately kept smaller than other English classes. The Classes are usually between 10 to 15 students.

7. Can I get the university literacy credits in ESOL ?

Yes. Senior ESOL classes work towards NCEA level 1 and level 2 literacy credits. Most students in ESOL classes at Pakuaranga College achieve university literacy standards. In fact the pass rate is among one the highest in New Zealand.

8. What happens to students who come to New Zealand with little or no English ?

Students with limited English start in the Reception Class. Here they will receive intensive study in English. They will be slowly integrated into classes when their English improves. They stay in the class as long as they need to improve their English

9. What happens if ESOL students start school in the middle of the year ?

All students are assessed for their language ability before they enrol. As a result students are placed in appropriate language classes and given the support they need.

10. ESOL sounds really exciting and the small classes appeal to me. Can I join these classes even though I speak English at home ?

Unfortunately the classes are only for those students who do not speak English at home and whose English skills need to be supported. The Optimal Learning Centre offers assistance for natural speakers of English who need support.