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English for Academic Purposes Programs: Key Trends Across Canadian Universities

Les programmes de cours d'anglais académique : tendances clés à travers les universités canadiennes

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Abstract

Because of the large number of postsecondary English for academic purposes (EAP) programs and the varying ways they are structured, it can be difficult to identify how a particular program fits within the overall landscape of university education. To identify general trends across Canada, the webpages for 74 EAP programs at 50 public English-medium universities were examined for key information related to each program. Data analysis included descriptive statistics as well as graphical representation. The results pointed to typical EAP programs that are independent units that offer non-credit courses with some credit options, have international tuition fees around \$9,000 per semester, provide approximately 22 hours of instruction per week, and generally require IELTS scores over 5.0 or TOEFL iBT scores over 59 for entry. Implications related to the marginalization of EAP programs and their students are outlined, with suggestions for recognizing the strengths of multilingual EAP students and for recognizing the legitimacy of EAP programs within the wider academy. All in all, these results provide an avenue of comparison and indicate the need for future research to better understand how EAP programming is conceptualized in the Canadian context.

Résumé

Étant donné le grand nombre de programmes de cours d'anglais académique postsecondaires ainsi que les diverses manières dont ils sont structurés, il peut s'avérer difficile d'identifier la façon dont un programme particulier s'inscrit au sein du paysage d'ensemble de l'enseignement universitaire. Afin d'identifier les tendances générales à travers le Canada, on a examiné les pages Web de 74 programmes d'anglais académique dans 50 universités publiques anglophones pour y rechercher les informations clés liées à chaque programme. L'analyse des données comprenait des statistiques descriptives ainsi que des représentations graphiques. Les résultats ont montré que les programmes typiques d'anglais académique qui sont des unités indépendantes et proposent des cours non-crédités avec option de crédit, présentent des frais de scolarité semestriels d'environ 9000 \$, fournissent environ 22 heures d'enseignement hebdomadaire et exigent des scores de 5,0 à l'IELTS ou des scores iBT supérieurs à 59 au TOEFL pour s'y inscrire. Nous soulignons les implications reliées à la marginalisation des programmes d'anglais académique et de leurs étudiants, et nous faisons des suggestions pour reconnaître les forces des étudiants multilingues des programmes d'anglais académique ainsi que la légitimité de ces programmes au sein des institutions plus larges. Dans l'ensemble, ces résultats fournissent une piste de comparaison et indiquent la nécessité de recherche future pour mieux comprendre comment on conceptualise la programmation de l'anglais académique dans le contexte canadien.

Keywords: English for academic purposes, international students, program structure, university pathways, English as an additional language

Mots clés : anglais académique, étudiants internationaux, structure de programme, voies universitaires, l'anglais comme langue supplémentaire

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Introduction

In recent years, Canada has attracted growing numbers of international students, with almost 500,000 postsecondary international students studying in Canada at the end of 2019 (Canadian Bureau for International Education, 2020). In addition to international students, Canada has also welcomed increasing numbers of newcomers, leading to record levels of immigration (Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada, 2018). Thus, in large urban centres, such as Vancouver and Toronto, around 45% and 46% of the population respectively has a mother tongue other than English or French (Statistics Canada, 2016). One of the results of these increases has been greater linguistic diversity on Canadian university campuses, with increasing numbers of both international and domestic students from first language backgrounds other than English or French. For example, across the University of British Columbia's (UBC's) Vancouver and Okanagan campuses in 2020, around 24% of undergraduate students were international students, with the top source countries (other than the United States or the United Kingdom with the third and tenth largest cohorts of international students respectively) being China, India, Korea, and Iran (UBC, n.d.). In fact, in the 2019–2020 academic year, international students at UBC came from 166 different countries (UBC, 2021).

To provide a pathway to higher education for multilingual students without an institution's required evidence of English language proficiency, many universities offer English for academic purposes (EAP) programs as a robust alternative to traditional standardized English language proficiency testing, with students demonstrating their English language proficiency by obtaining passing grades in a required course or set of EAP courses with relevant learning outcomes. By offering an alternative entrance to higher education made up of EAP courses and other supports, these programs can play an important role in helping their universities become leading international institutions (Smithwick, 2014). For Smithwick (2014), being a leading international learning institution entails being more socially and academically relevant outside of Canada, with international recognition as a top university with an expanding global presence. To become a top international institution of higher education known around the world, a university can attract international students with outstanding academic profiles. Many of these students will come from language backgrounds other than English, and while they are academically admissible to an English-medium Canadian university, they may not have fulfilled the English language proficiency requirements for a particular university. Rather than losing these students to another institution, universities can support academically admissible international students with EAP programming designed to develop their English language skills for postsecondary studies in English. Thus, the majority of students in an EAP program might be international students holding Canadian study permits, with smaller numbers of domestic students, such as those with permanent residence status in Canada (Tweedie & Kim, 2015).

EAP programs are generally designed for students who have the academic qualifications for admission to university, except for a recognized measure of English language proficiency. For students who are still developing their English language skills, there can be challenges studying in an additional language and adapting to a new educational setting. In particular, students in this profile could encounter difficulties interacting with other people in English as well as writing papers in English (Zhang & Zhou, 2010; Zhou & Zhang, 2014). To support students from English as an additional language (EAL) backgrounds, EAP programs usually consist of courses with learning outcomes related to students succeeding in their future university studies in English. For Hyland and Hamp-Lyons (2002), these types of programs involve preparing students to study in English at the university level while focusing on how students communicate within academic

contexts, taking into account the cognitive, social, and linguistic demands of those contexts. Often, the learning outcomes associated with EAP programs include gaining EAL skills, understanding intercultural contexts, acquiring specific rhetorical knowledge, learning various referencing styles, applying critical thinking abilities, making use of effective learning strategies, grasping core disciplinary concepts, and honing research methods (BC TEAL, 2013).

While EAP programs aim to prepare students for higher education in English, how they prepare students is likely quite different depending on where the program is offered. As MacDonald (2016) pointed out, “a great variety of models for EAP exists right across the country” (p. 107). This variety of models can make it difficult for an EAP program to understand where it fits in the overall landscape of EAP in the Canadian context. In Canada, there is no national scholarly or professional organization connected to teaching EAP at the postsecondary level. As such, it is not always readily evident how university-based EAP programming is offered in one province compared to another, or even between institutions within a single province. However, the goal of this study is not to come to a consensus on what EAP is in the Canadian context. Rather, by exploring the websites of English-medium universities across Canada, this study aims to identify some key trends related to EAP programming in the Canadian context by looking at where these programs are housed, whether their courses count for university credit, how much they charge for tuition, how long students are in these programs, and what levels of English language proficiency are required. Generally, the aforementioned information is not readily available between institutions, with little evidence in the scholarly literature of information to offer points of comparison between EAP programs. By understanding how EAP programs operate across the country, institutions can have a fuller understanding of the range of possibilities in the field of EAP. This information can also benefit incoming international students by helping them to have a better understanding of what EAP might mean in different contexts. As such, the overarching research question for this study is as follows: What trends emerge from a systematic review of the information related to EAP programs on the websites of English-medium Canadian universities?

Background

While little has been written specifically in the scholarly literature about the structure of EAP programs in the Canadian context, a sense of how EAP programs operate can be gleaned from studies carried out in EAP programs at Canadian universities.

Academic Home

Identifying where an EAP program finds itself within the overall administrative structure of a university, Fox et al. (2014) found that EAP programs can have an academic home in a wide range of university faculties, units, or departments. According to MacDonald (2016), some of the locations where an EAP program might reside include student services, academic departments, centres for continuing education, libraries, and independent units. MacDonald noted that this wide range of locations might result from the perception that there is no specific disciplinary home for EAP, EAP is not part of the core mission of a university, and the status of EAP is ambiguous in higher education. For MacDonald, “institutions are still trying to figure out what EAP is, where EAP fits, what EAP practitioners do, and how to work with [them]” (p. 114). Thus, an EAP program might be posited as more of an add-on to a university’s overall structure, taking on a subordinate position that is generally perceived as lower to that of other programs and academic disciplines (Smithwick, 2014).

Credit

Along with the wide range of academic homes for EAP programs in Canada, whether or not EAP courses bear credit towards graduation also appears to be uneven across the country. MacDonald (2016) noted that courses in EAP programs do not often carry credit at their universities. For example, a typical EAP program described by Smithwick (2014) was identified as being a non-credit university program. Van Viegan and Russell (2019) also described EAP programs with non-credit EAP courses alongside credit-bearing undergraduate courses, with the program in question consisting of one credit-bearing undergraduate course and three non-credit EAP courses over 24 weeks, with an extra half-year (12 weeks) non-credit discipline-specific course in the winter semester. Another possibility in terms of how credits are awarded for EAP courses has been described by Zappa-Hollman (2018). In the program she described, credits for the discipline-specific courses were an integrated part of the students' degree programs, while the English language courses were awarded non-transferable credits. Despite what may be going on in various university-based EAP programs, professional organizations in the field of EAL teaching and learning have asserted that EAP courses should bear credit towards the completion of students' programs of study because EAP, as a field, is not of a remedial nature. Rather, it can be conceptualized as similar to other additional language university courses, such as Spanish, Chinese, German, or Japanese (BC TEAL, 2013).

Program Structures

While EAP programs typically have key differences across Canada and are housed in a wide range of academic homes, two general categories of EAP programs in Canadian contexts have been described by Fox et al. (2006): independent programs and bridging programs.

Independent Programs. The independent programs identified by Fox et al. (2006) seem to be specifically designed as separate from other university programs, with their students generally not having met the English language proficiency requirements of their target university programs. These types of programs normally operate separately from the university, but their students might be able to take one or two discipline-specific courses along with their EAP courses. These programs can also be referred to as conditional admission programs in which students have to pass their EAP courses to gain full admission to the university. Examples of these types of programs include the English for Academic Purposes program at the University of Lethbridge (University of Lethbridge, 2021), the Intensive Academic English Program at the University of Manitoba (University of Manitoba, 2021), and the English for Academic Success program at the University of Waterloo (University of Waterloo, 2021).

Smithwick (2014) described a typical EAP program of the independent variety. The program in Smithwick's study consisted of four levels from "low intermediate" to "advanced." Placement involved a needs assessment on arrival, but also sometimes involved standardized English language proficiency test scores or other evidence related to EAL ability. The courses were offered over three terms a year, with each term lasting 14 weeks. There was also an intensive 6-week program in the summer as well as a program that offered conditional admission to the university for academically qualified students. Students in the conditional admission program enrolled in an additional discipline-based credit course. The tuition costs in Smithwick's study were not specifically identified, but it was noted that students in the program bore the full cost of their tuition without any government subsidies.

The program described by Smithwick (2014) is similar to other programs described in the literature. Lee and Wesche (2000) wrote about pre-admission EAP programs with five or six levels from beginner to advanced, with students in class and language labs for 21 to 25 hours a week. Tweedie and Kim (2015) looked at a program with three levels aimed at developing students' English for general academic purposes skills. Each level contained writing and grammar, reading, and listening and speaking courses, with a placement test determining a student's starting level. Students required 70% to pass a course. Students were in their EAP classes 20 hours a week. Another program described around the same time period (Farrell & Ives, 2015), had students in class 5 hours a day, with 1 hour each for reading, writing, listening, speaking, and grammar, for a total of 25 hours a week of EAP studies. Within this same category of independent programs, Keefe and Shi (2017) carried out a study in an EAP program at a Canadian university that provided students learning EAL with conditional admission to the university. Students were required to have at least an IELTS score of 6 or a TOEFL score of 82 in order to enter the 8-week program. The program only had one level, and students studied in class Monday to Thursday for 5 hours a day. There were also optional workshops on Fridays. Monday to Thursday were broken up into paired skills classes: reading and writing and listening and speaking. Students needed 75% in both classes for full admission to their degree programs. Finally, Wilson-Forsberg et al. (2018) described an EAP program at a smaller downtown university campus in which there are five levels of English language classes with 12-week semesters for students who have been conditionally accepted into a range of degree programs.

Bridging Programs. Bridging programs (also referred to as adjunct programs) are the other type of EAP program identified by Fox et al. (2006). In these programs, students are enrolled in EAP courses and other university discipline courses at the same time, with specific supports for those university disciplines. An example of this type of program is the University of British Columbia's Vantage College (UBC Vantage College, n.d.). This bridging-type program is an 11-month program that incorporates sheltered first-year university courses and EAP courses. The program is targeted at international students whose English language proficiency does not quite meet the university's requirements for direct admission. Both EAP and discipline-specific courses are part of this program, with the EAP courses linked to the discipline-specific courses (Zappa-Hollman, 2018).

Another example of the bridging type of program was an EAP program that was the focus of Van Viegan and Russell's (2019) study. This program was described as a 1-year-long bridging program which provided academically qualified students without the university's English language proficiency requirements a pathway to their undergraduate studies. Students were required to have an IELTS score between 5.0 and 6.5. Students in the program took one credit-bearing undergraduate course and three non-credit EAP courses over the full year (24 weeks). The three EAP courses consisted of Academic Skills and Strategies, Critical Reading and Writing, and Academic Listening and Speaking. Students took an extra half-year (12 weeks) non-credit discipline-specific course in the winter semester. During the first semester, students were in class 18.5 hours a week, and during the second semester, students were in class 21.5 hours a week. The total instructional time during the program is 480 hours. In order to enter their full-time disciplinary studies, they needed an average of 60% or higher in the EAP program.

The Study

A systematic review of the websites of public English-medium Canadian universities was undertaken during the fall of 2019 and the winter of 2020 to identify major trends in EAP program delivery across Canada. Websites were chosen as the data source because these are likely the primary means by which prospective students and other people looking for information on EAP programming might be expected to learn more about these programs. Although websites might not reflect actual programming at a university due to inaccuracies and delays in updating information, it can be reasonably expected that someone looking for general information about an EAP program would not go much further than the publicly available webpages. Universities were chosen based on their membership in Universities Canada, an organization representing Canadian universities (Universities Canada, n.d.). The list of member universities available on the Universities Canada website was reviewed to identify 63 public English-medium universities. Out of those 63 universities, the researchers identified 50 universities with 74 EAP programs among them. These programs were identified by searching for key words on the university websites, such as English for academic purposes, EAP, English as a second language, and ESL. However, there were times that this search did not result in identifying EAP programs that the researchers knew existed based on their own professional knowledge. In those cases, the researchers employed a Google search or a systematic exploration of the university website in question to find the EAP program's webpages on its university website. The university websites were visited multiple times to ensure that no EAP programs were missed. If one researcher could not find an EAP program on a particular university's website, the other researcher then independently searched that site to confirm that there was no information available related to an EAP program.

Once the EAP programs were identified, their webpages were carefully examined for the following information categories: academic home, credit status, tuition, minimum and maximum program lengths, hours per week, standardized English language proficiency test scores for entry into the entrance and exit levels, and the standardized English language proficiency test scores for entry into university. Finding this information involved reading over each program's webpages and inputting information into a spreadsheet. When information was not readily available on an EAP program's webpages, the researchers took extra time to search the university's website to try and find the information. As with the identification of the initial list of EAP programs, finding the EAP program information was also an iterative process that was carried out several times, if necessary, in order to provide as thorough information as possible. For example, if one researcher could not find information related to one of the categories, the other researcher then carried out a search for that information. Furthermore, the two researchers worked both independently and collaboratively to confirm the accuracy of the data gathered. First, the data were collected by one of the researchers. These data were then checked by the other researcher by matching the data to the website where the data were found. If new data were found by the other researcher, the first researcher then went back and checked those data. This back and forth between the two researchers ensured the accuracy of the information gleaned from the university websites.

Once the spreadsheet was as complete as possible, the researchers examined the data for key trends across the 74 EAP programs in the study. For some of the information categories examined, this analysis involved calculating the number of instances for key descriptors within each of the categories. For other information categories, the analysis involved using descriptive statistics to identify means, standard deviations, ranges, and medians for each category or specifically identified subcategory. Frequency distribution graphs were also created for key

information categories to better display the findings. Statistical calculations were carried out using IBM SPSS Statistics 26.

Findings

Academic Home

The webpages for each EAP program were examined to identify the academic home for these programs. Academic home was defined as an administrative unit within a university that a particular EAP program belonged to. The analysis of the university websites revealed six main administrative locations where the EAP programs ($n = 74$) in this study were housed. For the most part, 36% of the EAP programs appeared to be independent units at their universities and not part of a larger faculty or department, with 27 EAP programs identified as such. Of these 27 programs, 10 were identified as “Institutes,” nine were identified as “Centres,” six did not have a specific identification, and two were identified as “Colleges.” The next major administrative home was as part of their university’s wider continuing education activities, with 19 programs (26%) housed within varying faculties, schools, colleges, and other units labelled as continuing education, continuing studies, extended learning, open learning, or something similar. Following continuing studies, there were 12 EAP programs (16%) that were part of a larger university faculty, with six of these programs housed in a faculty of education and the others in a range of faculties, such as humanities. International services units on various university campuses in Canada also housed EAP programs, with 10 such programs identified (14%). In addition, outside providers (three private providers and one public postsecondary college provider for 5% of the total programs examined), delivered EAP programs on Canadian university campuses. Finally, there were two EAP programs, or just 3%, that appeared to be part of a general student services or student success unit on their campuses.

Credit Status

The EAP program websites were next examined to determine how many of them offered EAP courses that provided university credit and how many of them provided the option of taking concurrent credit courses in other disciplines. From the website analysis, it appeared that 15 out of the 74 programs (20%) examined provided some form of credit for successfully completed EAP courses that counted towards degree completion. However, the EAP courses in 50 of the programs examined did not provide credit towards degree completion (68%). Finally, for nine of the programs (12%), it was not evident on their websites whether or not their EAP courses provided credit that counted towards degree completion.

In addition to looking at the credit status of EAP courses within EAP programs, EAP program websites were also examined for whether their students had the option of taking other credit courses concurrently with their EAP courses. It was found that 44 of the programs (59%) had concurrent credit course options for their students, 22 did not (30%), and eight were unclear about whether or not their students could take other university courses while they were in their EAP programs (11%).

Tuition

The average tuition for both international and domestic students enrolled in EAP programs was also examined. International students were defined as students studying at a Canadian university on a study permit. Domestic students were defined as students charged domestic tuition, such as Canadian citizens, permanent residents, and students with refugee status.

International Tuition. Out of the 74 EAP programs examined, international tuition fees were readily identifiable for 71 of these programs ($n = 71$). While these programs varied widely regarding the number of weeks per term and the minimum number of terms students needed to complete as part of their EAP programs, the average EAP tuition an international student might expect to pay for a minimum period of enrollment was \$8,979.50 ($M = 8,979.50$, $SD = 9,706.91$, range = 1,950.00–51,878.00). The median international tuition for these EAP programs was \$5,100.00. However, it is important to note that there were two outliers in the data for which the total tuition for the minimum enrollment period for international students was around \$51,000. The rest of the programs that were reviewed assessed fees of less than \$30,000. The inclusion of these outliers in the data affects the reported average and median international tuition fees reported. To get a better sense of international tuition fees, the frequency distribution of international tuition across these programs is illustrated in Figure 1. Based on the frequency distribution, it can be seen that the international tuition for most programs is under \$10,000, with the highest number of programs having international tuition fees under \$5,000 for a minimum period of study.

Figure 1. International Tuition for EAP Programs in Canada ($n = 71$)

To better compare international tuition fees across EAP programs in Canada with different program lengths, the cost of tuition for each program was divided by the minimum number of weeks in that program. The researchers were able to calculate this weekly international tuition fee for 68 programs ($n = 68$), for an average of \$610.82 per week ($M = 610.82$, $SD = 428.19$, range = 139.29–2,161.58). The median international tuition per week for these programs was \$444.38. The frequency distribution of the average weekly international tuition across these programs is illustrated in Figure 2. Based on the frequency distribution, it can be seen that the weekly international tuition for most programs is under \$800, with the highest number of programs having a weekly international tuition between \$200 and \$400.

Figure 2. International Tuition Fees Calculated per Week ($n = 68$)

Domestic Tuition. The tuition fees for domestic students studying in an EAP program were identifiable on 16 of the websites examined ($n = 16$). The average EAP tuition due for domestic students was \$3,277.77 ($M = 3,277.77$, $SD = 2,764.12$, range = 0.00–7,889.56). The median domestic tuition for these programs was \$2,837.50. The frequency distribution of the average domestic tuition across these programs is illustrated in Figure 3. Based on the frequency distribution, it can be seen that the domestic tuition for most programs is under \$4,000, with the highest number of programs falling between a range of \$2,000 to \$4,000. It is important to note that four programs located at universities in British Columbia were identified as charging no tuition (\$0.00) to domestic students.

Figure 3. Domestic Tuition for EAP Programs in Canada ($n = 16$)

A weekly tuition amount for domestic students in EAP programs in Canada was also calculated. The researchers were able to calculate a weekly domestic tuition fee for 15 programs ($n = 15$), for an average of \$264.13 per week ($M = 264.13$, $SD = 217.01$, range = 0.00–657.46). The median domestic tuition per week for these programs was \$300.21. The frequency distribution of the average weekly domestic tuition across these programs is illustrated in Figure 4. Based on the frequency distribution, it can be seen that the weekly domestic tuition for most programs is under \$400, with the highest number of programs falling between \$300 and \$400 a week. As mentioned earlier, four programs at universities in British Columbia did not charge domestic students any tuition to study in their EAP programs.

Figure 4. Domestic Tuition Fees Calculated per Week ($n = 15$)

Minimum and Maximum Program Lengths

Minimum Program Length. The researchers next looked at the minimum number of weeks students could spend in an EAP program at a Canadian English-medium public university. This information was available for 70 of the programs examined ($n = 70$). On average, students could spend a minimum of just under 14 weeks in an EAP program ($M = 13.77$, $SD = 6.65$, range = 6–36). The median minimum number of weeks was calculated at 13 weeks. However, there were some outliers in the data, with three programs requiring a minimum of 36 weeks of study. The inclusion of these three programs in the data affects the average and median minimum numbers of weeks of study reported. Looking at the frequency distribution of the average minimum number of weeks students could study in an EAP program (see Figure 5), it can be seen that most programs require a minimum of 14 weeks or fewer in an EAP program, with most programs having a minimum of 12 to 14 weeks. Thus, it would seem that most programs require a minimum of one semester of study, with a typical semester or term at a Canadian university being around those 12 to 14 weeks.

Figure 5. Minimum Number of Weeks Required by an EAP Program ($n = 70$)

Maximum Program Length. The researchers also looked at the maximum number of weeks students could spend in an EAP program at a Canadian English-medium public university. This information was available for 60 of the programs examined ($n = 60$). On average, students could spend a maximum of just over 33 weeks in an EAP program ($M = 33.40$, $SD = 18.05$, range = 7–70). The median maximum number of weeks was calculated at 30 weeks. The frequency distribution of the average maximum number of weeks students could study in an EAP program is illustrated in Figure 6. Based on the frequency distribution, it can be seen that most programs allow for less than 50 weeks maximum of study, with most programs allowing for a maximum of 20 to 25 weeks or 45 to 50 weeks.

Figure 6. Maximum Number of Weeks Allowed by an EAP Program ($n = 60$)

Hours of Study Per Week

The next information category related to the number of hours per week students were in class for their EAP programs. The researchers were able to find this information for 52 of the EAP programs examined ($n = 52$). Students might expect to have just under 22 hours of classes per week during an EAP program ($M = 21.93$, $SD = 6.05$, range = 6–36). The median number of hours per week was 21.5. The frequency distribution of the number of hours per week of class time during an EAP program is illustrated in Figure 7. Based on the frequency distribution, it can be seen that programs typically have under 26 hours of classes per week, with most programs having either 20 to 22 hours a week or 24 to 26 hours a week.

Figure 7. Hours of EAP Classroom Study per Week ($n = 52$)

Standardized English Language Proficiency Entrance Scores

Minimum IELTS Scores for EAP Program Entry. The IELTS scores required for entry to the first level, or set of EAP courses, of an EAP program were identifiable for 52 of the programs the researchers examined ($n = 52$). The average IELTS score required for an entry level course was between 5 and 5.5 ($M = 5.26$, $SD = 0.65$, range = 3–6.5). The median IELTS score required for admission to the entry level of an EAP program was 5.5. The frequency distribution of the IELTS scores required for admission to the entry level of an EAP program is illustrated in Figure 8. Based on the frequency distribution, it can be seen that most programs have an IELTS score requirement of less than 6.0 for their entry levels, with most programs asking for an IELTS score between 5.5 and 6.0 for entry into their entry levels.

Figure 8. IELTS Scores Required to Enter the Entry Level of an EAP Program ($n = 52$)

Minimum TOEFL iBT Scores for EAP Program Entry. The TOEFL iBT scores required for admission to the entry level of an EAP program were identifiable for 41 of the programs the researchers examined ($n = 41$). The average TOEFL iBT score required for an entry level course was just over 59 ($M = 59.32$, $SD = 17.28$, range = 6–85). The median TOEFL iBT score required for admission to the entry level of an EAP program was 62. The frequency distribution of the TOEFL iBT scores required for admission to the entry level of an EAP program is illustrated in Figure 9. Based on the frequency distribution, it can be seen that most programs have a TOEFL iBT score requirement of up to 75 to enter an entry level course, with most programs asking for a TOEFL iBT score between 70 and 75 to enter their entry levels.

Figure 9. TOEFL iBT Scores Required to Enter the Entry Level of an EAP Program ($n = 41$)

IELTS Scores for Entry Into EAP Program Exit Levels. An EAP program's exit level is defined as the highest level in that program. Successful completion of this level generally fulfills a university's English language proficiency requirements and results in full entry to a student's university program. The researchers found information related to the IELTS scores students need to enter the exit level of an EAP program for 45 of the programs they examined ($n = 45$). The average IELTS score required to enter the exit level of an EAP program was just under 6 ($M = 5.99$, $SD = 0.29$, range = 5.00–6.50). The median IELTS score required to enter the exit level of an EAP program was 6. The frequency distribution of the IELTS scores required for entry to the exit level of an EAP program is illustrated in Figure 10. Based on the frequency distribution, most programs have an IELTS score entry requirement for their exit levels no greater than 6.5, with most programs asking for an IELTS score between 6 and 6.5 to enter their exit levels.

Figure 10. IELTS Scores Required to Enter the Exit Level of an EAP Program ($n = 45$)

TOEFL iBT Scores for Entry Into EAP Program Exit Levels. The TOEFL iBT scores required for entry to the exit level of an EAP program were identifiable for 35 of the programs the researchers examined ($n = 35$). The average TOEFL iBT score required for entry to an exit level course was between 75 and 76 ($M = 75.46$, $SD = 7.35$, range = 60–88). The median TOEFL iBT score required for entry to the exit level of an EAP program was 78. The frequency distribution of the TOEFL iBT scores required for entry to the exit level of an EAP program is illustrated in Figure 11. Based on the frequency distribution, it can be seen that most programs have a TOEFL iBT score requirement of 80 or less to enter an exit level course, with most programs asking for a TOEFL iBT score between 75 and 80 to enter their exit levels.

Figure 11. TOEFL iBT Scores Required to Enter the Exit Level of an EAP Program ($n = 35$)

English Language Proficiency Requirements for University Entrance

IELTS Scores for University Entrance. The researchers found information regarding the IELTS scores to fulfill university English language proficiency requirements for all 74 of the programs they examined ($n = 74$). The average IELTS score required to fulfill university English language proficiency requirements was just under 6.5 ($M = 6.48$, $SD = 0.13$, range = 6.0–7.0). The median IELTS score required to fulfill university English language proficiency requirements was 6.5. The frequency distribution of the IELTS scores required to fulfill university English language proficiency requirements is illustrated in Figure 12. Based on the frequency distribution, the vast majority of universities have set an IELTS score of 6.5 as fulfilling their English language proficiency requirements.

Figure 12. IELTS Scores to Fulfill English Language Proficiency Requirements ($n = 74$)

TOEFL iBT Scores for University Entrance. The researchers found information regarding the TOEFL iBT scores to fulfill university English language proficiency requirements for all 74 of the programs they examined ($n = 74$). The average TOEFL iBT score required to fulfill university English language proficiency requirements was just over 86 ($M = 86.44$, $SD = 4.51$, range = 79–100). The median TOEFL iBT score required to fulfill university English language proficiency requirements was 86. The frequency distribution of the TOEFL iBT scores required to fulfill university English language proficiency requirements is illustrated in Figure 13. Based on the frequency distribution, most universities have a TOEFL iBT score between 85 and 90 as fulfilling their English language proficiency requirements.

Figure 13. TOEFL iBT Scores to Fulfill English Language Proficiency Requirements ($n = 74$)

Discussion

Emerging from the findings is a composite picture of a typical EAP program as it might exist in the Canadian context at an English-medium university. This composite EAP program operates as an independent unit on its university campus, possibly associated within the wider continuing education activities of the university. It labels itself as either an institute or a centre. The EAP courses that students take in this program are non-credit courses that do not contribute to the credits required to obtain an undergraduate degree. However, in this scenario, it is possible for students in the EAP program to take one or two credit-bearing courses in other disciplines at their university. For international students, this program costs just under \$9,000 for the minimum amount of time they are required to be in the program, which is 14 weeks (one semester). For domestic students, such as permanent residents learning EAL, the program costs just under \$3,300 for the same minimum enrollment time. However, students could spend up to three semesters in the program. As for the make-up of each week, students are expected to be in their EAP classes for just under 22 hours a week. Entering the first out of three levels of this composite EAP program, with a level lasting one semester, students have to have at least an IELTS score between 5.0 or a TOEFL iBT score of over 59. However, students can directly enter into the exit level of this program with an IELTS score of 6 or a TOEFL iBT score of 75 and spend just one semester in the program. The university at which this typical composite program is offered requires students to have at least an IELTS score of 6.5 or a TOEFL iBT score of 86 for direct entry into its undergraduate degree programs.

Thus, based on the data collected for this study, a typical EAP program in the Canadian context emerges without a particular academic home or EAP-related credit-bearing courses. By identifying these general trends in Canadian EAP program delivery, individual EAP programs can situate themselves within the broader field as it operates in Canada. Most EAP programs at

universities in Canada are either independent units or part of the continuing education endeavours of their institutions. This typical placement outside of a university's core academic faculties reflects EAP's perceived lack of a disciplinary home and positioning on the margins of a university's main endeavours (MacDonald, 2016). However, around 16% of the programs examined in this study were associated with an academic faculty. The varying nature of where these programs are housed seems to point to EAP's status as an emerging discipline that is still finding its place in the Canadian academy. As MacDonald (2016) stated, universities are still working out what EAP is and where it should be located.

The composite program described above is made up of non-credit EAP courses, as are the majority of EAP programs at universities in Canada. Smithwick (2014) asserted that other university programs are above non-credit programs in a university's hierarchy. This hierarchy is reflected by the courses available to students in the composite program as well. While the EAP courses are non-credit, the students do have the opportunity to take one or two credit-bearing courses in other disciplines, sending the message that the other courses have more value than the non-credit EAP courses. The lack of credit-bearing EAP courses in the composite program is another indicator of how EAP might lie outside, or below, the main endeavours of the university. However, not all programs are non-credit. The varying credit status of EAP courses also points to the emerging nature of the discipline in Canada, since some programs do offer credit for their EAP courses, and there is an increasing call in the field for other programs to also offer credit-bearing courses for EAP at the postsecondary level (e.g., BC TEAL, 2013).

When EAP programs do not have an academic home nor offer credit-bearing EAP courses, these programs can take on what Raimes (1991) called "the butler's stance," (p. 243) in which the service aspects of an EAP program are valued inasmuch as the program supports the needs of the university. Service to the university becomes the most important aspect of an EAP program, and EAP courses are not generally conceptualized as part of academe. Ding and Bruce (2017) elaborated on what they call the "support service" (p. 9) conceptualization of EAP that places EAP programs in the stance of serving the university. In this conceptualization, the theory and research that ground EAP practice are downplayed, with EAP programs serving the university through the technical process of helping students learn English, but not by contributing to the university through knowledge creation via research and theory building, as is expected in other disciplinary fields.

A lack of an academic home and non-credit courses may also serve to marginalize the students in these types of EAP programs. In postsecondary settings, Marshall (2009) identified deficit understandings of multilingual students who are perceived as needing remedial instruction in English, with the attached social stigma and questioned legitimacy as university students. In fact, when students are posited by institutions as remedial EAL learners, their multilingual competencies risk being seen "as a problem to be fixed rather than an asset to be welcomed" (Marshall, 2009, p. 42). These students may then be academically separated from other students on campus, and they may be labelled as remedial students not yet ready for credit-bearing studies. The disconnect with the rest of the university might leave students in these non-credit courses feeling as if they are not being prepared for their university studies, they are missing opportunities to interact with other students, and they are spending time on unrelated tasks (Tweedie & Kim, 2015). Moving away from deficit and remedial perceptions of EAP students who are not yet ready for credit-bearing programs and moving towards understanding the multiple strengths multilingual students bring with them to EAP studies—which have been recognized by EAL organizations as equitable to other credit-bearing modern language courses, beyond remedial English classes, and

comparable in rigour to other academic programs (BC TEAL, 2013)—will contribute to de-marginalizing EAP students and better recognizing them as legitimate members of the campus community. Furthermore, providing EAP programs with an academic home and giving students credit for their EAP courses can serve to mitigate negative comparisons between credit-bearing courses in other disciplines and non-credit-bearing EAP courses to foster increased student motivation and engagement (BC TEAL, 2013).

Forefronting equitable programming that recognizes EAP student strengths, a different composite EAP program can be created from the findings of this study based on a minority of the programs that are associated with core university faculties and do offer students academic credit for their EAP courses along with concurrent credit options in other disciplines. Hyland (2018) argued that EAP is evolving into a field of knowledge that is increasingly research-informed and theoretically based. For Hyland, EAP brings together the fields of sociology, education, and applied linguistics to create a field of study that is a well-developed discipline, as evidenced by the conferences, journals, books, research, expertise, and particular practices that accompany it. In this conceptualization of the field, EAP is an “academic field of study ... [in which there is an] active engagement with theory and research that connects with and informs practice” (Ding & Bruce, 2017, p. 9). The varying manifestations of EAP in Canadian universities hold the potential for Hyland’s and Ding & Bruce’s (2017) visions of EAP as an academic field of endeavour in its own right to become more common across the country.

In order for EAP to become a fully recognized discipline as envisioned above, operating within an academic home, offering credit-bearing courses, and evolving into a research-informed field based in theoretical understanding, a number of factors need to come together to support integrated understandings of EAP’s role in the academy. First of all, bringing EAP programs into an academic home, such as an academic faculty or unit, can contribute to legitimizing EAP courses and including EAP program development and administration in the same collegial governance structures as other academic programs on campus. With a move such as this, an EAP program can become an important component of a faculty’s overall educational opportunities (UBC Faculty of Education, 2021), and be seen as a legitimate equal when engaging with other programs in the academic community, thus lessening the hierarchical positioning identified by Smithwick (2014). With the inclusion in a faculty could also come the hiring of faculty members with tenure-track positions that include teaching, scholarship, and service as part of their overall responsibilities. If EAP is to develop as a discipline, the educators involved in that discipline need the time, stability, and professional development funds allotted in such a position to advance pedagogical practice, engage in scholarship, and contribute to service related to EAL teaching and learning. That way, these faculty members can foster the growth and evolution of the EAP community while enhancing the value placed on the creating and sharing of knowledge to improve EAP practice, which in turn, can lead to a field of EAP that is sustainable, creative, and transformative.

Conceptualizing EAP as a field of scholarly endeavour in Canada also bodes well for future collaborations between EAP educators on both the national and provincial levels. While it has been noted that there is no EAP-specific scholarly organization in the pan-Canadian context, such as those that exist in the United Kingdom (e.g., BALEAP, 2021), opportunities exist for EAP educators and scholars to engage with others in national organizations related to EAL teaching and learning, such as the Canadian Association of Applied Linguistics, which promotes scholarship in all areas of applied linguistics across Canada (ACLA CAAL, 2021). There are also opportunities for engagement on the provincial level, which would reflect the contextual differences between the different regions of Canada. For example, provinces such as British Columbia and Ontario

have professional organizations with annual conferences, teacher development opportunities, and publications dedicated to English language teaching and learning (BC TEAL, 2021; TESL Ontario, 2021). By becoming more involved in these national and provincial organizations, EAP educators can find a forum to learn about each other's programs, share their scholarship, and grow their practice.

Limitations and Future Studies

Knowing the basic structure of EAP programs at universities across Canada is a first step towards understanding how these programs operate in the Canadian context. Finding the information reported in the results section of this paper was challenging, however, and involved multiple visits to websites, google searches, and applications of the personal practical knowledge of the researchers to dig out where the information might be on a particular university's website. Even with this effort, the information sought was not always readily available. Thus, there were omissions in the data, and results were only reported for programs with the information on their websites at the time of this study. The researchers also cannot ensure that any programs were overlooked, despite a thorough search through all of the websites of members of universities Canada. In addition, the researchers were relying on the accuracy of the information on the universities' websites. It is possible that some information might have been out of date or may have been inaccurate, depending on the frequency with which a university updated its EAP program website. Based on these challenges, universities are encouraged to put as much relevant information as possible on their websites related to their EAP programs as well as to keep them as up to date as possible. These websites are the first stop for many prospective students, and they depend on the accuracy and the completeness of the information. In addition, these websites can be written with their audience in mind, that is, students with emerging levels of EAL skills, to facilitate their understanding of what they might expect in such a program.

However, a composite picture of EAP at Canadian universities did emerge from the trends in the data gathered. This is a picture that will be interesting for stakeholders in EAP programs who wonder where their programs fit within the overall landscape of Canadian EAP. Nevertheless, a further limitation to this study is the constantly changing world of higher education in Canada as it is impacted by current events related to the COVID-19 pandemic. As programs adapt to teaching online and provincially mandated social distancing protocols, how EAP programs are structured and operate within the academy could be different after this crisis has passed. Research into how EAP is impacted by crises such as COVID-19 will contribute to the resiliency of the field.

In addition, to fully round out and understand the trends identified in this study, future studies should dig deeper by contacting key personnel in these programs to conduct expert interviews aimed at sharing facts about EAP programming at Canadian universities that are not readily available on their websites, but that the public might readily expect to have access to. Next, once a clearer picture of EAP programming emerges, the question arises as to whether or not the trends in Canadian EAP are best serving the needs of their learners in those programs. Thus, studies exploring student perceptions of their programs, the impact of these programs on student outcomes, and the role of these programs in the university are all called for.

Conclusion

Canadian universities have been experiencing a positive growth in the linguistic diversity of their students, with EAP programs offering students who have not fulfilled their institution's English language proficiency requirements a course-based pathway to higher education that fulfills those

English language proficiency requirements. However, it can be difficult for a particular EAP program to see how it fits into overall EAP programming across the country. This study set out to look at information about EAP programs publicly available on university websites in Canada. What resulted was an understanding of the major trends related to EAP programs in the Canadian context. In particular, trends related to where these programs are housed, what credit students receive for EAP courses, how much the programs cost, how long students might study EAP, how many hours a week they spend in class, and what standardized test scores are associated with these programs were all identified. These findings provide a wider context for EAP providers and help to position EAP programs described in the scholarly literature so that there is a way to get a sense of the uniqueness of individual EAP programs across the country and how they fit within the more general field of Canadian EAP. While the overall landscape of EAP at English-medium public universities in Canada is diverse and widespread, the trends identified in this study point to an emerging discipline that is still determining its place in the Canadian academy.

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