The Oral English Proficiency Program (OEPP) at Purdue University is the academic unit on campus that implements the university policy on the hiring of teaching assistants whose first language is not English.

The Oral English Proficiency Program

- provides oral English proficiency screening services to all departments on campus employing L2 speakers of English as teaching assistants;
- certifies the oral English proficiency of teaching assistants whose first language is not English; and
- offers English as a second language instruction to prospective teaching assistants.

The OEPP’s mission is to provide a supportive environment in which Purdue’s international students develop academic English proficiency across a wide array of domains and contexts. Screening of prospective teaching assistants is done by means of Oral English Proficiency Test (OEPT), a computer-based test developed in the OEPP. Instruction is through ENGL 620, a course developed and taught in the OEPP.
ENGL 62000, “Classroom communication in English as a second language (ESL) for international graduate students”, is open to students who have received a score of 40 or 45 on the Oral English Proficiency Test and been identified by their departments as potential TAs. Departments determine which students will receive priority for the course; Students may not enroll on their own.

The course, which follows an active learning model, focuses on classroom communication and presentation skills, strategies for overcoming language barriers, and conversational interaction skills. Students gain experience speaking English in a classroom context by giving presentations to and interacting with undergraduate student volunteers who then provide individual feedback. At the end of the semester most students are certified and a small percentage are recommended to repeat the course.

**Course Goals:**
- Observing and practicing presentations and interaction appropriate for a variety of professional contexts
- Developing communication skills and strategies such as question and answer skills, negotiation skills, compensatory strategies, paraphrasing skills, and nonverbal skills
- Improving pronunciation, intonation, stress, rhythm, and listening comprehension
- Developing skills for interaction and conversation
- Learning about the American educational system

ENGL 620 is a 5 credit hour course. These credits do not apply toward a student's plan of study; However, they do count toward the minimum credit hours international graduate students are required to take each semester.

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**About the OEPT**

The Oral English Proficiency Test (OEPT) is a computer-based test developed by the OEPP to screen prospective graduate TAs for English language proficiency. Because the test is computer mediated, all test takers experience the same test interface without the variability introduced by different test administrators in face-to-face interviews. Examinees respond to questions on a variety of topics and present and summarize information. Responses are recorded and then evaluated by at least two trained OEPT raters. A score of 50 or higher is required for certification.

Further information at [http://www.purdue.edu/oepp/oept](http://www.purdue.edu/oepp/oept)
The Impact of Volunteers on the Oral English Proficiency Program

Each semester the Oral English Proficiency Program welcomes hundreds of undergraduate student volunteers to ENGL 620 classrooms to interact with and give feedback to our students. Some benefits of these interactions for our international graduate students and for undergraduate volunteers are:

• ENGL 620 students have opportunities to interact casually and become more comfortable with undergrads.
• Instructors are able to evaluate how well students can understand and negotiate information with undergraduates.
• Undergraduates can gain an appreciation for how hard international graduate students work to improve their oral English.
• Our students receive valuable written feedback from undergraduate volunteers.
• Undergraduates may earn extra credit for volunteering.
• Undergraduates can earn an “Intercultural Communication Partner” certificate for 10, 20, 30 or 40 volunteer hours per academic year.
• The general quality of undergraduate education at Purdue can improve as our students who are current or future TAs, become better communicators in English.

We encourage all Purdue instructors across campus to offer their undergraduate students incentives to volunteer for the OEPP. Undergraduates can go to https://volunteer.ace-in-testing.com/ to sign up. The OEPP gives each volunteer a participation memo and we can send instructors a list of their student volunteers and hours at the end of each semester.

A brief informational video featuring OEPP Volunteer Coordinator Beth Lageveen, our volunteer of the year, and two former English 620 students can be viewed at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=66FOGoB-zTU

An Outstanding Volunteer: Madelyn (Maddie) Ackerman was OEPP volunteer of 2016/17, her first year as an undergraduate engineering student. As of this semester, she has volunteered more than 90 hours for the OEPP!

ENGL 620 Student Reflections from Fall 2017

Hsi-Chun Chao, Chemistry

“I am Hsi-Chun Chao and I am from Taiwan. Please call me Hsi-Chun, pronounce the first word without the ‘H’ sound would be the key to say my name.” This is my introduction to every class that I am a TA now. As a Chemistry major Ph.D. student as well as a non-native speaker, it is really worth to take the OEPP course. I also got an “exceptional” evaluation of my TA work last semester! A[nother] useful skill I learned from ENG 620 is the procedures to answer students’ questions. Since I am teaching one class now, I have Q&A all the time. To paraphrase the question to the whole class is really important because other students might have the same question, so I could explain to the whole class once instead of repeating it again and again.”

Rene Soto Perez, Engineering Education

Rene is from Colombia and studying in a doctoral program in Engineering Education. “I have been able to apply the skills learned in this class in other contexts. For example, I have heard how to use phrasal verbs in my classes as a Ph.D. student. Also, my classmates some of them not English speakers have told me they have seen how I have improved in the way I am using English. They have noticed my fluency has improve and my grammar has improved, too. Right now, I can express myself with more confidence in most of the environments, such as restaurants, bars, supermarkets, and so on.”
OEPP Newsletter

OEPP Departmental Liaisons

The OEPP serves all departments on campus. Each department or program on campus that employs international graduate students as teaching assistants has a faculty or staff member appointed as liaison to the OEPP, usually a graduate administrator, secretary, or advisor. Liaisons are the link between the OEPP and the international graduate students who need our services. OEPP staff work with Departmental Liaisons on all administrative matters rather than directly with students. OEPP Departmental Liaisons are responsible for:

- Serving as their program’s resource person on the university’s policy on the hiring of international graduate students;
- Serving as their graduate program’s primary contact with the OEPP;
- Scheduling prospective TAs for the OEPT;
- Retrieving OEPT scores and certification results from the OEPT online application and storing this information with other student records;
- Identifying students who should be enrolled in ENGL 620;
- Ensuring that all non-native-English-speaking graduate students who are appointed to TA positions involving the direct instruction of undergraduates have been certified for oral English proficiency;
- Completing the ITA Verification Report each fall and spring;
- Assisting the OEPP with any other matters involving international graduate students in their program.

We could not do our work without the support and collaboration of all our hard-working OEPP Liaisons.

Liaison Profiles

Anita Park, Industrial Engineering

I am a Graduate Program Specialist and an advisor to master’s non-thesis students in Industrial Engineering. As a liaison, I schedule the OEPT for all IE graduate students, check OEPT completion for TAs, organize the student list for ENGL 620 registration, and manage OEPT reports. I’ve been working with Rochelle since 2016, and Rochelle has been always helpful and prompt in processing our requests. I appreciate her hard work.

Karen Poore, Management

I have worked as a PhD Admissions Coordinator with Krannert School of Management for 3 years. I started at Purdue University 13 years ago with the OnePurdue project and have been with Krannert for the past 8 years. When I am not here at Krannert I enjoy training my golden retriever puppy, Finch.

I love working with our international students! Having traveled to countries where the native language is not English I totally understand how difficult it is to communicate confidently. OEPP supports us with giving our international students the opportunity to test and advance in their English abilities. OEPP makes sure that our students have the proficiency required for a positive and productive educational experience here at Krannert School of Management. Thanks to all in the OEPP office for your amazing support!
Mark Haugen, OEPP Instructor and Mentor

I am a Continuing Lecturer. My primary responsibilities are to teach English 620, rate the Oral English Proficiency Test, and mentor new Tutors and Classroom Instructors. I really enjoy working in the OEPP because I get to work with students from across the globe on improving their communication skills.

Kenny Tanemura, OEPP Tutor

Even though I grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area surrounded by people “from around the world,” I am still impressed by the diversity of students in the OEPP. This is my 8th semester as a Tutor in the OEPP, and I have come to see the program as a second home outside of Second Language Studies, my academic program in the English department. I appreciate the smooth-flowing schedules and agendas of the OEPP program. While I have enjoyed teaching freshman composition, ENGL 620 gives me the rare chance to focus on oral proficiency, which is obviously important to anyone in my field. Working in the OEPP has also given me the chance to work with graduate students, an experience that will help me after I graduate and teach graduate students in the future.

Rochelle Hines, Program Secretary

I was born in Lafayette, Indiana but raised in Phillips, Wisconsin. I returned to Lafayette, where I have remained for the past 40 years. I have one daughter who currently lives in Chicago with her husband, who is in the Navy. I have been at Purdue for 32 years. I enjoy traveling, spending time with family and friends, and teaching my rescue dog not to eat people.

Kelley Farrell, Program Coordinator

My name is Kelley Farrell and I am a native of Lafayette, where I currently live with my husband Mark, our son Ryan, and three pups Max, Lizzie, and Bella. I have degrees in Business Management, Marketing, and Criminal Justice. This is only my second semester as the OEPP Program Coordinator and I am looking forward to many more. Two of my main responsibilities are carrying out the International Teaching Assistant (ITA) verification process and registering students for the English 620 course. When I am not working, I enjoy spending time with my family and friends, cheering my son on during his swimming and marching band competitions, traveling and attending sporting events, and spending time at our family house on the river. I am usually up for any kind of adventure.

Hanyang Fu, OEPP Instructor

My name is Hanyang Fu. I am from northeastern China, and this is my fourth year as a PhD student at Purdue. I have been working as an instructor in the OEPP for two years. My job is to help international graduate students who intend to become teaching assistants overcome language barriers that impede successful classroom communication. During these two years, I have worked with graduate students from diverse cultural and educational backgrounds and learned a lot from them. In my free time, I enjoy practicing yoga and watercolor painting.
## SUMMARY OF OEPP ACTIVITIES

### ACADEMIC YEAR 2016/17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>615</td>
<td>Number of OEPT tests administered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1562</td>
<td>Total number of test ratings by all OEPT raters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87%</td>
<td>Percentage of OEPT examinees who reported taking the OEPT practice test</td>
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<tr>
<td>226</td>
<td>Number of graduate student enrollments in ENGL 620</td>
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<tr>
<td>1024</td>
<td>Number of individual undergraduate volunteers for ENGL 620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1780</td>
<td>Total number of hours volunteers spent in ENGL 620 classrooms</td>
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**Contact us:**
Oral English Proficiency Program, 155 S. Grant St. 810 Young Hall West Lafayette, IN 47907
www.purdue.edu/oepo
oepp@purdue.edu
(765) 494-9380

**Oral English Proficiency Program**
April Ginther Ph.D., Director
Nancy Kauper Ph.D., Associate Director
Kelley Farrell, Program Coordinator
Rochelle Hines, Secretary
Mark Haugen Ph.D., Instructor Mentor
Beth Lageveen, Volunteer Coordinator