

Pathways to ESL Endorsement at UNL

In order to get an English as a Second Language (ESL) Endorsement in the state of Nebraska, a teacher must also have either an elementary or secondary teaching license. Undergraduate students in elementary and/or secondary teacher education programs at UNL **can also** earn their ESL Endorsement along with their elementary or secondary teaching license and bachelor's degree at graduation with some careful planning and extra work. It is also possible to begin work towards earning an ESL Endorsement as an undergraduate and return to finish the endorsement as a graduate student. Both options are mapped out below.

Requirements to Earn an ESL Endorsement

Course	Graduate Option	Undergraduate Option
Second Language Acquisition	813A	413A
ESL Curriculum and Teaching	813B	No Current Offering
Intercultural Communication	813J	No Current Offering
Linguistics for Language Teachers	813K	413K
Teaching Multilingual Learners in the Content Areas	813M	413M (Secondary)/317 and 297E (Elementary)
ESL Internship	897E	No Current Offering

As this chart illustrates, three of the six required courses for the ESL Endorsement are offered at the undergraduate level. One or more of these courses is required for all students earning their elementary or secondary license.

Option 1: ESL Endorsement with Initial License and Bachelor's

Students who would like to graduate with their bachelor's and their initial elementary or secondary teaching license as well as their ESL endorsement, need to plan to take the three courses offered for undergraduates (413A, 413K, and 413M or 317/297E). Additionally, during a students' senior year, they need to take 9 credits of graduate courses (813B, 813J, and 897E).

The university allows undergraduates to take graduate courses according to the following policy:

"Seniors at UNL may be permitted up to 12 hours of credit for graduate courses, provided that these credits are earned the calendar year prior to receipt of the baccalaureate. The student should consult [Scholarships and Financial Aid](#) regarding continuation of any undergraduate scholarships or financial aid. Graduate courses at the 900 level are reserved exclusively for graduate students. Before registering for a graduate course, a senior must obtain approval from Graduate Studies using the [Request for Graduate Credit](#) form, indicating whether the course will be used toward the bachelor's degree. If used in the bachelor's degree, the course cannot also be used toward a future graduate program unless the student is accepted into, and the courses are part of, an Accelerated Master's Program. Graduate courses taken prior to completion of a bachelor's degree do not always transfer as graduate credit to other institutions, nor are they guaranteed by Graduate Studies to apply toward a UNL graduate program. Students in an established accelerated master's program at any University of Nebraska campus may begin their graduate enrollment as a junior."

SOURCE: Executive Graduate Council Minutes (September 26, 1974; amended April 25, 2018); modified by the Executive Graduate Council on 10-18-2023

Students interested in this option will need to plan and work with their advisor to ensure all the requirements are met for (1) their major, (2) their initial elementary or secondary license and (3) the ESL endorsement. To earn the additional ESL Endorsement at graduation, undergraduate students may have to take more than 120 credit hours to meet all state and UNL requirements for all three of the above. Further, if the nine graduate credits earned to complete the ESL Endorsement are not needed to complete the requirements for the bachelor's degree, those credits may count towards a master's degree at UNL, particularly for degrees offered by TLTE.

If a student chooses this option, it will be important to make contact with Dr. Sara Skretta near graduation to make sure that the earned ESL Endorsement is added to the list of what certification UNL recommends the state to provide. There currently is not a clear mechanism for Dr. Skretta to know this information unless the student notifies the Office of Accreditation, Placement and Licensure.

Option 2: Start ESL Endorsement as Undergraduate, Finish as Graduate

For those who would like to earn an ESL endorsement, but do not feel a need to have it at graduation, another option exists: starting the ESL endorsement as an undergraduate and finishing it as a graduate student

For this option, undergraduate students may take 1-3 of the following courses as undergraduates (413A, 413K, and/or 413M or 317/297E) and 1-3 of the following courses as either undergraduates or graduates (813B, 813J, and 897E). Undergraduates who would like to take graduate level courses can do so during their senior year, following the policy cited above in Option 1. Additionally, if all nine credits of ESL endorsement courses offered at the undergraduate level (413A, 413K, and 413M or 317/297E) are completed at the undergraduate level, graduates would qualify for a provisional ESL endorsement while they complete the rest of the coursework.

The advantage of this approach (starting as an undergraduate, finishing as a graduate) is that those with complicated schedules can space-out the required course work in order to work on the most reasonable pathway towards licensure and endorsement that works for the individual student. It also offers a provisional ESL endorsement option along the way. Students who have started their ESL Endorsement work as undergraduates and wish to finish it as graduate students will need to apply to UNL for graduate study and be accepted into the endorsement program. The graduate work completed for ESL endorsement can count towards earning a master's degree, especially in TLTE.

Additional Important Information

It is important to note that UNL can endorse ESL for K-6 or 7-12, but not both. If a student would like both, they would need to do an additional 45-hour practicum/internship to cover the other grade level span.