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Executive courses in the USA

Demand for executive language courses in the USA shows no sign of slowing down and schools are increasingly led by their clients' needs when developing new programmes. Flexibility and a highly intensive style of language learning are prerequisites for most executive-focused courses.

Business executives and professionals need sophisticated cross-cultural training and profession-specific language development to function effectively in an ever-competitive global job market," asserts Marco Pinna, Director of The Language Academy (TLA) in Fort Lauderdale, FL. The school has offered executive programmes for over 11 years and was exclusively an executive training centre before it became a mainstream language provider. "TLA started as an executive training centre with profession-specific programmes such as English for Law, English for Finance, English for Journalism and English for Aviation," relates Pinna.

Today, the school offers three types of business instruction – Executive English, English Plus, and Super Executive – and each programme focuses on particulars such as business linguistics, report writing, presentation and negotiation skills. The English Plus and

Super Executive programmes also offer private lessons to concentrate on specific language needs. Pinna notes that their product range has expanded over the last few years to include English for IT, English for Veterinary Medicine and even English for Real Estate.

Gary Duff, Programme Coordinator at the University of Nebraska in Omaha, NE, says that their International Professional Development programme was introduced "at the request of companies in Japan who needed short-term, business communication courses rather than MBAs." He notes that the course typically attracts professionals with high levels of language proficiency as opposed to complete beginners. "The programme is for young to middle level managers and employees – average age is 32 – with upper intermediate to advanced English, a bachelor's degree, and work experience," he states. It could be argued that such tough criterion could affect enrolment numbers but Duff relates that the programme has simply had to develop to "accommodate higher levels of language ability and changes in curriculum and training methods". Here, students can train for up to 26 hours per week and typical course content includes seminars on how to give effective business presentations plus instruction in business reading, writing and listening skills, with optional activities for an additional four-to-five hours.

According to Alicia Brent, Director of the Executive and Foreign Language Programs at Monterey Institute of International Studies in Monterey, CA, public demand led the institute to set up Custom Language Services (CLS) over 15 years ago – a designated department specialising in one-to-one tuition and small group instruction for business professionals. She explains that their executive programming attracts a variety of professionals, including government and foreign ministry officials, and consequently programme flexibility, such as open start dates and suggestible scheduling, is a must. "We offer customised programmes that are available at any time of year, any intensity, and any duration. The client decides," she relates. "We also offer hybrid programmes that integrate face-to-face instruction with distance-learning components for clients who are too busy to take long periods of time off from their work." However, although CLS accommodates various course lengths, they recommend a minimum 60 hours per programme.

Many providers report a steady increase in the number of corporations investing time and money in executive language learning and Pinna for one says their own executive model experienced an "unprecedented boom in 2007". However, at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, PA, Kara Bundy explains that they purposely keep class sizes small. "In terms of enrolments the numbers are intentionally lower. We keep class sizes small in order to ensure maximum effectiveness of discussions and team simulations."

In terms of student trends, Bundy reports that students from the Asia-Pacific region are particularly drawn to their executive learning packages and estimates that this is probably down to Asia's emergence as a global business leader. "Among young professionals in Asia, English proficiency is often tied to performance appraisal and promotion," she says. Pinna agrees and says cross-cultural language development is particularly important to Japanese executives. However, he has noticed a distinct Western European flavour in classrooms with Swiss, German, French and Italian among the most common nationalities present. "Basically all West European highly industrialised nations," he asserts.

In sum, Business English aims to help executives familiarise themselves with business terminology, methodology and American corporate culture and demand in the USA shows no sign of waning.



Selection of programmes available

Location	Name of school	How many start dates per year?	Minimum length of course in weeks	Min. no. of hours tuition p/w	Types of executive language courses on offer					
					Closed group	Tuition in teacher's home	Intensive	One-to-one	Tailor-made	Other
Denver, CO	Colorado School of English	yr	2	18	●	●	●	●	●	
Monterey, CA	Monterey Institute of Int. Studies	yr	–	v	●	●	●	●	●	d
Provo, UT	Nomen Global Language Centers	yr	1	21	●	●	●	●	●	
Fort Lauderdale, FL	The Language Academy	yr	1	–	●	●	●	●	●	c, g
Omaha, NE	University of Nebraska	5	8	30	●	●	●	●	●	
Philadelphia, PA	University of Pennsylvania, ELP	v	v	30	●	●	●	●	●	o
various	ELS Language Centers	yr	v	35	●	●	●	●	●	

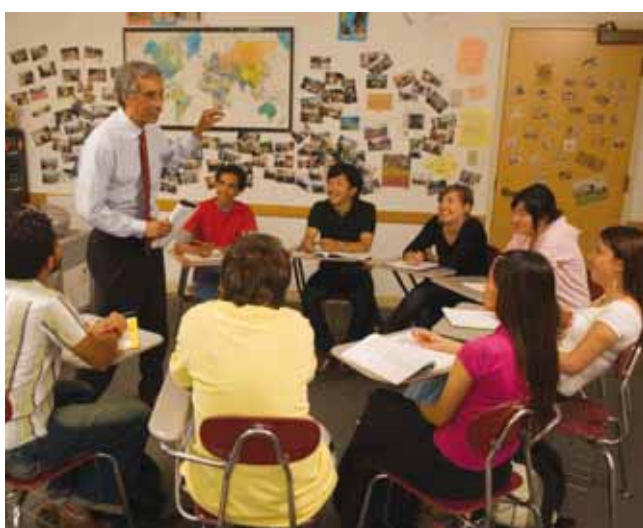
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c combination courses d distance learning g general English o online learning v varies yr year round



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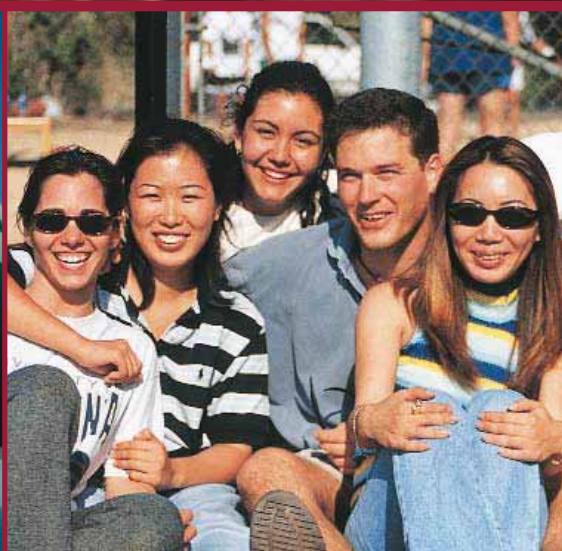
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