

US business

Business English courses offered in the USA can cover a whole range of different subjects and they generally focus on the needs of one individual student or very small groups.

Business English courses, which teach executives language skills specifically tailored towards the needs of a business environment, appeal to a niche student market, although many schools in the USA offer such courses. At the English Language Center's schools in Boston, MA, Los Angeles and Santa Barbara in CA, business English courses make up five per cent of the total number of courses run, says Laurie Thompson, Vice President at the school.

"California is a big destination for business people from around the world," she says. "With our experience in all kinds of English training, it makes sense to offer courses to these business people."

Anna Shine from New England School of English in Cambridge, MA, says that they have been offering business English courses at the school for 10 years because "we were specifically asked to by students and agents", while consumer demand also played a role in the decision to introduce business English courses at the University of Nebraska in Omaha, NE.

"We received requests from mostly Japanese companies – at that time – for short-term professional training for younger executives and managers," says Gary Duff at the university. "We have had steady enrolment since the beginning and the popularity of these kinds of programmes seems to be increasing, although in terms of numbers of participants, our intensive language programme will probably always be larger."

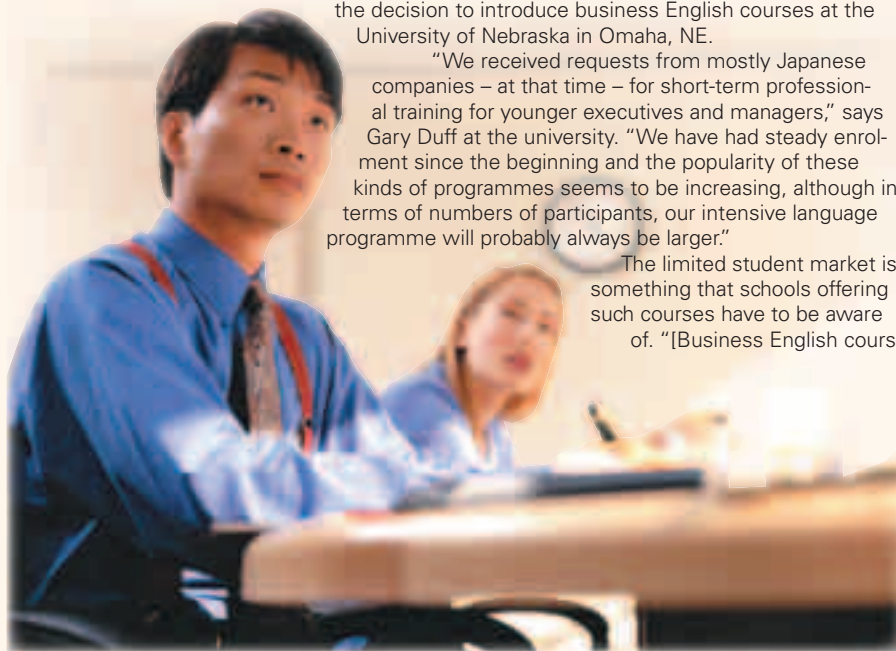
The limited student market is something that schools offering such courses have to be aware of. "[Business English courses]

es] appeal to a very specific market and are more expensive," says Des Levin from Talk International in Fort Lauderdale, FL. "We require that students have an upper intermediate or higher level of English proficiency and a minimum of three years of business experience – so the [courses] are not available to and do not appeal to the general market."

Many schools deal with inconsistent demand by restricting start dates. At the Monterey Institute of International Studies Custom Language Services (CLS) in Monterey, CA, "CLS is currently developing small group programmes to be offered four times a year," says Martina Barth at the school, while on-demand courses are also offered. "The focus of these programmes will be general business English skills and they are designed for companies or executives who are looking for a small group setting and have more flexibility in terms of scheduling."

Business English courses have to be tailored to some extent, and schools must be prepared to cover a whole range of skills in their programmes. Linda Galas from International House in Portland, OR, stresses, "With the exception of our legal English course, we have never delivered the same executive course twice. Each is different and designed for the group or individuals involved."

Schools need to stay up-to-date with modern business trends and review and develop course delivery and materials. Thompson emphasises that periodicals and site visits are an important part of their course content. "[Business courses] have become more customised and more reliant on [real-life situations] – as opposed to text books," she says. "The advent of technology has also led to a de-emphasis on written skills."



Selection of programmes available

| Location | Name of institution | Min. course length in wks | No. start dates p/y | Types of courses offered | Location | Name of institution | Min. course length in wks | No. start dates p/y | Types of courses offered |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Boston, MA | OISE Boston | 1 | yr | c,i,o,t | New York, NY | Manhattan Language | 4 | yr | c,o,t |
| Cambridge, MA | Harvard University IELP | 8 | 3 | i | New York, NY | New York Institute of Technology | 8 | 3 | c,i,t |
| Cambridge, MA | New England School of English | 2 | yr | c,i,o,t | New York, NY | Pace University | 3 | 6 | c,i,o,t |
| Detroit, MI | Wayne State University, ELI | 2 | yr | c,i,t | Portland, OR | International House Portland | – | yr | c,i,o,t |
| Fort Lauderdale, FL | Florida Language Center | 2 | yr | c,h,i,o,t | San Francisco, CA | Brandon College | 4 | 12 | c,i,o,t |
| Fort Lauderdale, FL | Talk International | 2 | 2 | c,i,o,t | Santa Monica, CA | International House Santa Monica | 1 | yr | c,h,i,o,t |
| Honolulu, HI | Academia Language School | 1 | yr | c,h,i,o,t | Seattle, WA | Washington Academy of Languages | 5 | yr | c,o,t |
| Houston, TX | Uni. of Houston-Downtown, ELI | 6.5 | 6 | c,i,o,t | various | CCLS | 1 | yr | c,i,o,t |
| Kalamazoo, MI | Western Michigan University Celcis | 3 | 4 | c,i,t | various | ELS Language Centers | 1 | yr | c,i,o,t |
| La Jolla, CA | Int. Center for American English | 1 | yr | c,i,o,t | various | English Language Center | 1 | 9 | c,i,o,t |
| Los Angeles, CA | California State University, ACLP | 2 | yr | c,i,o,t | Washington, DC | Eurocentres | 2 | yr | c,o,t |
| Monterey, CA | Monterey Inst. of International Studies | – | yr | c,i,o,t | Washington, DC | Int. Center for Language Studies | 8 | 6 | c,i,o,t |
| New York, NY | Columbia University, ALP | 3 | 1 | i | | | | | |

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