I. Undergraduate Bilingual Education Advising FAQ

General Advising

Q. Who is my advisor?
You will have two advisors: a departmental and a bilingual advisor. Your departmental advisor will help you with the majority of your advising. Your bilingual advisor will assist you in matters related to your Bilingual specialization.

Departmental advisor information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campus</th>
<th>Departmental Advisor</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>Becky Adams</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Becky.Adams@tamuc.edu">Becky.Adams@tamuc.edu</a></td>
<td>EDS 210</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mesquite</td>
<td>Debra Lee</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Kim Pinkerton</td>
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<td>CHEC 132</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corsicana</td>
<td>Julie Persky</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Julia.Persky@tamuc.edu">Julia.Persky@tamuc.edu</a></td>
<td>NAVR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bilingual advisor information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student’s Last Name</th>
<th>Bilingual Advisor</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A-M</td>
<td>Alexandra Babino</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Alexandra.Babino@tamuc.edu">Alexandra.Babino@tamuc.edu</a></td>
<td>EDS 224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>EDS 132</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EC-6 Bilingual Generalist Teacher Program

Q. I speak Spanish, but I don’t speak “proper” Spanish. Can I still become a bilingual teacher? Most native speakers, also called heritage speakers, have excellent fluency and pronunciation. Our bilingual education and Spanish courses are designed to build on your existing oral language skills. To assess your Spanish proficiency, please take the university’s Spanish placement exam right away. See the “Spanish” section of this FAQ for more information.

Q. I don’t know how to write well in Spanish, particularly when to write accent marks. Can I still become a bilingual teacher? Many native Spanish speakers have well-developed oral language skills, but are growing in literacy skills necessary for becoming a bilingual teacher. This may be the result of receiving all or most of their education in English. Our bilingual education and Spanish courses will help you to develop your literacy skills. To assess your Spanish proficiency, please take the university’s Spanish placement exam right away. See the “Spanish” section of this FAQ for more information.

Q. Should I become a bilingual teacher or a Spanish teacher? To answer that question, you will want to consider several factors. One factor is what age of students you would like to teach. Bilingual teachers typically teach students between 4-11 years old in elementary school; many Spanish teachers teach students 11-18 years olds in middle and high school.

Another key difference is the content. Bilingual teachers generally teach all content areas (language arts, math, science, and social studies) in Spanish (and sometimes English), while Spanish teachers focus on teaching Spanish grammar, vocabulary, and culture. In addition, bilingual teachers instruct native Spanish speakers who have advanced oral and sometimes written Spanish skills. Spanish teachers often teach native English speakers who have little or no knowledge of the Spanish language.

Lastly, bilingual teachers are in great demand as the number of ESL and bilingual students continues to grow. In fact, many districts are unable to hire qualified bilingual teachers. Texas alone had over 7,000 classroom bilingual positions they were unable to fill. By becoming a bilingual teacher, you can meet this need and have more choices in where you work.
Q. I’m learning Spanish, but not a native speaker. Can I become a bilingual teacher?
It’s a definite possibility. To get started, take the Spanish placement test. Refer to the Spanish requirements section for more information. This will determine which level of Spanish classes you will take and if any additional Spanish classes are required besides those specified on the degree plan. Additionally, it is helpful to immerse yourself in the language. This may mean regularly conversing with Spanish speakers and/or studying abroad in a Spanish speaking country.

Q. I’m bilingual. I speak English and a language other than Spanish. Can I become a bilingual teacher?
That’s great that you are bilingual; this likely means you have learned a second language and so can empathize with and better understand the process of acquiring additional languages. Currently, however, the overwhelming majority of bilingual programs in Texas are for Spanish speakers so we do not offer a program for EC-6 Bilingual Generalists except for those fluent in Spanish. In our program, students take several courses that are conducted mostly or completely in Spanish. For this reason, students who are bilingual in languages other than English and Spanish cannot earn their EC-6 bilingual certification with us. However, they may obtain their ESL certification.

Q. Should I earn my EC-6 Generalist certification and just add my EC-6 Bilingual certification later?
If you plan to be a bilingual teacher, it is strongly recommended that you take the classes on the degree plan to best prepare you for the certification exams and for the later teaching of real life Spanish-speaking children in a bilingual program. If you continue and graduate from the EC-6 Bilingual Generalist program, you can decide to take the EC-6 Bilingual certification exams later; however, we highly recommend you take them before your residency and internship so that the concepts studied in your classes are fresh in your mind. In addition, many districts, even if they have a bilingual teaching vacancy, may require you to have the actual bilingual certificate in hand before they can offer you a position.

Q. What are the benefits of becoming a bilingual teacher?
There are innumerable benefits to becoming a bilingual teacher! One advantage is that you will be able to teach in two languages and share two cultures, thereby meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse and growing population. Another benefit is a deep satisfaction in being able to give back to your community. Still, other benefits include a yearly stipend of $2,000-5,000 in addition to your salary. (The exact stipend varies district to district.) There are also often scholarship opportunities at the undergraduate and graduate level.
Q. Should I earn a BAIS or BSIS?
A BSIS is recommended, but you may wish to discuss the difference between a BAIS and BSIS with your advisor. The BAIS requires 12 foreign language credits, whereas the BSIS does not.

Q. How do I get into the EC-6 Bilingual Generalist degree program once I am admitted to TAMU-C?
Ask your departmental advisor to sign you up for the EC-6 Bilingual Generalist program.

Q. What courses will I need to take?
We provide an advisement guide which can be found here: http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/colleges/educationHumanServices/departments/curriculumInstruction/undergraduateCertificationPrograms/EarlyChildhood.aspx
We recommend that you take SPA 335 which has been designed to help you be successful on the BTLPT certification exam required to become a bilingual teacher.

Q. How do I know which courses I still need?
Using your DegreeWorks account, you will be able to see which courses you are still missing. When you talk with your advisor, you will want to keep in mind which classes are available each semester, so that you take the necessary prerequisite classes needed for future classes.

Spanish Requirements

Q. What Spanish placement test do I need to take?
You must take the Spanish Placement Test ($5) offered through TAMU-C, even if you have taken and passed the CLEP test and/or taken basic (100 and 200 level) Spanish courses. This will allow you to potentially test out of all or some of the basic Spanish courses and place you into the required advanced (300 level) courses needed for the EC-6 Bilingual program. In the past, having taken the Spanish Placement test has also been one of the requirements for those who have been granted scholarships for future bilingual teachers.

Q. Will I earn university credit for Spanish courses based on my CLEP results?
Depending on your CLEP score, you may earn credit for 100 and 200 level Spanish courses. Your CLEP score, no matter how high, however, will not earn you credit for 300 level Spanish courses; the required 300 level Spanish courses must be taken at the university.

Q. Can I use the results from a Spanish placement exam I took in high school or at a community college?
No, you cannot. Our Spanish Placement Test was designed by our Spanish professors and helps ensure that you are ready for the challenge of our advanced Spanish courses.

Q. How do I schedule the placement exam?
Visit the TAMU-C Spanish Placement Test website to register for a day and schedule a time to take the 90 minute test:
http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/testingOffice/placementExams/spanishPlacement.aspx

Q. I don’t see my Spanish credits on DegreeWorks, even though I took the placement exam. What should I do?
As mentioned above, no credits are awarded for passing this test nor are those credits required for your program.

Q. Where can I find more information about the TAMU-C Spanish placement exam?
You can find more information at the following website:
http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/testingOffice/placementExams/spanishPlacement.aspx

Q. What Spanish courses do I need to take and what do I do with the results after the exam?
Share the results with your bilingual advisor and register for the appropriate Spanish courses.
• SPAN 331: Spanish Conversation for Oral Proficiency or SPAN 333: Spanish for Heritage Speakers I
• SPAN 332: Spanish Composition and Grammar or SPAN 334: Spanish for Heritage Speakers II
• SPA 335: Advanced Conversation & TOPT Preparation is recommended
You will receive a letter from the Spanish instructors in the Department telling you which courses to take. Often you will be instructed to take SPAN 333 or 334, the courses designed for heritage speakers. These courses will build on your strong oral skills and help you focus on improving your reading and writing skills so that you can pass your Spanish certification exam and become a better bilingual teacher.

Q. When should I take my Spanish courses?
We provide an advisement guide which can be found here:
http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/colleges/educationHumanServices/departments/curriculumInstruction/undergraduateCertificationPrograms/EarlyChildhood.aspx
Under this degree plan, students can take their upper level Spanish courses (SPAN 331 or 333 and SPAN 332 or 334) their sophomore year; however, many students also take them their junior year. Please keep in mind that you need to take the placement exam before registering for the upper level Spanish classes. These classes are only offered in the fall and the spring and must be taken in order.


**Coursework**

**Q. What BLED (bilingual/ESL education) courses do I need to take?**
There are several differences between the EC-6 Bilingual Generalist and the EC-6 Generalist degree plans. One of these differences is that the EC-6 Bilingual Generalist contains courses specific to bilingual education. These include the following required courses:

- BLED 401: Foundations of Bilingual/ESL Education
- BLED 402: Bilingual Oral Language and Biliteracy Instruction
- BLED 403: Bilingual Instruction for the Content Areas

**Q. When should I take the bilingual (BLED) courses?**
As seen on the advisement guide, it is recommended that you take these classes during your junior year. All BLED course are generally offered during the fall and spring semesters; however due to enrollment numbers, BLED 403 may be offered in the summer. Summer enrollment is subject to change and it cannot be guaranteed that courses will be offered then.

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<tr>
<th>Course</th>
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<tr>
<td>BLED 401: Foundations of Bilingual/ESL Education</td>
<td>100% online</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLED 402: Bilingual Oral Language and Biliteracy Instruction</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLED 403: Bilingual Instruction for the Content Areas</td>
<td>100% online</td>
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**Q. Can I substitute courses for the BLED courses on my degree plan?**
Generally speaking, no. BLED courses are designed to cover content not included in other courses. The only exception would be a BLED 497 study-abroad course in which students travel to a Spanish-speaking country with a BLED professor who designed and taught the course.

**Q. Can I substitute study abroad courses for Spanish credit?**
The study abroad experience itself will not enable you to receive credit for Spanish courses. However, if you are taking Spanish courses at a university, while in a foreign country, you might be able to receive credit for Spanish courses. Please check with the Spanish department first.
Q. I’ve attended community college. How do I know which courses transfer?
You will begin by working with your department advisor. He or she can answer all your questions about what courses will transfer from your community college. In general, when you look at the plans, if the column entitled “Transfer Grade” is empty, that means there is an equivalent course at your community college that can be used for credit here. An example is the “TECA 1318” which is equivalent to our “HHPK 324.”

Do I have to attend classes in Commerce to complete the EC-6 Bilingual Generalist program?
Most classes can be taken in McKinney, Corsicana and Mesquite, but certain classes may require students attend classes offered exclusively in Commerce.

Where can I find more information about how to take the THEA and resources to prepare for the exam?
http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/testingOffice/placementExams/THEA.aspx

Are there other resources available to help me strengthen my reading and writing abilities?
Visit the TAMU-C Writing Center:
http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/colleges/humanitiessocialsciencesarts/departments/literatureLanguages/writingCenter/default.aspx

Submit a class paper to the online writing lab:
http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/colleges/humanitiessocialsciencesarts/departments/literatureLanguages/writingCenter/onlineWritingLab.aspx

Explore the online writing center resources:
http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/colleges/humanitiessocialsciencesarts/departments/literatureLanguages/writingCenter/resources.aspx

**EC-6 Bilingual Generalist Certification Tests**

Q. I’m working on my EC-6 Bilingual Generalist certification. What certification exams do I need to take?
You will need to take the same tests as those required of non-bilingual teachers:

- Pedagogy Professional Responsibilities (PPR) (160)
- EC-6 Core Subjects test (291)

You will also need to take two tests specific to bilingual education:

- Bilingual Target Language Proficiency Test (BTLPT) (190)
- Bilingual Supplemental (164)
Q. What do I need to do to be eligible to take the BTLPT?
*Please note, you do not have to have passed the PPR or Core Subjects test prior to taking the BTLPT)

You will need to email your bilingual advisor for approval. She will check that you have met the requirements to take the BTLPT listed below:

- Be admitted to the teacher education program
- Pass SPA 331 and SPA 332; or SPA 333 and SPA 334 with a C or higher
- Pass SPA 335 or LALS 101
  *SPA 335 is recommended
- Pass BLED 402 and BLED 403 with a C or higher
- Pass practice exam (found within BLED 402) with score of 80% or higher and email screenshot to bilingual advisor to verify your score
Q. When can I take the BTLPT?
We recommend you take the exam right after taking BLED 402, BLED 403 and your Spanish courses, but before your residency and internship. In between this time, you will need to take a practice test and score at least an 80%. Then, notify your bilingual advisor (Dr. Riley or Dr. Babino), who will give you permission to sign-up to take the exam.

Q. What do I need to do to be eligible to take the Bilingual Supplemental?
You will need to email your bilingual advisor for approval. She will check that you have met the requirements to take the Bilingual Supplemental listed below:

- Be admitted to the teacher education program
- Pass the EC-6 Generalist PPR and Core Subjects tests
- Pass BLED 401 with a C or higher
- Pass Certify Teacher Bilingual Supplemental practice exam with a score of 80% or higher and emailed screenshot/certificate/report to verify

Q. When can I take the Bilingual Supplemental?
After taking BLED 401, 402, and 403 (usually in your junior year), you will have learned the content necessary to be successful on the bilingual supplemental exam. We highly recommend you take this before starting residency. To receive permission from your bilingual advisor to sign-up for the exam, you will need to have taken a practice exam and scored a 80% and passed the actual EC-6 Generalist PPR and Core Subjects tests.

Q. What resources do you recommend to help me prepare for the BTLPT?
Here are some recommended resources:

- BTLPT practice interactive exam, test prep manual and other resources (free):
  http://cms.texas-ets.org/texes/btlpt-spanish/

- BTLPT prep books on Amazon (various prices):
  https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_noss_2?url=search-alias%3Dstripbooks&field-keywords=btlpt

**T-Cert (free for TAMU-C students)**

Instructions for accessing the online modules

1. Go to https://pact.tarleton.edu/tcert/
2. Click the “Subscribe” option.
3. Click the option which indicates you are attending an A&M System school and select “Texas A&M University-Commerce.”
4. Submit your first name, last name, and TAMU-C email address. A verification code will be sent to your university email address within 2-3 business days.
5. Use your verification code to subscribe to T-CERT. When you subscribe, you will select a user ID and password.
6. Use your ID and password to login to T-CERT.
7. Select the option to add modules. Select the BTLPT module.

Q. What resources do you recommend to help me prepare for the Bilingual Supplemental exam?
Bilingual Supplemental prep manual (free):

Certify Teacher online Bilingual Supplemental test prep ($55):
https://www2.certifyteacher.com/produtos/detail/bilingual-education-supplemental

240 Tutoring online Bilingual Supplemental test prep ($40/month)
https://www.240tutoring.com/texes/bilingual-education-supplemental/

Q. How do I register for the Bilingual Supplemental and/or BTLPT exams?
Contact Dr. Jacqueline Riley (jacqueline.riley@tamuc.edu) or Dr. Alexandra Babino (alexandra.babino@tamuc.edu) to request to take the exams. Dr. Riley or Dr. Babino will check that you have fulfilled the course requirements. Then, they will email Ms. Deborah Alford to notify her of your approval.

Q. What should I do now, I’ve failed the exam X times?
The remediation needed will depend on where you struggled. Consult your bilingual advisor for recommendations.

Q. I’m a teaching aide. How do I earn my bilingual certification?
Those who are teaching aides can obtain their certificate in one of two ways: 1) Through the regular elementary teacher preparation program which requires about one year of education courses and one year of student teaching (one semester internship and one semester residency) or through the aide program which allows you to do your internship and residency (often during the same semester) while remaining in your teacher aide position. You will need to work in a bilingual classroom with a bilingual teacher mentor for at least part of your job responsibilities. Speak to your departmental advisor to see if you qualify for participation in the aide program.

Q. How do I earn my ESL certification?
An EC-6 Bilingual Generalist teaching certificate qualifies you for a general education, bilingual, or ESL teaching assignment. You do not need a separate ESL certificate if you have a bilingual one.

If you are not in the EC-6 Bilingual Generalist program, the regular EC-6 Generalist degree plan contains the ESL-infused courses that will help prepare you for the ESL Supplemental exam. You should take the English as a Second Language Supplemental exam (154) after you have completed your coursework and taken and passed the PPR and Core Subjects test.
Student Teaching

Q. Will I be placed in a school where the bilingual program is offered for internship and residency?
Yes. You will be assigned two teacher mentors, at least one of which must be a bilingual teacher.

Q. Where can I student teach where bilingual programs are offered?
- You will learn in your BLED courses that dual language (two- or one-way immersion) programs are the best kinds of bilingual programs in terms of academic achievement for English learners. You may want to do some internet research to see if the district you think you would like to work in has any dual language schools before you make your request. Currently, all the bilingual programs in Dallas ISD are either one-way or two-way programs. Your bilingual advisor may be able to tell you of any other dual language schools in your area.
- If you are located in the Dallas area, you can request an assignment in Dallas or Mesquite ISD. Both districts have strong bilingual programs and have teacher mentors, including bilingual teachers, who have worked with TAMU-C for years. Student teachers can do their internship in Dallas in the spring; or in Mesquite ISD in the fall and spring.
- If you prefer an assignment in East Texas, we recommend Paris, Sulphur Springs or Greenville ISD as both districts have fairly large bilingual programs and therefore quite a few bilingual teachers. They also have a great need for bilingual teachers, and so may very well offer you a position before you even graduate if you do well as a student teacher.
- If you are located in the McKinney area, you may request Plano, Allen, or Wylie ISD. All three districts appear to have at least one dual language program.
- For students in the Rockwall and Royse City offer bilingual placements (during Spring only).

Q. When will I graduate?
This will depend on a variety of factors: how many classes you have remaining, when each of your remaining classes are offered, if your remaining classes require prerequisites, and how many classes you are taking each semester. You can meet with your departmental advisor to map out a tentative timeline.

Scholarships

Q. How do I find out about scholarships that are available for bilingual/ESL students?
You can view the university’s scholarship page here:
http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/tuitionCosts/financialAidandScholarships/scholarships/
At this time, our department is not offering any bilingual/ESL-specific scholarships. We will contact those pursuing Bilingual certification if/when this changes.

**B.E.S.O. (Bilingual/ESL Student Organization)**

**Q. What is B.E.S.O.?**
B.E.S.O. is the Bilingual and English as a Second Language Student Organization. It advocates for bilingual and ESL students to promote diverse languages and cultures in the classroom.

**Q. Who can join?**
B.E.S.O. is open to all Texas A&M University-Commerce students, not just those working on degrees related to bilingual and ESL education.

**Q. What are the benefits of joining?**
B.E.S.O. provides passionate students with opportunities to grow as emerging bilingual/ESL professionals. In turn, this demonstrates to future employers your commitment to the educational field in general and to your own growth in particular. It also distinguishes you from your peers in interviews and prepares you for a thriving career.

**Q. What kind of activities does the organization do?**
B.E.S.O. provides several networking, professional development, and volunteering opportunities throughout the school year. Some activities include hearing from a Bilingual/ESL educator panel, attending regional and state conferences, and volunteering in local bilingual and ESL classrooms.

**Q. How do I join?**
There are two steps: complete and turn in the membership form and pay the dues ($10 for undergraduate and $20 for graduate students). Contact your bilingual advisor for the membership form.

**Q. I don’t live in Commerce. Can I still participate in the activities?**
Yes, you may. When possible, our meetings are broadcast virtually to the Metroplex, McKinney, and Commerce campuses, and at times online, to accommodate students across the area.

**Q. What if I can’t attend all the meetings?**
While we would love to see you at all the meetings, we realize that other commitments do not always make this possible. That is why, in addition to B.E.S.O.’s regular meetings, the organization offers other events. Volunteer and extended professional development opportunities are often offered throughout the year at various times and locations.
II. Undergraduate ESL Advising FAQ
(for Those not Earning Bilingual Teacher Certification)

**The following questions apply to those NOT in the EC-6 Bilingual Generalist Program.**

What do I need to do to earn my ESL certification?
You will need to pass the ESL Supplemental exam (154).

What are the requirements to take the ESL Supplemental exam?
- Pass the PPR exam
- Pass the Core Subjects exam
- Pass BLED 412 with a C or higher
- Pass ECE 358 with a C or higher

Who can grant me approval to take the ESL Supplemental exam?
The person giving approvals currently will depend on where you are in the program:
- If you are already in student teaching, you will request permission from your coordinator.
- If you are in BLED 412, then you can request approval from the instructor.
- If you are somewhere in between, then it’s the BLED faculty’s judgment (Dr. Riley or Dr. Babino).

What resources are available to prepare for the ESL Supplemental exam?
ESL Supplemental Prep manual (free):

ESL prep books on Amazon (various prices):