



Case Study: Southern Utah University

Intensive English Program (IEP)
Placement Testing



About iTEP

The International Test of English Proficiency (iTEP) was introduced in 2008 to modernize English language assessment with on-demand scheduling, 24-hour grading, and accurate test data. iTEP provides a convenient and cost-effective testing option delivered in a highly secure test center environment or remotely at-home.

iTEP offers academic testing for secondary schools and universities for both admissions and on-campus ESL programs. iTEP also offers a range of career testing used by companies around the world to determine English proficiency needed for hiring and promotion decisions. For more information see www.itepexam.com.

Case Summary

For years, Southern Utah University relied on student-provided test scores to place international students in their Intensive English Program (IEP). Accepted students would present their test scores upon arrival at the university. However, this placement method did not work when students arrived without test scores or when the test scores they brought were not compatible with the school's system. Staff at the university's American Language and Culture Center, which runs the IEP, decided they needed a new method to assess and place incoming students. In 2014, they found their solution: the iTEP Academic-Plus exam. This exam offered easy, flexible testing with quick results and comprehensive scores for accurate placement.

Since 2014, iTEP has continued to support Southern Utah University and its international students. Most recently, iTEP began providing exam preparation materials to the university's international students. The goal is to help

students perform to the best of their ability by allowing them to become more familiar with the exam's rules, regulations, and setup in their native language. iTEP also donated several exams to the university's exam challenge opportunity which enables students to show significant improvements in their skills and jump to a higher English course or enter one of the university's degree programs.



The Problem

Southern Utah University is a fully accredited public university located in Cedar City, Utah, USA, and is close to the state borders of Nevada and Arizona. Utah University has been recognized for its curriculum development, low student debt, and volunteer services with awards such as Best in State, Best Regional University in the West, and 2022 College of Distinction.

Southern Utah University offers students from around the world the opportunity to study in any of their 150+ undergraduate degrees or 32 graduate and certificate programs. So far, the university has welcomed students from more than 63 different countries. Many students start their education in the Intensive English Program

(IEP) before moving on to one of the school's degree programs.

The university's American Language and Culture Center runs the IEP. For placement into the program, new students need to bring their English proficiency test scores to campus and present them upon arrival. However, students often arrive without exam results, or the results they present do not provide enough information to get a clear understanding of their abilities. In these cases, the center is faced with the challenge of quickly testing, grading, and placing the students for classes. It is clear that the school needed a more reliable method for assessing and placing incoming students.

The Approach

The American Language and Culture Center began searching for a more reliable method of assessing students for placement. They needed an English language test that could provide test results with a relatively short turnaround time. The results had to be compatible with the Intensive English Program's curriculum for correct placement. Additionally, since Southern Utah University offered two start dates during each of its spring, summer, and fall semesters, the new test needed to have flexible testing times.

Through its search, the American Language and Culture Center found the iTEP Academic-Plus. With this exam, the center no longer needed to rely on students to supply sufficient test scores for placement. Dr. Robb McCollum, the current Director of the American Language and Cultural Center, said "A lot of students come from regions of the world where there just aren't good testing centers, or they don't have a reliable internet connection to take an online test". He also noted that by using iTEP Academic-Plus, "We don't have to spend any time grading exams, so we can just administer the exams on campus, and that makes it easier for us". Students could be tested at any time regardless of whether they arrived late or early. iTEP test results for Listening, Grammar, and Reading were available instantly, and results for Speaking and Writing were available within 24 hours.

The iTEP Solution

With accurate scores, fast results, and a high level of flexibility, the iTEP Academic-Plus has proved itself to be an ideal solution for Southern Utah University. The length of the test (90 minutes for the iTEP Academic-Plus) also allows Dr. McCollum and his team to hold as many testing sessions as they need. Some students use the extra sessions as an opportunity to challenge their previous scores and skip to a higher level of the Intensive English Program or move into a degree program.

Since 2014, iTEP has continued to support Southern Utah University and its students. When the school expressed concern that students from areas without standardized computer testing might not be as comfortable taking the test, iTEP was able to provide the school with exam prep materials. These materials allowed students to become more familiar with the iTEP exam rules, regulations, and setup to ensure they could perform to the best of their abilities. iTEP also donated several exams to the school's score challenge opportunity to allow students the chance to prove themselves and advance their education.

For more information about testing at the secondary school level, contact iTEP at info@iTEPonline.com. For more information about Southern Utah University's international education opportunities, visit the website at <https://www.suu.edu/iss/>.

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