Frequently Asked Questions

What is Anytime ESL?
Anytime ESL is an online English as a Second Language (ESL) program funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) as part of its Adult Non-Credit ESL programs.

Who is Anytime ESL's target audience?
The target audience is adult immigrants in Ontario with a beginner to intermediate understanding of English who want to improve their English reading, writing, listening and speaking skills for employment, further education and/or social reasons. (Canadian Language Benchmark levels 1-5).

Who is the program best suited for?
Anytime ESL is suitable for Ontario English language learners who have no access (or limited access) to, or are unable to attend, ESL classes in person. It is also suitable for those who want to supplement the learning they are already receiving in an ESL classroom. Interested language learners should have a desire to work online, and a working email address and some proficiency using a computer before they register for Anytime ESL.

Can learners participate in both a classroom ESL program and Anytime ESL?
The answer is yes. In addition to being ideal for independent study learners, Anytime ESL also works well to enhance and supplement what instructors are teaching in ESL classrooms. AMDSB classroom instructors, for example, have had success piloting a blended learning model, using Anytime ESL to reinforce what they have taught in class. Learners can either complete the online component at home or devices could be made available to them before or after class. Since Anytime ESL assigns each online learner an online instructor, classroom instructors don't need to worry about monitoring the learner's online progress. With the learner's permission, Anytime ESL instructors can share learner progress with classroom instructors. All Anytime ESL curriculum follows Quartz principles and has embedded PBLA assessments and rubrics which can also be shared.

Is there a cost to participate in the Anytime ESL program?
Anytime ESL is free to all those who qualify for Adult Non-Credit ESL service in Ontario, *and want to learn online. See Eligibility criteria below.*

What is the eligibility criteria to register for Anytime ESL?
The Anytime ESL Program follows the same rules of eligibility as classroom Adult Non-Credit ESL programs funded by MCIIT.
To qualify:
- You must be an adult immigrant residing in Ontario
- Your first language must not be English
- You must be 18 years old or have completed your high school diploma
- You must not be enrolled in any publicly supported day school in Ontario

and

- You must be a Canadian citizen, permanent resident, Convention refugee or a refugee claimant: **or**
- Provincial nominee, or their dependant, who has been approved through the Opportunities Ontario: Provincial Nominee Program but has not yet been processed to receive permanent resident status; **or**
- A temporary foreign worker, or their dependant, who has been approved through the Canadian Experience Class but has not yet been processed to receive permanent resident status; **or**
- An approved foreign domestic worker admitted under the Live-in Caregiver program.

What learning platform does Anytime ESL use?

Anytime ESL uses the Moodle Learning Management System for all its Independent Study (IS) curriculum. All IS courses are structured to look and work the same way so once students learn how to use the platform they will be able to easily navigate all courses. Live chats and group discussions are also run through the Moodle platform, meaning learners will use the same login process they use for IS courses to access the web conferencing tool used for group sessions and live chats.

What are the technology requirements for accessing Anytime ESL?

Anytime ESL is compatible with desktop computers, laptops, and mobile devices such as tablets and cell phones. However, some course activities may display better on larger screens. Because some learning activities require learners to listen to audio and/or speak and record answers, the technology used should have a working microphone and speakers.

- **Do I need high speed internet?**
  It is recommended you have access to a high speed Internet connection for our online courses to work properly.
- **Do I need speakers?**
  Yes. All of Anytime ESL online courses contain audio instructions, speaking and listening activities, videos, and pronunciation help.
- **Do I need a microphone?**
  Yes. Most of our online courses contain activities that require learners to speak and record answers. The microphone can be built into the device, or part of a headset.
- **Do I need a headset?**
  In cases where learners are accessing the program from a public access site or classroom, it would be proper etiquette to use a headset to listen to lessons.
- **Do I need a webcam?**
  A webcam is not required for most of our courses. However, it may be required for live online tutorials with an instructor, or for some PBLA assessments.

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- **Can I do the courses on my cell phone?**
  Yes, you can do Anytime ESL courses on your cell phone if you have an internet connection, a microphone and sound. However, some activity images will display better on a larger screen - like a tablet, laptop, or computer.
- **Do I need a phone?**
  We do not require learners to have a landline or cell phone if they are using a computer, laptop, or tablet to do our courses. We can communicate entirely by email or online conferencing. However, we can communicate by phone if that is the learner's preference.

What happens if I have problems with the technology? What learner supports are available?
There is a tech support staff person available weekdays between 8:30 am and 4 pm, and by appointment other times. A number of How To videos and documents are also available on the Anytime ESL website, www.anytimeesl.ca .

Is this program available for all levels?
Anytime ESL curriculum is directed at language learners at Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) levels 1-5. While the content of the Anytime ESL curriculum may be of interest to learners at higher CLB levels, the activities will not be challenging enough. Anytime ESL has also not created any PBLA assessments beyond CLB 5. Learners who register for Anytime ESL, but present at CLB Level 6 and higher, are referred to existing Literacy and Basic Skills online programs (e-Channel).

Do the learners need a CLB assessment at intake?
At present, having a formal CLB CLARS assessment is not a requirement for registration with Anytime ESL. Although it is helpful to know learner levels at intake, there is no formal ministry-approved online assessment that can effectively assess in all four language skills – speaking, listening, reading and writing. For learners who have not had a formal English assessment, Anytime ESL staff is able to informally assess levels and assigns curriculum accordingly. Learners without formal assessments, who require proof of a level to take the Canadian Citizenship test, for example, may be referred to an assessor in their geographic area for a formal assessment.

How does Anytime ESL work?
Anytime ESL offers 3 methods of study:
1. **Self Directed Study** – Learners are enrolled in curriculum and work through it independently at a time that is convenient for them. They are supported by an assigned online instructor, who monitors their progress, encourages them, and answers questions as they arise.
2. **Live, Group Sessions** – Learners are enrolled in Instructor-led, interactive group sessions that cover a specific, pre-advertised subjects and are scheduled to take place on a specific date, at a specific time. Anytime ESL calls these sessions "Coffee Break"

discussions. Each addresses a specific topic and features a grammar point. There are four discussions monthly – two for CLB levels 1-2 and two for CLB levels 3-5.

3. **Tutorials** – Online instructors may arrange to meet online with learners to provide additional support and clarity, and to reinforce speaking and listening skills.

What courses are available?

Anytime ESL offers a wide variety of courses at CLB levels 1-5. Presently these courses fall under the following themes:

- Anytime Essentials
- Banking and Finance
- Canadian Citizenship
- Commercial Services
- Education
- Family & Relationships
- Health & Wellness
- Housing
- Living in Canada
- On the Job
- Police & Canadian Law
- Recreation & Leisure
- Transportation

There is always new curriculum in development. A list and brief description of all current curriculum appears on the Anytime ESL website (https://anytimeesl.ca/learn), so check there regularly for updates. A schedule for Anytime ESL's online Coffee Break Discussions can be found on the website's Calendar and Events page (https://anytimeesl.ca/calendar-events).

What do courses look like?

All courses follow a similar design and layout. Courses begin with an Introduction Module, which is followed by numbered Module Topics which cover different, but related subjects. Most courses have 3-6 Module Topics. Each Module Topic is divided into 3 sections:

- **Learn It** – skill building activities and resources that will help you learn more about the subject of the module topic.
- **Practise It** – interactive skill using activities and resources that will let you practise what you have learned.
- **Assessment** – 1-3 real world tasks that test how well you've learned the lesson and can apply it to real life situations (PBLA).

Learners also complete a Self Assessment after each Module Topic is completed, to reflect on their learning, and identify areas of concern.

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NOTE: Level 1 and 2 courses function differently from the level 3-5 courses, in that they do not appear to the learner in their entirety from the start. To ensure activities are completed in a prescribed order, a new activity does not open up until the previous activity has been completed.

Will I need help to work online with Anytime ESL?
Some online learners have limited computer skills so need some help getting started. Once you become comfortable with our technology, you should be able to manage things on your own, and may even want to access the courses from home if you have a computer and internet access. Anytime ESL has recently completed a Getting Started course which will help you feel more comfortable working online with Anytime ESL. We also have some "Help" videos you can watch. Of course, your online instructor will do everything they can to help you so you have a positive experience working online. Tech Support is also available, but only during daytime hours (or by appointment) at this time, as we are a new initiative.

How do you register?
You can register for Anytime ESL by completing an online registration accessible though the Anytime ESL website, www.anytimeesl.ca , OR, by requesting and completing a fillable form registration that can be returned by email to anytimeesl@ed.amdsb.ca.

What happens after you register?
After you have registered and completed the intake questions, you will be assigned to an online instructor. You will receive a Welcome email with the instructor's name and email address. Your instructor will follow up with an email to introduce themselves and explain what you must do next to get started. Your instructor will communicate with you on a regular (weekly) basis. They will email you, but can also phone, skype, or contact you in a different way – if that's what you want.
To start, your instructor will help you pick an online course to work on. They will also tell you how to log into your course, and give you a User Name and Password to use. You will only be able to do one course at a time. Your instructor will monitor your progress in the course each week, and help you when you are having trouble. They can have special online meetings with you if you want them. Your instructor will also help you get ready to do the assessments that are part of every course topic. They will give you a Rubric for every assessment you complete. It will say how you did on the assessment. You can keep these rubrics in your files (portfolio) as part of your collection of artefacts needed to progress a level in the applicable skill and competency.

How do you login?
Once your registration is completed and activated, your assigned online instructor will send you an email with instructions on how to login and access your courses. There is a Login link on the home page of the Anytime ESL website but you must have the user name and password provided to you by your online instructor to access your course.

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When can you access Anytime ESL courses?
Once you have received your login information from your Instructor you can access your assigned courses immediately. Courses are available 24 hours/day, 7 days/week – whenever it suits your schedule. If you run into trouble, and need help, just email your Instructor and they will get back to you as soon as possible.

Who do you ask for help if you have questions?
If you have any questions or problems during your time with Anytime ESL, email or phone your online ESL instructor, OR, send an email to: anytimeesl@ed.amdsb.ca OR phone 519-271-4896 x 2401. You can also use the Message feature available in your course.

Where can you do your courses?
You can do your online courses anywhere that you have access to a computer and the Internet. If you don't have a computer with the Internet at home, you can go to a local library or public access centre. If you are using a mobile device you may want to work on your courses where you have access to Wifi, instead of using up your data.

FOR CLASSROOM INSTRUCTORS/SUPPORT WORKERS:

What level of expertise do I need to support learners participating in Anytime ESL?
You don't have to be an expert in online learning to support a learner working online. Registration – To help a learner register, you need to help them access the Anytime ESL website (www.anytimeesl.ca) , find the registration link, and complete the registration form. There is one registration question that requires a file/picture to be downloaded, so it would be helpful I you knew how to do that. However, knowing how to download is not essential as we can by-pass that in the registration process. (See How Do You Register.)
Once learners are registered and have been assigned an Online teacher, you may need to help them find the login link on our website, and/or help them with their first login to a course. Depending on the level of the learner, you may need to provide moral support while they complete their course – especially in the early days. Once the learner is used to navigating our learning management system they should be able to work independently.
If you have any questions or concerns, you can just send us an email or gives us a call. We have staff who can help you.

If I have a number of learners participating in Anytime ESL, how can I keep track of what everyone is working on and the progress they are making?
Every learner registered with Anytime ESL is assigned an online Instructor who will mentor them and monitor their progress. With the learner's permission, you can be included on all email correspondence with your learner. Learners can give permission by sending an email to anytimeesl@ed.amdsb.ca .

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How can classroom ESL programs fit online learning into regular programming?
It certainly takes some management to offer flexible learning in a classroom setting. However, once you've made the initial foray into online learning, you'll find it is more a help than a hindrance. Most ESL instructors start out slowly by registering a small group of learners who have a common interest/goal so they can all work on the same course. Another option, is to see what Anytime ESL curriculum might complement what you are teaching in the classroom. If learners will be working online from the classroom, then you will need to schedule weekly computer time for them. Some instructors teach a unit on online learning before registering learners in order to prepare them. Anytime ESL is working on Lesson Plans that would help classroom instructors prepare learners for participation in Anytime ESL.

Can artefacts and PBLA assessments for "blended learners" be shared?
Anytime ESL wants to coordinate service to "blended" learners with classroom ESL programs – including sharing of PBLA assessments and artefacts. Since all sharing of information can only be done with the Learner's consent, Anytime ESL gets this consent from Learners during the registration process. As a result, we are able to share completed rubrics for online assessments done by the learner. These rubrics can be added to the learner's classroom portfolio.