

Curriculum Policy

General English Courses

LSI Portsmouth aims to provide the students with the kind of curriculum which they cannot easily follow in their own countries; namely a curriculum where there is a strong emphasis in the classroom in **oral practice** and plenty of exposure to **native speakers** and **real, authentic situations**.

The morning classes

These use grammar-led course books, designed to suit multi-national classes. Although the lessons are based on the syllabus of course books appropriate to the students' level, teachers personalise and adapt subject matter so that it is relevant, useful and interesting for our students. Teachers are encouraged to have a flexible approach to the course book in order to cater for the changing needs of the group, particularly necessary due to continuous enrolment.

The afternoon classes

The first lesson in the afternoon is, broadly speaking, function-led (e.g. directions, polite requests, eating out, etc.) and skills-based, focusing mainly on listening, speaking and vocabulary development, though all skills may be explored.

The second lesson in the afternoon is often theme-based, aiming to give students extra vocabulary input and exposing them to reading and listening texts to facilitate discussion. If the level of the students permits, lessons may also be based on media/current affairs – again according to the level and interests of the group. The teacher does have leeway to swap the order of function and theme if he/she deems it appropriate.

Over the years LSI Portsmouth has developed a substantial resource of in-house materials, of which we are especially proud, to assist teachers with their classes, particularly in the Executive, Exam and General English classes. LSI Portsmouth's published authors and teacher-trainers provide the lead on this.

30+ classes

Students tend to come for short stays of one to three weeks. Students may opt for the 15-hour "Core" morning component and in addition add one of a number of afternoon 1:1 or group option to the Core part. Due to the short nature of the course, lessons tend to be more "bookless" than GE; following a course book syllabus would produce learning outcomes too narrow in scope. Therefore a more functional approach is often taken, with students producing what they can on a subject at the earliest opportunity with the teacher repeatedly upgrading their language lexically and grammatically as he/she sees fit. Should an afternoon "intensive" course be running, the morning and afternoon teachers liaise closely to ensure no repetition of material.

A book is issued for students staying two weeks or more. The student is given a choice of a traditional course book or grammar book, such as English Grammar in Use.

Exam Preparation Courses

Cambridge exam preparation courses

LSI Portsmouth's full-time Cambridge exam preparation courses are designed to help students learn and improve the language skills necessary to get the best possible grade in their chosen exam, but also to improve the general level of their English in all areas of communication. Courses cover the Cambridge syllabus by following Cambridge exam course books, which will be given as part of the course. Although it is a book-based syllabus geared towards the exam, teachers will also incorporate a wide range of other materials and activities appropriate to the level and aims of the lessons. Mock exams take place in the middle of the course, just before the exam entry deadline, to allow students to assess where they are in relation to the exam, and whether to register for it.

The ideal preparation for a Cambridge exam is to follow the full 10-12-week course. However, classes are not closed exam groups and are open to students at the same level who are studying for shorter periods (minimum 4 weeks) or not taking the exam. Priority is given to students following the full course. Students must be at the correct level to join these classes, and undertake a pre-test before being allowed onto the course

IELTS exam preparation courses

The classes cover all four skills and there are practice tests each week. At the lower levels the classes are often more skills-based, with particular focus on reading and writing, in order to prepare students to tackle the demands of IELTS material at a later stage. Most IELTS classes use an IELTS course book as a basis, but teachers also produce significant amounts of their own material, in order to adapt to the differing needs of the students (some students, for example, may only come for three weeks, and therefore need supplementary materials).

Our IELTS classes are supplemented by access to the study centre, where students can borrow and take home reading and listening practice material, under the guidance of the study centre supervisor, who is an experienced IELTS teacher. The supervisor is also available for advice on IELTS, including the opportunity to do mock speaking tests by appointment. This also applies to Cambridge courses – students can ask for advice from the study centre supervisor about the exam, and get feedback on a mock speaking test.

Executive Courses

The morning component of the course is usually 1:1 with the focus on improving the individual's structural English, general and business vocabulary, specific work-related vocabulary and pronunciation, intonation and stress. The afternoon component usually incorporates listening and speaking skills in the context of meetings, presentations, etc. in a small group.

The DOS/ADOS meet(s) with the teachers individually to pass on detailed information regarding objectives, strengths, weaknesses, etc. based on the needs analysis and interview. They will guide the teachers towards materials and the approach most suited to the particular student's needs and approach to study. The student will be issued with a course book/grammar book to keep, relevant to their course/level. The teachers are trained and experienced in selecting the key units for the individual's needs, editing and supplementing units from a wide range of published sources and in-house material as well as using the student as a resource.

The afternoon group component of the course is decided by the DOS/ADOS to match the required functions from the initial interview. From there, a class needs-audit is employed to help the teacher choose the most appropriate material (published or in-house) for the class to meet their needs during the week.

Throughout the week the teachers and the DOS seek feedback from the students and from other teachers and adjustments are made as necessary. Near the end of the week, each student who will continue their course the following week has a tutorial with the DOS to measure progress and decide on the content of the following week's course.

Pre-Sessional Courses

The LSI Portsmouth Pre-Sessional English (PSE) course aims to make the transition to the British higher education system easier for international students and to give them the best chance of success on their course. It is a General Academic English course which aims to meet the broad academic needs of all of our students. Each group studies a similar syllabus which includes a wide range of general academic skills and language.

The aims and outcomes of the course are as follows:

Course Aims:

- To provide students with the language and study skills they need to cope with the demands of an advanced degree course delivered through the medium of English.
- To familiarise course members with the expectations, culture and conventions of British universities.
- To increase students' ability to take responsibility for their own learning and to be able to become successful independent learners.
- To help students to adapt to living and studying in the UK.

Learning Outcomes:

On successful completion of this course, participants will be expected to have:

- An ability to communicate successfully with native and non-native speakers of English in a wide variety of contexts such as seminars, tutorials/supervisions, and private study groups
- An ability to function effectively in the context of lectures and seminars.

- An ability to deal with a range of written academic texts effectively, reading efficiently, extensively, intensively and critically.
- An ability to research and write well-structured and comprehensible academic essays and extended independent research reports which meet University standards in terms of presentation, referencing and evidence of research.
- An ability to give a well-structured and comprehensible oral academic presentation.
- An ability to demonstrate critical thinking skills in oral and written work.
- Demonstrated skills in time management, producing work within given timescales.
- Demonstrated an ability to take increasing responsibility for their studies and to engage in private study, working both independently and collaboratively.
- Demonstrated the ability to conduct independent academic research, using a wide range of reference material from libraries and online resources.
- IT skills which enable them to produce word processed documents, academic posters and presentation slides which meet University requirements in terms of formatting and presentation.

Courses can be 25, 18, 12, 8 or 4 weeks depending on the student's IELTS score and the equivalent score required in their university offer letter.