



Yamada Language Center Group Norms and Operations

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Departmental mission – Who we serve and how we operate

As a center that supports language learning and teaching across the UO campus and across the globe, we strive to be a workplace that models respect for all of our staff and for those we serve. The Yamada Language Center, founded in 1991, serves the 2,500+ language teaching faculty and students at the University of Oregon. The center houses five classrooms optimized for active teaching and learning, numerous spots for tutoring and conversation, and a large student center which serves many purposes, including as a learning environment for less commonly taught languages through our Self Study Language Program. The staff currently consists of a director, five professional staff including the SSLP Coordinator, four FLTAs, and approximately five student workers.

Roles & responsibilities – what we do (see separate page with job descriptions/details)

Director oversees all department programs and activities and is the collaborating liaison to all other language and language technology units including the UO Language Council. (1.0 FTE)

Self Study Language Program Coordinator manages the Self Study Language Program and is a member of the UO Language Council. (.33 FTE)

Administrative Program Assistant oversees daily operations, student supervision, and special projects, including the annual Foreign Language and International Studies Day and other events (.5 FTE)

Business Manager oversees all accounting processes and payroll, course scheduling, travel, contracts, facility maintenance, access and security, and assists with special events. (.7 FTE)

Analyst Programmer develops, maintains, and supports all technology applications that serve UO language faculty and students and the broader language learning and teaching community. (.75 FTE)

Instructional Technologist provides IT and technology equipment support for staff, faculty, and students using the Center, assists in Work-study Student hiring and supervision, and handles audio-visual processes for our programs. (.5 FTE)

Student Workers provide onsite support to the UO language community and maintain access to our Center. (Approx. 8 hours a week each)

Group communication – how we work together & address bias issues

We have a commitment to ongoing trainings in implicit bias and cultural competence both individually and as a unit. We practice listening skills during unit work meetings and collaborations. Face to face communication should always be done with respect. We avoid gender, ethnic, and other negative stereotype-based humor in all communication.

We provide multiple opportunities for feedback, especially for members of traditionally marginalized groups. We respect the cultures, religious beliefs, and political views of our coworkers. Staff will take the initiative to educate themselves about cultures that are different from their own to promote good communication and collaboration as a team.

We answer email promptly (within one working day) and respectfully. Emails should have clear subject headers that inform the audience of the topic. Don't use "reply" to old emails if the topic isn't related to current email subject. Be direct and honest in emails, avoid passive aggressive behavior such as cc'ing someone to direct or expose blame.

We hold staff meetings at least twice a month. Agendas and meeting logistics are distributed at least 24 hours in advance. We commit to attending staff meetings on time and not interrupting or talking over each other at meetings. When addressing a problem – come with a solution, disagree in a respectful manner. When taking on new projects, initial meetings should be held with all staff involved to discuss feasibility, timelines, resource requirements (time and budgets), and other salient issues.

Regular team building and training meetings should be held to keep staff's knowledge base up-to-date.

Online resources for staff:

We provide training and support for all staff using online, web-based resources. For example, we suggest:

- Using UO supported services (OneDrive, Teams, Dropbox, Zoom) for sharing documents, collaborative editing and online meetings.
- Using the UO service portal for UO related support requests.
- Using non UO supported services (Google docs, Figma, etc.) for communication and collaboration with outside vendors and contractors.

YLC Classroom resources, scheduling, and tech management

We maintain cleanliness and supply markers, erasers, and appropriate technological equipment for all department-controlled classes. When instructors need technology help in their classrooms, our staff goes promptly and quietly to address the problem with the goal of minimizing interruption of class time.

We manage assignments of YLC-controlled classrooms in McKenzie Hall via room reservation requests (face-to-face or via email or web-based request form). We respond to faculty room requests within 24 hours. We schedule classroom use each term fairly and in consideration of the language departments' needs, in a collaboration between the director and the administrative program assistant.

We keep up-to-date technology (hardware and software) available for students and teachers. We instruct classes in audio-visual hardware and software applications when needed and provide quarterly training on available equipment for all faculty who use our classrooms

Engagement with faculty, other UO departments

We communicate daily with other faculty, staff, and department representatives in our Center and classrooms, via email, and by phone. We treat faculty and other UO staff with respect and courtesy. We put effort into getting to know and working with other UO units. We inform other

units about YLC cultural events, language and diversity opportunities, and community engagement opportunities.

One of the ways we show our appreciation for the many departments we work with is by hosting our annual fall term “Welcome Back Breakfast.” This event brings together new and continuing language faculty and department heads and includes our Fulbright language scholars and our SSLP Coordinator and staff.

Engagement with Work Study and general student population

We respect linguistic, cultural, racial, and gender diversity when interacting with students. We will seek ongoing education about cultural differences in our student population so we can serve them better. Our staff has a commitment to ongoing training in respectful communication with students, including becoming informed on working with students of mixed-status immigrant families and other issues affecting students including sexism, racism, religious discrimination, sexual-identity/gender discrimination, substance/alcohol abuse, and other issues that may affect our student workers and general population. We prepare and maintain a file of up-to-date resources that we can share with students who ask for help.

We provide information on language learning opportunities for students via our front desk staff, our website, and at events and conferences including the Study Abroad Faire, IntroDucktion, and other campus-wide venues.

Engagement with the public

We create an atmosphere of welcoming for the UO and the broader language-learning and teaching community. We do that by modeling inclusion and respect for each other and for the faculty, staff, and students we serve. We strive to foster a multi-cultural learning and resource center that serves the UO and broader learning and teaching community.

We inform and educate the public about YLC cultural events, language and diversity opportunities, and community engagement opportunities. We respect diversity in the communities we work with at public events. We maintain and publicize our online presence via our website, by bringing FLTAs to speak during local high school classes, by inviting high school students to YLC during our annual Foreign Language and International Studies Day (FLIS) event, and by hosting the NILI Summer Program and SAIL (Summer Academy to Inspire Learning) programs.

Department employer / employee relations - creating a collaborative and respectful workplace

Director and staff:

The director and staff will ensure that each person understands their roles and responsibilities at YLC. Whenever possible, new projects or responsibilities should be discussed with staff before assigning them, with consideration given to current responsibilities, time restrictions, and availability.

The annual performance review should be given on a regular schedule, without interruption, during a designated meeting time. The director will offer staff positive feedback as well as suggested improvements during the year.

We meet regularly as a working staff and show up on time to our meetings. We schedule regular meetings for staff and directors as well as meetings that include all members of our YLC community (directors, staff, student workers, etc.) to discuss current concerns and future planning. We offer alternative ways to give input for those who are unable to attend group meetings or who are uncomfortable bringing up issues in a public venue.

At least once a year, we schedule brainstorming sessions that include all staff to discuss future projects. We also hold an evaluation session in the spring to assess our successes and challenges encountered during the year and to discuss ways to improve our work.

Remote working:

When working remotely, staff and director should check-in at least weekly with each other, preferably via video chat or phone. Regular work hours should be agreed upon and respected by both staff and director. The director and staff should also agree on a work plan.

Staff with co-workers:

We respect each other's roles and responsibilities as well as the limits of each other's time commitments. We respond to email requests and phone calls within 24 hours. We provide assistance at the earliest possible timeframe to support and assist our co-workers in carrying out their jobs.

We strive for clear written and verbal communication on work orders and requests. We show respect for each other's work space and value our co-workers ideas and opinions. When addressing a problem, we offer solutions and express disagreements in a respectful manner. We always maintain appropriate work conversations with co-workers.

Self-Study Language Program – SSLP Coordinator with language tutors:

The SSLP coordinator evaluates and gives guidance and feedback to the student assistant tutors and Temp Classified Support Staff who work in the Self Study Language Program. Evaluations of the Coordinator should be submitted to the Director by all tutors and SSLP staff as part of their exit interview or at the end of each academic year.

Student hiring, supervision, mentoring, training guidelines:

We actively seek to hire a diverse staff of student workers and maintain an inclusive, welcoming environment in our Center. We support unbiased recruiting and hiring practices for all interested and qualified work study students. We follow university policies and procedures while interviewing and evaluating candidates for available positions.

Everyone involved in supervision of students will complete student supervision, implicit bias, and other relevant trainings. Student evaluations of their supervisors will be requested yearly

and/or as part of an exit-interview. A system for feedback, including anonymous (online) feedback, about supervisors and other climate issues will be available to student workers.

We provide training for student workers about work expectations and appropriate behaviors during their work shifts and we set a good example while supervising and training students. All staff will uphold the same standards of respect for our student workers as we do with other co-workers.

We hold monthly meetings with Work Study students to discuss their current tasks and future projects. We maintain an updated student handbook to reflect what we expect from student workers during their shifts. At the end of their first term, we meet with Work Study students to give them feedback on their work.

Conflicts and Resolution of Issues

Concerns and conflicts regarding a violation of Group Norms should initially be brought to the Director. If that avenue does not resolve the issue, outside help and/or mediation will be sought by the Center.

Technology and innovation:

Major new projects or services should be discussed in advance with staff members to develop reasonable cost, time, and resource estimates and ascertain project feasibility, benefits, and staff responsibilities.

Technical help, bug reports, and feature requests can be sent directly to the analyst programmer. Minor work can be done independently, but work requiring longer time investments should be approved by the director. Maintenance of existing technology projects is managed by the analyst programmer, with clear communication to director, staff and other invested parties of service downtime to director, staff, and other parties who may be affected.

Budget availability should be discussed with the business manager before commitments are made for large purchases and in advance of authorizing work that will require an ongoing outlay of funds.

Direct help – in-person, email, phone

Responding to requests in person, via email, phone, and video conference should always be done in a polite and professional manner. We should respond to help requests as soon as possible. If in-person or by phone, we should know who to forward requests to, especially when available staff are unable to help a patron. Troubleshooting and help with VLL and course sections issues should be done promptly and accurately.

Director, staff, and work study students should have a clear understanding of which service and help medium they are responsible for. Currently, with oversight by the Director:

- Classroom technical help
 - Information Technology Consultant: In-person, cell, email
 - Administrative Program Assistant: In-person, email, phone

- Students: In-person
- Classroom reservations
 - Administrative Program Assistant: In-person, email, website
 - Students: In-person and by phone
- VLL
 - Administrative Program Assistant: In-person, email
 - Students: In-person
- ANVILL
 - Analyst Programmer: Email, UO Service Portal, phone/zoom
 - Director: In-person, email, UO Service Portal, phone/zoom

Web-based communication

- Babel Website: General YLC information, self-study program information, contact form, room reservation, equipment reservation, language exchange app, STAMP testing information, and FLIS information, and the VLL app.
- We currently have several web-based communication modes:
 - ANVILL Help Wiki: General documentation for ANVILL
 - ANVILL Service Portal: Canvas specific documentation for ANVILL
 - YLC Help Wiki: Future location of documentation for Babel website services.
 - YLC Staff Wiki: Future location of in-house and staff specific documentation (not accessible to public).
 - Live Chat: Available on Babel Website.

Public outreach

Trainings for faculty and teachers-in-training; Fulbright FLTA Orientation/ NILI Summer Session:

We strive to create a welcoming environment for our out-of-town and international guests. Some examples: hosting a meet and greet on campus and/or at lodging sites; fostering awareness of and respecting the dietary practices and religious observances of our guests especially, when scheduling group meals and meetings; providing direct transportation to activities; helping guests with issues like missing luggage; showcasing local eateries, resources, and events; and working with hotel staff to secure accommodations and airport shuttle services.

Conferences and trainings for off-campus & international audiences:

We educate ourselves in advance about the cultural and ethnic backgrounds of the attendees whenever possible. Instructors should conduct themselves in a way that promotes open discussion, encourages diversity of engagement, and allows attendees to express themselves without fear of discrimination.

We should structure our trainings so that attendees have opportunities to share their cultures and languages with other attendees. Instructors should be aware beforehand of issues that can

occur between attendees due to political, ethnic, or religious differences. Instructors should also have a plan for dealing with attendees who are acting disrespectfully to others in the group.

Engaging high schools:

We create culturally enriching events that excite high school students and that showcase UO language programs. We reach out to the community so we can offer new workshops that are inspiring and appropriate for young people.