

## THE IMPORTANCE OF ESP TRAINING IN ENHANCING TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AT ESSAT-TLEMCCEN

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**Abstract:** *To enhance international collaboration and develop academic programs, the Higher School of Applied Sciences in Tlemcen conducted a quantitative survey involving 75 teachers from diverse disciplines. Using a simple random sampling method, the study aimed to identify specific support and training needs to enhance teaching practices, promote student engagement, and encourage participation in international research initiatives. The structured questionnaire focused on required support for joint research projects, opportunities for academic exchange, and priorities for professional development, particularly in digital competencies. The survey also investigated the impact of cross-cultural exposure and language learning on pedagogical innovation. Results showed that 82% of respondents prioritised institutional support for establishing an international research partnership. In comparison 76% emphasised the need to strengthen English for Specific Purposes (ESP) skills to facilitate academic mobility and global research collaboration. Participants highlighted the necessity for targeted training in academic writing, professional communication, and discipline-specific teaching methodologies. The study underscores the pivotal role of ESP mastery in scientific publishing, international conference participation, and effective engagement with global research communities. Developing ESP proficiency is essential for advancing professional growth and increasing the school's international visibility. The findings recommend integrating ESP-focused training programs with sustained exposure to English in professional contexts to support continuous academic development and achieve the institution's internationalisation objectives.*

**Keywords:** *International Collaboration; Professional Development; English for Specific Purposes; Academic Exchange; teaching methods; Teacher Training.*

### 1. Introduction

According to the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, the Preparatory School of Sciences and Techniques in Tlemcen was established in 2009 by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research as part of a national initiative. Its main objective is to offer scientific and technical training to students who have a good level in the baccalaureate exam. In 2016, the institution **underwent a restructuring process** and became the Higher School of Applied Sciences, Tlemcen, with a focus on research in applied sciences, including mathematics, physics, and chemistry. The school provides programs in various

disciplines, including electrical engineering, automation, industrial engineering, and recently electronics.

This paper examines the perspectives of both teachers at the Higher School of Applied Sciences in Tlemcen (ESSAT) regarding their professional development and their role in enhancing the institution's international academic reputation. As Avalos (2011) points out, "Teacher professional development is a long-term process that includes regular opportunities and experiences planned systematically to promote growth and development in the profession." According to him, professional development for teachers should be seen as a continuous and structured process designed to foster their growth and development in the profession. (Avalos, 2011:12)

The report highlights the benefits of engaging with varied educational models, mentioning that such experiences enhance their teaching practices and offer students broader academic perspectives. These results provide a basis for developing the school's future strategies, focused on improving educational standards, fostering global research partnerships, and advancing training in English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Within this framework, the present study seeks to address two key questions: **To what extent does ESP training contribute to the professional development of teachers at the Higher School of Applied Sciences, Tlemcen and how can ESP training enhance the capacity of teachers to strengthen the international academic reputation of the institution?**

Through these questions, the report emphasizes the key role of ESP in providing teachers with the linguistic and pedagogical skills that foster their professional development and enhance the institution's international reputation.

## **2. Overview of Educational Setting at ESSAT**

At the Higher School of Applied Sciences in Tlemcen, training in professional development and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) plays a crucial role in improving the quality of education and preparing teachers for international opportunities. The report emphasized the importance of equipping the school with the necessary tools and resources to participate in international research collaborations, enhance teaching methods, and promote their involvement through innovative approaches.

Additionally, ESP training plays a vital role in improving communication skills, particularly in academic and professional contexts, which are crucial for teachers, Crystal (2003) has emphasized the importance of the English language in modern society Cook explained that English is highly required for scientific writing and reading, "English is a requirement for scientific writing and reading: Few scientists can make a proper contribution to their field without having access to English, either in person or through the translation of one kind or another.(Cook, 2008: 200). Indeed, English plays a crucial role in modern society; moreover, it is indispensable for scientific communication, since researchers need access to it either directly or through translation in order to contribute effectively to their fields. This paper explores the current initiatives, the needs identified through surveys, and the opportunities for growth in professional development and ESP training at ESSAT, aiming to align the institution with international standards and promote a dynamic academic environment.

Moreover, ESP training helps improve language skills needed for academic and professional success. For students, learning academic English and technical communication is essential in their studies when competing in the global job market. Sifakis, N.C. (2003) claims that ‘It is important to remember that the ESP domain is characterized by a wide diversity—different learners, different classes, different needs, different syllabi, and different teachers’. (Sifakis, 2003:195) For teachers, it improves their ability to teach in English, communicate with native speakers, take part in research projects, and create materials for diverse learners. The status of ESP today is seen as important and needs more awareness. Moreover, ESP is characterized by diversity in learners, needs, and teaching contexts, while its practice enhances teachers’ skills and highlights the need for greater awareness of its importance. According to Robinson (1991)

*“ESP is now regarded as a specific activity involving education, preparation and practice, and it covers three key areas of knowledge, namely, pedagogy, language, and the .... This is because ESP courses are normally goal-oriented and aimed at equipping learners with skills they need for academic purposes or workplace purposes; this would then enable them to comprehend and communicate more efficiently in their respective language environment. He added in this sense, “Another notable feature of ESP courses is that they are conducted over a short period of time. This means that their objectives are clearly specified and involve collaboration and negotiation with all those who are involved in the course, that is, organizers, teachers, sponsors and learners.” (Robinson, 1991:3)*

In fact, ESP is a goal-oriented activity combining pedagogy, language, and subject knowledge, designed to equip learners with academic or workplace skills; moreover, its courses are short, clearly defined, and require collaboration among all stakeholders. The growing need for ESP training supports ESSAT’s goal of preparing teachers to participate in international academic exchanges, research, and professional networks.

Through this paper, we analyse the current situation of professional development and ESP training at the school, examining the needs highlighted by teachers. By doing so, the Higher School aims to provide a comprehensive framework for boosting teaching excellence, increasing research productivity, and preparing teachers to effectively engage in the professional world. This effort involves aligning the school’s initiatives with global educational best practices while providing assistance in language proficiency, innovative teaching methods, and international cooperation. From the perspective Global Education Charter, the Maastricht Global Education Declaration (2002) states;

*“Global education is education that opens people’s eyes and minds to the realities of the globalised world and awakens them to bring about a world of greater justice, equity and Human Rights for all. Global education is understood to encompass Development Education, Human Rights Education, Education for Sustainability, Education for Peace and Conflict Prevention and Intercultural Education; being the global dimension of Education for Citizenship”. (The Maastricht Global Education Declaration, 2002:11)*

Moreover, global education raises awareness of global realities and fosters justice, equity, and human rights by integrating sustainability, peace, intercultural understanding, and citizenship education.

### **3. Teaching ESP at the Higher School of Applied Sciences**

Improving teaching quality and enhancing training in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is essential. As Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) state that ESP "is defined to meet specific needs of the learner, makes use of the underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves, and is centered on the language, skills, discourse, and genres appropriate to these activities." (Dudley-Evans and St John (1998: 4–5). Thus, ESP is designed to address learners' specific needs by drawing on the methods of their field and focusing on the relevant language and skills.

As the global educational environment becomes more interconnected, ESSAT acknowledges the significance of empowering lecturers with the necessary tools and knowledge to engage in international research partnerships, implement innovative teaching methods, and connect effectively with students in a dynamic academic setting. Likewise, students' proficiency in academic English and their capability to communicate in professional environments are vital for their success in higher education and the global market.

### **4. Case Study**

This research study aims to investigate the role of ESP skills in enhancing teachers' professional development at the Higher School of Applied Sciences, Tlemcen. To ensure an understanding of the educational context, teachers from various academic levels (preparatory cycle and second cycle) participated in this study. Their opinions were collected through surveys, providing valuable feedback on pedagogical approaches, student engagement, and the general quality of learning.

#### **4.1. Context and Participants**

In this investigation, we collected answers from 61 teachers at the Higher School of Applied Sciences in Tlemcen. They were asked to complete the questionnaire via a Google form. The form includes a questionnaire designed for teachers. The aim of this questionnaire is to identify the specific needs of the teachers and determine the objectives related to the program, international collaboration, and training. As Oppenheim, 1992 emphasizes, as Creswell (2014) asserts, "The survey is one of the most popular research instruments, as it allows the researcher to collect data from a large sample in a systematic way, making it particularly useful in educational research." (Creswell, 2014:376) This highlights the importance of questionnaire construction to ensure relevant and reliable data collection.

#### **4.2. Data Collection**

Based on the results obtained from the teacher survey, we gathered interesting and pertinent data concerning the engagement of educators and learners in professional training and academic contexts. As Patton (2002) asserts, "What gets measured gets valued; what gets measured and fed back gets improved." This reveals the importance of structured data in understanding best practices and supporting continuous improvement in education.

##### **4.2.1. Teacher's Survey**

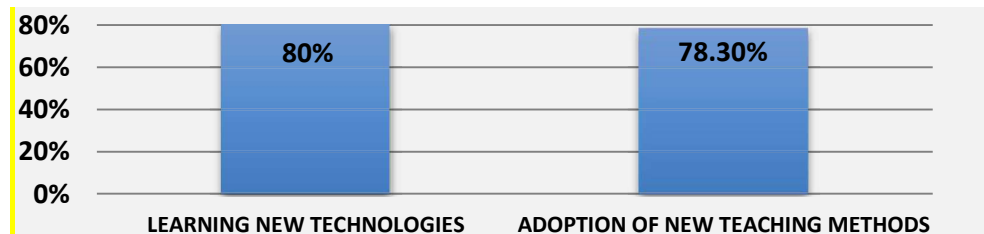
The Higher School of Applied Sciences in Tlemcen conducted a survey to better understand the needs and preferences of its teachers in relation to program

development, international collaboration, and digital literacy training. This survey aimed to determine the types of training and support that teachers require to improve their teaching methods in ESP, engage more effectively with students, and participate in international research collaborations. These align with findings in Algeria where “a noticeable discrepancy between teachers’ overall digital literacy and their digital literacy within the CBA” has been observed, attributed to an “outdated curriculum which places minimal emphasis on digital competencies.” (Hassani & Meharèt, 2024: 155) The following findings emphasise the elements where support and development are most needed, as well as the opportunities participants hope to explore through exchange programs and digital skills programs.

#### 4.2.2. International Collaboration and Mobility

##### 4.2.2.1 What support, especially in ESP, enables collaboration in international research?”

The majority of participants emphasized the importance of improving their skills in two areas: learning new technologies and adopting innovative teaching methods, with the objective of enhancing teaching practices and aligning with modern educational standards. A significant 80% expressed interest in staying updated with emerging technologies, while 78.3% stressed adopting new pedagogical approaches to achieve better student engagement and quality education. Regarding joint research projects with international partners, most of the 60 responses indicated a need for support, particularly in ESP-related skills such as academic writing and project preparation, reflecting the objective of strengthening international collaboration. Furthermore, many participants emphasized the importance of access to physico-chemical analysis platforms, in line with the objective of ensuring reliable and high-quality research outcomes.

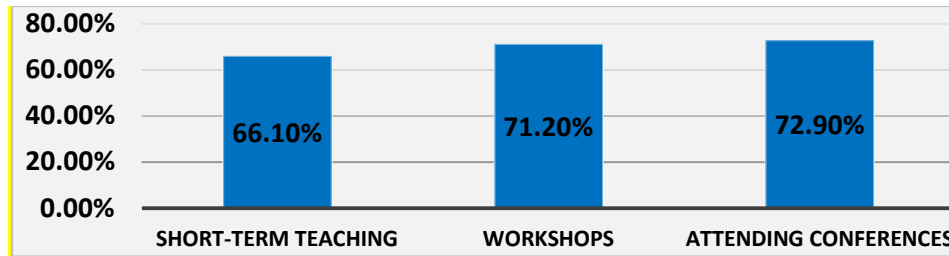


**Figure 1.** Enhancing ESP Teaching through Technology and Pedagogical Innovation

##### 4.2.2.2. What opportunities would you like to explore during exchange programs with foreign universities?

Improving ESP skills is considered essential for successful participation in global academic exchanges, as it facilitates professional communication, collaborative research, and meaningful contributions in international settings. The aim is to identify the main opportunities that lecturers seek during exchange programs with foreign universities. Among the 59 responses, participants expressed a strong interest in a range of opportunities during exchange programs with foreign universities. The most commonly cited opportunities were scientific collaboration

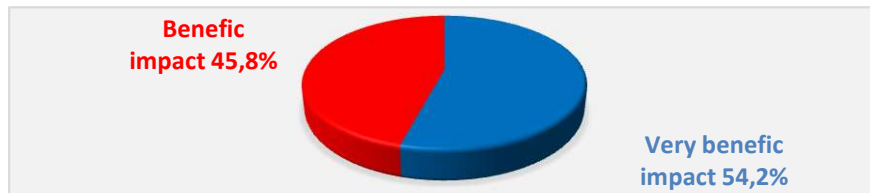
(86.7%) and funding for joint research projects (76.7%). Respondents also showed interest in attending conferences (72.9%), participating in workshops (71.2%), and undertaking short-term teaching assignments (66.1%). Additionally, some respondents also expressed interest in long-term training programs aimed at improving their academic and research skills. Overall, these responses indicate a strong interest in international exchange programs, particularly in scientific partnership and joint research funding, followed by participation in conferences, workshops, and short-term teaching assignments.



**Figure 2.** Enhancing Exchange Program Participation through ESP Training

**4.2.2.3. Exposure to different cultures and educational practices can enhance ESP teaching methods.**

The objective of this analysis is to examine how international exposure contributes to enhancing ESP teaching practices. The responses further suggest that exposure to diverse cultural perspectives and educational practices can enhance teaching methods by fostering more inclusive, adaptable, and engaging learning environments with a total of 59 responses. This enables lecturers to engage more effectively with students from diverse backgrounds, and enriches the educational experience for both teachers and students. Thus, international exposure is not only an opportunity for mobility but also a powerful means of enriching ESP teaching and student engagement.



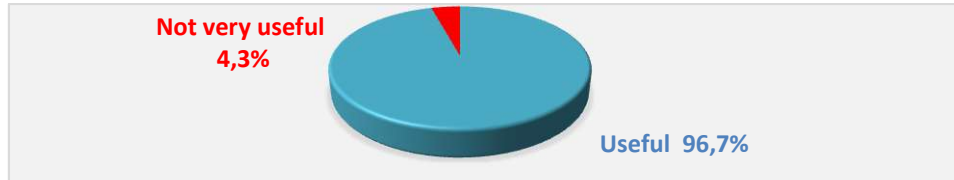
**Figure 3.** Cultural and Educational Diversity on ESP Teaching

**4.2.3. Training and Professional Development**

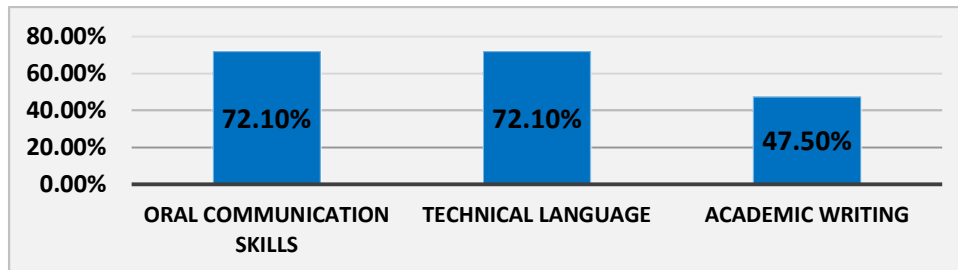
**4.2.3.1. What type of training would be most useful to you?**

The objective of this analysis is to identify the types of training most useful for enhancing teaching practices. Among 61 participants, the majority (96.7%) emphasized the importance of practical training, showing a clear preference for applied methods over theoretical ones. Other key areas of interest included oral communication (72.1%), technical language proficiency (72.1%), and academic writing skills (47.5%). Overall, the findings highlight the need for training initiatives

that prioritize practical application and communication competencies essential for effective teaching.



**Figure 4.** Useful Training Areas for Professional Development

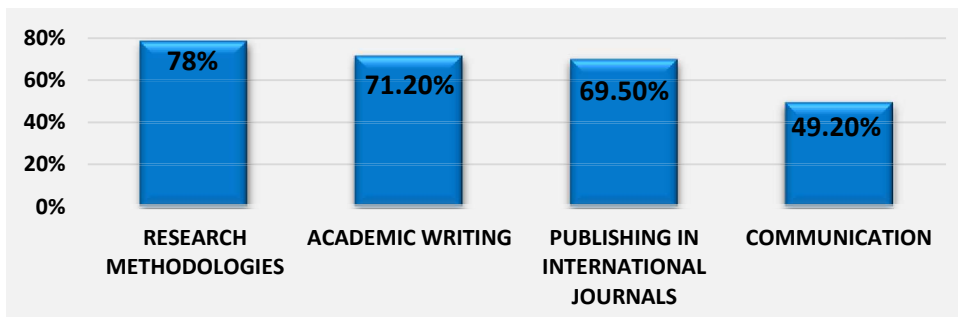


**Figure 5.** ESP Skills Needed for Professional Development

The majority of participants emphasised practical training to enhance their teaching, favoring suitable methods. Communication skills, technical language, and academic writing were also identified as important areas for development.

**4.2.3.2. Would you be interested in receiving training on the following topics?**

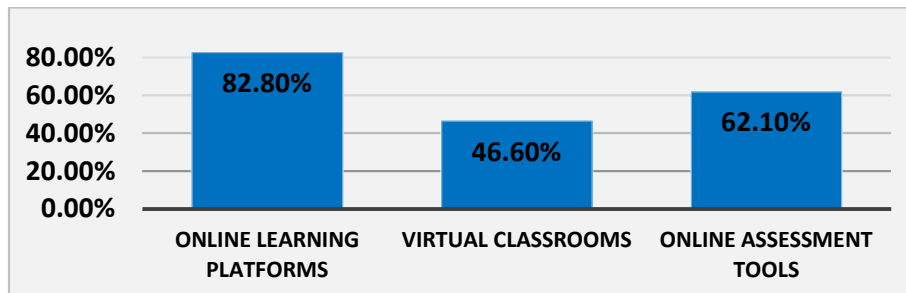
The objective of this analysis is to determine lecturers' priorities for training topics that support academic and professional development. Based on 59 responses, research methodologies (78%), academic writing (71.2%), publishing in international journals (69.5%), and communication (49.2%) were identified as the most valuable areas. Several participants also highlighted the importance of ESP training to improve academic communication in international research contexts and to increase publication opportunities in high-impact journals. Overall, the findings confirm that ESP is not only essential for teaching but also plays a central role in strengthening research, collaboration, and international visibility.



**Figure 6.** Enhancing Research Skills through ESP

#### 4.2.3.3. What types of digital literacy training would you find most valuable?

This analysis seeks to highlight the areas of digital literacy training that lecturers consider most valuable. From 58 responses, the highest priorities were online learning platforms (82.8%), virtual classrooms (62.1%), and online assessment tools (46.6%). Additionally, participants placed strong value on research methodologies (78%), academic writing (71.2%), publishing in international journals (69.5%), and communication (49.2%). These findings emphasize the dual importance of digital literacy and ESP training in equipping lecturers to engage in international research, publish in global journals, and communicate effectively in their professional fields.



**Figure 7.** Valuable Digital Literacy Training for Enhanced Teaching and Research

By integrating ESP training into these initiatives, the institution can better equip lecturers to engage in international research, publish in global academic journals, and communicate effectively within their professional domains. These recommendations aim to support teachers' efforts toward more effective and innovative educational strategies.

## 5. Data Analysis

The findings from the teacher survey conducted at the Higher School of Applied Sciences in Tlemcen reveal a strong need for professional development in key areas such as technological integration, pedagogical innovation, and international collaboration. The responses indicate that many lecturers are interested in enhancing their English for Specific Purposes (ESP) competencies, particularly in ways that are practical and directly relevant to their teaching and research responsibilities.

One of the major findings collected from the data is the demand for targeted ESP training that focuses on improving academic communication skills, including writing for publication, presenting research findings, and participating in international scholarly discourse. As Boudersa asserts, "ESP teachers are supposed to teach not only the English language, but they are required to teach the English language through specific-field(s) content," (Boudersa 2021:5) reinforcing the importance of specialized ESP training. Such training is not only seen as a tool for professional development but also as a strategic necessity for increasing global engagement and institutional visibility. Furthermore, the lecturers expressed a strong interest in opportunities that allow for exposure to diverse educational systems and cultural practices. They view international partnerships, academic exchanges, and

attendance at global conferences as valuable means of enriching their own teaching practices and fostering student motivation and engagement.

The data also highlights the importance of institutional support mechanisms. These include access to modern research platforms and facilities, digital literacy programs, and interesting structures that recognise and reward excellence in teaching and research. Without adequate infrastructure and continuous training, efforts to internationalize and modernize teaching practices may remain limited. Moving forward, it is essential for the institution to implement aligning training programs with international standards, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, and ensuring that staff has the tools and support needed to innovate and excel in their fields.

In conclusion, the survey results show a clear direction for creating a more dynamic, internationally connected, and professionally strong academic community at the Higher School in Tlemcen.

## **6. Discussion**

The teacher survey conducted at the Higher School of Applied Sciences in Tlemcen reveals a strong need for professional development in key areas such as technological integration, pedagogical innovation; and international collaboration. The responses indicate that many lecturers are interested in enhancing their English for Specific Purposes (ESP) competencies, particularly in ways that are practical and relevant to their teaching and research responsibilities.

First, the strong interest expressed by teachers in practical training (96.7%) shows a clear preference for applied approaches rather than purely theoretical ones. This suggests that professional development programs should focus on active learning methods, such as workshops, conferences, and collaborative projects, to better meet lecturers' needs. Practical training is important not only for improving classroom teaching but also for enhancing teachers' ability to participate in international research.

Second, the focus on ESP-related skills such as oral communication, technical language, and academic writing highlights the importance of English in both teaching and research. Teachers see English proficiency as a bridge to international collaboration, access to global knowledge, and participation in exchanges. This aligns earlier studies that highlight ESP as central to preparing academics for global engagement.

Third, teachers expressed strong interest in international collaboration and mobility. They prioritised scientific partnerships, joint research funding, and participation in conferences and workshops. Exposure to different educational systems and cultures was also regarded as a way to improve teaching methods and increase student motivation.

Fourth, the survey highlighted the growing role of digital literacy in teaching and research. Teachers were interested in training on online platforms, virtual classrooms, assessment tools, and strategies for publishing in international journals. This reflects the increasing digitalization of higher education and the need for lecturers to use technology effectively.

Finally, the results point to the need for institutional support. Teachers stressed the importance of access to research facilities, scientific platforms, and programs that recognize and reward academic excellence. Without this support, it is difficult for

teachers to fully engage in international research or adopt innovative teaching practices.

Overall, the findings highlight that while ESSAT has made progress, gaps remain. Strengthening ESP training, investing in digital literacy, and expanding international partnerships are key strategies. Aligning teacher development with international standards will improve teaching quality and raise the school's reputation worldwide.

### **6.1. Recommendations/Teachers Survey at ESSA-Tlemcen**

Based on the findings of this study, some key elements have been identified. The following suggestions of the teacher survey aim to identify the needs of the participants and to support the professional growth of the lecturers, with a particular emphasis on enhancing **ESP** competencies to facilitate international collaboration and effective communication in specialised fields.

- Establish a Research Support Office.
- Improve Access to Research Platforms and Facilities.
- Expand International Partnerships and Exchange Programs.
- Provide Practical ESP Training Focused on Communication and Research.
- Support Participation in International Conferences and Workshops.
- Implement Digital Literacy Training Programs.
- Promote Cultural Exchange and Interdisciplinary Collaboration.
- Develop ESP-Focused Academic Writing and Publishing Programs.
- Create Incentive Programs for Teaching and Research Excellence.
- Establish a Faculty Development Fund.

## **7. Conclusion**

In conclusion, the data collected from the teacher survey at the Higher School of Applied Sciences in Tlemcen provides valuable insights into the needs and objectives. By using a well-structured questionnaire, we were able to systematically gather relevant information that highlights key areas for improvement in professional development, ESP training programs, and international collaboration. The findings emphasize the importance of equipping lecturers with the necessary skills and knowledge to engage in global academic and professional environments. Additionally, some answers point out the need for enhanced English language proficiency and exposure to intercultural communication, both essential for success in higher education and the global workforce. Regarding the first research question, the results indicate that ESP training significantly contributes to teacher professional development by improving linguistic competence, broadening teaching methodologies, and enhancing confidence in academic communication. Concerning the second question, the findings show that ESP training strengthens the institution's international academic reputation by enabling teachers to participate more actively in international conferences, publish in international journals, and engage in global research networks.

Moving forward, the results will serve as a foundation for shaping the higher school's future strategies, ensuring that lecturers are well-prepared to succeed in this competitive world. In the future, these results will help the Higher School plan better strategies. This will make sure that teachers are ready to succeed in a competitive world. By meeting the needs of the teachers, the school can grow into a stronger, more international, and high-quality institution. These actions will help

the school match international standards. A strong focus on teacher development is the key to future success.

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