The English Assessment Program

GUIDELINES to ENGLISH LANGUAGE CERTIFICATION

FOR ALL INDIVIDUALS, REGARDLESS OF CITIZENSHIP, FOR WHOM ENGLISH IS NOT THE NATIVE LANGUAGE

You need to be certified as proficient in English if:

- English is not your native language, and
- You expect to hold a position that involves instructional activity, and,
- Your duties will include any contact with students.

Categories of appointment include, but are not limited to:

- Graduate Teaching Assistants
- Instructors
- Lecturers
- Adjunct Faculty Members (some exemptions apply; see page 2)
- Visiting Faculty Members (some exemptions apply; see page 2)

You do not need to be certified as proficient in English if:

- Your appointment is in the Modern Languages Department, or
- You will serve as a Graduate Research Assistant; or
- Your duties will include no contact with students.

You should begin the certification process early in the semester before you will hold an appointment that involves instructional contact with students.

To obtain certification, make an appointment to visit the English Assessment Program office. If you have them available, please bring copies of your IBT or IELTS scores and transcripts from bachelor’s or master’s degrees completed in the US.

Please understand that obtaining English proficiency certification is your responsibility. If you are not certified, your department may not be able to give you an appointment.
Other Certifications:

Adjunct and Visiting Faculty: Some Adjunct or Visiting faculty members from industry, government, and other institutions may be exempted from English Assessment Program certification. For this alternative certification, the dean of the instructor’s college must certify in writing to the Senior Vice President and Provost that the instructor is proficient in English. (see Faculty Handbook Section 3.29.2)

Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty: Tenured or tenure-track faculty members should obtain certification through their Department Chair/Director. (see Faculty Handbook Section 3.29.3)

(a) The English proficiency of non-native speaker applicants for all faculty positions must be closely scrutinized and evaluated during the lecture-interview stage of the faculty recruitment process, taking into account the level and maturity of the students the faculty member will be expected to teach.

(b) For all newly appointed tenured and tenure-track faculty for whom English is not the native language, (1) the chair or director of the academic unit must certify in writing to the Senior Vice President and Provost that the instructor is proficient in English, and (2) a copy of the letter of evaluation based on classroom observation (see Faculty Handbook Section 3.29.4) must be submitted to the Senior Vice President and Provost no later than the end of a new instructor’s second semester of appointment.

Special Certification in Unusual Circumstances: Screening criteria for language skills, no matter how carefully drawn, will inevitably impose testing requirements on some instructors who are clearly proficient in English. Therefore, instructors who believe that the testing requirements should not apply because of unusual experience or circumstances may request special certification via interview. Such a request should be made in writing to the Dean of the Graduate College and should explain why regular testing should not be required. The instructor’s chair or director should also send a letter of support for special certification. The Dean may then conduct an interview with the instructor to determine whether the testing exemption is warranted and whether the instructor should be certified as proficient, and will notify the instructor, the department, and the Provost of the decision. The Graduate College must receive the request for special certification before the start of the semester for which certification is required.

We will be happy to give you details.
I. Instructing:

Level A GTAs who fulfill any of the following duties will be appointed to Instructing positions:

- Serve as the instructor of record for any course,
- Conduct laboratory sections,
- Conduct discussion sections,
- Conduct any course with a designated course number,
- Conduct any instructional activity which results in a grade (or portion of the final grade) given by the Graduate Teaching Assistant,
- Conduct any instructional activity in which new material is presented, or
- Conduct any instructional activity in which attendance by students is required

II. Provisional Instructing:

The Provisional Instructing appointment will be required for all Level B Graduate Teaching Assistants who:

- Serve as the instructor of record for any course,
- Conduct laboratory sections,
- Conduct discussion sections,
- Conduct any course with a designated course number,
- Conduct any instructional activity which results in a grade (or portion of the final grade) given by the Graduate Teaching Assistant,
- Conduct any instructional activity in which new material is presented, or
- Conduct any instructional activity in which attendance by students is required

1. Provisional Instructing appointments allow the GTA to instruct courses, subject to these limitations:

   a) Duties will not involve more than brief written communication with students, and a faculty member proficient in written English will be responsible for assuring the quality of such communication.

   b) Duties will not involve any correspondence with parties outside the university, e.g. letters of recommendation and similar documents, without prior review of such correspondence by a faculty member proficient in written English.

2. Provisional Instructing Appointments may be renewed as follows:

   a) Indefinitely: Provisional Instructing appointments to teach laboratory sections, discussion sections or other courses ancillary or secondary to a lecture course may be granted for an unlimited number of semesters.

      When the appointment involves teaching a laboratory section, discussion section, or other course that is ancillary to a lecture course, the appointment may be renewed indefinitely. In this case, the instructor of record in the lecture course must be certified as proficient in both spoken and written English, and the lecture course instructor assumes responsibility for reviewing all written communications as required in Section 1 above.
b) One Semester Only: A Provisional Instructing appointment to teach a course that stands alone, i.e., is not ancillary or secondary to a lecture course, may be granted for one semester only. The appointment may not be renewed in subsequent semesters.

When the appointment involves teaching a course that stands alone, i.e. is not ancillary to a lecture course, the appointment will be for one semester only. In this case, a faculty member proficient in written English will be responsible for reviewing written communications as required in Section 1 above.

III. Supporting:

Supporting positions are assigned to Level A, Level B, or Level C GTAs who assist professors by fulfilling duties other than those described as duties of the Instructing position (see above).

Supporting GTAs have instructional contact with students, but the duties can be logically described as helping, rather than instructing.

Examples are:
- office hours
- non-compulsory discussions of homework assignments or examinations
- individual help in classes, laboratories, or help centers

1. In every activity conducted by a GTA—Supporting, the following limitations will apply:
   a) Students will be receiving assistance over and above the required instruction of the course.
   b) Students will have direct access to a faculty member for further assistance, and the students will be aware of the faculty member and his/her availability.
   c) A faculty member will hold direct responsibility for the learning experience of the students and for the successful performance of the Graduate Teaching Assistant.
   d) Any formal written work for use by students, such as handouts, Power Points, or examinations will be reviewed by the supervisor.

2. Supervision

Every student who is appointed to a GTA—Supporting position will be directly supervised by a faculty member named on the Personnel Action Form.

a) The Supervisor will be the instructor of record in the class in which the GTA assists. If the GTA is not attached to a particular class, the supervisor may be the supervisor of the instructional unit in which the GTA assists, the Graduate Liaison, or the Department Chair or Director. If no faculty member takes responsibility for a Supporting GTA, no appointment will be made.

b) The supervisor will be directly responsible for:
   - Ensuring that the duties of the GTA fall within the definition of the Supporting position.
   - Ensuring the quality of the learning experience for the students.
   - Reviewing and ensuring the quality of all written work prepared by the GTA for or on behalf of students.
   - Ensuring the successful performance of the Graduate Teaching Assistant. The faculty member will terminate duties involving student contact if, in his or her judgment, the Graduate Teaching Assistant is not performing them successfully based on issues of language or cultural differences. In this circumstance, the Graduate Teaching Assistant must obtain a new Certification to Support before being assigned duties involving student contact.
**IV. No Contact:**

*No Contact* positions may be assigned to GTAs who have no English certification or to **Level A**, **Level B**, or **Level C** GTAs.

*No Contact* positions are assigned to GTAs who fulfill duties that do not require direct instructional contact with students.

Examples are:

- Grading papers or examinations for a professor, and having no discussion of the grades with students.
- Preparing laboratories or classrooms for a class
CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

You may obtain English Assessment Program Certification by passing the designated tests in oral, aural, and written English or by presenting appropriate evidence of their equivalents. When you complete the requirements, your department will be notified of your eligibility for appointments. When you obtain Certification Level A, you will receive a Letter of Certification.

Certification Level A:

Level A GTAs CAN:

- **Instruct a lecture course** (A lecture course is not ancillary or secondary to any other course.)
- **Instruct a laboratory or discussion course** (A laboratory or discussion course is ancillary or secondary to another course.)
- **Serve in a Supporting position** (Supporting GTAs can conduct help sessions, office hours, individual discussions of homework assignments or examinations, or provide individual help in classes or laboratories.)
- **Serve in a No Contact position** (No Contact GTAs can grade papers or help professors but have no direct instructional contact with students.)

For Certification Level A, the following evidence of proficiency will be required:

**Oral/Aural Requirement**
- A score of 45 or higher on the SPEAK Test administered by the English Assessment Program
- OR
- An Internet-Based TOEFL score of 24 or higher on the Speaking section
- OR
- An IELTS score of 7.0 or higher on the Speaking section
- OR
- A master’s degree from an accredited four year U.S. college or university AND
- A grade of **Pass to Instruct** on the TEACH Test.

**Written Requirement**
- A grade of **Pass to Instruct** on the English Assessment Program Written English Proficiency Examination,
- OR
- A grade of 6.0 on the Educational Testing Service TWE,
- OR
- A score of 30 on the Writing Skills section of the Internet-Based TOEFL (iBT)
- OR
- An official transcript of the student’s college record showing an undergraduate degree from an accredited four-year American college or university. The transcript must show the standard (not ESL) undergraduate two-semester sequence of English composition courses with grades of “B” or better taken at a four-year accredited American college or university.
Certification Level B:

Level B GTAs CAN:

- **Provisionally Instruct a lecture course for a single semester** (A lecture course is not ancillary or secondary to any other course.)
  
  Provisional appointments are subject to certain limitations (see page 3).

- **Provisionally Instruct a laboratory or discussion course on a renewable basis** (A laboratory or discussion course is ancillary to another course.)
  
  Provisional appointments are subject to certain limitations (see page 3).

- **Serve in a Supporting position** (Supporting GTAs can conduct help sessions, office hours, individual discussions of homework assignments or examinations, or provide individual help in classes or laboratories.)

- **Serve in a No Contact position** (No Contact GTAs can grade papers or help professors but have no direct instructional contact with students.)

Level B GTAs CANNOT:

- Instruct a lecture course for more than a single semester

For Certification Level B, the following evidence of proficiency will be required:

- **Oral/Aural Requirement**
  
  - A score of 45 or higher on the SPEAK Test administered by the English Assessment Program
  
  OR
  
  - An Internet-Based TOEFL score of 24 or higher on the Speaking section
  
  OR
  
  - An IELTS score of 7.0 or higher on the Speaking section
  
  OR
  
  - A master’s degree from an accredited four year U.S. college or university
  
  AND
  
  - A grade of Pass to Instruct on the TEACH Test.

- **Written Requirement**
  
  - A computer-based TOEFL score of 213 or higher,
  
  OR
  
  - A paper-based TOEFL score of 550 or higher,
  
  OR
  
  - An Internet-Based TOEFL (iBT) score of 79 or higher,
  
  OR
  
  - An IELTS Overall Band Score of 6.5 or higher
  
  OR
  
  - A grade of Pass to Support or higher on the English Assessment Program Written English Proficiency Examination,
  
  OR
  
  - A grade of 4.5 or higher on the Educational Testing Service TWE,
  
  OR
  
  - A master’s degree from an accredited four-year U.S. college or university
Certification Level C:

Level C GTAs CAN:

- Serve in a Supporting position (Supporting GTAs can conduct help sessions, office hours, individual discussions of homework assignments or examinations, or provide individual help in classes or laboratories)
- Serve in a No Contact position – (No Contact GTAs can grade papers or help professors but have no direct instructional contact with students.)

Level C GTAs CANNOT:

- Instruct any class for any period of time

For Certification Level C, the following evidence of proficiency will be required:

- Oral/Aural Requirement
  - A score of 45 or higher on the SPEAK Test administered by the English Assessment Program
  - An Internet-Based TOEFL score of 24 or higher on the Speaking section
  - An IELTS score of 7.0 or higher on the Speaking section
  - A master’s degree from an accredited four-year U.S. college or university
  - A grade of Pass to Support on the TEACH Test.

- Written Requirement
  - A computer-based TOEFL score of 213 or higher,
  - A paper-based TOEFL score of 550 or higher,
  - An Internet-Based TOEFL (iBT) score of 79 or higher,
  - An IELTS Overall Band Score of 6.5 or higher
  - A grade of Pass to Instruct or Pass to Support or higher on the English Assessment Program Written English Proficiency Examination,
  - A grade of 4.5 or higher on the Educational Testing Service TWE,
  - A master’s degree from an accredited four-year U.S. college or university
  - An official transcript of the student’s college record showing an undergraduate degree from an accredited four-year U.S. college or university. The transcript must show the standard (not ESL) undergraduate two-semester sequence of English composition courses with grades of “B” or better taken at a four-year accredited American college or university.
**SPEAK Test:**

The SPEAK Test is a taped test of oral skills. The test lasts about 30 minutes.

The SPEAK Test is scheduled by individual appointment. The charge for each SPEAK Test is $50.00 and examinees may take the test two times each semester (Fall, Spring, Summer).

**SPEAK Test Practice Handbooks are available in Bizzell Memorial Library at the main circulation desk. The handbook may be checked out for 24 hours.**

**SPEAK Test or iBT Scores and What They Mean**

**SPEAK Test**

45 or higher = The examinee is qualified to take a TEACH Test.

Below 45 = The examinee has not qualified to take a TEACH Test.

Scores of SPEAK Tests administered at other institutions will not be accepted.

**Internet-Based TOEFL (iBT)**

An Internet-Based TOEFL score of 24 or higher on the Speaking section = The examinee is qualified to take a TEACH Test

A score of below 24 on the Speaking Section = The examinee has not qualified to take a TEACH Test based on the iBT; he/she may qualify via the SPEAK Test.

**TEACH Test:**

The Teach Test is taken by examinees who:

a) Score 45 or higher on the SPEAK Test,

   **OR**

b) Have an Internet-Based TOEFL score of 24 or higher on the Speaking section

**Description of the Test**

The TEACH Test assesses the examinee’s ability to conduct an undergraduate-level class in his/her field. The examinee is asked to conduct a 5-10 minute lesson on one of two simple topics. Topics are provided by the examinee’s department and are available from our office 24 hours prior to the test. The charge for the TEACH Test is $50.00 and it is given one time per semester (Fall, Spring, and Summer) before the start of classes.

**A. Grading Criteria**
The examinee is rated by a panel of observers whose judgment to pass must be unanimous. The presentation will be graded holistically; that is, there are no numerical scores or subscores. The panel of observers will base their decision on the following criteria:

1. How well the panel understands the examinee’s English.
2. How well the examinee understands and answers questions and how well the examinee responds to comments and conducts discussion.
3. How well the examinee conducts himself/herself in a student-teacher relationship; that is, how appropriate the examinee’s behavior is as the teacher of an American classroom.
4. How clearly the examinee presents his/her material.

B. Grades and What They Mean

Pass to Instruct
The examinee must demonstrate a high level of proficiency in each of the four areas of the test. If there is any doubt about the examinee’s ability to thrive in the classroom based on the stated criteria, the panel will not pass the examinee at this level.

Pass to Support
The examinee can exhibit some difficulty or hesitation in spoken or aural English but the difficulty must be judged minor by the panel. Any problems in speaking and listening must be described as occasional, not consistent, and all should be such that they can be clarified by the examinee without undue effort when panelists ask for clarification. Examinees who meet this standard may retake the TEACH Test in a future semester in order to receive a Pass to Instruct, however, they are required to view their videotaped presentation prior to taking the TEACH Test again.

Defer
The grade of Defer is not a passing grade. Examinees who receive a grade of Defer may retake the TEACH Test in a subsequent semester. They do not need to retake the SPEAK Test or TSE. Examinees who receive a grade of Defer are required to view their videotaped presentation prior to taking the TEACH Test again.

Fail
Examinees who have taken the TEACH Test three or more times and have not passed will receive a grade of Fail. They will not have an opportunity to retake the TEACH Test until they have earned a score of 45 or higher on a subsequent SPEAK Test.

Written English Proficiency Examination:

The Written English Proficiency Examination is given by the English Assessment Program on assigned dates, at least two times prior to the beginning of each semester (Spring, Summer, and Fall). The charge for each examination is $50.00, and examinees may take the test two times each semester.
Description of the Test

The English Assessment Program Written English Proficiency Examination consists of a 500-word essay on one of two general topics to be announced at the test. Examinees are expected to compose an essay during the testing session. No outside assistance or previously planned work is acceptable, and the essay must respond directly to one of the topics given. The examination lasts four hours. Examinees must supply pencils or pens.

A. Grading Criteria

The English Assessment Program has designated three levels of written proficiency in English for examinees who speak English as a second language: Pass to Instruct, Pass to Support, and No Pass. The following criteria are used to evaluate proficiency:

- correct sentence structure
- correct idiomatic expression
- correct verb tense
- logical organization
- correct diction
- correct spelling
- general command of English

Examinees at all three levels may have some problems in all the above areas; frequency and degree of the errors are the criteria for placement in one of the three categories.

B. Reference Books at the Test

1. Personal books or materials may not be brought to the examination, but the following reference books will be available for use during the test:

   - The American Heritage College Dictionary
   - The American Heritage Dictionary
   - Understanding and Using English Grammar
   - Roget’s International Thesaurus
   - Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English
   - Oxford Dictionary of Phrasal Verbs
   - The Holt Handbook

2. Before the day of the examination, examinees may make an appointment to look at the reference books in the English Assessment Program Office.

C. Grades and What They Mean

Pass to Instruct

Examinations graded Pass to Instruct may demonstrate some minor problems with idiomatic expression, but none that interfere with understanding. The writing may appear to be somewhat stiff or awkward, but the sentences will be logically complete and the ideas will be clear and organized. The writing will resemble that of a competent native speaker. Examinees who receive a grade of Pass to Instruct have completed the written English requirement for Certification to Instruct.
**Pass to Support**

Examinations graded **Pass to Support** will demonstrate some difficulties with sentence structure, spelling, diction, verb tenses, idiomatic expression, or organization. Examinees who receive a grade of **Pass to Support** have completed the written English requirement for Certification to Support.

**No Pass**

Examinations graded **No Pass** will show serious difficulties with sentence structure, spelling, diction, verb tenses, idiomatic expression, and organization. The writing will appear to be literally translated from a foreign language and will be difficult to follow. Examinees who receive a grade of **No Pass** have not completed the written English requirement.

Examinees are encouraged to review their tests.

**English Composition Courses as part of a U.S. Undergraduate Degree:**

The individual must present an official transcript of the student’s college record showing an undergraduate degree from an accredited four-year American college or university. The transcript must show the standard (not ESL) undergraduate two-semester sequence of English composition courses with grades of “B” or better taken at a four-year accredited American college or university.

**APPEALS**

Graduate student appeals of Written English Proficiency Examination and TEACH Test grades will be handled as Graduate Assistant Appeals. Appeals filed by faculty members, and those seeking faculty appointments will be handled by the appropriate units.

**ENGLISH ASSESSMENT PROGRAM CLASSES**

Examinees who do not pass the English proficiency tests are encouraged to take the written and spoken English skills classes offered by the English Assessment Program during the Fall and/or Spring semesters.

**CLASSROOM INTERVENTION and REVOCATION of CERTIFICATION**

If teaching evaluations or other information suggests that a certified graduate teaching assistant is having classroom difficulty based on English language and communication issues, the English Assessment Program will request early intervention from the Dean of the Graduate College, who will forward the recommendation to the relevant academic dean. Upon the academic dean’s approval, a representative of the English Assessment Program will observe the class and make recommendations, and, if necessary, will ask for assistance with pedagogy from the Teaching and Learning Program. The academic dean may recommend further measures.

If the problem cannot be solved, the Dean of the Graduate College will have the option to revoke the teaching assistant’s English language certification. Revocation will require that the teaching assistant be removed from the classroom. This action will be taken only when it is clearly in the best interest of the students in the class. The Provost will be notified of the action, and the teaching assistant may appeal the decision to the Provost.