

ENGLISH LANGUAGE CERTIFICATION EXAM (ELCE) GUIDELINES FOR NONNATIVE SPEAKING GRADUATE STUDENTS

Attachment 1: Graduate Division Policy on International TAs

A screening panel consisting of at least two members, a faculty member and a linguist, will assess the English language proficiency of new nonnative speaking graduate students who are candidates for teaching assistantships. Each member of the panel plays an important role in determining whether a nonnative speaking graduate student meets the minimum level of proficiency necessary for a teaching assistantship.

Faculty and Linguist Roles

The faculty member is the expert in the student's discipline. This person will ask questions typically asked by undergraduates in class, prompt the student for further explanation or clarification, and assess for appropriate and clear responses.

The linguist, who is appointed by the English Language Program for International Instructors (ELP-ii), will assist in the interview and assess for weaknesses in speech production. Since the linguist may not have any knowledge of the discipline, the linguist can prompt the student for further explanation or clarification of the topic.

Proficiency

In the context of the oral interview, the minimum level of English language proficiency can be defined as the graduate student's ability to respond appropriately to questions of a general and discipline-specific nature with comprehensible pronunciation. The student should be able to successfully interact and communicate ideas given a 10-15 minute interview.

In reaching its decision, the panel will consider the following areas of language competency:

1. pronunciation
2. listening comprehension
3. general vocabulary
4. discipline-specific vocabulary
5. smoothness/fluidity
6. speed
7. rhythm and intonation
8. grammatical accuracy
9. modulation of voice
10. organizational clarity

The panel should also consider the use of communication techniques which assist in compensating for some language weaknesses. Those communication techniques include the following:

1. eye contact
2. boardwork
3. manner (confidence)
4. body language

Screening Recommendations

Together, the panel members determine whether the student meets or exceeds the minimum level of proficiency.

FAIL: If the student does not meet the minimum level of proficiency, the student will be required to participate in the ELP-ii and may not be assigned a teaching assistantship or any other position involving undergraduate contact.

PROVISIONAL PASS/PASS WITH CONDITIONAL CERTIFICATION: If the student does not fully meet minimum proficiency and needs additional language training, the student may be assigned as a teaching assistant, grader or reader provided the student participates in the ELP-ii before or concurrent with the TAship.

PASS: If the student meets or exceeds the minimum level of proficiency, the student may be assigned as a teaching assistant.

Students who receive a recommendation of **FAIL** or **PROVISIONAL PASS** must be rescreened before the start of the following quarter. Students who receive a **PASS** or **PASS WITH CONDITIONAL CERTIFICATION** (upon successful completion of recommended skill work) will not be tested again.

Upon completion of the screening, the linguist will return all test materials to the ELP-ii representative, who will inform the department administrator of the results. In coordination with the department, the ELP-ii representative will notify the students of the results.