

# Demonstration of English Language Proficiency

## I. Scope

This policy establishes the English language proficiency requirements for all non-immigrants who seek to study (or pursue a J-1 program) at Washington University in St. Louis (WashU) and the responsibility of the university to determine that international students and scholars possess the level of proficiency in the English language necessary to succeed in their respective course of study and/or program.

This policy applies to all schools and programs at WashU that admit those students or accept scholars (J-1 program), which would include (but not be limited to) individuals holding F and J status. Solely for purposes of this policy, the term *international student* or *scholar* refers to a non-immigrant degree-seeking student or exchange visitor approved to work or study in the United States.

## II. Policy

To ensure a successful academic experience at WashU, international student applicants and prospective J-1 exchange scholars will be required to demonstrate proficiency in the English language by submitting official scores at or above the stated minimum score from any one of the accepted standardized English language proficiency tests as set forth in Appendix A (p. 2).

Official test scores must be received by WashU directly from the test administration agency. Official scores must be less than two years old at the time of the application deadline or the submission of the application. Admitted students who defer enrollment may need to submit new scores if their previously submitted scores have expired.

All academic departments making admission decisions regarding international student applicants (in either F-1 or J-1 status) are responsible for determining, as part of the admission process, that the applicant possesses sufficient English language proficiency to successfully undertake the proposed course of study. The academic department must notify the Office for International Students and Scholars (OISS) that the applicant has demonstrated the requisite English language proficiency according to this policy.

All academic departments sponsoring a J-1 exchange visitor (in scholar categories) are responsible for determining that the prospective scholar possesses sufficient English language proficiency to successfully participate in the department's specific exchange visitor program and to function on a day-to-day basis. The department must notify OISS that the scholar has demonstrated the requisite English language proficiency according to this policy. Prospective J-1 scholars who do not meet the requisite English language proficiency according to this policy may not be sponsored for a J-1 program.

Some schools and programs may require higher minimum test scores than the university minimum requirements based on the level of English proficiency needed for their respective course of study and/or program. Programs should include the required minimum scores in admissions information for international student applicants. International student applicants and scholars should consult with the school and/or program to which they are applying to confirm the required minimum scores.

Academic departments may choose to only accept standardized tests (as set forth in Appendix A (p. 2)) for all individuals to which this policy applies whose first language is not English.

Admitted international students may be required by their school or academic department to complete English language placement assessments and/or courses or programming for English communication support as recommended by the English language support contact for their school.

## III. Policy Exemptions

Exemptions from the English language proficiency test requirements as set forth in this policy are generally permitted for international student applicants who meet one or more of the following criteria:

1. Are a citizen of a country listed in Appendix B (p. 2) or have completed two or more years of study (before the applicant's matriculation term) within the last five years at an English-medium institution in a country listed in Appendix B (p. 2);
2. Earned a bachelor's degree\* or equivalent from a non-United States institution in a country where the official language is English based on the CIA World Factbook;
3. Possesses two years or more of continuous full-time work experience in the United States within the last four years: A current resume and an employment letter on company letterhead stating the dates of employment is required for verification;
4. *Applies to undergraduate applicants only:* Earned a score of 670 or higher on the Evidence-Based Reading & Writing (ERW) section of the SAT or an ACT English score of at least 30;
5. *Applies to applicants to the Two-Year LLM program with the requirement of the Intensive Legal English Program (ILEP) to be taken before their second year:* Earned a score of 5.5 on IELTS Academic, 60 on TOEFL iBT, or 400 on GATEWAY English;
6. *Applies to applicants to the JD program only:* Scored a minimum of 166 on the LSAT in lieu of one of the tests outlined in Appendix A (p. 2);
7. Satisfactorily demonstrated English language proficiency, both spoken and written, in accordance with an approved rubric (approved by the Vice Provost for Graduate Education and International Affairs) administered as part of the academic program's admissions requirements. It is incumbent upon the academic department to ensure the rubric is applied to all international applicants to the degree program (i.e., This option cannot be used solely for ad hoc waiver requests. This exemption must be approved by the Vice Provost for Graduate Education and International Affairs prior to administration.).

\* For joint programs/degrees between English-medium institutions and non-English-medium institutions, applicants must have attended the English-medium institution for a minimum of two years (before the applicant's matriculation term).

Note that any exemption request to this policy is reviewed on a case-by-case basis and must be approved by the Vice Provost for Graduate Education and International Affairs after review of the entire record and in consultation with OISS. The university has the discretion to require an English language proficiency exam from any international student or scholar at any time before or after admission or program acceptance if the facts reasonably lead the university to believe that such is necessary to determine the student or exchange scholar's actual level of English language proficiency.

## Appendix A: Accepted Tests and Scores

### University Minimum Requirements for Standardized Testing Options for Degree-Seeking Applicants

- Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) iBT: 90 minimum composite score
  - For programs whose students will need to serve as assistants in instruction, do extensive reading and writing, or otherwise meet a particularly high standard of English communication skills, programs may find that a more appropriate minimum composite score is 100 on the TOEFL iBT.
- International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Academic: 6.5 composite minimum score
  - For programs whose students will need to serve as assistants in instruction, do extensive reading and writing, or otherwise meet a particularly high standard of English communication skills, programs may find that a more appropriate minimum score is 7 on the IELTS Academic.
- GATEWAY English Test - 495 minimum score

### Tests That Will Be *Temporarily* Accepted for Students Admitted for Academic Years 2020-21 Through 2026-27

The university strongly prefers that international student applicants submit TOEFL iBT or IELTS Academic tests to demonstrate English language proficiency.

- Duolingo English Test: 115 minimum score
- TOEFL ITP Plus for China (for student applicants in Mainland China who are unable to take the standard TOEFL iBT test due to testing suspensions): 600 minimum score (with Vericant video)
- TOEFL iBT Home Edition: 90 minimum score

In addition, international student applicants submitting scores from the above temporarily accepted tests may be required to complete testing upon arrival within the school to determine if they need additional English courses.

## Exchange Program Students and Scholars

Prospective participants in a J-1 program may:

1. Submit test scores as set forth under the University Minimum Requirements for Standardized Testing Options for Degree-Seeking Applicants above;
2. Submit a passing rubric form, as set forth under section III. 7. above, completed by the WashU Exchange Program;
3. Score a minimum of 3 on the English3 Interview (applies to J-1 scholars only)
4. Score at least 180 on specific Cambridge tests; OR
5. Partner universities confirm that the prospective student passed an English proficiency test in alignment with WashU English language proficiency requirements (applies to J-1 exchange students only).

## Appendix B: List of Countries

- Australia
- Cameroon
- Canada
- Commonwealth Caribbean nations
- Ghana
- Hong Kong
- India
- Ireland
- Kenya
- Liberia
- New Zealand
- Nigeria
- Sierra Leone
- Singapore
- South Africa
- Uganda
- United Kingdom
- United States
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

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