

ENGLISH PROFICIENCY POLICY FOR GRADUATE ADMISSION

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Governors revise the English proficiency requirement for graduate admission to include the following:

Successful completion of the highest level of the Wayne State University English Language Institute (ELI) program.

Background

Currently, Board of Governors Statute 2.34.12.30-2.34.12.60 stipulate that English proficiency for graduation admission may be met by any of the following means: complete a baccalaureate degree at an accredited institution in the United States or at an institution where English is the medium of instruction; present an acceptable score on the Michigan English Language Assessment Battery (MELAB); or, present an acceptable score on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL).

Since 1974 the ELI has trained prospective graduate and undergraduate applicants to WSU in the use of the English language, academic skills, and cross-cultural communication. It has also served as a testing center for the University, administering the PBT TOEFL 10-12 times a year and reporting the results to both admissions offices. Students completing the highest level of the ELI (Level 5) routinely obtain passing scores on the TOEFL; during the past five years, only 2.3% of ELI's students at the highest level (four students out of a total of 172) have had initial difficulty passing the TOEFL due primarily to test anxiety. Some students receive acceptable TOEFL scores by simply completing the ELI's Level 4. Additionally, students attending the ELI receive academic preparation skills—such as research paper writing and giving formal presentations—which reach far beyond the range of sheer linguistic skills measured by the different versions of the TOEFL, IELTS, or MELAB.

Because the ELI's linguistic, communicative, academic, and cultural preparation of students exceeds to a great extent the minimum English proficiency requirements set for admission to WSU, the Office of Undergraduate Admissions recognized the completion of the highest level of the ELI as proof of adequate English proficiency for admission eight years ago, a practice which is very common at universities that own and operate their own intensive English programs.

Program Administration

Monitoring students' transition from the ELI to graduate programs will be coordinated between the ELI and Graduate Admissions on a regular basis as it is now.

Budget and Resource Requirements

There are no additional resources or budget necessary for the implementation of this proposal.

Approvals

The proposal for the English proficiency policy was approved by the faculty and director of the English Language Institute, the Associate Vice President for Educational Outreach and

Submitted by: Keith E. Whitfield, Provost

International Programs, the New Programs and Program Review committee of the Graduate School, the Graduate Council, the Dean of the Graduate School, and the Office of the Provost.