



MEMORANDUM

To: Dr. David Dalton, Chair Graduate Council
Graduate Council Members

From: Tynsley Gilchrist, Ed.D. Graduate Student and Graduate School Intern
Johnna Watson, Associate Dean for Graduate Enrollment Management

Date: Tuesday April 4th, 2023

Re: English Language Proficiency: Expanded Pathways Proposal

BACKGROUND

Success at UNC Charlotte depends upon the student's ability to converse in, write, and understand (U.S.) English. To assure such competence, the university requires any applicant whose native language is not English to submit official test scores to demonstrate proficiency. To be considered official, the scores must be sent directly from the testing agency to UNC Charlotte. Scores older than two years will not be accepted.

Graduate Admissions proposes several modifications to the English language proficiency requirements in order to 1) create more transparent pathways for applicants to satisfy proficiency requirements, 2) decrease requests to waive requirements and workload on program directors and staff, and 3) make the Duolingo English Test an officially accepted instrument for English proficiency.

The evaluation of our current English Proficiency policy included reviewing data on test score standards from [peer institutions](#) and aspirational/competitor institution's websites, including several universities that serve large numbers of international students. Future considerations may include requiring specific subscores on tests in addition to specified standards for Teaching Assistants. If approved, this policy would go into effect immediately and will be reflected in the Graduate Catalog. Accordingly, we respectfully propose expanding the pathways to satisfy English proficiency as follows.

CURRENT POLICY

[Graduate Catalog Copy:](#)

Additional Admission Requirements for all International Applicants and/or Applicants Whose Native Language is Not English

The following items must be submitted as part of the application process and are required before an admission decision can be rendered.

Official scores on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), if English is not the applicant's native language and the applicant has not earned a post-secondary degree from a U.S. institution. Required is either a minimum score of 83 on the Internet-based TOEFL, a minimum score of 557 on the paper-based TOEFL, or a minimum overall band score of 6.5 on the IELTS.

[Website:](#)

An English proficiency test may be waived if the applicant has earned a degree from a United States regionally accredited institution where English is the mode of instruction, or if the applicant has full-time work experience (generally 5+ years) in the United States in a position where English is heavily used in writing and speaking.

PROPOSED POLICY

Success at UNC Charlotte depends upon a student's ability to converse in, write, and understand (U.S.) English. To assure such competence, any applicant whose native language is other than English must submit an official TOEFL, IELTS, or Duolingo score. To be considered official, the scores must be sent directly from the testing agency to UNC Charlotte. Typically, testing agencies retain scores for two years.

Applicants who meet one of the following criteria are exempt from the English language proficiency requirement:

1. Has completed at least one academic year of post-secondary (academic) study in the U.S. (*or an approved country) within five years of the proposed term of enrollment.
2. Has completed at least one full calendar year of professional work experience in the United States (*or an approved country) in a position where English is heavily used in writing and speaking.

***Approved Countries with English as the Primary Language**

Australia, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, Canada (exception of the Province of Québec), Dominica, Fiji, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guyana, Ireland, Jamaica, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, New Zealand, Nigeria, Philippines, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, St. Kitts, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, United Kingdom, United States and territories, and Zimbabwe.

Applicants who do not meet the minimum English language proficiency requirement cannot be admitted. They may, however, choose to enroll at UNC Charlotte's English Language Training Institute (ELTI) and e-apply to the Graduate School once English language proficiency is obtained. See [ELTI's website](#) for details.

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)

Administered by Educational Testing Service (ETS)

- Minimum Score Required: 83 Internet-based
- Official scores sent directly from Educational Testing Service (ETS) are required.
- UNC Charlotte's school code is 5105. A department code is not necessary.
- *MyBest* Scores are accepted. You must send all of your individual scores to us and not just your "*MyBest* Scores."
- Registration: www.toefl.org

International English Language Testing System (IELTS)

Jointly managed by University of Cambridge ESO Examinations, British Council, and IDP:IELTS Australia.

- Minimum Score Required: Overall band score of 6.5
- Official scores must be sent directly from the testing center to UNC Charlotte.
- Request your scores be sent electronically to University of North Carolina Charlotte Graduate Admissions.
- Registration: www.ielts.org

Duolingo English Test

Provided by Duolingo.

- Minimum Proficiency Score Required: 115
- Official scores should be made available electronically to the University of North Carolina at Charlotte Graduate School via the Duolingo test taker portal.
- Registration: www.englishtest.duolingo.com

English Language Training Institute (ELTI)

UNC Charlotte accredited intensive English program for academic language development in a university setting



- Minimum proficiency: Completion of the last level of the program (Level 5) with a final grade of B (80%) or higher.
- Curriculum, application requirements, dates and schedule, and tuition and fees schedule: <https://elti.charlotte.edu/programs/university-preparation>.
- The ELTI will work with the Graduate School to identify current ELTI students who seek admission to UNC Charlotte graduate programs. The ELTI Program Director will send a memo of completion along with a final grade report for any eligible student to the Associate Dean of the Graduate School at the conclusion of the semester.