

Mitchell Hall
P.O. Box 340
Milwaukee, WI
53201-0340
www.gradschool.uwm.edu

November 15, 2021

Rationale for Changes to GFC Document #1373/Faculty Document #3078

RECOMMENDATION FOR ENGLISH PROFICIENCY REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLICANTS TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

English proficiency is necessary for graduate students to fully engage in academic discourse, and social and professional interactions while studying at UWM. Even in disciplines where other spoken or symbolic languages are mainly used for instruction, students who earn a graduate degree are expected to have English proficiency as an outcome of their course of study.

Changing testing conditions due to the global COVID-19 pandemic have resulted in an increase of English proficiency testing options. GFC recognized the changing options with a passed resolution on 05/03/2021 adding Pearson Test of English (PTE) and Duolingo as acceptable tests to meet the English proficiency admission requirement. Since then, other new test options have been introduced, including a new version of the TOEFL exam. To remain competitive, UWM must be able to make decisions quickly about acceptability of new test options as they are developed and promoted to prospective applicants. The proposed updates to the policy keep the minimum standards for admissibility set by the GFC, but give the Center for International Education (CIE) flexibility to determine which standardized exams are acceptable, and require CIE to determine, in collaboration with the Director of UWM's English Language Academy, equivalent measures for each exam.

Additionally, the English as a Second Language (ESL) program changed its name to the English Language Academy (ELA), with the coursework for graduate students coming from the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and Intensive English Program (IEP) curriculums. Proposed updates to the policy reflect the name changes.

Summary and Justification of Proposed Changes to Current Policy

- 1) Update to indicate the minimum standard required scores for admission are based on TiBT (TOEFL internet based test) scores.
- 2) Remove all other test options.
- 3) Provide CIE the flexibility to accept alternative English proficiency exams based on current market trends.
- 4) Update the name of the English Language Academy, including the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and the Intensive English Program (IEP) curriculums.