

ENGLISH PROFICIENCY REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATE ADMISSION AND NEW GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTS

All University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Graduate School applicants are required to demonstrate a suitable level of proficiency in the English language to gain admission in one of two categories:*

- I. Full admission with English proficiency
- II. Dual admission with English deficiency

I. Full Admission with English Proficiency

The English proficiency requirement can be fulfilled by A, B, or C.

- A. Receipt of a baccalaureate or higher degree from UWM, or another accredited institution where English is the language of instruction (as determined by the Center for International Education – CIE). Applicants whose native language is not English also must meet the following criteria:
 - A1. the applicant must have attended this institution for at least one year; and
 - A2. the applicant must have lived and worked in the U.S. continuously since receiving the degree, OR must have received the degree within the previous two years of the application date.
- B. Submission of official standardized test scores. Acceptable score types to be determined by the Center for International Education (CIE). As new tests are available in market, CIE will collaborate with the Director of UWM’s English Language Academy to determine equivalency of TOEFL** (Test of English as a Foreign Language) results with a minimum required score of 79 on the Internet-based TOEFL (IBT) and a minimum recommended sub-score of 18 in each skill). All acceptable tests and required scores will be available on CIE’s website for international applicants.
- C. Submission of other test scores deemed by UWM to be reliably equivalent to a C1 level in the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR). Procedures for determining CEFR equivalents are outlined in Appendix A.

** Programs are not obligated to accept students in dual admission status. Full admission with English proficiency is required for online programs.*

*** Test must have been taken within the previous two years of the application date. Some programs may require a higher minimum overall score on the test and/or on specific sub-scores.*

II. Dual Admission with English Deficiency

A. Qualifications for dual admission

Applicants who do not meet any of the above (I.A. through I.C.), may be recommended for dual admission in academic coursework and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) coursework by fulfilling one of the following:

1. Submission of official standardized test scores. Acceptable score types to be determined by the Center for International Education (CIE). As new tests are available in market, CIE will collaborate with the Director of UWM's English Language Academy to determine equivalency of TOEFL*** (Test of English as a Foreign Language) results with a minimum score of 68 on the Internet-based TOEFL (IBT) and a minimum sub-score of 16 in each skill. A minimum sub-score of 18 is recommended for the writing test. All acceptable score types and required scores will be available on CIE's website for international applicants.
2. Submission of other test scores deemed by UWM to be reliably equivalent to a B2 level in the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR).

**** Test must have been taken within the previous two years of the application date. Some programs may not accept students in dual admission status. Some academic courses may not be suitable for dually admitted students before they reach full proficiency. Students need to talk with their graduate advisor and/or the course instructors before enrolling in their academic courses.*

B. Subsequent Demonstration of English Proficiency to Gain Full Admission

Subsequent to dual admission, the student may demonstrate English proficiency by

- a. presenting a new official TOEFL score (or equivalent test scores) that meets the English Proficiency requirement for full admission for the program of the student, or
- b. achieving a CEFR level of C1 (or higher level if required for a specific degree program) through assessment of a portfolio that includes the following:
 1. a grade of B or better in ESL 420 and passing the impromptu writing sample, and/or
 2. a grade of B or better in ESL 435 and passing a speaking test.

The portfolio will be assessed by a normed EAP portfolio committee.

Upon demonstration of proficiency, the Graduate School will remove the English deficiency, and the student will gain full admission in the semester immediately following submission of the requisite scores or achievement of a passing portfolio. If proficiency is attained through submission of qualifying official test scores before the student arrives at UWM, the student's proficiency status will be changed to allow unrestricted enrollment.

C. Enrollment Requirements and Restrictions for Dual Admission

Graduate students in dual admission status must simultaneously enroll in their academic program and in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) subject to the following restrictions:

1. EAP instruction will be required each semester until the English deficiency is removed. Specific EAP courses (420 and/or 435) will be assigned based on areas of need identified by test sub-scores.
2. If the English deficiency is not removed within 3 enrolled semesters, the student will be dismissed.
3. The maximum academic course load is 6 graduate credits each semester until the English deficiency is removed.

III. Assessment of English skills for international students appointed as Teaching Assistants

A. An assessment of spoken English is required to appoint an international student as a Teaching Assistant unless the student has submitted official scores on one of the tests as follows:

1. 24 or better on the Speaking section of the internet-Based TOEFL (iBT)
2. 7.0 or better on the Speaking section of the IELTS
3. 185 or better on the Speaking paper of the CAE or the CPE
4. 125 or better on the Conversation and Production sections of the Duolingo English Test

The test must have been taken within the previous two years of the application date.

- B. Those who do not meet the criteria above must take the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee International Teaching Assistant Assessment (MITAA). The student may then be hired as a TA subject to the following:
1. Score of 45+ with a benchmark of 3 in overall language ability, pronunciation, and interaction with committee pronunciation – no restrictions
 2. Score of 35-44 – the student must take the International Teaching Assistants oral skills ESL course (EAP 435), or an equivalent course approved by GFC, concurrent with the TA appointment.
 3. Score of 34 or below – the student must take the International Teaching Assistants oral skills ESL course (EAP 435), or an equivalent course approved by GFC, before the TA appointment begins.

Students will be re-tested after completion of one semester in the International Teaching Assistants oral skills class, and will be reassessed for the TA appointment based on the MITAA score ranges in III B 1-3 above.

IV. Consideration of exceptional cases

The admissions staff of the Center for International Education (CIE) has discretion to determine whether this policy applies to applicants with circumstances not considered by the parameters of this policy. In so doing, the admissions staff will work with representatives from the program to which the student applied, the English Language Academy (ELA) program, and the Graduate School.

Policy history:

This policy was initially codified September 15, 2016, superceding GFC Document No. 1373 (2015/16) and GFC Document No. 876 (2002).

Appendix A
UWM Procedure for Determining CEFR Equivalency

The English proficiency policy for the Graduate School includes a provision to allow submission of “a test score deemed by UWM to be reliably equivalent to a C1 level in the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR)”. The following procedure will be established to determine if a test score or other language assessment is an acceptable replacement for TOEFL, IELTS or CAE (per proficiency policy above). Faculty oversight will be provided by GFC.

- A. The process for determining the validity of a language assessment will be initiated **by the institution administering the assessment, or by a UWM graduate program director or other graduate faculty member, in cooperation with graduate school administration.** When requesting approval from UWM, the administering institution will submit the following to UWM ESL program’s director who will copy appropriate staff from the Center for International Education and the Graduate School:
1. Documentation outlining the assessment procedures at the institution, including but not limited to sample assessment items, systems for evaluation and calculations of the statistical validity and reliability of the assessment.
 2. Procedures for the security of administering the assessment.
 3. In the case of a global appreciation of a student’s ability to perform, based on long term and multiple assessments over a period of time, documentation of the institutional student learning outcomes and the methods of assessment used to determine student attainment of those outcomes, and documentation of institutional accreditations.
- B. If UWM officials do not feel the above evidence is adequate for making a determination, further steps may be initiated, including:
1. Teleconferencing between UWM’s ELA experts and the institution’s experts to discuss instructional and assessment practices, and review the qualifications of instructors and administrators.
 2. Correlation studies of the institution’s assessments and other language assessments already accepted at UWM.

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