To: Graduate Department Representatives
From: Keely Austin, Director of Communication and Language Support
           Elliott Walters, Assistant Director of Language Support Programs
Re: Guidelines for Assessing English Language Proficiency in Graduate
           Admission; Communication and Language Support Services

Welcome back to the Fall 2022 semester at CMU. We are writing to offer updates on

- guidelines for assessing language proficiency,
- use of scoring thresholds,
- legal considerations related to graduate admission, and
- support for students for whom English is not their first language.

GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSING LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

The purpose of these guidelines is to offer updated resources and a framework for using language assessment scores to understand the English language proficiency of students for whom English is not their first language. Issues for the students, programs, and the university can arise when students with less than the required proficiency are admitted. We recommend that departments continue accepting TOEFL (iBT, iBT Home, Essentials), IELTS, IELTS Indicator, and the Duolingo English Test (DET) as options for demonstrating language proficiency for the 2022-2023 academic year and 2023-2024 graduate application cycle.

Recommended plan of action for departments
1) Determine the English skills that students in your department need (e.g., interact in research teams, serve as TAs, interview for jobs, or present to funding agencies), and then screen for those skills. Some departments have found it useful to review the score of current students to determine what scores were most appropriate.
2) Set realistic minimum scores, including subscores, for applicants to your program. Over the course of the 2022-2023

Graduate students need to have the fluency to handle academic work from the beginning of their studies. Carnegie Mellon does not offer basic language acquisition classes, nor would our students have time to attend such classes concurrent with full-time academic work. Language support for international and multilingual students is available through Communication and Language Support which offers workshops, success series, and individual consultations.

Standardized language assessment should be required for all applicants for whom English is not their first language, including those who attended other academic programs in the US.

3)   Accept TOEFL iBT, TOEFL iBT Home, TOEFL Essentials, IELTS, IELTS Indicator, and DET with the thresholds listed in the charts below for recommended and minimum scoring.

4)   Register with Duolingo as an institutional partner in order to receive certified scores. https://englishtest.duolingo.com/edu

no TOEFL/IELTS/DET standard has been set by an individual college or program.

Recommended Composite/Overall Score Thresholds

CMU Thresholds	Composite Score TOEFL IBT, TOEFL Home	Composite Score IELTS, IELTS Indicator	Overall Score DET
Recommended	100	7.5	120
Minimum	86	6.5	110
Subscores recommended: Speaking (TOEFL and IELTS) Conversation (DET)	25	7.5	120

For calibration purposes: CMU Undergraduate Admission requires a TOEFL Composite of 102 or higher (80th percentile) and a 25 on each TOEFL subscore.   An IELTS composite of 7.5 or higher and minimum subscores of 7.5. The required DET composite is 135 with subscores of literacy 135, conversation 130, comprehension 145, and production 113.

Importance of Subscores
Subscoring is also critical to assess as it offers the department a more nuanced understanding of an applicant's English language proficiency relating to communication needs that are specific to the department or discipline. For instance, if your program is writing-intensive, it would be important to understand an applicant's English writing abilities as a factor in being successful as a student. If your program requires a student to teach, the speaking and listening subscores are particularly useful to consider. Take time to evaluate the communication skills needed to be successful in your program's curriculum. A composite score alone is

Speaking	Recommend=25 Minimum= 20	Recommend=7.5 Minimum= 6

Writing

	Recommend=25 Minimum= 20	Recommend=7.5 Minimum= 6

Pass- All TA assignments (undergraduate and graduate) including lectures, recitations, labs, and studios; can also serve as sole instructor for a course.

Restricted 1- TA assignments (undergraduate and graduate) for recitations, labs, office hours, and studios.

Restricted 2- One-on-one sessions: e.g., office hours or tutoring, instructor assistant for labs or studios (if supervised by an instructor present in the lab or studio, and not responsible for safety instructions or for giving presentations).

If your department requires students to have a higher ITA Language Certification than suggested in the above chart, please consider the following factors that impact student improvement:

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