TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS INTENSIVE ENGLISH CENTER

Policy No. 4.06.08

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS LANGUAGE EXAM EQUIVALENCY POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Tennessee State University Intensive English Center provides English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction to non-native speakers of English. The Intensive English Program involves 10 consecutive levels from beginner to advanced with each level offering 154 hours of guided instruction over the course of two months. It typically takes 20 months for a true beginner to complete the entire curriculum. Students progress between levels upon achieving student learning outcomes relative to curricular goals.

As part of the admission process, Tennessee State University requires international students to provide international language scores to demonstrate their language competency so that they can pursue their studies without hindrance. An applicant whose native language is not English is required to submit a test score of 61 as the minimum acceptance level of performance on the TOEFL-IBT or 5.0 on the IELTS.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy and procedures document is to justify the rationale and establish the guidelines for the language waiver policy whereby successful completion of designated levels at the Intensive English Center shall serve as proof of language competency and respectively satisfy Tennessee State University's language requirements for the international students.

At the IEC, students' performance is assessed relative to a proficiency scale through the use a variety of formative and summative assessment tools, thus providing a more accurate indication of the students' language competency. The IEC curricula are aligned with the requirements of academic study at the TSU's undergraduate and graduate programs.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all full-time and part-time IEC students in good standing who successfully meet all academic and administrative requirements of the full-course load offered at designated levels. Courses may be taken in a single term or asynchronously.

DEFINITIONS

Words, definitions and acronyms in this document shall have the following meanings:

- A. CEFR: Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
- B. Full-course load: Registering for all the courses at a certain level at the IEC totaling up to 22 hours of instruction per week
- C. IEC: Intensive English Center
- D. IEC Courses: Integrated Skills, Reading and Writing, Listening Speaking and other elective courses as appropriate
- E. IEC Level: One of the ten levels of English language instruction at the IEC
- F. IEC Term: A seven-week term at the IEC
- G. IEP: Intensive English Program
- H. International Language Score: Test scores of internationally recognized language exams such as IELTS and/or TOEFL
- I. TSU: Tennessee State University

PROCEDURES

- A. International language score requirement is waived when an IEC student successfully completes the full-course load and meets all the requirements of IEP Level 7 (CEFR: B2.1) for those students who are seeking admission to undergraduate programs at TSU. In lieu of the TOEFL or IELTS scores stipulated in this policy, students may submit official academic record of successful completion of all courses of TSU Intensive English Center Level 7.
- B. Such students must successfully meet all academic and administrative requirements of all the courses offered at abovementioned levels. Students who take less than the full course load do not qualify for this policy. However, students may take the courses at different terms.
- C. Upon successful completion of courses, students shall be issued an IEC transcript that substantiates the courses taken at the IEC and grades received in those courses.
- D. Students shall present their official IEC transcript during their application to undergraduate programs at TSU along with other documents requested.
- E. The IEC transcript shall serve as the equivalent of the international language score(s) stipulated in this policy.
- F. The admissions department at TSU may at any time require additional documents or information on the student applying to undergraduate programs.

G. Due to the fact that both the TOEFL and IELTS test scores are valid for two years, the transcripts issued by the IEC are also valid for two years.

APPROVAL, VALIDITY AND REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

This policy goes in effect on the day approved by the President of Tennessee State University and is valid until revoked or amended.

This policy is reviewed annually during the IEC Annual Retreat. Any changes are subject to the approval of the President of Tennessee State University.

Updated 7/2020

ANNEX: IEC CURRICULUM MAP

EXTERNAL BENCHMARKS				TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY - OIA INTENSIVE ENGLISH CENTER MASTER PROGRAM DESIGN	
CEFR DESCRIPTORS	CEFR LEVELS	TOEFL*	IELTS**	TSU IEC LEVELS	
PROFICIENT USER	C1 (ADVANCED)	95-120	8	Level 10	C1.2
			7	Level 9	C1.1
INDEPENDENT USER	B2 (UPPER- INTERMEDIATE)	72-94	6.5	Level 8	B2.2
			5.5	Level 7	B2.1
	B1 (INTERMEDIATE)	42-71	5	Level 6	B1.2
			4.5	Level 5	B1.1
BASIC USER	A2 (PRE- INTERMEDIATE)	n/a	4	Level 4	A2.2
			n/a	Level 3	A2.1
	A1 (ELEMENTARY)	n/a	n/a	Level 2	A1.2
			n/a	Level 1	A1.1

^{*} Papageorgiou, S., Tannenbaum, R. J., Bridgeman, B., & Cho, Y. (2015). The association between TOEFL iBT test

scores and the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) levels (Research Memorandum RM-15-06). Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.

** https://www.ielts.org/ielts-for-organisations/common-european-framework