



## Administrative Policy

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Official Measures of English Language Proficiency for Admission of International Students</b>
Source:	Office of International Affairs
Prepared by:	Assistant Vice Chancellor for International Affairs
Approved by:	Roderick Nairn Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs
Effective Date:	January 1, 2015
Replaces:	January 1, 2014
Applies:	All International Students at All Campuses of University of Colorado Denver

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### A. Introduction

This policy establishes English language proficiency requirements for the admission of international students to the University of Colorado Denver and the responsibility of the university to determine that international student applicants possess a level of proficiency in English necessary to succeed academically. The university is responsible for certifying to the US Department of Homeland Security that this determination has been made, in accordance with US immigration laws, for students requiring visa documents. With properly documented evidence of English language proficiency, the International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) within the Office of International Affairs (OIA) will certify to the US Department of Homeland Security, as part of the Certification of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Visa Status (Form I-20) or for Exchange Visitor Visa Status (Form DS-2019), that the student has the required level of English language proficiency.

### B. Policy Statement

All academic units making admission decisions regarding international students are responsible, in consultation with the International Admissions unit in OIA, for determining that the applicant has the required proficiency in English to successfully undertake the proposed course of study. These academic units must work with International Admissions to record the determination in ISIS (the university student records system) for each admitted student.

Undergraduate and graduate academic departments and/or programs may require a *higher* level of English language proficiency than this policy establishes, based on the specific needs of the discipline. If a higher level of proficiency is required, this must be clearly documented and published in all marketing materials for the academic department or program, including Websites. In addition, the academic department or program must notify the International Admissions unit in OIA of any decision to require a higher level of English language proficiency in order to ensure this is reflected in OIA marketing and recruitment materials.

No academic department or program, however, may admit a student below the established policy minimums unless an exception has been granted pursuant to the “Exceptions” section of this policy.

### **C. Governing Practices**

Applicants will be considered to have the required English language proficiency if they meet one of the following criteria:

1. The applicant is a citizen of a country whose official language is English.
  - a. These countries include Australia, Belize, Botswana, Canada (except Quebec), Commonwealth Caribbean, Ghana, United Kingdom, Ireland, Kenya, New Zealand, Singapore, South Africa, and Zimbabwe.
  
2. The applicant has obtained a composite score of 75 or above on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) Internet-Based Test (iBT), or a composite score of 537 or higher on the TOEFL paper-based test (pBT), including obtaining minimum sub scores (see below), for both undergraduate and graduate programs.
  - a. The admissions committee shall review all sub scores to ensure that a minimum sub score has been obtained in each of the following categories<sup>1</sup>:
    - i. Reading
    - ii. Listening
    - iii. Speaking
    - iv. Writing
  - b. See <http://internationaladmissions.ucdenver.edu> for specific minimum scores.
  - c. Note that the College of Nursing has established higher minimum score requirements and the College of Nursing Admissions Office should be contacted directly for specifics.
  
3. The applicant has obtained a composite score of 6.5 or above on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), including obtaining minimum sub scores (see below), for both undergraduate and graduate programs.
  - a. The admissions committee shall review all sub scores to ensure that a minimum sub score has been obtained in each category<sup>2</sup>:
    - i. Reading: Minimum score of 5.5
    - ii. Writing: Minimum score of 5.5
    - iii. Speaking: Minimum score of 5.5
    - iv. Listening: Minimum score of 5.5
  
4. The applicant has graduated from the University of Colorado Denver’s ESL Academy.

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<sup>1</sup> These sub score minimums reflect the bottom threshold for intermediate performance in Reading and Listening on a scale of High, Intermediate and Low, as well as the lower threshold of fair performance in Speaking and Writing on the scale of Good, Fair, Limited, and Weak.

<sup>2</sup> No sub scores should fall lower than one full point from the composite minimum required for admission.

5. The applicant has graduated from a US/UK accredited school abroad with English as the medium of instruction.
  - a. The applicant must provide a letter from the home institution verifying this information if the language of instruction is not clearly indicated on the official academic transcript.
6. The applicant has earned an Associate's or bachelor's degree in the US, or has successfully completed a minimum of 2 semesters of full-time study in a master's program at an accredited institution in the US. In addition, undergraduate transfer students who have successfully completed the GTPathways core at a Colorado Community College are deemed to have the required English language proficiency.
7. **UNDERGRADUATE APPLICANTS ONLY:** The applicant has graduated from and completed a minimum of 1 year of secondary school in the US that included at least one unit of college preparatory English.
  - a. All freshman applicants who apply for admission immediately following graduation from a high school in the US are required to submit SAT/ACT results.

#### **D. Exceptions**

1. Exceptions to this policy may occur in special circumstances involving bi-institutional agreements with foreign universities, extended studies, new pathway and/or international college programs, and other international agreements that would warrant exceptions to the policy. All such exceptions must be codified in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)/Letter of Agreement (LOA) among participating parties and have appropriate approvals in accordance with the agreement. Approvals include deans, finance administration, international affairs, legal counsel, the provost, the Higher Learning Commission, and other accreditation review processes and other approvals as warranted by the specific terms of the agreement. The Memoranda of Understanding will be executed with the guidance of the Office of International Affairs (OIA). OIA will notify International Admissions of each MOU and the approved exceptions.
2. Exceptions may also be granted infrequently by a dean, upon the recommendation of the academic program to which the student applied. The dean should feel confident, in granting an exception, that the student's command of English is sufficient for the student to succeed academically. All exceptions will be communicated by the dean to the Office of International Affairs.
3. Upon the recommendation of the international admissions committee and with the approval of the Director of International Enrollment Management, an undergraduate applicant may also be granted an exception.