



University of Colorado
Denver | Anschutz Medical Campus

Campus Administrative Policy

Policy Title: Official Measures of English Language Proficiency for Admission of International Students

Policy Number: 7009 Functional Area: Student Affairs

Effective: ~~January-April 1, 2015–2020 (Pending)~~
 Date Last Amended/Reviewed: January 1, 2015
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 Supersedes: Official Measures of English Language Proficiency for Admission of International Students (January 1, 201~~5~~4)

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Applies to: University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus
 University of Colorado Denver

A. INTRODUCTION

This policy establishes English language proficiency requirements for the admission of international students to the University of Colorado Denver | Anschutz Medical Campus 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) [unit](#) 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.

[This policy applies to any applicant for credit-bearing coursework at CU Denver | CU Anschutz whose legal presence in the United States is dependent on a valid, temporary, nonimmigrant visa.¹ It does not apply to US citizens, permanent residents, persons with refugee or other protected status, holders of valid immigrant visas² or undocumented immigrants.](#)

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 if whether~~ the applicant has the required proficiency in English to ~~successfully undertake~~ [be prepared for successful completion of](#) the proposed course of study. These academic units must work with International Admissions to record the determination in [ISIS-CU-SIS](#) (the university student records system) for each admitted student.

[Undergraduate admitting units \(i.e. International Admissions and the College of Nursing\)](#) and graduate academic departments and/or programs may require a *higher* level of English language proficiency than ~~this policy establishes~~ [the university minimum requirements](#), based on the specific needs of the discipline, [with the exception that no department may refuse to accept successful completion of the CU Denver ESL Academy program as proof of English language proficiency under any circumstances](#). 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~~ [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 ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY FOR](#)

¹ As listed in the US Department of State’s Foreign Affairs Manual (9 FAM 402.1): <https://fam.state.gov/FAM/09FAM/09FAM040201.html>

² As listed in the Foreign Affairs Manual (9 FAM 502.1-3): https://fam.state.gov/fam/09FAM/09FAM050201.html#M502_1_3

Commented [HC1]: Including this language here allows us to remove the specific mention for the College of Nursing in the testing section below.

DEGREE-SEEKING STUDY

Applicants to undergraduate and graduate degree programs will be considered to have the required English language proficiency if they meet any one of the following criteria:

- ~~1. —~~ 1. — ~~1. —~~ The applicant is a citizen of a country ~~whose official language is English, listed by the government of the United Kingdom as exempt from the English proficiency requirement for a UK student visa.~~³

- ~~a. —~~ a. — ~~As of this policy's effective date, these countries include: Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Botswana, Canada (except Quebec), Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Commonwealth Caribbean, Ghana, United Kingdom, Ireland, Jamaica, Kenya, New Zealand, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, and the United Kingdom, Singapore, South Africa, and Zimbabwe.~~

2. — The applicant has graduated from the University of Colorado Denver ESL Academy.

3. — The applicant has obtained provided a valid, official composite score of 75 or above on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) Internet-Based Test (iBT) an accepted English language proficiency examination that meets the university's minimum criteria for admission. International Admissions will, in consultation with campus stakeholders to include the Graduate School, graduate departments, and the ESL Academy, establish and annually publish such criteria in the course catalog and the International Admissions website.
As of this policy's effective date, the university accepts the following English language proficiency examinations: Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) Internet-Based Test (iBT), including TOEFL MyBest scores; International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Academic; and Pearson Test of English (PTE) Academic.
, 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 (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):

³ As listed here: <https://www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/knowledge-of-english>

- 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 (No sub scores should fall lower than one full point from the composite minimum required for admission):
- 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

Commented [HC2]: Removing this specific call-out for the College of Nursing, because of the new language on undergraduate admitting units above.

Applicants to **undergraduate degree programs only** will be considered to have the required English language proficiency if they meet any one of the following criteria:

4. The applicant has graduated from the University of Colorado Denver's ESL Academy.

5.

- 1. The applicant has earned a high school diploma in the United States (including at least one year of secondary study in the US and at least one unit of college preparatory English coursework); or has completed an entire secondary qualification, comparable to a US high school diploma, at a school holding US regional accreditation but located in another country.
- 2. The applicant has completed an entire secondary qualification, comparable to a US high school diploma, in one of the exempt countries listed above; graduated from a US/UK accredited school abroad with English as the medium of instruction, or has completed such a qualification at a school accredited by an exempt country but located in a non-exempt country.
 - 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.
- 63. 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

Commented [HC3]: The goal here is to accommodate UK-accredited high schools in Qatar, Canada-accredited high schools in China, etc.

students who have successfully completed the GTPathways core at a Colorado Community College are deemed to have the required English language proficiency. The applicant has earned a score resulting in CU Denver | CU Anschutz advanced standing placement on the relevant Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), General Certificate of Education (GCE) A-Level, or GCE AS-Level English subject examination.⁴

74. 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. The applicant has provided a valid, official score that reaches the College Readiness Benchmark in the Evidence-Based Reading and Writing section of the SAT, or in the English section of the ACT.⁵
5. The applicant has earned an associate or bachelor degree in the United States; or has earned a post-secondary qualification, comparable to a US associate or bachelor degree, in one of the exempt countries listed above; or has earned such a qualification at an institution accredited by an exempt country but located in a non-exempt country.
6. The applicant has successfully completed the GTPathways core at a Colorado community college.
7. The applicant has earned the following credits and grades at a regionally accredited institution of higher education in the United States:
 - a. 24 or more transferrable semester credits, or the equivalent, and
 - b. A college-level GPA of 2.7/4.0 or higher; or a grade of B- or higher on English Composition I, or the equivalent, or a higher English composition course.

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

1. The applicant has earned a bachelor degree in the United States; or has earned a post-secondary qualification, comparable to a US bachelor degree, in one of the exempt countries listed above; or has earned such a qualification at an institution accredited by an exempt country but located in a non-exempt country.
2. The applicant has completed [12 or more semester hours] of coursework in a master or doctoral degree program in the United States with an overall GPA of 3.0/4.0 or higher; or has completed a comparable amount of graduate coursework with a

Commented [HC4]: e.g. College of the North Atlantic (Canada-accredited) in Qatar.

Commented [HC5]: e.g. American University of Beirut (Middle States-accredited) in Lebanon.

Commented [HC6]: Changed "two semesters of full-time study" to "12 or more semester hours" after presenting to the Graduate Admissions Working Group yesterday.

⁴ Acceptable examinations and scores are listed in the CU Denver course catalog.

⁵ For more information: <http://collegeboard.org> and <http://www.act.org>.

comparable GPA in one of the exempt countries listed above; or has completed such coursework at an institution accredited by an exempt country but located in a non-exempt country.

D. ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY FOR UNDERGRADUATE ESL PATHWAY ADMISSION

Commented [HC7]: Changed each instance of "bridge" to "pathway" in this section.

Applicants to undergraduate degree programs, except Nursing, who do not meet any of the English language proficiency criteria for degree-seeking study will be considered for admission to a pathway program housed in the CU Denver ESL Academy. Any student admitted to the ESL pathway program will be placed directly into the highest level of ESL instruction (as of this policy's effective date, the highest level is level 5). International Admissions and the ESL Academy will jointly establish, and publish annually in the course catalog and the International Admissions website, the English language proficiency criteria for admission to the pathway program.

DE. EXCEPTIONS

Exceptions to this policy may occur in special circumstances, as outlined below.

1. International Partnerships with Foreign Universities

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. Agreements establishing dual-degree and other academic partnership programs with foreign universities may contain specific English language proficiency guidelines which will act as exceptions to this 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. Undergraduate Study

The international admission committee within International Admissions may grant exceptions to undergraduate degree program and non-degree-seeking applicants, with the approval of the Director of International Enrollment Management. This exception does not apply to any programs in the College of Nursing.

~~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. Graduate Study

~~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. The dean of the relevant school or college may grant exceptions to graduate degree program applicants, upon the recommendation of the program's faculty. The dean should feel confident, in granting an exception, that the applicant's command of English is sufficient for academic success in the program. The dean will notify the Office of International Affairs of each such exception granted.~~

The Director or Associate Dean responsible for of Graduate Admissions at the relevant school or college, in consultation and agreement with the Director of International Enrollment Management, may grant exceptions to graduate non-degree-seeking applicants.

4. Visiting Scholars

J-1 Short-Term Scholars, Research Scholars, Professors, Specialists, and Student Interns sponsored by CU Denver | CU Anschutz must prove their English language proficiency as part of the J-1 visa application process. This is managed by ISSS under a separate policy, "English Proficiency Policy for J-1 Exchange Visitors" (ISSS policy). Any such visiting scholar may be admitted to non-degree coursework at the university, incidental to their research or teaching duties, without providing further proof of English language proficiency beyond the requirements of the ISSS policy. However, visiting scholars must meet the English language proficiency criteria outlined above for admission to any degree program at CU Denver | CU Anschutz.

Commented [HC8]: This is a new section designed to offer some more flexibility for non-degree graduate applicants.

Notes

1. Dates of official enactment and amendments:
November 9, 2004: Adopted

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July 1, 2012: Revised/reissued by the Provost
January 1, 2014: Revised
January 1, 2015: Revised
April 12, 2019: Formatting Updated

2. History:
April 12, 2019: Modified to reflect a Campus-wide effort to recast and revitalize Campus policy sites into a standardized and more coherent set of chartered policy statement organized around the several operational divisions of the university. Article links, University branding, and formatting updated by the Provost's office.
3. Initial Policy Effective Date: November 9, 2004
4. Cross References/Appendix: N/A

Under Review Fall 2019