KENT STATE UNIVERSITY
CERTIFICATION OF CURRICULUM PROPOSAL

Preparation Date   Curriculum Bulletin _____

Effective Date   **Spring 2018**   Approved by EPC _____

Department	**Office of Global Education**
College	**PR - Provost**
Proposal	**Establish Policy**
Proposal Name	**Establish policy for English proficiency requirements for international admissions**

Description of proposal:

This proposal is to set English proficiency requirements for admission to ensure all students applying with international credentials are adequately prepared for academic coursework in English instruction at Kent State University. The requirements also guarantee consistency, transparency and clarity for those who set the admission criteria for their academic programs and for those who must meet them.

Included in the proposal is a new tier system with score ranges for each proficiency test and descriptions of expectations of students' proficiency for each score range.

Describe impact on other programs, policies or procedures (e.g., duplication issues; enrollment and staffing considerations; need, audience)

The policy will ease confusion and lessen administrative and faculty burden holding to the current variety of required test scores for specific academic programs.

Units consulted (other departments, programs or campuses affected by this proposal):

College graduate program coordinators, college administrators, Global Education, Provost, GSAAC

REQUIRED ENDORSEMENTS

_____   ____/____/____
Department Chair / School Director

_____   ____/____/____
Campus Dean (for Regional Campuses proposals)

_____   ____/____/____
College Dean (or designee)

_____   ____/____/____
Dean of Graduate Studies (for graduate proposals)

_____   ____/____/____
Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost (or designee)

Proposal Summary for a Policy
English Proficiency Requirements at Kent State University

Subject Specification:
This proposal is meant to make current English proficiency guidelines into an official policy to ensure all students applying with international credentials are adequately prepared for academic coursework in English instruction at Kent State University. It will also guarantee consistency in the requirements set for those applying with international credentials.

Background Information:
Until this time, there has been no formal policy regarding English proficiency for students with international credentials at Kent State University. There have been standards in place but as they were never officially approved and made into policy, there have been inconsistencies in English proficiency requirements, waivers, application reviews and decisions directly related to the aptitude of a student's English skills.

The approval of this policy will ensure consistency and accuracy in regards to English proficiency requirements for applicants and academic programs. It will also allow us to remain strategically paralleled with peer and aspirational institutions as well as regional competitors. According to IIE's Open Doors report fact sheet for the state of Ohio, Kent State University ranks third in the number of international students following The Ohio State University and the University of Cincinnati. This policy is necessary to the continued growth and success of our global competitiveness amongst other universities in Ohio. It is also required in order to align with the third priority of Kent State University's Strategic Roadmap, Global Competitiveness. The English Proficiency policy will ensure a foundation of English proficiency to increase enrollment of international students, enhance their education experience through academic excellence and success as well as positively impact student retention and recognition among international partners. A consistent and decisive English proficiency policy, process and strategy forms clear expectations campus wide for all involved in the internationalization initiative of the university.

Creating an official policy will allow programs and applicants consistency in requirements and ensure students are prepared with the necessary English proficiency skills to be successful in academic program of study. The findings and implementation of this policy were based on review of the existing procedures in place as well as comparison and analysis to other universities and colleges throughout the United States, institutions as defined by President Warren in her Strategic Visioning as Selected Peer Institutions and Selected Aspirational Institutions.

Selected Peer Institutions per this Strategic Visioning include:

Georgia State University
University of Houston
Western Michigan University
Ohio University
University of North Texas
Utah State University

Selected Aspirational Institutions per this Strategic Visioning include:

Clemson University
Pennsylvania State University
University of South Florida
Temple University
Virginia Commonwealth University

Regional/Comparable Institutions researched in development of this proposal include:

Case Western Reserve University
The Ohio State University
Bowling Green State University
Cleveland State University
Wright State University
University of Cincinnati
Kansas State University
Wichita State University
Webster University
Indiana State University
Indiana University
Ball State University
Ferris University
University of Pittsburgh
University of East Kentucky
Purdue University
University of Colorado

The research and analysis of these institutions with Kent State University English proficiency processes revealed that our standards parallel with set policy of most other institutions of similar size, recognition and international aspirations. Most institutions have a university standard or minimum and then graduate programs or colleges within the institution may choose to set a higher English proficiency requirement.

Also found to be common among these institutions was the waiving of the English proficiency requirement for students that had already obtained a U.S. degree. It has been confirmed through this research that all Peer and Aspirational institutions as well as other regional and comparable institutions waive the English proficiency requirement for those that have received a degree or completed at least two years of full time academic study at a U.S. institution.

Research also demonstrated that our current country list (see pages 4-5) with regards to English proficiency waivers is comparable with other institutions. For international applicants who have been primarily educated within certain countries, there is a waiver for the English proficiency requirement. The chart on the next page shows prospective countries that other universities waive the English requirement for, of which we have added South Africa, Zimbabwe, Fiji and Nigeria to Kent State University's existing list.

Countries	Universities																	
	UT Aust	U Houst	USF	Purdue	OSU	Cinci	Indiana	Colorado	Indiana St	C Mich	W Mich	E Kentuck	N Texas	Miami	Ball St	Ferris	Illinois	# for country
Botswana			G	Y				Y		R	K				R	Y	B	8
Fiji		R	G	Y		K			B	R	K				R	Y	B	**10**
Hong Kong Public Universities						K												1
India								Y										1
Kenya			G	Y			R			R	K				R		B	7
Lesotho			G	Y						R	K				R	Y	B	7
Liberia	O	R	G	Y	R	K			B	R	K	P	G	R	R	Y	B	**15**
Malawi				Y			R			R	K					Y		5
Micronesia				Y			R			R						Y		5
Nauru									B									1
Nigeria			G	Y			R	Y		R	K				R		B	8
Papua New Guinea			G	Y						R					R	Y		5
Phillipines				Y			R				K				R		B	6
Sierra Leone		R	G	Y						R	K				R	Y	B	8
Singapore				Y		K	R	Y		R	K				R		B	8
South Africa		R	G			K		Y		R	K		G	R			B	**9**
South Sudan				Y														1
Swaziland			G	Y						R	K				R	Y	B	7
Tanzania			G	Y			R			R					R	Y	B	7
The Gambia				Y			R				K				R	Y	B	6
Uganda			G	Y						R	K				R	Y	B	7
Zambia			G	Y			R			R	K				R		B	7
Zimbabwe		R	G	Y			R	Y		R	K				R	Y	B	**10**
	1	5	15	18	1	6	8	6	4	19	17	1	2	2	15	12	17	

The current standards that have been in place for students with international credentials align with the proposed policy. The existing procedures are outlined in subsequent pages of this policy with new additional items highlighted in yellow. The proposed policy includes additional countries that have not previously been a part of the English proficiency standards, a proposed higher PTE minimum and implementation of an internal English Proficiency tier system for Academic programs.

English Language Proficiency Current Standards

Undergraduate
All undergraduate applicants must obtain a minimum TOEFL score of 525 (71 on the Internet based version), minimum MELAB score of 75, IELTS score of 6.0, or PTE Academic score of 50, or Complete the ELS level 112 Intensive Program.
Those who do not meet the minimum score for admission may be admitted conditionally if they meet academic requirements—Conditional Admission means students will take English language classes at our ESL Center before entering their programs.

Graduate
All graduate applicants must submit an English language proficiency test score to be considered for a graduate program. Graduate programs set their own English requirements, please review **Graduate Program English Requirements** before submitting your application.

Waive English Language Requirement

All international applicants whose education has been primarily outside the United States of America must provide objective evidence of proficiency in the English language. However, the following exceptions apply:

1. **Applicants primarily educated in the following countries/territories:**
   Anguilla
   Antigua & Barbuda
   Australia
   Bahamas
   Barbados
   Belize
   British Virgin Islands
   Canada (except Quebec)
   Cayman Islands
   Dominica
   Falkland Islands
   Fiji
   Ghana
   Gibraltar
   Grenada
   Guernsey
   Guyana
   Ireland
   Isle of Man
   Jamaica

Jersey
Liberia
Montserrat
New Zealand
Nigeria
South Africa
St. Kitts & Nevis
St. Lucia
St. Vincent & the Grenadines
Trinidad and Tobago
Turks & Caicos Islands
United Kingdom
United State Territories
Zimbabwe

2. Applicants who have recently completed three years of full-time study at a secondary institution in the U.S. may be exempted from this requirement after supporting academic records have been reviewed by the Admissions Office.

3. Applicants who have received a U.S. Bachelor's or U.S. Master's degree or who have completed two years of full-time academic study at an accredited post-secondary institution within the U.S.

4. International Baccalaureate (IB) applicants to Kent State may satisfy this requirement by attaining a minimum score of 5 in the Diploma Programme higher level or a minimum score of 6 in the standard level English language examinations. Or, applicants who have completed the ELS level 112 will be considered as met the English language requirement for undergraduate applications.

Any request for a waiver of the English language proficiency requirement must be submitted in writing to the Admissions Office with any supporting documentation.

Kent State University reserves the right to require evidence of English language proficiency for all applicants, the adequacy of which shall be at the sole discretion of Kent State University.

There are four different English proficiency exams that Kent State University will receive for consideration for admission if a student has international credentials and does not meet any of the English waiver conditions. These exams are the TOEFL, IELTS, PTE and MELAB. The following provides a brief description of each of these exams which are widely used among universities and colleges throughout the world as an indicator of a student's English proficiency.

TOEFL

This exam is described as "the most widely respected English-language test in the world" and is recognized by over 9,000 institutions in over 130+ countries. There are two basic types, paper-based referred to as pBT and internet based, iBT. The pBT is not as common as the iBT. At Kent State University we only accept pBT if it is our own ESL Center's institutional paper-based test. All other TOEFL scores must be submitted officially and electronically to us from the testing organization ETS. The range for pBT is 310 – 677 and the range for iBT is 0-120.
https://www.ets.org/toefl/ibt/about

IELTS

The International English Language Testing System or IELTS is said to be "the world's most popular English language test for higher education and global migration with over 2.7 million tests taken last year in 140 countries." There are two basic types, Academic and General Training and Kent State University accepts only the Academic IELTS, which is the most common and widely used for English proficiency consideration. It is based on an easy-to-use 9 band scale which ranges from 1-9, non-user to expert respectively. IELTS is available at more than 1,100 locations worldwide and includes a face-to-face speaking component as part of the assessment. At Kent State University, we accept a copy of the official report from the student and verify the score through an online portal provided by IELTS.
https://www.ielts.org/

PTE

Pearson Test of English Academic or PTE is the world's "leading computer-based test of English" for those that are studying abroad or migrating. They are known for their fast results, within five business day, and for their flexible test dates as they run 363 tests a year in more than 200 locations worldwide. This exam has become increasingly popular and is accepted by thousands of institutions worldwide, including Harvard Business School, INSEAD and Yale. The PTE score range is from 10-90 points. At Kent State University, we accept a copy of the official PTE report from the student and verify the score through an online portal provided by Pearson.
http://pearsonpte.com/

MELAB

The Michigan English Language Assessment Battery is another English proficiency standardized examination. This exam is recognized by thousands of institutions both for academic and professional purposes. As stated in the MELAB 2015 Report, it is aimed at the B1-C1 levels of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR, Council of Europe) and the report ranges from 0-99. Of the four English proficiency exams received at Kent State University for admission consideration, MELAB is the least common and is verified by an official report mailed directly to the International Admissions Office at Kent State University.
http://cambridgemichigan.org/institutions/products-services/tests/proficiency-certification/melab/

Given the diversity of these exams and the range of their score equivalencies, an English Proficiency Tier chart has been developed to allow for a benchmark and comparison of these scores. The chart will serve as an internal guide and sets the English Proficiency exams in tiers. By choosing a tier, the academic programs will have the option to choose the range that best suits their individual program needs. It should be considered while setting the English Proficiency requirement for an academic program that English ability does not fully assess or measure the academic ability or skill of the student. The English proficiency tiers include text to briefly describe and outline the overall English proficiency and ability of the student at that specific level. It should be noted that deviations from the tiers could lead to inconsistency of English proficiency among admitted students. This is to be used as an internal document only for guidance and policy purposes.

English Proficiency Tiers for Academic Programs

	TOEFL IBT	TOEFL PBT	IELTS	MELAB	PTE
Tier A	71-78	525-549	6.0	74-76	50-57
	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Recommended for programs that aren't writing intensive, often in STEM fields				
Tier B	79-93	550-586	6.5	77-81	58-64
	Can exchange factual information on familiar routine/non-routine matters within his/her field with some confidence. Can pass on a detailed piece of information. Recommended for programs with a moderate amount of writing, often in master's level business and education programs.				
Tier C	94-101	587-609	7.0	82-85	65-72
	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialization. Recommended for writing intensive programs, often in communication and medical fields, especially PhDs.				
Tier D	102+	610+	7.5	86+	73+
	Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options. Recommended for heavily writing and research intensive PhDs across all disciplines.				

Alternatives and Consequences:
This policy once approved will allow accuracy and consistency in the English proficiency requirements as well as ensure students are adequately prepared to enter into their academic studies. It will also align Kent State University English proficiency policy with peer and aspirational institutions. The result of falling behind with respect to English proficiency requirements and waivers would be detrimental to the sustained growth and academic success of our international student population as well as prevent our institution from receiving the quality applicants that our competitors would readily consider for admission.

Specific Recommendation and Justification:
The English proficiency proposal, once approved as official policy will effectively define the English proficiency requirements for students, faculty and staff. It will serve to safeguard applicants from beginning academic study until they have a proficient grasp of English to be successful in their program. The policy will also guide departments in choosing which English proficiency requirements they need in place for academic success and retention of international students. It will also ensure those students who have received academic credentials which waive the English requirement are recognized so that we are aligned in our English proficiency policy with peer, aspirational and regional institutions.

Timetable and Actions Required:
This proposal will be presented to Graduate Studies Administrative Advisory Committee (GSAAC) for approval in fall of 2016 semester.
Once approved, International Admissions will coordinate efforts with each academic department to review the policy and provide training as needed regarding the English proficiency exams and ranges so that they choose which English proficiency tier they will adopt for their program(s).

The proposal will go to GSAAC for review and approval, but after that, it must also go to the Educational Policies Council (EPC) and Faculty Senate for their respective approvals. After GSAAC approves the proposal as policy, the associate deans of the committee would work with academic colleges to revise admission criteria for each graduate program to correspond with the new tier system. EPC would then be notified of revised program admission criteria before implementation within the University Catalog.

There will be ongoing review of resources used in research to confirm that our English proficiency policy is aligned with the most up to date and accurate information.

With the implementation of the new CRM system at Kent State University, International Admissions will be able to track the English proficiency scores of applicants. The database will allow us to closely monitor the types of exams being submitted and the score ranges of students that are being admitted. This information will be gathered regularly and internal data collected, reviewed and strategically evaluated to remain current with best practices for English proficiency exams among peer, aspirational and regional institutions.

Sources

https://www.ets.org/toefl/institutions/scores/compare/
http://pearsonpte.com/institutions/scores/
http://pearsonpte.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/PTEA_Score_Guide.pdf
http://www.cambridgemichigan.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/MELAB_ConcordanceTable.pdf
https://www.ets.org/toefl/ibt/about
https://www.ielts.org/
http://pearsonpte.com
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http://www.hhl.de/fileadmin/texte/_relaunch/Conversion_Table_TOEFL_(PBT,CBT,iBT).pdf