
Policy: English Proficiency Requirement

Number: 02.16.01

Approval Date: April 25, 2013

Revision Dates: February 11, 2021, April 11, 2024

Section: Student Affairs

Area: Admissions

Subject: English Fluency and Literacy Requirement: TOEFL & IELTS

POLICY

TOEFL Requirement - All applicants, regardless of citizenship, whose native language is not English, are required to demonstrate fluency (speaking) and literacy (reading and writing). The primary means to document fluency and literacy is to submit a Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). A minimum score of 213 is required on the computer-based version of the examination, 79 on the Internet-based version of the examination (subtest score minimums: 15 reading, 15 listening, 18 speaking, 17 writing), or total score of 550 on the paper version with 55 or greater in each of the four subtest scores (listening, structure/writing, reading, and speaking). CHP programs have the option of setting higher score requirements. The test must have been taken within the two years immediately preceding the requested semester of admission. An official copy of the TOEFL score, issued by the Educational Testing Service must be sent directly to UAMS by the Educational Testing Service. A photocopy of the scores sent to the student is not sufficient. No action will be taken on an application containing a photocopied test score.

IELTS Requirement - The minimum score on the IELTS test is 6.5. Please note that departments have the prerogative of setting higher score requirements. The IELTS test must have been taken within the two years immediately preceding the requested semester of admission. An official copy of the IELTS score, issued by IELTS must be sent directly to UAMS by the testing agency. A photocopy of the scores sent to the student is not sufficient. No action will be taken on an application containing a photocopied test score.

F1 Visa Applicants - SEVIS (Student & Exchange Visitor Information System) requires certifications that each international student has taken or met the English Proficiency requirement at UAMS. The only exceptions that can be made besides the applicant completing the TOEFL or IELTS exam within two years are:

- Received a bachelor's degree or master's degree from an accredited U.S. college or university to include 6sc of English Composition.
- Official Letter from institution outside the U.S. to document the mode of instruction for the program/degree was English.

Applicants on a F1 Visa cannot petition for a TOEFL or IELTS Waiver.

Petitioning for a TOEFL or IELTS Waiver – At the discretion of the program admissions committee within the College of Health Professions (CHP) and approval of the CHP Associate Dean for Student Affairs, the TOEFL or IELTS requirement may be waived for non F-1 applicants to programs in CHP who meet any of the criteria listed below.

- Received a bachelor’s degree or master’s degree from an accredited U.S. college or university to include 6sc of English Composition.
- Graduated from a U.S. high school having completed a minimum of three (3) full years in residence and having completed two years of regular English courses with B or better grades.
- Scored 21 or greater on the English component of the ACT exam.
- Maintains a current U.S. certification to practice in the related discipline in which further coursework will be completed and has practiced in this discipline in the U.S. for at least two (2) years.

Administrative Waiver – The applicant does not meet stated waiver qualifications; however, should the program chairmen, through program processes, believe there to be no deficiency in the area of English fluency and literacy the opportunity exists for a petition under administrative waiver. Chairman/program director requesting administrative waiver will closely monitor student progress and develop a plan of action should one be deemed necessary.

A waiver is not automatically granted. Each petition is reviewed on an individual basis, and the department chair/program director and/or Associate Dean for Student Affairs may request additional supporting documentation and/or demonstration of the applicant’s ability to write, speak, and comprehend the English language.

PROCEDURE

Applicant must submit the completed TOEFL or IELTS Waiver Request Form to their department chair/program director. The program chair/director will review, make a decision, sign, date, and submit form to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs or the Student Services Specialist assigned to their program.

APPROVAL

This policy was approved by the College of Health Professions Executive Committee on July 7, 2016.