

Proposition: 12-11/12A

Title: **A Change in the Undergraduate English Proficiency Requirement So That The IELTS and TOEFL Requirements Are Equivalent**

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**Proposed
Committee**

Assignment: Scholastic Affairs

Assigned

Committee: Long Range Planning

Passed ADAC: 14 November 2011

Passed DAC: 13 December 2011

Proposal: This proposition requests that language in the undergraduate catalog be changed so that the English language proficiency for international undergraduate students is equivalent whether the student took the IELTS or the TOEFL examination.

The proposed changes in the Undergraduate Catalog are given below with text to be added indicated in red font and text to be eliminated given in strike-through font. (Text from http://catalog.nmsu.edu/undergrad-2011-2012/01-general/intl_students.html.)

English Language Proficiency

NMSU requires a score of 500 paper-based or 61 internet-based or better on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), or a score of ~~5.0~~ **5.5** on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), for all international students, both non-degree and degree seeking. International students may also demonstrate English proficiency by satisfactorily completing NMSU's Center for Intensive Training in English (CITE) programs. A waiver of the TOEFL requirement may be considered for:

1. Students who are native speakers of English.
2. Students completing high school in the United States who (a) have attended the high school for at least two full semesters and (b) have scored in at least the 75th percentile in English on the ACT.
3. Students transferring from a junior college, or university in the United States who have earned a minimum of 30 acceptable semester credits (45 acceptable quarter credits) with a GPA of 2.0 or better. "Acceptable credit" means classes that require a high proficiency in both written and oral English.
4. Students demonstrating English-language proficiency using methods accepted by the Office of Admissions.

5. Students enrolling in certain programs where English language proficiency is not required.

The university reserves the right to require any prospective international student to meet the TOEFL requirement.

The proposed changes in the Prospective Students section of the NMSU web site are given below with text to be added indicated in red font and text to be eliminated given in strike-through font. (Text from <http://prospective.nmsu.edu/international/language/index.html>)

The required TOEFL scores for regular NMSU admission:

- 61 on the iBT or 500 on the paper-based test for applicants to undergraduate degree programs.
- 79 on the iBT or 550 on the paper-based test for applicants to graduate degree programs**

**Some graduate degree programs reserve the right to require higher TOEFL/IELTS standards.

The required IELTS scores for regular NMSU admission:

- ~~5.0~~ 5.5 overall for undergraduate applicants.
- 6.5 for graduate applicants.

Similar changes are requested in all other published documents in which the IELTS score is published relative to undergraduate students.

Rationale: University Admissions is requesting that the English proficiency requirement for international undergraduate applicants be raised for students who take the IELTS test instead of TOEFL. We propose that the minimum IELTS score for undergraduate admission be 6.0 instead of the current requirement of 5.0. A majority of our peer institutions have IELTS requirements between 6.0 and 7.0. As shown in the chart below, an IELTS score of 6.0 is converted to internet-based TOEFL (iBT) scores in the range of our current requirement of 61 iBT.

We are concerned that because there is a lack of institutional resources for the English proficiency needs of the international students, currently NMSU cannot adequately serve these students by providing sufficient SPCD classes. For example, with the continuing expansion of the admission of undergraduate students sponsored by the governments of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, we are seeing a growing number of students admitted with 5.0 IELTS who still need additional Intensive English courses at NMSU. If we raise the IELTS requirement to 6.0 the students admitted with IELTS scores below 6.0 would understand that they will be enrolled in additional Intensive English classes beginning the first semester at NMSU.

Comparison Charts

Based on the research reports that link TOEFL iBT scores to IELTS and CEFR scores, ETS developed these comparison charts to help you make informed admissions decisions. The current NMSU TOEFL requirement is 61 and IELTS requirement is 5.0. It is proposed to change the IELTS requirement to 6.0 to be consistent with the equivalent TOEFL as given below.

TOEFL Score	IELTS Band
0 – 31	0 – 4
32 – 34	4.5
35 – 45	5
46 – 59*	5.5
60 – 78*	6
79 – 93*	6.5
94 – 101*	7
102 – 109*	7.5
110 – 114	8
115 – 117	8.5
118 – 120	9

An * in the table above indicates score comparisons with the highest degree of confidence.