

# English Proficiency for Prospective International Students

## Policy

### ADM 16.2

#### Office of Enrollment Services

Policy Type: Administrative

Applies to: New international student applicants, beginning Fall 2017

### POLICY DATES (required)

Issued:

Revised:

Edited:

Currently, the University of Mount Union accepts the following proof of English proficiency for international student applicants:

English Proficiency Test	Score Required
TOEFL	79 (Students can score between a 61 – 78 but be required to take ESL courses for their first year)
IELTS	6.5 (Students can score between a 5.5 – 6.0 but be required to take ESL courses for their first year)

Mount Union also will accept the following as proof of English proficiency when reviewed on a case-by-case basis:

- Completion of a minimum of two English courses (non-ESL) at a U.S. high school with a minimum grade of B.
- Completion of an International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum with a minimum score of 5 in the Diploma Programme, or a minimum score of 6 in the standard level English language examinations.
- Completion of the British Ordinary Level (O-level) English Language Exam (GCE/GCSE/IGCSE) with a Grade of B or higher.
- Completion of a minimum of 24 credit hours of academic (non-ESL) coursework at an accredited two or four-year postsecondary institution in the U.S. with a minimum GPA of 3.0.

### Current Policy from Faculty Handbook (Article II, Section 2(e)):

The current policy reads as follows: The faculty of the University of Mount Union set the TOEFL/IELTS/ESL requirement for international degree-seeking students as follows: 500 (PBT), 61 (iBT) or 5.0-5.5 (IELTS) is the required minimum for admission for all degree-seeking international students. Students accepted with TOEFL scores between 61-78 (iBT), 500-547 (PBT) or an IELTS (International English Language Testing Service) score between 5.5-6.0 are required to take a minimum of 8 ESL credit hours in their first year. Students will take 4 ESL credit hours (ESL 110 – ESL Communication) in the first semester, followed by an additional minimum of 4 ESL credit hours in the second semester. The determination of the eventual number of ESL credit hours needed in the second semester will be based on the academic advisor's assessment of the student's cumulative first-semester academic performance and the ESL instructor's professional evaluation of the student's language proficiency progress.

Other forms of English proficiency can be accepted on a case-by-case basis (as outlined above).

### Definitions

Term	Definition
PTE Academic	Pearson's Test of English.

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Term	Definition
British A-levels	An examination through the British system of education. A-levels are accepted at most U.S. institutions as transfer credit, much in the same way that Advanced Placement (AP) exam credit is accepted as transfer credit at U.S. institutions when the proper score is obtained.
MELAB	Michigan English Language Assessment Battery.
IB	International Baccalaureate Diploma

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Office of International Admissions has done extensive research to identify what other private - and some public - institutions in Ohio are accepting as other forms of English proficiency, or in some instances, exemptions granted for proof of English proficiency. This research has been reviewed by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Vice President for Enrollment Services.

By accepting other, well documented forms of English proficiency, this will open up the possibility of Mount Union being able to accept international students that are well prepared with English proficiency with more ease. It will be one less obstacle, and often one less expense, for an international student with the requisite English skills to be admitted to Mount Union.

An aggregate of 40 schools were chosen and researched. Institutions were chosen by using [ohiopriatecolleges.org](http://ohiopriatecolleges.org) to find all private institutions in the state of Ohio, similar in size to Mount Union. Area state institutions were chosen and researched mainly due to their proximity to Mount Union. Research shows that a number of institutions will accept the following tests (along with the TOEFL and/or IELTS tests):

1. SAT Critical Reading scores (old SAT) or the evidence-based Reading & Writing scores (new SAT)
2. ACT English scores
3. Pearson's Test of English – Academic (PTE)
4. Michigan English Language Assessment Battery (MELAB)
5. British A-level or O-level examinations

Research also shows that institutions will exempt students from the English proficiency requirement if one of the following conditions have been met:

1. From an English speaking country (list is vetted and provided on website for prospective international students).
2. Completed a certain number of years of secondary school in the U.S.
3. Recently completed a certain number of credit hours at a college/university in the U.S., U.K., Canada (except Quebec), or Australia with a certain cumulative GPA.
4. Recently completed 1 – 2 English composition courses in the U.S. from a regionally accredited college/university with a grade of C or better.
5. Recently completed an accredited ESL program in the U.S.

### PROPOSAL

Given the above research, it is proposed that the following assessments (with corresponding scores) be accepted by UMU along with the TOEFL and IELTS scores:

1. PTE Academic score of 55
2. SAT Critical Reading Score of 500 (old SAT)

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3. SAT evidence-based Reading & Writing score of 590 (new SAT)
4. ACT English score of 21
5. MELAB score of 80
6. Completion of the British Advanced Level (A-level) English Language Exam (GCE/GCSE/IGCSE) with a Grade of C or higher. (*Currently UMU accepts the O-levels with a grade of B or higher; A-levels are more difficult and students can receive college credit upon completion and a grade of C or better; therefore a grade of C is recommended for the A-level examinations for proof of English language proficiency*).

It is also recommended that the following be considered as a rule for exemption of students needing to submit any proof of English proficiency:

1. Completion of secondary school (with at least 2 years of prior, continuous enrollment) from an English-speaking country.
2. Completion of at least 1 year of post-secondary school (with cumulative GPA of 2.5 or higher at the post-secondary level in academic [non-ESL] coursework in an English-speaking country).

English-speaking countries include (but are not limited to) Canada (except Quebec), Australia, the United Kingdom, the Bahamas, New Zealand, etc. A full list of English-speaking countries can be captured from the United States Central Intelligence Agency's Library where they publish The World Factbook. Each country's official language(s) are listed: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2098.html>.

## PROPOSED CHANGE TO CURRENT POLICY

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The Office of International Admissions also requests the following change to an exemption already in existence:

- Current exemption reads: Completion of a minimum of 24 credit hours of academic (non-ESL) coursework at an accredited two or four-year postsecondary institution in the U.S. with a **minimum GPA of 3.0**.
- Recommended change to exemption: Completion of a minimum of 24 credit hours of academic (non-ESL) coursework at an accredited college/university in the U.S. with a **minimum GPA of 2.5**. (*The rationale behind this change being that the admission requirement for a transfer student to be admitted is a 2.0 cumulative GPA; requiring a 2.5 GPA is just slightly higher than the actual GPA requirement for admission to the university as a transfer student*).

## CONCLUSION

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By approving a wide array of options when it comes to proving English language proficiency, as well as approving certain English proficiency waivers (where feasible), this will allow a greater diversification in the international student applicant pool. For example, students that reside in countries where English is the official language, will no longer be deterred from applying to UMU because of needing to provide a TOEFL or IELTS score as part of the application process. These students will not have that obstacle standing in their way during the application process, when it really should not be an obstacle for them in the first place. Also, there are a number of other highly regarded English language proficiency examinations being accepted by other U.S. institutions as proof of English proficiency, like the PTE and MELAB, that

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UMU should also considering accepting. Again, this gives international students a variety of options at proving their English language proficiency.

By accepting these revisions and additions to the English proficiency policy, the Office of International Admissions is confident this will aide international students in being admitted into their degree program(s) here at Mount Union.

### Responsibilities (required)

Position or Office	Responsibilities
Director of International Admission	Admit qualified degree-seeking international students to UMU based on academics and English proficiency.

### Resources (required for any resource referred to in the policy)

Central Intelligence Agency. World Factbook. Retrieved online from: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2098.html>.

Pearson's Test of English. Information gathered from: <http://pearsonpte.com/>.

Michigan English Language Assessment Battery. Information gathered from: <http://cambridgemichigan.org/institutions/products-services/tests/proficiency-certification/melab/>.

World Education Services. A Guide to the A-levels. Retrieved from: <http://wenr.wes.org/2014/02/a-guide-to-the-gce-a-level>.

International Baccalaureate Program. Information gathered from: <http://www.ibo.org/programmes/diploma-programme/>.

List of Ohio Private Institutions. Information gathered from: [www.ohiopriatecolleges.org](http://www.ohiopriatecolleges.org)

### Contacts (required)

Subject	Office	Telephone	E-mail/URL
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### History (required)

All changes must be listed sequentially, including edits and reviews. Note when the policy name or number changes.

Issued:

Revised:

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