

Alternative Documentation of English Proficiency

University policy requires that graduate students demonstrate a minimum level of English proficiency before admission so that students who are admitted to graduate programs can expect to complete the programs in a reasonable amount of time and be successful in the classes they have access to across campus in a variety of programs.

A Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) may request a waiver to the English proficiency assessment requirement if there is sufficient documentation of English language proficiency. If there is any doubt about a student's English proficiency, it is strongly recommended that the student take one of the various English proficiency exams recognized by the University (TOEFL, IELTS, PTE, Cambridge CAE, DET, or MN Battery). These assessments focus on the academic language students need to be successful in a graduate program which can be different from the day to day language a student uses in social interactions.

Considerations when making a request to prove proficiency through alternative documentation:

- 1) If the applicant already has a score on an assessment recognized by the University, that score should be considered the measure of proficiency for the applicant. This form should only be used in the absence of a test score.
- 2) It is important to document the level or proficiency of the applicant. This can be done through submitting the citations of previous publications in English, oral proficiency interview results, etc.
- 3) Evidence of proficiency should include areas of both listening and speaking in English and reading and writing in English.
- 4) Writing such as essays submitted as part of the application process or email communication are not considered evidence of proficiency. Generative AI tools can be used to easily produce these types of writing. Instead, publications in English and impromptu supervised writing samples are better documentation of proficiency.

To request a waiver, please complete the following questions and attach any documentation you have. Citations of publications are acceptable.

1. Prospective student name: _____ UMN ID#: _____
2. What evidence do you have that the student's listening and speaking skills surpass the minimum English proficiency requirements for a graduate student?

Example: *Student took a course with a UMN faculty member and/or a faculty member has had extensive verbal exchanges with the applicant (note dates of interview and participants, attach transcript if possible) and student has a recently expired TOEFL score with a listening sub score of ____ and a speaking sub score of ____.*

3. What evidence do you have that the student's reading and writing skills surpass the minimum English proficiency requirements for a graduate student?

Example: *The student has published his/her work in English (provide citations and any information that might be useful or attach publications). We had the student write a supervised impromptu essay on a topic related to their field that meets the standards required for this graduate program. (Examples of evidence that do NOT meet the standard include essays or personal statements submitted as part of the application.)*

4. Include other relevant information, if any, about the applicant's prior experience with English (prior work experience, studied in English, etc.) indicating the period of time and where the experience took place. Example: *student was enrolled in a human resources certificate program at Cambridge University for two years in 2002, or the student has been working at 3M in Minnesota for the past three years as a system analyst and we have checked references from that program.*

5. Check one:

_____ I request the student be admitted with an AZ hold and be required to take a supportive English class, if necessary.

_____ I request that the student be considered to have already exceeded the minimum English requirement and be admitted with no assessment on arrival required.

6. **Attach a copy of any evidence (written reports, expired test scores, interview transcripts, etc.).**

7. I understand that I am requesting an exception to the University's English proficiency policy and am confident that this applicant will be able to fully access all aspects of the program to which they are admitted based on the evidence documented here.

Name of Director of Graduate Studies

Signature of Director of Graduate Studies

Date

Submit the waiver request form to:

*Michael Anderson, English Proficiency Committee
Minnesota English Language Program
Email: ande1819@umn.edu*