



English as a Second Language Program

TO: Graduate Program Directors

FROM: Michele S. Bowman, Ph.D.
ESL Program Director

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SUBJECT: iBT, SPEAK test and ESL Program

Here are some updates about language proficiency requirements for admissions versus those for International Teaching Assistants (ITA's).

The TOEFL (iBT) provides more information about the applicant's abilities to communicate in an academic English language environment and integrates skills to better simulate language use in the classroom. ETS recommended that institutions set section or skill score requirements either by themselves or in combination with a total score in order to make best use of the score information. The minimum score for admission to Cleveland State University is 78 with no section lower than 17.

Some departments may have higher section requirements or even a higher minimum.

The other typical test scores submitted are IELTS (6.0 required, no section below 5.0); ITEP Academic (3.8 required) and Duolingo (100 required)

International Teaching Assistants

Any international graduate student whose first language is not English and is a candidate for a TA position must provide a speaking score from the new internet-based TOEFL (iBT), the Test of Spoken English (TSE) or the SPEAK. The Test of Spoken English (TSE) is being phased out, but may still be available in those countries that do not have the new internet-based TOEFL (iBT) yet.

The speaking score on the TOEFL is a fairly new component. While the minimum score for admission is 17, **ETS identifies a score of 23 as the minimum score required for ITA's**, equivalent to a score of 45 on the TSE/SPEAK. A student with a score of 23-25 must be

concurrently enrolled in ESL 1504 if assigned a teaching assistantship. However, **a speaking score of 26 is identified as the equivalent of 50 (on the TSE/SPEAK) for which no further ESL coursework is needed** (www.ets.org/toefl). On the **IELTS** test, a 6.0 is the minimum score for admission; however, a **speaking score of 6.5 -7.0** is identified as the minimum score required for ITA's with concurrent enrollment in ESL 1504. A score of 7.5 is required for which no further ESL course work is needed. On the **Duolingo test**, 100 is the minimum score for admission. A **score of 105-115 on Duolingo is acceptable for a teaching assistant with concurrent enrollment** in ESL 1504; however, the Conversation and Production **sub-scores** must both be at least 105. **The minimum score for which no further ESL course work is needed is 120 +** on the Duolingo test. The **sub-scores** of Conversation and Production must be at least 120. Please consult the ESL Director if working with another test.

The ESL Program offers the SPEAK test through the **Testing Center, located at Rhodes West 215**, for those students who do not currently have a score of at least 23 on the iBT. Procedures and "What to expect" are found below, but can also be sent to you as a separate document. If the student does not achieve a score of 50 on the SPEAK test, the ESL program provides instruction in either ESL 1503 or 1504 (in Learning Stream/ CE). However, any international graduate student may enroll in these courses, as well as in ESL 1502, ESL Graduate Writing (only offered in the Spring Semester). While a minimum of approximately 8 students is generally required for any of the courses, the ESL Program Director may allow fewer students in ESL 1504 in order for ITAs to keep their assistantships.

ESL 1503 & 1504

- Designed for ITA's to improve communicative competence and placement is done through SPEAK
- Available to all international students to improve their speaking skills
- 1503 will begin with some presentation skills; 1504 addresses teaching strategies.
- Only students enrolled in 1504 may concurrently hold an ITA position.
- Each is registered has a required textbook; and graded S/U

Also available:

ESL 1502

- Graduate ESL Writing course
- Uses students' writing assignments from courses as assignments
- Required text provides practice in writing, grammar and reading.
- Non-credit graded S/U, but counts toward full-time registration

I am available to discuss the SPEAK testing process or the graduate courses. Please feel free to contact me at x9904 or at m.s.bowman@csuohio.edu if you are interested in learning more about the English as a Second Language Program,. You may also view information at <http://www.csuohio.edu/cehs/departments/TE/ielp/index.html>



ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE PROGRAM

SPEAK Test Procedures

1. Pay the \$125 fee at the Cashier's Office of Treasury Services (MC 1st floor) and get payment receipt for SPEAK test.
2. Take your payment receipt and make an appointment for the SPEAK test by calling the Testing Center x2272 or stopping by the Testing Center office (**RW 215**).
3. Complete the SPEAK test form at the Testing Center when making the appointment. You must include the name of your Graduate Program Director and your contact information.
4. Take the SPEAK test at your appointment time.

The ESL office will receive your test electronically. It will be rated by two raters and will take 5- 10 working days (up to two weeks). We will complete the rating as quickly as possible. You do not have to call the ESL Department. Depending on the student's score, the student will be cleared to accept a teaching assistantship without restriction or will need to participate in a class before doing so. Two courses are offered through Continuing Education (non-credit) ESL 1503, Intermediate English as a Second Language Speaking Skills, and ESL 1504, Communication Skills for International Teaching Assistants (ITAs). ITAs may teach concurrently if registered for ESL 1504. The expenses for these classes are the students' responsibility. Departments may pay for the course or reimburse, but the Department must make that decision. If you have any questions about the courses or the procedure, please contact the ESL Program.

Official SPEAK Test Cancellation /Refund Policy

In order to receive 100% refund for the SPEAK test, you must cancel your appointment with the Testing Center at least 48 hours before your scheduled test. If you cancel your appointment before the scheduled time, but less than 48 hours, you will receive a 50% refund. If you request a refund, but did not cancel before the appointment, no refund will be issued. All refunds will be issued as a reversal of charges to your account. Refunds are not available in cash or check. Any questions must be directed to Michele Bowman, the ESL Program Director.

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What to Expect at the SPEAK test

The test lasts approximately 20-30 minutes and there are twelve questions on the test to which you respond.

You will be asked to:

Tell a story based on a six-picture sequence and answer a related question

Describe a graph and answer a related question

Respond to questions about a map, ideas and your field of study

Take a role and give a short speech.

You will be given a few seconds to think and to prepare each response. For some questions, the preparation time is longer; and in that case, you will be told how much time you have to prepare your response. Be sure to take a pencil to the test center because you will be allowed to take notes in the test book during the test. We do not recommend, however, that you attempt to write out and read your responses.

You will be instructed when to begin and stop speaking. As you speak, your voice will be recorded. Be sure to speak clearly and loudly enough for your responses to be recorded. Your responses should be complete and directly related to what is being asked. Attempting to use responses you have learned or prepared ahead of time may result in lower scores.

While many of the questions may not appear to be directly connected to your academic or professional field, each question is designed to tell the raters about your oral language ability in English. Your score for the test will be based on the recorded samples of your speech. Trained raters will assign a score for each response, based on the scoring scale established for this test.

The Test of Spoken Language is no longer given in the United States since the iBT (internet-based TOEFL) now has a speaking section. The SPEAK test is still offered at Cleveland State University.