

Verification of English Language Proficiency for Undergraduate Students at the University of Kansas

After you have been admitted as a new undergraduate student from abroad or as a domestic undergraduate student whose first language is not English, you need to visit the university's Applied English Center (AEC) when you arrive at the university. Students whose first language is not English must be screened by the Applied English Center, as required by the university. Please be sure to visit the AEC on your first weekday in Lawrence.

1 **If you are a native speaker of English** from the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, an English-speaking province in Canada, or an English-speaking Caribbean country, you will not be required to take courses in English as a second language. Please come to the AEC office before enrollment to receive the necessary documents.
Bilingual students: If you have spoken two languages (including English) since your very early childhood and have attended many years of schooling in the U.S., the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, an English-speaking province in Canada, or an English-speaking Caribbean country, you are probably bilingual. If so, you will not be required to take courses in English as a second language. Be sure to visit the Applied English Center when you arrive on campus before enrollment so that your English proficiency can be verified.

2 **If you are a new undergraduate** who already has a bachelor's degree earned in residence from an accredited English-medium U.S. college or university or a college or university in the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, an English-speaking province in Canada, or an English-speaking Caribbean country with instruction conducted in English, you may request a **waiver** of the AEC English proficiency test. This does not apply to degrees earned online. A waiver means that you will be excused from the AEC English proficiency test, and you will be allowed to enroll full-time in university academic courses.

3 **If you have a recent paper-based TOEFL score report** (within the past two years), with each part score 57 or higher, and a score of 4.5 or higher on the Test of Written English (TWE), you will not be required to take courses in English as a second language. Be sure to visit the Applied English Center when you arrive on campus before enrollment so that your English proficiency can be verified.
Test of Written English: If your part scores are 57 or higher, but your score on the Test of Written English (TWE) is lower than 4.5 or you do not have a TWE score, you will write a timed essay. If you pass the timed essay test, you will not be required to take courses in English as a second language. If you do not pass the timed essay test, you will be required to take an AEC course. On the very rare occasion that a student writes a timed essay that is very low, that student will be required to take the entire AEC English proficiency test and will be placed in one or more courses based on the test results.

4 **Computer-based TOEFL score report:** This version of the TOEFL test was discontinued over two years ago. The Applied English Center no longer accepts computer-based TOEFL score reports.

5 **If you have a recent Internet-based TOEFL score report** (within the past two years) with 23 or higher on the Reading, Listening, and Writing parts, you will not be required to take courses in English as a second language. Be sure to visit the Applied English Center when you arrive on campus before enrollment so that your English proficiency can be verified.

6 **If you have a recent IELTS score report** (within the past two years) for the Academic format of the IELTS, with 6.0 or higher on the Listening, Reading, and Writing modules, and with a total score of 6.5, you will not be required to take courses in English as a second language. You must visit the Applied English Center when you arrive on campus before enrollment so that your English proficiency can be verified.

7 **Students who are non-native speakers of English and do not meet the guidelines listed in sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6** are required to take the AEC English proficiency test. The test will determine whether or not you can understand university lectures in English, read academic material quickly with good comprehension and write good paragraphs that answer questions about the reading, complete English sentences grammatically, and write an acceptable short essay in 30 minutes without using a dictionary. English courses taken in high school, college, community college, or university will not excuse you from the test.

If you pass all three parts the English proficiency test, you may enroll full-time in university academic courses.

If you pass one or two parts of the English proficiency test, you will enroll in one or two English courses and you will be permitted to enroll in one or more university academic courses.

If you do not pass any of the three parts of the English proficiency test, you will be required to enroll in full-time courses in English as a second language at the AEC.



Frequently Asked Questions

If you have further questions, contact:

Applied English Center

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When should I visit the Applied English Center (AEC)?

You should visit the AEC office on your first weekday in Lawrence.

Where is the AEC?

The AEC is on the second floor of Lippincott Hall in room number 204. Lippincott Hall is on Jayhawk Boulevard, the main street of the University of Kansas campus. It is near the Kansas Union and across the street from Fraser Hall, the tall building with two flags on top.

What will happen when I go to the AEC?

When you enter the AEC, you will see a receptionist. Tell this person that you are a new student. The receptionist will help you to register for the proficiency test or to speak to someone to verify your native proficiency, your TOEFL score, or your IELTS scores.

I have been admitted to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Will I need to take AEC courses?

It will depend on your level of English proficiency. In most semesters, approximately 40%–50% of new international undergraduate students are required to take one or more courses at the AEC. Most of these students are also taking university courses at the same time.

Why is my English proficiency important at the University of Kansas?

The University of Kansas is a large research university with high standards. It is impossible for students to meet those high standards without very good control of English. The university does not accept students into academic classes if they cannot understand and use English well, because these students would not succeed in courses or would slow class progress.

Will I receive academic credit for my AEC courses?

You may receive credit toward graduation in advanced AEC courses if you are an undergraduate student in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the School of Business, or the School of Architecture. Courses in AEC Levels 4 and above carry credit.

The schools listed above limit AEC credits toward graduation to a maximum of 9 hours. Even if you take and succeed in more AEC courses for credit, only a maximum of nine will count toward your degree.

Students who are NOT undergraduates or are NOT in one of the schools listed above: your transcript will show AEC courses, but the courses will not count toward your degree.

What is the proficiency test like?

You can get a sample test at the AEC to help you learn about the test. The test has 3 parts:

I. Reading & Writing (200 points)

- A. Multiple-Choice (3 reading passages, 30 questions, 35 minutes) -- Students read three passages with an average length of 225 words. Comprehension and vocabulary questions follow each passage.
- B. Written Answers (a 600-word reading passage, 4-5 questions) -- Students are given a passage and a note-taking page. They have 20 minutes to read the passage and take notes. Then they give back the reading passage and have 30 minutes to use their notes to answer several questions in paragraphs.

II. Test of Listening Comprehension (200 points)

(3–4 dialogues, 2 short lectures, 61 questions, 35 minutes) For each dialog or lecture, students first read the questions. Then they write answers while they listen to the dialogue or lecture.

III. Grammar for Communication (200 points)

- A. Guided Paraphrase (40 questions, 30 minutes) -- Each item has an A sentence and a B sentence. Sentence B has one or more blank spaces. Students read sentence A and write one or more words in each blank in sentence B so sentence B has the same meaning as A.
- B. Timed Essay (30 minutes) -- Students write a short essay on a topic given to them. The score for the essay depends on organization and development, fluency of expression, grammatical variety and correctness, and vocabulary range and appropriateness. A minimum of 150 words is required for a passing score.

If I do not pass the test, how many AEC courses will I have to take?

This depends on your current English proficiency, your ability to learn English, and your study skills. Some students are required to take only one or two AEC courses and may finish their AEC work in one semester. Other students who arrive at the university with low English skills may need to spend one or two semesters or longer as full-time students in AEC courses (three courses -- 18 class hours per week), and then two or more semesters as part-time AEC students (one or two courses -- 4-12 class hours per week).

Can I take AEC courses and regular university courses at the same time?

In most semesters, about 70% of the new undergraduate students taking AEC classes are also taking university courses at the same time. Students who need to take full-time (three) AEC courses are not permitted to take university courses at the same time, but students who need to take one or two AEC courses may enroll in one or more university courses with the permission of the AEC. You also need a score of 70% on the listening comprehension section of the test before you may begin taking university courses.

How many levels of instruction are there in the AEC program?

There are five levels.

Do I have to study at every level?

For most students, it is not necessary to study at every level. Your English language test scores will determine your starting level. The typical student progresses one level each semester, but many students who have a good aptitude for language learning and study hard and use the language a lot outside of class may skip levels. Once you have passed at least one part of the test and have a score of 70% on the listening comprehension part of the test, you may begin taking university courses along with your AEC courses.

How much work is required in the AEC courses?

For each hour of class, you will have one hour or more of homework per day. Successful language learning requires practice and review. Courses at the AEC encourage active use of English and, therefore, all of your AEC courses will require written assignments and outside reading. Some long-term projects such as group presentations or research papers require several weeks of preparation.

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