Verification of English Language Proficiency for **Graduate Students** at the University of Kansas

After you have been admitted as a new graduate student from abroad or as a domestic 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.

2. **Bilingual students:** If you have spoken two languages (including English) since your very early childhood and have attended many years of schooling in 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.

3. **If you already have a B.A., B.S., or master’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. Some programs may have different English requirements. Please contact your department.

4. **If you have a recent paper-based TOEFL score report** (within the past two years), with each part 57 or higher and a 5.0 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.

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. You must 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 or higher, 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.

Students who are non-native speakers of English and do not meet the guidelines listed in sections 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 are required to take an entrance proficiency test and write a timed essay. English courses taken in high school, college, community college, or university will not excuse you from the test. Your AEC English placement test results will determine if you need to enroll in AEC classes or if you are eligible to enroll in full-time university academic courses.

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Frequently Asked Questions

When should I go to 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 2nd floor of Lippincott Hall in room 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 register for the placement test or for an interview to verify your native proficiency, your degree, or your TOEFL or IELTS scores.

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 standards without very good control of English. KU 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.

I have been admitted to a graduate program. Do I need to take any AEC courses? All new international students must visit the AEC office to have their English proficiency verified, regardless of the admission requirements. Approximately 20% of new international/non-native English-speaking graduate students are required to take one or more courses at the AEC. About 90% of these students are also permitted to enroll in university courses at the same time.

Will I receive academic credit for my AEC courses? AEC courses do not apply to graduate degree requirements. AEC classes are included on your KU transcript.

What are the proficiency test and timed essay like? The entrance proficiency test is the Cambridge-Michigan Language Assessment (CaMLA). You can get a sample test at the AEC to help you learn about the test. The test has 2 parts:

- **Listening**: There are 25 test items in the listening section. Ten items require you to choose the correct response to a statement or question. Fifteen items require you to choose a correct answer to a question following a short conversation.
- **Grammar/Vocabulary/Reading**: This section of the test is comprised of 55 test items. Twenty items focus on grammar, 20 items focus on vocabulary, and 15 items focus on reading. There are no breaks between the grammar, vocabulary, and reading sections of the test.

Students will also be given 30 minutes to write a short essay on a topic given to them. The essay is scored according to 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? You could be enrolled in one, two, or three courses, depending on your current English proficiency level (4-18 class hours per week).

Can I take AEC courses and regular university courses at the same time? Students who place into Level 4 or 5 courses may enroll in one or more other university courses, with AEC and graduate department permission.

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. Graduate students who need AEC classes usually start at the fourth or fifth level. A typical student progresses one level each semester, but some students who learn quickly, study hard, and use the language outside of class may skip levels.

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 the active use of English. Therefore, all of your AEC courses will require written assignments and outside reading.

I have been admitted to a graduate program. When can I apply for a graduate teaching assistantship (GTA position)? If you want to apply for a GTA position, you must meet the university’s general requirements for English, AND you must also show speaking proficiency with a score of 50 or more on the SPEAK test, a score of 22 on the speaking section of the Internet-based TOEFL (iBT), or a score of 8 on the speaking section of the IELTS.

If you are outside the USA, you will need to submit iBT or IELTS speaking scores to your department. If you cannot take the iBT or IELTS in your country, you can take the SPEAK test when you arrive at KU; however, waiting could impact the issuance of your immigration documents.

If you are in the United States, you can take the iBT at one of the testing sites listed on the Educational Testing Services Website: [www.ets.org](http://www.ets.org) and you can take the IELTS at one of the testing sites listed on the IELTS Website: [www.ielts.org](http://www.ielts.org). You can take the SPEAK test at the University of Kansas. Call the Applied English Center (1-785-864-4606) to find out how to sign up for the SPEAK test.