

**Motion on Regents' Test Exemption Scores  
for Students Who Are Non-native Speakers of English**

**Motion:**

The policy on exemption from Regents Testing for non-native speakers of English will be:

Nonnative speakers of English (NNS) will be certified as meeting Regents's requirements by passing RGTR 0198 and RGTE 0199. However, NNS students may demonstrate their competence in reading and writing and automatically pass these courses by passing the Reading and Writing Tests of the Georgia State Tests of English Proficiency (GSTEP), taking the regular Regents' Tests, taking the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) **or taking the International English Language Testing System (IELTS).**

**NNS have automatically passed RGTR 0198 if they have at least the following scores on the reading sections of the TOEFL or IELTS:**

<b>Paper-based TOEFL</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Computer-based TOEFL (CBT)</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>internet-based TOEFL (iBT)</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>IELTS Reading subscore</b>	<b>6</b>

**NNS students have automatically passed RGTE 019 if they have the following scores on the writing sections of the TOEFL or IELTS:**

<b>Test of Written English (TWE)</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>CBT Essay score</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>iBT Writing score</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>IELTS Writing subscore</b>	<b>5.5</b>

**Rationale:**

The policy needs to be updated because the IELTS is a new test that has become a common way to demonstrate proficiency in English. In addition, the TOEFL is available in a new format (internet-based). The motion establishes cut scores for these new tests. It also more clearly distinguishes the reading and writing portions of the Regents' Test.

Here is the policy that this motion is updating. It is part of Section 1165 of the Catalog.

Non-native speakers will be certified as meeting Regents' testing requirements either by taking the regular Regents' Test, by passing the reading and writing sections of the revised Georgia State Test of English Proficiency (GSTEP Regents'), or by earning a score of 23 or higher on the reading section of the computer-based TOEFL or a score of 57 or higher on the reading section of the paper-based TOEFL and a score of 4 or higher on the Test of Written English (TWE).

## TOEFL

**Reading:** TOEFL iBT score of 23 is equivalent to the computer-based score of 23. Note that this score is in the 73<sup>rd</sup> percentile for all TOEFL iBT test takers.

[http://www.ets.org/Media/Tests/TOEFL/pdf/ngt\\_percentile\\_information.pdf](http://www.ets.org/Media/Tests/TOEFL/pdf/ngt_percentile_information.pdf)

### **Writing:**

The current policy includes an exemption for the TWE (administered with the paper-based TOEFL) but not for the computer-based TOEFL (CBT), which provides a writing score. The CBT combines the essay score with the grammar test to provide a subscore for writing, but also reports the essay score separately. The CBT essays are rated on the same scale as the TWE (see [www.essayline.co.kr/upload/twetopics/tweguid.pdf](http://www.essayline.co.kr/upload/twetopics/tweguid.pdf))

The iBT now consists of two writing tasks (an integrated task and a stand-alone task). There is no direct equivalence between the old scale and the new scales. The new scales can be found here: (pp. 7-8) <http://www.ets.org/Media/Tests/TOEFL/pdf/ibt%20scores.pdf>.

The relevant descriptor for a score of 4 on the TWE/CBT is as follows:

### **An essay at this level**

- **addresses the writing topic adequately but may slight parts of the task**
- **is adequately organized and developed**
- **uses some details to support a thesis or illustrate an idea**
- **demonstrates adequate but possibly inconsistent facility with syntax, and usage may contain some errors that occasionally obscure meaning.**

source: <http://tinyurl.com/3cevcld>

The scoring rubrics for the two writing tasks of the TOEFL iBT are found here:

[http://www.ets.org/Media/Tests/TOEFL/pdf/Writing\\_Rubrics.pdf](http://www.ets.org/Media/Tests/TOEFL/pdf/Writing_Rubrics.pdf)

The closest descriptor to 4 on the TWE is 3 on the two rubrics. A score of 3 on both tasks converts to a standardized score of 20. Looking at how students perform on the TOEFL, ETS provides the percentile ranks for these scores from 2005-2006:

iBT 20 = 40<sup>th</sup> percentile (all students)  
45<sup>th</sup> percentile (undergraduates only)

<http://www.ets.org/Media/Research/pdf/TOEFL-SUM-0506-iBT.pdf>

CBT 4 = 48<sup>th</sup> percentile (all students)  
TWE 4 = 57<sup>th</sup> percentile (all students)

<http://www.ets.org/Media/Research/pdf/TOEFL-SUM-0506-CBT.pdf>

The percentiles on the iBT are somewhat lower than on the CBT in part because until recently some students were able to take the paper-based test and did not take the TWE, so the scores for CBT and TWE may not include as many lower-proficiency students.

Sample responses for the TOEFL iBT writing test can be found here:

[http://www.ets.org/Media/Tests/TOEFL/pdf/ibt\\_writing\\_sample\\_responses.pdf](http://www.ets.org/Media/Tests/TOEFL/pdf/ibt_writing_sample_responses.pdf)

## **IELTS:**

IELTS is an internationally recognized test that is widely accepted worldwide as evidence of English language proficiency. Some units are currently considering a motion to allow IELTS scores in lieu of TOEFL scores for undergraduate admissions. IELTS provides an overall score from 4 to 9, with subscores in the areas of listening, reading, speaking, and writing. The proposed IELTS score for undergraduate admissions is 6.5. Note that the proposed subscores for Regents exemption are lower than the overall score; this is consistent with our current practice of allowing lower individual subscores on TOEFL for Regents exemption than the overall total score.

Table of equivalencies for TOEFL/IELTS writing can be found here:

<http://www.uark.edu/ua/iao/englproficient.html>