



English Proficiency of Faculty

Purpose

Texas state law requires instruction at public colleges and universities to be delivered in understandable English. Each public institution is required to adopt a policy that establishes a procedure to ensure that all faculty members speak or write proficient English.

Persons Affected

This policy applies to all university faculty.

Definitions

Faculty member: A person who teaches a course offered for academic credit by an institution of higher education; this individual would be any instructor of record and includes adjuncts and graduate teaching assistants and excludes all librarian ranks.

Policy

It is the responsibility of academic deans and unit heads to monitor the English proficiency of incoming and current faculty and to address deficiencies where there is need.

An exception to this policy may occur when a faculty member uses a foreign language to conduct foreign language courses designed to be taught in a foreign language. Additionally, an exception will be allowed in cases of joint international programs where the course may be taught in the language of the visiting faculty member.

Refusal by the faculty member to participate in any English language assessment, reassessment, and/or prescribed tutorial program may result in loss of teaching credit-bearing courses or dismissal from employment with the University.

Procedures

The written request for employment contract for these faculty members will bear the following administrative endorsement: "I attest that the English language proficiency of the candidate has been considered, and the candidate is qualified to fill this position."

All persons hired for instructional positions at the university are required to indicate on the New Employee Work Authorization Questionnaire whether English is their primary language. Faculty members who indicate their primary language other than English may be required to demonstrate proficiency in English by passing a formal assessment (e.g., Internet-based test [IBT] Test of English as a Foreign Language [TOEFL] speaking score of 26, or with an International English Language System [IELTS] speaking score of seven).



Should it be determined by the chair or dean that there is a concern with a continuing faculty member's oral and/or written English, as evidenced by student and/or faculty comments, the faculty member may also be required to demonstrate proficiency in English by passing a formal assessment (e.g., Internet-based test [IBT] Test of English as a Foreign Language [TOEFL] speaking score of 26, or with an International English Language System [IELTS] speaking score of seven). If a chair or dean concludes that a faculty member's teaching effectiveness is seriously diminished by English language deficiencies, the dean or chair shall require the faculty member to take a personalized short course or developmental program as approved by the Office of Human Resources to remediate those deficiencies. The academic unit head will place the results of these English proficiency performances in the faculty member's employment file. A copy of the English proficiency outcome will be forwarded to the appropriate dean.

Faculty members who do not demonstrate English proficiency will be allowed one year to successfully complete a personalized short course or development program to remediate those deficiencies. With the approval of the academic unit head and dean, additional time to remediate deficiencies is possible. Texas law requires the faculty member to bear the costs of the program. Unsatisfactory performance in this course will result in appropriate action being taken by the University, up to and including dismissal from employment.

Related Statutes or Regulations, Rules, Policies, or Standards

Tex. Educ. Code § 51.917

Responsible Executive

Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Forms

Request for Contract; New Employee Work Authorization Questionnaire

Revision History

September 1, 2023 (original)