

Oral English Proficiency Program

Original Implementation: September, 1990

Last Revision: October 29, 2018

Texas state law requires instruction at public colleges and universities be delivered in understandable English. Each public institution is required to adopt a policy establishing a procedure to ensure that proficient English is spoken by all faculty members. "Faculty member" means a person who teaches a course offered for academic credit by an institution of higher education. It is the responsibility of academic deans and unit heads to monitor the English proficiency of current faculty and to address deficiencies where there is a need.

A faculty member may use 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.

All persons applying for a position at the university that involves course instruction will be required to indicate on The New Employee Work Authorization Questionnaire whether English is their primary language. Aside from native speakers, an individual's primary language will be considered English if he/she completed an undergraduate or graduate degree at an accredited institution of higher education in the United States, not including U.S. Territories.

Newly hired faculty members who do not identify English as their primary language must demonstrate their oral proficiency in English through a two-part assessment:

1. Pass an approved test of English proficiency (Internet-based test [IBT] Test of English as a Foreign Language [TOEFL] speaking score of 26, International English Language System [IELTS] speaking score of seven, or American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages [ACTFL] Oral Proficiency Interview score at advanced mid).
2. Receive a rating of oral English proficiency by a two-person team from the university's English Language Institute (ELI) through observation of a regularly scheduled class during the first two weeks of the initial academic term.

The academic unit head will place in the faculty member's employment file the results of these oral proficiency performances. A copy of the English proficiency outcome will be forwarded to the appropriate dean.

Refusal by an individual to participate in any assessment of his/her academic English competency will result in appropriate action being taken by the university, up to and including termination of employment.

Faculty members who do not demonstrate proficiency in oral English will be allowed one year to complete successfully the level four Speaking and Listening course of the ELI program. 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 termination of employment.

Cross Reference: Tex. Educ. Code §51.917

Responsible for Implementation: Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Contact for Revision: Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Forms: New Employee Work Authorization Questionnaire

Board Committee Assignment: Academic and Student Affairs

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October 12, 2009