

## Mathematics Department policy on language qualification

The Mathematics Department is pleased to have many excellent international students in its program and supports their efforts to improve their English language skills. The University of Oklahoma requires that all graduate assistants having direct contact with students must pass written and oral examinations to demonstrate proficiency in English. These exams are administered through the **English Assessment Program** (EAP), which is located in Robertson Hall, Room 201. Detailed information about the English language assessment process, the three tests, and the test schedules may be found on the EAP page on the Graduate College site <http://gradweb.ou.edu/EAP/index.htm>

In order to fulfill its curricular obligations, the Mathematics Department depends on the fact that international graduate students will become fully language qualified by the end of their second year in the program, and will become full participants in its educational mission.

**Benefits of Language Qualification.** Here are some specific benefits of language qualification.

- Students who complete their language qualification will receive a stipend increase beginning the semester after qualification.
- Language qualification is a major factor in deciding who obtains summer teaching support. This summer teaching is a valuable source of income for international students.
- Students who are language qualified at an early stage are eligible for more advanced and more diverse teaching assignments. These students graduate with very broad teaching portfolios, and tend to be more competitive in the job market.

In addition to these benefits, there are negative consequences to not being fully language qualified after the second year. Students who are not language qualified at the end of their second year, will go on probationary status (see below). Students on probationary status are not eligible for Department Travel Support, and are not eligible for Summer Assistantships.

**Overview of the Language Qualification Process.** Here is a summary of the Language Qualification process. Please refer to the EAP website for a more detailed discussion.

- To demonstrate oral proficiency, the graduate assistant must first take the SPEAK test administered at the English Assessment Center.
- The next step in the process is the TEACH test. In this test, the student must give a short lecture and respond successfully to questions.
- Finally, to demonstrate written proficiency, the student must pass the WRITTEN test administered at the English Assessment Center.
- In order to be fully language qualified, the student must pass the SPEAK test, and must pass both the TEACH and WRITTEN tests at the **instruct** level.

**Resources for Students.** The University and the Department provide a variety of resources to help international graduate assistants improve their English language skills.

- EAP provides SPEAK test practice handbooks and tapes. These are available in Bizzell Memorial Library at the main circulation desk.

- The EAP offers a non-credit **Spoken English Class**. The Mathematics Department will pay the cost of taking this course once. Make sure that you contact the Department Office Manager **before** you make any arrangements for taking this course.
- The Department pays for the student's first attempt at each of the SPEAK, TEACH, and WRITTEN tests.
- The student is responsible for the costs of subsequent EAP tests. However, Department will reimburse the student for the cost of a test if student passes it at the **instruct** level.
- EAP provides a **Written English Class: English Writing for International Students** (ENGL 2113.001). This is a credit course, and students are responsible for fees and tuition.
- Your fellow students in the Mathematics Department are a great resource. Make sure to talk often to native English speakers among your peers. Ask for a group of your peers to give you practice runs at the TEACH test, to look at sample essays that you have written etc.
- The University **Center for English as a Second Language** (CESL) provides additional resources to international students. Their web-page is at <http://esl.ou.edu/index.html>

**Satisfactory Progress.** Ideally, a student will pass all three tests in the first academic year. Here is a possible scenario for a student who enters in the Fall.

- Fall Semester. Study for, take and pass the SPEAK test.
- Spring Semester. Study for, take and pass the TEACH test at the **instruct** level.
- Summer. Study for, take and pass the WRITTEN test at the **instruct** level.

The Department realizes that this ideal scenario may not work for all students. The Department allows students **two years** in order to become fully language qualified.

**Probationary Status.** Students who do not complete their language qualification before the end of their fourth semester will go on probationary status. A student on probationary status is required to follow the rules listed below. Failure to do so may result in termination of the graduate assistantship.

1. Each examination not yet passed must be attempted at least once during each semester in residence. The Mathematics Department will pay the cost of up to one attempt for each test during each semester. In order to obtain the necessary authorization, report to the Department Office Manager before paying the test fee at the Bursar's office. The Department will refund the cost of any test which is passed at the instruct level.
2. Each time one of these tests is attempted and not passed, arrangements must be made with the English Assessment Center personnel to go over the test and determine which specific areas need improvement. The graduate assistant must give a written report on the results of the test, and, if it is not passed, the specific areas that need improvement and the plans to make the necessary improvements. A form will be provided on which to write this report. This report is to be given to the Assistant to the Graduate Directors within one week of learning your test results.
3. Non-language-qualified students are expected to participate in all departmentally sponsored activities designed to improve language and teaching skills. Students will be notified of these activities.

Students on probationary status are expected to follow these rules every semester. They will be monitored and will be subject to review by the Graduate Committee. If the Committee finds no compelling reason to recommend an extension of the probationary period, the assistantship will be terminated. The Committee may in unusual circumstances recommend that the Chair extend the probationary period.