

DATE: May 18, 2011

TO: Deans, Directors, Department Heads, and Advisors

FROM: George Gehrels, Chair, Undergraduate Council (UGC)
Celeste F. Pardee, Curriculum Associate, Academic Affairs

RE: Second Language Requirement for Undergraduate International Students

International students who are native speakers of languages other than English now have another option for satisfying the Second Language Requirement for a baccalaureate degree. The Center for English as a Second Language (CESL) awards an English language endorsement to students who attain advanced levels in CESL's curriculum. When the CESL Endorsement is used for admission to the University, it will also fulfill the General Education Foundations-Language. This amendment to the Second Language Requirement was initiated by Undergraduate Council in December 2010, and approved by the Faculty Senate on 3/7/11. Effective in Summer/Fall 2011, this option is available to all undergraduates, regardless of catalog year.

Amended Second Language Requirement, <http://catalog.arizona.edu/2010-11/policies/secondlang.htm>: International students who are native speakers of languages other than English may fulfill the second language requirement with the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or with the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), provided that it was an admissions requirement and their score was satisfactory for admission to the University of Arizona. Alternatively, in lieu of an acceptable score on one of these standardized tests, an Endorsement from the Center for English as a Second Language (CESL) may satisfy the Second Language Requirement. U.S. citizens and international students from countries where English is the official language may not use the TOEFL, IELTS, or CESL Endorsement to satisfy the Second Language Requirement

Justification:

All international applicants to the UA whose native language is not English are required to take the TOEFL or IELTS as an admissions requirement. The TOEFL and IELTS scores used for admission also satisfy the Foundations-Language Requirement. Students who are unable to earn the minimum score for admission often choose to improve their English skills with intensive study at CESL. In 2005 CESL began awarding an English language endorsement to students who attained advanced levels in CESL's curriculum but who continued to struggle with the standardized tests.

Admissions accepts the endorsement as an equivalent option for satisfying the English requirement since it's an assessment of reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills over a period of time. The criteria for earning the CESL Endorsement are rigorous: grades of B or higher in all advanced-level CESL classes, average proficiency scores of '7' in the 4 skill areas, a writing sample, and recommendations from the students' CESL instructors, in addition to completing the TOEFL/ IELTS within the last 6 months. If the minimum TOEFL/ IELTS score is a sufficient indicator that an international student meets the second-semester or fourth-semester language skill level required for a bachelor's degree, then the CESL Endorsement should also indicate this proficiency.

Management of the Policy:

In the UAccess Student System, the CESL Endorsement along with the TOEFL or IELTS score, if required for admission to the University, will automatically fulfill the Second Language Requirement on the international student's Academic Advisement Report, just as the score on a UA language proficiency exam may satisfy the second-semester or fourth-semester language requirement for U.S. citizens.

Questions about the amended Second Language Requirement may be addressed to Celeste Pardee, Curriculum Associate, at 621-5375, or at cpardee@u.arizona.edu.