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### Unfair treatment to international students

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# Unfair treatment to international students.

Submitted by: Aima Zhang

10/11/2014

## Discussion:

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Georgia Southern University officially requires TOEFL score of 523 for international undergraduate admission. However, after admission and arrival at GSU, the Center of International Study will not allow international students to register any courses unless they have TOEFL scores >590.

## Rationale:

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Discrimination against international students. It affects the whole university.

## Response:

From the Senate minutes 11/19/2014:

We had one Request for a Discussion Item from a faculty member who had questions about the policy for foreign students in terms of English language preparation. Turns out that she really didn't understand the policy quite clearly. The policy states that if you have lower than 590 TOEFL, you must have SAT reading score 510 or higher, or other combinations depending on when the test was taken. If a test score is old, and the student has not been using English of late, their actual ability now may not be what it was when they took the test. If their score falls between 520 and 509, students are actually tested when they get to campus and based on the testing that's done on campus, may or may not be placed in an English Language course. Turns out that most people actually pass that exam here. Not passing could be good for a student in terms of understanding spoken English or being able to speak English, so it actually works out fairly well

Georgia Southern University officially requires TOEFL score of 523 for international undergraduate admission (<http://admissions.georgiasouthern.edu/requirements/international/>).

After admission and arrival at GSU, the Center of International Study (CIS) will not allow international students to register any courses unless they have TOEFL scores >590. TOEFL score of 590 is a non-published requirement (See the attached document). The Center of International Study (CIS) gives “Placement Exam” to the international students who have **TOEFL score <590** or **SAT critical Reading <510** and places them in the 6-credit-hour English Language Program (ELP). ELP is not a course in our catalogue and cannot be transferred to other institutions (see <http://academics.georgiasouthern.edu/elp/>). If a student cannot make an A in ELP, he/she has to take more English class the second semester.

The attached table shows that only 11.5% of universities, such as Columbia, Cornell or Harvard require TOEFL score >590.

GSU enrolled 94,790 students since 2000. 59% of 94,790 students (56,133) have **SAT critical reading <=510**. These 59% students don't have to take ELP because they are American students.

A Chinese exchange student, Jin Yan, has TOEFL score 553 and was placed in ELP program this semester (See attached document).

The exchange program with China Huazhong Normal University (HNU) used to be very popular with 10-20 exchange students each year. Now we only get half dozen from HNU. The reason is that the program requires English courses and prohibits the exchange students from taking upper level courses. Chinese students consider the exchange program as a waste of time and money. For example, Sisi Qui didn't finish her program and went back to China after the first semester. Qui's parents could not afford to spend their life saving and let their daughter taking courses that wouldn't count towards her graduation from HNU.

CIS has no business to test English proficiency using “Placement Exam” because TOEFL is the proficiency test and 523 score is the official requirement.

TOEFL 590 requirement is a scam to make money through ELP. Where did the money from ELP go?

In other universities, ELP is for international students who have TOEFL scores below admission requirements. Why GSU has different practice?

Can international students file class action lawsuit against GSU for discrimination? Can international students demand money back for 6-credit-hour ELP?

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## English Language Placement Exam FAQs

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- 1. What is this exam?** This exam helps Southern determine which English course an undergraduate non-native speaker should be placed in. It consists of 3 parts:
  - a 30 minute writing sample.
  - the Michigan Test of English Proficiency which includes grammar, vocabulary and reading, and
  - the listening section of the Michigan English Language Institute College English Test.
- 2. Do all international students take this exam?** NO. Students are exempt from testing if they have:
  - transferred to Georgia Southern and received transfer credit for ENGL 1101,
  - obtained a TOEFL score greater than 590 (paper-based), 243 (computer-based) or
  - 86 (Internet-based),
  - obtained an IELTS score of 7.5,
  - obtained an SAT Critical Reading Score of 510 or higher,
  - obtained an ACT Combined English/Writing Score of at least 24, or
  - completed Georgia Southern's English Language Program.
- 3. What do the results mean?** In the column, **English course**, you will see which course the student should take.
  - If the students are in **ELP**, you should **NOT** enroll them in any courses- they must see the Director of the program, Joan Stalcup, and she will enroll them. The student will take the program this semester, and then be enrolled in regular classes the following semester.
  - If the students are in **ESL 092 R/W, 092 L/S and/or 092 Grammar**, it means they have placed in the ELI<sup>2</sup> level, but have been given permission to take one other course. They have already been preregistered for the ESL courses. Please advise them to take one other course- perhaps a math or science class?
  - If a student is in **ESL 0093 or WRIT 1101**, he/she has already been preregistered for that course. Please note that 093 is a 6-credit class. It may also help to explain to them that they will enroll in WRIT 1101 the following semester, which is equivalent to ENGL 1101, but has a different name to distinguish it as the international student section.
  - If **ENGL 1101** is on the list, it means that the student can be advised to take any section and he/she should register for any section available.
  - If it says, **Did not check in-see Kelley**, it means the student did not check in for Intl SOAR Orientation and the Center needs to get his/her immigration documents. You may still advise the student as you can see the English level. There will be an international hold on the student's record to prevent registration until we have copied said documents.
  - If it says, **DID NOT TAKE THE EXAM**, the student needs to see Kelley and should not be advised about an English course. The student can be told he needed to take the exam and will need to do that, but he can be advised about other courses.
- 4. Can students slip through the cracks?** Yes, but in very few cases and usually with transfer students or legal permanent residents. Here's an example: a student gets accepted and transfers at the very last minute and the Center doesn't have all of his documentation for issuing a new I-20, so we do not know that he is going to enroll at GSU. The student arrives at orientation and is checked in. At that point he is still not designated as needing to take the ELI<sup>2</sup>E, so he is missed. If in doubt, send to Kelley Riffe, Joan Stalcup or Jeff Palis.
- 5. What do I do if a student's name is not on the list?** Asking a few questions beforehand can help clear up a situation very quickly. You can check with Kelley since it probably means he has not checked in or was just admitted and didn't get on the list. You can ask if she is a transfer student and has had ENGL 1101. If yes, there is no problem. If no, he will need to take the exam before he can actually register. Please send to Kelley.

Untitled

Jin Yan: TOEFL score 553

Minimum 590 TOEFL paper score are required to take our internal test, which is state-of-the-art (the Michigan test). Depending on the results of the test, they are routed to different courses. I am enclosing the relevant memo, which is distributed to academic advisors in all the colleges (enclosed).

Reading: 52 Raw, 70 Converted  
Listening: 33 Raw, 78 Converted  
Writing: 73  
She was placed in ESL 093 with a comment next to it of "weak writing".

To give you an idea of how the other students did, the highest raw and converted scores:  
Reading: 90 Raw, 92 Converted  
Listening: 46 Raw, 90 Converted  
Writing: 93