Revisions to Policy on Spoken English Proficiency for
Graduate Teaching Assistants/Associates/Graduate Instructional Assistants

POLICY

USF System Regulation USF10.102 requires the University to “ensure the spoken English language competence of all prospective and current faculty members involved in classroom instruction.” (For this regulation and related policies see Appendix A.) Since graduate teaching assistants at USF are engaged in classroom instruction, The Office of Graduate Studies requires all prospective TAs whose native language is not English to demonstrate spoken English proficiency before they may be hired into positions of: Teaching Assistant (job code 9184) or Teaching Associate (job code 9183). See Appendix B for description of duties associated with graduate assistant job codes. This policy applies to international students in these job codes even if they are exempt from the TOEFL or IELTS requirements for admission (see Appendix ) unless they are from a country where the only official language is English (see Appendix C).

Before being appointed to any of the above positions, international students must earn a satisfactory score on one of the following tests of spoken English proficiency. These are the only tests that are acceptable:

- the speaking subsection of the Internet-based TOEFL (iBT-S). Most international applicants must take the TOEFL to meet admission requirements, and the speaking sub-score may be used to determine spoken English proficiency for a TA appointment. Under certain circumstances the TOEFL may be waived for ADMISSION to a graduate program. However, applicants must still take the internet-based TOEFL or one of the following tests to show proficiency in spoken English if they are going to be appointed to a teaching assistantship.

- the Test of Spoken English (TSE): The TSE was discontinued in March 2010, but scores are acceptable up to two years after the test is taken. ETS replaced this test with the spoken subsection of the Internet-based TOEFL (see above).

- the SPEAK test: The TSE was discontinued in 2012. Scores are acceptable up to two years after the test is taken.

If a satisfactory score on one of these tests was submitted for admission to the University and is uploaded in BANNER, additional testing typically will not be required. However, The Office of Graduate Studies or the hiring department reserves the right to request that a new test score be submitted (by an international OR domestic student) if the student’s spoken English proficiency is in doubt.

The following scores must be earned on one of the approved tests listed below before an international student may be hired for job codes 9183 or 9184. A one-semester conditional appointment may be given to international teaching assistants (ITAs) who score close to the cutoff (see Conditional Appointment range below), provided that they concurrently enroll in the course Spoken English for International Teaching Assistants (FOL 4101).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Minimum for Unconditional Appointment</th>
<th>Minimum for Conditional Appointment (requires concurrent enrollment in Spoken English for ITAs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TSE (score interval = 5)</td>
<td>50 (range 0 – 60)</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPEAK (score interval = 5)</td>
<td>50 (range 0 – 60)</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOEFL iBT (score interval = 1)</td>
<td>26 (range 0 – 30)</td>
<td>23-25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTERPRETATION OF SCORES

SCORES OF 50/26 OR HIGHER - Unconditional Teaching Appointment (9183 or 9184) ITAs who meet or exceed the minimum score for unconditional appointment may assume any tasks outlined in the relevant job description.

SCORES of 45/23 - 25 - Conditional Teaching Appointment (9183 or 9184) ITAs who score a 23-25 on the iBT (or 45 on the SPEAK) may perform instructional duties under close supervision, provided that the appointment is unavoidable due to department commitments and that the ITAs concurrently enroll in Spoken English Class. Please contact Peter Harries (harries@usf.edu) for more information on this class.

SCORES below 45/23-25 – ITAs may not be appointed to a 9183 or 9184 job code.

SCORES OF 40/21-22 – FOR AY 2010-2011 ONLY

SPOKEN ENGLISH FOR INTERNATIONAL TEACHING ASSISTANTS - FOL 4101
This non-credit course was developed for International Teaching Assistants new to USF who earn a 45 on the SPEAK (23-25 on the iBT) and who must be hired in an instructional capacity to meet department commitments. Priority for Enrollment in FOL 4101 SPEAK/iBT Score:

1. New to USF, initial appointment in TA job codes 9183, 9184 45/23-25
2. Continuing student, initial appointment in TA job codes 9183, 9184 45/23-25
3. New to USF, initial appointment in Instr. Asst. job code 9550, 45/23-25
4. Continuing student, initial appoint in Instr. Asst. job code 9550, 45/23-25
5. New to USF/continuing students who will have initial appt. in following semester, 45/23-25

Currently students will not be charged to take this non-credit class. An exam will be administered at the end of the course to measure the ITA’s spoken English proficiency and determine eligibility to engage in instructional activities in future semesters. Depending on the outcomes of the course, the following options are available:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Exam Score</th>
<th>Resulting Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50+</td>
<td>Teaching appointment may become unconditional.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>If satisfactory teaching evaluations are earned, ITA may continue to teach in same capacity for one more semester provided s/he enrolls in an equal or higher level spoken English course.* If the ITA does not score at least a 50 after the second semester of spoken English instruction, s/he will not be allowed to teach until a SPEAK score of 50 is earned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 or lower</td>
<td>40 or lower Student may not be hired in a 9183 or 9184 job code until a score of 50 or higher is achieved on the SPEAK test</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BEST PRACTICES FOR RECRUITING INTERNATIONAL TEACHING ASSISTANTS
By appointing international students as teaching assistants, the Department and College assume the responsibility of assisting the students in meeting the SUS and University standards for spoken English. Programs should move toward an active interview process using Skype (www.skype.com ) to evaluate spoken English proficiency prior to offering a teaching appointment.
Verbal GRE scores do not assess spoken English, so they are not a reliable or accepted indicator. The speaking sub-score on the Internet-base TOEFL (iBT) is a good indicator. If you make offers to international students with low iBT speaking scores, they should be encouraged to practice their spoken English so that they can pass the SPEAK test when they arrive at USF.

Following the offer of admission, programs should continue to work with students on English proficiency by pairing them with senior graduate students who will continue to verbally communicate via Skype or other means.

Studies suggest that International students with limited teaching experience achieve a greater level of success in graduate school if they are NOT assigned to TA positions in their first semester. This delay affords the program the opportunity to work with the students on speaking and pedagogical skills prior to assigning them to teach.

The Office of Graduate Studies strongly recommends that departments require new international students to arrive four weeks prior to the start of the semester. This allows time for the program to assess speaking and teaching skills and to provide practice with the language and with mock SPEAK tests. Early arrival in August also allows qualified students to take the ITA workshop.

**APPROVAL PROCESS for AY 2010-2011**

The Office of Graduate Studies will run a list of ITAs for the Fall 2010 semester to verify that the ITAs have met the spoken English proficiency requirement. The ITAs will be permitted to remain in their assigned positions if they meet the following criteria.

1. ITAs who come from a country where the official language is English (see Appendix D) are considered proficient.
2. If the ITA has an Internet-based TOEFL speaking sub-score (iBT-S) of at least 26 in the Banner data system, the department may process the appointment papers for ITAs in codes 9183 or 9184. If the department has written documentation of these scores but they are not in Banner, the documents should be faxed (4-5762)/emailed (tron@usf.edu) to Joseph Butts in The Office of Graduate Studies for review and official documentation in Banner.
3. If the ITA has an iBT-S score of 23-25 all efforts should be made to assign the ITA to another job code, e.g., 9550. If department commitments make that impossible, the new ITA must also enroll in Spoken English for ITAs during the term they are teaching. This course is offered by permit only for new ITAs who have unavoidable teaching responsibilities and have a score of 45 on SPEAK (23-25 on the iBT-S). Permits must be obtained from Peter Harries (harries@usf.edu). To obtain a permit please send proof of the test score (if not in Banner) to him via email or mail (ADM226).
4. If the ITA has a SPEAK score of 40 (iBT score of 21-22) or below the department may be appointed as an Instructional Assistant (9550) job code or other GA position.

Revised 7/1/11
Graduate Teaching Assistants/Associates may be assigned as classroom teachers, co-teachers, classroom assistants, lab assistants, or other roles directly related to classroom instruction. Most Graduate Teaching Assistants/Associates are paid by academic departments. They may also be employed by the Center for Teaching Enhancement and perform similar teaching assistant/associate duties.

Graduate assistants teaching or assisting in courses should be supervised by at least one faculty member experienced in the discipline.

Graduate Teaching Assistants/Associates may not be assigned to teach a graduate course. They may provide support to a qualified faculty/instructor teaching a graduate course, but may not be the instructor of record.

A Graduate Teaching Assistant/Associate may not assist with teaching a graduate level course that they may subsequently take at some time in their degree program.

It is extremely critical for accreditation purposes that graduate students are appointed appropriately to Graduate Teaching Assistant/Associate job classifications.

The Office of Graduate Studies recommends that all departments require that all GTAs receive pedagogy training and/or attend the Teaching Assistant Workshop conducted by the Academy for Teaching and Learning Excellence. This office typically holds a one day workshop with additional trainings each August prior to the start of the fall semester. See http://atle.usf.edu.

PLEASE NOTE: International students from countries where English is not the official language who want to be considered for a teaching assistantship must show proficiency in spoken English even if their TOEFL has been waived for admission to a graduate program. They need a minimum score of 26 on the spoken portion of the Internet-based TOEFL (iBT) or 160 on the spoken portion of the TOEIC test administered by ETS (http://www.ets.org/toeic).
Number: USF10.102

Subject: Faculty Recruitment, Selection, Appointment
(c) The USF System will ensure the spoken English language competence of all prospective and current faculty members involved in classroom instruction, other than courses conducted primarily in a foreign language. For current faculty, this competence will be ascertained during the annual evaluation. For faculty appointed after the original effective date (10-05-03) of this Regulation and for current faculty promoted or changing job classification after the original effective date (10-05-03) of this Regulation, competence will be ascertained prior to appointment, promotion or reclassification. If it is determined that testing is required to demonstrate proficiency, support will be offered for the faculty member to promptly take such a test.
The 2009 Florida Statutes
http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?StatuteYear=2009&AppMode=Display_Results&Mode=Search%2520Statutes&Submenu=2&Tab=statutes&Search_String=1012.93

Title XLVIII, K-20 Education Code
Chapter 1012.93 Faculty members; test of spoken English.
All faculty members in each state university, other than those persons who teach courses that are conducted primarily in a foreign language, shall be proficient in the oral use of English, as determined by a satisfactory grade on the “Test of Spoken English” of the Educational Testing Service or a similar test approved by the Board of Governors. History, --s. 781, ch. 2002-387; s. 164, ch. 2007-217.

Excerpt from the USF Faculty Handbook on Spoken English Proficiency (10/20/11), p. 79

ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (ARTICLE 10.5)
Every faculty member is expected to be proficient in oral English language skills. Faculty found to be potentially deficient in English oral language skills shall be tested. Faculty may demonstrate proficiency by achieving a score of 50 or above on the Test of Spoken English (TSE). Faculty who score a 45 on the TSE may continue to teach for one semester while enrolled in appropriate English Language instruction. Faculty who score below 45 on the TSE shall be assigned appropriate non-classroom duties for up to two consecutive semesters while participating in appropriate oral English language instruction. The University shall provide instruction at no cost and shall pay the expenses for up to two administrations of the TSE.

2010-2013 Collective Bargaining Agreement between USF & United Faculty of Florida
Article 10 - Employee Performance Evaluations

10.5 Proficiency in Spoken English. No employee shall be evaluated as deficient in oral English language skills unless proved deficient in accordance with the appropriate procedures and examinations established by Section 1012.93, Florida Statutes, and State Board of Education rule, for testing such deficiency.

A. Faculty involved in classroom instruction, other than in courses conducted primarily in a foreign language, found by their supervisor, as part of the annual evaluation, to be potentially deficient in English oral language skills, shall be tested in accordance with appropriate procedures and examinations established by statute and rule cited above for testing such skills. No reference to an alleged deficiency shall appear in the annual evaluation or in the personnel file of a faculty member who achieves a satisfactory examination score determining proficiency in oral English as specified in the rule (currently "50" or above on the Test of Spoken English).

B. Faculty who score at a specified level on an examination established by statute and rule cited above for testing oral English language skills ("45" on the Test of Spoken English), may continue to be involved in classroom instruction up to one (1) semester while enrolled in appropriate English language instruction, as described in paragraph (D) below, provided the appropriate administrator determines that the 22 quality of instruction will not suffer. Only such faculty members who demonstrate, on the basis of examinations established by statute and rule, that they are no longer deficient in oral English language skills may be involved in classroom instruction beyond one (1) semester.

C. Faculty who score below a minimum score on an examination established by statute and rule for determining proficiency in oral English (currently "45" on the Test of Spoken English) shall be assigned appropriate non-classroom duties for the period of oral English language instruction provided by the University under paragraph (D) below, unless during the period of instruction the faculty member is found, on the basis of an examination specified above, to be no longer deficient in oral English language skills. In that instance, the faculty member will again be eligible for assignment to classroom instructional duties and shall not be disadvantaged by the fact of having been determined to be deficient in oral English language skills.

D. It is the responsibility of each faculty member who is found, as part of the annual evaluation, to be deficient in oral English language skills by virtue of scoring below the satisfactory score on an examination established by statute and rule for determining such proficiency (see paragraph A), to take appropriate actions to correct these deficiencies. To assist the faculty member in this endeavor, the University shall provide appropriate oral English language instruction without cost to such faculty members for a period consistent with their length of
appointment and not to exceed two (2) consecutive semesters. The time the faculty member spends in such instruction shall not be considered part of the individual assignment or time worked, nor shall the faculty member be disadvantaged by the fact of participation in such instruction.

E. If a university determines, as part of the annual evaluation, that one (1) or more administrations of a test to determine proficiency in oral English language skills is necessary, in accordance with statute and rule and this section, the University shall pay the expenses for up to two (2) administrations of the test. The faculty member shall pay for additional testing that may be necessary.
TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language): [http://www.toefl.org](http://www.toefl.org)

Applicants whose native language is not English or who have not earned a degree in the United States must demonstrate proficiency in English by submitting TOEFL scores earned within two (2) years of the desired term of entry. A minimum total score of 79 on the internet-based test, 213 on the computer-based test, or 550 on the paper-based test is required for admission to a graduate program. Applications submitted with TOEFL scores that do not meet the minimum requirements will be denied. The TOEFL requirement may be waived for admission if the applicant meets one of the following conditions:

- The applicant’s native language is English, or
- Has scored 500 or higher on the GRE Verbal Test, or
- Has earned a college degree at a U.S. institution of higher learning, or
- Has earned a college degree from an institution whose language of instruction is English (must be noted on the transcript), or
- Has scored 6.5 on International English Language Testing System (IELTS) [http://www.ielts.org](http://www.ielts.org)/

PLEASE NOTE: International students whose native language is not English and who want to be considered for a teaching assistantship must show proficiency in spoken English even if their TOEFL has been waived for admission to a graduate program. They will need to score at least a 26 on the spoken portion of the Internet-based TOEFL (iBT) or a 50 on the SPEAK test administered through INTO-USF.
APPENDIX C

English Speaking Countries – No proficiency test is required if the TA is from one of these countries.

Antigua
Australia
Bahamas
Barbados
Barbuda
Belize
Bermuda
Canada except Quebec (French)
Cayman Islands
Commonwealth Caribbean, Including Belize
Dominica
Fiji
Grenada
Guyana
Jamaica
Liberia
New Zealand
Ireland
South Africa (when English is the first language)
St. Kitts & Nevis
St. Lucia
St. Vincent & Grenadines
Trinidad & Tobago
United Kingdom
Virgin Islands
Zimbabwe