



UNC CHARLOTTE

Undergraduate Admissions

9201 University City Boulevard, Charlotte, NC 28223-0001

DATE: March 25, 2015

TO: Gregory Starrett, Faculty Council President

FROM: Claire Kirby, Director, Undergraduate Admissions
Kelly Franklin, Director, English Language Training Institute
Christina Sanchez, Associate Director, Office of International Programs

RE: Recommendation to revise the required language proficiency test scores for undergraduate admission

CC: Joan Lorden, Provost
Tina McEntire, Associate Provost for Enrollment Management
Joël Gallegos, Assistant Provost for International Programs

Background and Rationale for Proposed Revisions

A task force was appointed in 2012-2013 to evaluate the international undergraduate admissions process. The task force included representatives from the Graduate School, Undergraduate Admissions, and International Programs. One of several recommendations from the task force was to conduct a formal review of the language proficiency test scores required for undergraduate student admission to degree seeking programs at UNC Charlotte. Students whose native language is not English must provide proof of English ability. One way to prove ability is to submit language proficiency test (i.e., TOEFL or IELTS) results. The Offices of International Programs and Undergraduate Admissions have reviewed the language proficiency recommendations of the task force and recommend revisions to the existing policies.

A survey of 78 other institutions, including other UNC system schools and Central Piedmont Community College, found that the UNC Charlotte required language proficiency test scores for admission were lower than national and peer averages. In addition, the review found that most schools have subscore requirements for the TOEFL and the IELTS to ensure that students do not present skewed scores. Without review of subscore requirements, it is challenging to determine students' overall preparedness for university-level work. It is not uncommon for students to present high listening and/or speaking ability while having very low reading and/or writing scores. The Offices of International Programs and Undergraduate Admissions believe that raising the total standard and introducing minimum level subscores for admission would increase the likelihood that incoming students are better prepared to handle rigorous university-level classroom expectations.

Proposed Language Proficiency Scores:

Language Proficiency Test	Current UNC Charlotte Scores, Total	Surveyed Institution Scores	Proposed standard: Total	Proposed Standard: Subscores
Internet-based TOEFL	64 (out of 120)	76.5	70	14 on each subscore
Paper-based TOEFL (institutional TOEFL)	507 (out of 677)	542	523	46 on each subscore
IELTS	6.0 (out of 9)	6.3	6.0 (no change)	5.0 on each subscore

Continued Conditional Admission

Students who are academically admissible but do not meet the admissions standards on the language proficiency test may continue to be admitted conditionally to enroll in the UNC Charlotte English Language Training Institute (ELTI).

ELTI students can then work with Undergraduate Admissions to pursue their degree after they either (1) improve their test scores to the required minimum score, or (2) complete ELTI Level 7. If a student pursues admission after Level 7 completion, the TOEFL test score is waived; however, recommendation for admission by ELTI is dependent upon students meeting the following criteria:

- Student is academically admissible to UNC Charlotte and has followed all required processes for admission;
- Student has completed the highest level of ELTI (Level 7) with satisfactory grades; and
- Student has been recommended by the ELTI Director and faculty who have assessed the student's work ethic and ability to function and perform in the classroom.

Recommendation for Implementation

Undergraduate Admissions proposes that the new language proficiency test score requirements be effective with the Summer and Fall 2015 terms.

Impact on Enrollment

Many international undergraduate applicants to UNC Charlotte do not submit a TOEFL or IELTS because they are transferring from other US colleges or they have taken the SAT or ACT. The transfer students are able to prove English ability through their transferable college coursework. Across all 2014 terms, there were 299 admitted Visa holders, and 188 of those presented a TOEFL or IELTS for admission. Of the 188 score senders, *47 would not have met the proposed new scores:*

- 38 students had an overall TOEFL score below the proposed minimum of 70.
- 9 students had an overall score above 70 but a sub-score below the proposed minimum 14.

Many students will choose to re-test to try to improve their scores. These students would also be offered conditional admission pending admission to ELTI.