



10-4-2012

Academic Policy Committee Report - October 4, 2012

Graduate Council

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Graduate Council, "Academic Policy Committee Report - October 4, 2012" (2012). *Academic Policy Committee Reports*.
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ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2012, 2:15 P.M. – 3:30 P.M.

111 STUDENT SERVICES BUILDING

Present: Stefanie Ohnesorg (Chair), Ralph Brockett, Catherine Cox, Russell Crowe, Yanfei Gao, Carolyn R. Hodges, Yvonne Kilpatrick, Joann Ng Hartmann, Kay Reed, Marian Roman, Amanda Sanford, Shawn Spurgeon, Ahmad Vakili.

The meeting was called to order by Stefanie Ohnesorg, Chair, at 2:15 p.m.

1. Approval of Minutes from August 30, 2012.

The minutes of the August 30, 2012 meeting were approved without changes.

2. Credit Hour Definition.

In preparing for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) reaccreditation self-study, the Provost's Office and the SACS Liaison, Dr. Mary Albrecht, have developed the following definition for credit hour to be proposed for approval by the Undergraduate and Graduate Councils:

The unit of credit is the semester hour, which reasonably approximates one hour (50 minutes) of in-class work per week and a minimum of two hours out-of-class student work each week for approximately 15 weeks. The time required in a laboratory, field, or studio varies with the nature of the subject and the aims of the course; typically, two or sometimes three hours of such work are considered the equivalent of one hour of class work. A minimum of 700 minutes of instruction or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time is required for each semester credit hour.

This definition has been used as an administrative policy, but was not approved by the Councils.

The committee discussed the definition and made comments about areas in the language that needed to be clarified. The committee agreed with the statement in principle, but because of these questions, needed to have more information.

Dr. Albrecht will be invited to the APC meeting on January 24, 2013 for further discussion. The Graduate Deans' Group will also be asked to review the policy for comment.

3. Conditional Admission for International Graduate Students who require English language training prior to full admission.

The proposal for Conditional Admissions Policy and Procedures was presented by Yvonne Kilpatrick (Attachment 1). Dean Hodges briefed the committee on the interest by the Center for International Education and some academic departments to make conditional admission decisions in special cases when sponsorship is available for English instruction and international students may come to UT prior to entry into the academic program.

Yvonne Kilpatrick and Dean Hodges looked at several models from other institutions using English Language Conditional Admission and chose a model that does not require a TOEFL prior to the conditional admission decision. The proposed model developed for UTK specifies that academic departments may decide to choose to participate in this arrangement, and if they do participate, then they may tag certain admission applications for review for conditional admission.

Several questions were asked about the program, including how this proposal helps UTK to get to the TOP 25 of institutions, what happens when the student does not perform in English competency during the year of instruction, and when the proficiency examination is done to find out if the student has met the admission requirement.

A MOTION WAS MADE AND SECONDED to accept the policy as presented to be effective Fall 2013. The VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS to recommend the policy to the Graduate Council for approval.

4. Electronic Media/Videoconferencing during Defenses and Final Exams.

Stefanie Ohnesorg asked that the committee review the material on Blackboard concerning policy for electronic media/videoconferencing during defenses and final exams. This item will be on the agenda for the January 24, 2013 meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 24, 2013.

UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, KNOXVILLE

GRADUATE SCHOOL

**POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR CONDITIONAL ADMISSION BASED ON
ENGLISH PROFICIENCY**

Proposed Policy: August 31, 2012

Overview

The policy on conditional admission based on English proficiency facilitates the admission of academically qualified, degree-seeking international graduate students who have not satisfied the English proficiency requirement, yet are being considered for full admission by a graduate program.

This policy supplements the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK) Graduate School's policies specifying minimum qualifications for admission of applicants to degree-seeking status at the master's and doctoral levels (see *Graduate Catalog* at: http://catalog.utk.edu/content.php?catoid=7&navoid=521#Admission_of_International_Students Individual graduate programs may in addition have more stringent conditions beyond these standards (see the specific graduate program for details in the *Graduate Catalog*).

This conditional admission policy shifts the timing for the applicant to fulfill the English proficiency requirement to a date after arriving at UTK for intensive English language study and provides the student with the guarantee of admission to a graduate program when the English proficiency condition and, where required by a program, other qualifying standardized tests for admission have been completed within the allotted timeframe of three semesters, including summer term.

Prospective international students should consult UTK Graduate Admissions web page for the list of graduate programs that have agreed to consider applicants for conditional admission for English proficiency.

Applicability

Graduate degree applicants must be recommended by a graduate program for admission to the UTK with English proficiency conditional admission.

Condition

English proficiency conditional admission to a graduate program may be granted by the UTK Graduate School for a period of one year (three semesters, including summer term). Any graduate program recommending English proficiency conditional admission must commit to

admitting the student into the program no later than the end of the three semesters specified in the admission letter only if the student has fulfilled the English language requirement and any other requirements prescribed by the program. A program granting conditional admission based on English proficiency is obligated to offer admission in the following year to the student meeting the requirement(s).

Effect

A student admitted conditionally under this policy will receive the appropriate documentation for entering the U.S. for English language study only. Upon entry into the U.S., this student will enroll in the University of Tennessee English Language Institute (UT ELI), with the intent of achieving the Graduate School required TOEFL score of 80 iBT (or 550 paper-based) or IELTS score of 6.5. The student may request a waiver from the Graduate School to attend a different U.S.-based and U.S.-accredited intensive English language program. If the student passes this language threshold, he/she will be expected to enroll as a degree-seeking student in the admitting program starting with the semester immediately following, which cannot be later than the third semester after the student enrolls in the intensive English language program.

Procedures

- The applicant must submit an online application for admission to the UTK Office of Graduate Admissions.
- Graduate programs will need to petition the Office of Graduate Admissions to conditionally admit a student based on English language proficiency. Furthermore, conditional admission can be granted only by the UTK Graduate School if the UT ELI has confirmed that it can accommodate the student or if a waiver has been granted to attend a different intensive English language program.
- Once the UTK Graduate School and the degree program agree that the student's qualifications warrant conditional admission, an admission letter will be issued by the Office of Graduate Admissions and indicate the English proficiency conditional admission and other requirements to be met within the specified timeframe.
- The Form I-20 (Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant F-1 Student) will be issued by the English Language Institute (ELI) program only.
- Upon successful completion of the ELI course and/or program and the appropriate TOEFL or IELTS score, the student will be issued a new Form I-20 by UTK CIE for the intended graduate degree program.
- The student may not enroll in any other UTK course while enrolled in the ELI.

Facilitation

An offer of conditional admission for English proficiency will be in effect for three semesters, including summer term, from the term of enrollment in the UT ELI. The student may request a waiver from the Graduate School to attend a different U.S.-based and U.S.-accredited intensive English language institute.

Funding

Funding for enrollment in the intensive English language program at ELI is the student's or his/her sponsor's responsibility.

Non-satisfaction of condition for full admission

If a student is unable to fulfill the English proficiency condition within the required timeframe, admission to the graduate program will be revoked. In this case, the student has the following options:

- Submit a new graduate admission application and, if admitted conditionally, continue studying at UT ELI.
- Leave the U.S.
- Seek a transfer to another school in the U.S.

CIE will advise students in this situation of their options and rights.