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## Academic Policy Committee Report - February 22, 2018

Graduate Council

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**MINUTES OF ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Thursday, February 22, 2018, 2:00 P.M.**  
**111 Student Services Building**

Committee members: Maria Stehle (Chair), Sergio Bedford, Eric Boder, and Lars Dzikus.

Other attendees: Mehmet Aydeniz, Graduate Council, Chair-Elect, Mary Albrecht, Dixie Thompson, and Catherine Cox, Graduate School. Yvonne Kilpatrick, Graduate Admissions.

Maria Stehle called the meeting to order at 2:10 p.m.

**1. Proposal: Changes to the Conditional Admission Based on English Proficiency catalog text**

Yvonne Kilpatrick, from Graduate Admissions, presented the 2017 summer working group results for the language in the Graduate Catalog concerning English Proficiency and English certification. After discussion, it was decided that the revisions for this language are more editorial than policy-related. Mary Albrecht, with the catalog working group, will meet with Yvonne Kilpatrick and Catherine Cox and discuss the edits and revisions to the language in the catalog for English Proficiency and English certification.

**2. Proposal: Remove heading and catalog text for section: English Proficiency**

Yvonne Kilpatrick, from Graduate Admissions, presented the 2017 summer working group results for reviewing the policy related to English language requirements for applicants and students. The current English Proficiency policy no longer reflects the Graduate School practices for assessing English proficiency. In 2013, a new assessment process was implemented that is managed by the English as a Second Language Program within the UT English department. The current process is published on the English as a Second Language webpage (<http://english.utk.edu/english-as-a-second-language/learning-english-as-a-second-language/>).

The working group voted to submit a proposal to the Academic Policy Committee recommending removal of the English Proficiency policy section in the Graduate Catalog (as shown below). The effect would be discontinuation of the English proficiency assessment that occurs after admission and discontinuation of placement in English language coursework that occurs subsequent to the assessment.

**Proposal:** Remove heading and catalog text for section titled: *English Proficiency*. Also, we are requesting to move the text below in yellow highlight from under the *English Proficiency* heading to the *Competency in English* heading.

**English Proficiency**

Applicants whose native language is not English must pass an English proficiency examination (English Placement Exam), given by the university prior to initial registration. Students whose performance on the examination indicates a need for additional English study must enroll immediately for English 121 or another course assigned by the English Department for undergraduate credit and pass with a grade of C or better. A student may not take more than 9 additional credit hours of course work while enrolled in English 121. Students whose scores indicate that they are not prepared to enter English 121 will be referred to a program of intensive English study prior to enrolling in an academic program.

All prospective teaching assistants or associates whose native language is not English are required to take and pass the ITA-OPIC Test before they can be assigned classroom related duties in connection with their assistantships. The ITA-OPIC is administered on campus through the Graduate School, and students need to consult the ITA-OPIC website for more specific details on the ITA-OPIC, including test dates (<https://gradschool.utk.edu/graduate-student-life/ita-testing-program/>).

The content of the second paragraph, above, refers to the policy stated in the *Competency in English* section of the Graduate Catalog. **The working group also recommends moving the highlighted language above to the *Competency in English* section (shown below in yellow highlight).**

**Competency in English:**

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, requires all who teach to be competent in spoken English. The specific policy, as it relates to graduate students who teach, is as follows: Since a certain level of competency with English as a spoken language is necessary for effective communication and teaching, all Graduate Teaching Assistants and Graduate Teaching Associates whose first language is not English are required to demonstrate an appropriate level of comprehensibility for classroom teaching by taking the Oral Proficiency Interview by computer (OPic) administered through the Graduate School. **Students need to consult the ITA-OPic website for more specific details on the ITA-OPic, including test dates (<https://gradschool.utk.edu/graduate-student-life/ita-testing-program/>).**

The results of this test will be communicated to the appropriate department to be used in determining the nature and extent of instructional or other duties assigned the Graduate Teaching Assistants or Graduate Teaching Associates. Suggested modes of remediation will be given to the department and graduate student when appropriate.

New international students who have been offered an appointment as Graduate Teaching Assistant or Graduate Teaching Associate will take the OPic after their arrival at the UT and the results of the test will be used to determine the nature of their assignment.

~~Validation of competence in communicating with students in English is required for all who are responsible for working with students. Deans, department heads, and directors are responsible for validating such competence, using the appropriate university form (APR FORM 1-89).~~

Discussion: Mary Albrecht communicated that the APR Form 1-89, mentioned above is no longer valid and not being used and recommends that the paragraph mentioning the obsolete form be removed.

**VOTE: APC voted and unanimously approved as shown below. The proposal is moving forward with recommendation for approval to the Graduate Council.**

- Remove the English Proficiency heading and text from the Graduate Catalog,
- Add the sentence from the English Proficiency text to the Competency in English text,
- Remove the last paragraph in the Competency in English text referencing the I-89 form.

**3. Jens Gregor, from Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science submitted a proposal regarding the doctoral residence requirement.**

Discussion: APC discussed the doctoral residence requirement and decided not to take any action at this time.

With no further items, the meeting adjourned at 3:15.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Cox  
Graduate Council Liaison