

English Proficiency for Prospective J-1 Scholar

The English proficiency level required by the US Department of State is: be able to engage in the described program activity, understand the conditions under which they will work (i.e. benefits available, salary, cost of living, etc.), carry out the normal day to day tasks of living in the USA, and to communicate adequately in an emergency.

The options for documenting English level are: (check the number of the option you choose)

- 1. TOEFL or IELTS score. Anyone whose native language is not English may submit a score on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). Passing marks are 550, 213, 80, and 6.5 for paper-based, computer-based, internet-based (iBT) TOEFL, and IELTS respectively. Scores should not be more than 3 years old. Or;
- 2. Attach a letter certifying the visitor has adequate English proficiency. This must be signed by a qualified university official or independent English language instructor. (See **Guidelines for Letter Certifying Level of English Proficiency** on the next page). Or;
- 3. A recorded videoconference lasting 15 or more minutes conducted in English by the UT host. Or;
- 4. A recorded phone call in English lasting 15 minutes. Or;
- 5. Native speaker of English (grew up in a household and community that primarily spoke English or lives and works in a community that primarily speaks English)

Please note that option 3 and 4 require the host department to keep the recording for 3 years beyond the end of the visit.

Name of Visitor _____

Name of Host: _____

Signature of Host: _____ Date: _____

Please submit this form along with the J -1 Request.

Guidelines for Letter Certifying Level of English Proficiency

- The letter needs to be on letterhead from the institution of the writer.
- It needs to have the name and title of the writer (usually in the closing salutation/signature area).
- It needs to briefly state on what basis the writer is qualified to make the evaluation
 - For example: native speaker of English, Professor of English Language, Instructor of ESL, etc.
- It needs to include the method of evaluation, i.e. recent personal interview in English or via routine conversation in English (like would happen between colleagues in an academic department) etc. (an excellent evaluation method could be to have the visitor explain in English to the evaluator what they will be doing at UT)
- The following statement or something very similar needs to be included:
 - “This person has demonstrated English language proficiency adequate to perform the proposed activity at the University of Tennessee, to understand their working conditions and expectations, to communicate in an emergency, and to carry out normal day to day activities in an English speaking community.”