

## **UC SAN DIEGO DIVISION OF GRADUATE EDUCATION AND POSTDOCTORAL AFFAIRS ENGLISH LANGUAGE POLICY FOR INTERNATIONAL TEACHING ASSISTANTS**

International graduate students who are proposed as teaching assistants for the first time (regardless of year in program), whose native language is not English, or who have serious pronunciation problems, may not serve as TAs until they have been certified to have the requisite English language skills. This English language policy does not apply to students who serve as language assistants in courses conducted in their native language.

### **LANGUAGE TESTING**

A student's language competency should be assessed on the basis of an oral screening conducted prior to the start of classes (in unusual circumstances, no later than the **first** week of classes). The typical test periods are the month of September, and then Finals Week and the week after Finals in Fall, Winter and Spring quarters. The oral screening test will be administered by a committee of at least one faculty representative from the hiring department and a trained linguist appointed by the Division of Extended Studies - International Programs. A determination will be made as to whether a student meets the minimum level of proficiency necessary for a TAship. The minimum level of proficiency can be defined as the student's ability to respond and interact appropriately to questions of a discipline-specific nature with proficient vocabulary and comprehensible pronunciation given a 15-minute interview. Information about various means of assessing teaching-related language skills can be obtained from the English Language Program for International Instructors ([ELP-ii. engagedteaching@ucsd.edu](mailto:ELP-ii.engagedteaching@ucsd.edu)).

### **CERTIFICATION**

A student may receive unconditional ("pass") or conditional ("provisional pass") certification. The former indicates that the student has adequate language skills to serve as a TA without further language training. Conditional certification indicates that the student has nearly adequate language skills to serve as a TA, but must enroll in an appropriate language training course before or during the first quarter in which they will serve as a TA. Furthermore, a student receiving provisional certification must be re-evaluated prior to serving as a TA for a second quarter and may not serve as a TA for a third quarter unless they receive unconditional certification by then. A student who does not receive either conditional or unconditional certification must enroll in a language training course prior to being tested again and must be certified before they may serve as a TA.

### **LANGUAGE COURSES**

A student with a TA requirement who receives conditional certification or who fails to be certified may enroll at no cost no later than the second week of classes in the ELP-ii offered by the Teaching + Learning Commons. Alternatively, a student may enroll in an English as a Second Language course offered by UCSD Division of Extended Studies, a community college, or other institution. Funding for such language training must be funded by the student or provided by the student's department.

### **DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

If the department offers a TAship to an incoming international student who fails to be certified, the department must honor its financial commitment to that student even though they will not be allowed to serve as a TA. It would be advisable, therefore, for departments that expect incoming international students to serve as TAs in their first quarter to have these students certified prior to making the formal TA offer and make clear in any communication to students that a TAship opportunity is conditional upon being certified. Achieving a TOEFL iBT Speaking score of 26-30, an IELTS Speaking score of 8.0-9.0, a Duolingo Speaking score of 150-60 or a PTE Speaking score of 84-90 is an acceptable method of pre-certification in the student's home country. Students who do not pass the pre-certification screening will be eligible to be screened at UC San Diego by the method described above.

### **COMPLIANCE**

To ensure a rewarding teaching experience for both the TA and undergraduates, students who are awarded TAships without certification are subject to having their appointment as a TA denied by the Division of Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs until the students are certified as having the requisite English language skills for teaching.