

**Proposed Change in University Handbook
(approved by Faculty Senate 10-11-05)**

Background

In 1996 the Board of Regents adopted a policy requiring that prospective faculty members and graduate teaching assistants have their language capability assessed. Minimum scores on the TSE or SPEAK test were established. Faculty members or graduate teaching assistants who scored below this minimum could not be appointed without spoken English language remediation. Changes in the scoring standards of the TSE/SPEAK test combined with the results of a Legislative Audit conducted of all Regents' institutions in Fall 2004 lead the Board of Regents to modify this policy. The proposed changes to C22.2 of the University Handbook reflect the changes in the Board of Regents Policy.

Current Policy

C22.2 All prospective faculty members and graduate assistants will have their language capability assessed in accordance with Kansas Board of Regents' policies. Prospective faculty members found to be potentially deficient will be required to achieve prescribed minimum scores on the TSE or SPEAK. The Regents' policy provides that the minimum score for appointment is 240. Individuals must have scored at or above the prescribed minimum on the SPEAK, to be appointed without spoken English language remediation conditions. (BOR 6-27-96)

Proposed Policy

C22.2 All prospective faculty members and graduate teaching assistants will have their spoken English competency assessed in accordance with Kansas Board of Regents' policies. Prospective faculty members are to have such an assessment performed on a face-to-face basis at the time of the on-campus interview or by mediated means in the instance of telephone interviews. Graduate teaching assistants will have such an assessment interview performed upon their arrival for their first semester on campus. An oral interview is to be conducted by no fewer than three institutional personnel, one of whom shall be a student. Prospective teaching personnel found to be deficient in speaking ability will be required to achieve a minimum score of 50 on the Test of Spoken English (TSE) or the Speaking Proficiency English Assessment Kit (SPEAK) in order to be appointed to teaching responsibilities without first completing spoken English language remediation. (BOR 1-19-05; BOR 6-27-96)

Guidelines for assessing spoken English language competency

General features of speech to assess:

Vocabulary/Grammar/Fluency
Loudness/Rapidity of Speech
Enunciation
Clarity of Expression
Skill in Explaining Concepts

A score of 50 or better on the SPEAK test is necessary to demonstrate spoken English competency. The following are features on the SPEAK test that correspond to scores of 50 and scores of 60.

Score of 50:

Speaker exhibits the following traits with regard to selection of vocabulary, control of grammatical structure, accurate pronunciation, and delivery:

- Errors are not unusual, but rarely major
- Accent may be slightly distracting
- There is some range in grammatical structure and vocabulary, which may be slightly distracting
- Delivery is generally smooth, with hesitancy and pauses

Communication is generally effective; tasks are performed competently, little listener effort is required

- Speaker is able to select reasonable language for the task
- Speaker generally uses appropriate response to audience/situation
- Response is generally coherent, with generally clear, logical organization, adequate development and some effective use of cohesive devices (e.g. however, therefore, after that, nevertheless, etc.)
- Speaker uses linguistic features that are generally effective; communication is generally not affected by errors

Score of 60:

Speaker exhibits the following traits with regard to selection of vocabulary, control of grammatical structure, accurate pronunciation, and delivery:

- Errors not noticeable
- Accent not distracting
- Range in grammatical structure and vocabulary
- Delivery often has native-like smoothness

Communication is almost always effective; tasks are performed very competently, almost no listener effort is required

- Speaker is highly skillful in selecting appropriate language for the task
- Speaker uses appropriate response to audience/situation
- Response is coherent, with logical organization, clear development and effective use of cohesive devices
- Speaker uses linguistic features that are almost always effective; communication is not affected by minor errors

Note: A score of 60 does not mean that the person must speak perfectly with absolutely no accent. It means that the minor language problems do not interfere with communication at all.