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SFU.CA/GRADUATE-STUDIES

MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION Senate

DATE January 15, 2026

FROM Mary O'Brien,
Chair of Senate Graduate Studies
Committee (SGSC)

RE: Graduate General Regulation 1.3 Admissions



For Approval:

At its meeting on **January 6, 2026**, SGSC reviewed and approved the revision Graduate General Regulations 1.3 Admissions. This gives rise to the following motion, effective **Fall 2026**:

Motion 1:

That Senate approve the revisions to Graduate General Regulation 1.3 Admissions, effective Fall 2026.

MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION Mary O'Brien, Chair SGSC DATE December 9, 2025
FROM Michelle Grahame, Associate
Director, Graduate Admissions,
Records & Registration, FGS
RE: Graduate General Regulations Revision: GGR 1.3 Admissions

**Motion:**

That SGSC approve the revisions of GGR 1.3.3 English Language Competence, effective Fall 2026.

Overview:

Effective January 21, 2026, TOEFL will transition from the existing 0-120 score scale to an updated score scale of 1-6 in increments of 0.5. To support the transition, TOEFL will provide comparable scores on the 0-120 score scale for two years, however, institutions will also need to identify their minimum accepted scores based on the updated score scale. Detailed information about the TOEFL Score Scale Update and a guide for institutions is available at:

<https://www.ets.org/toefl/institutions/ibt/score-scale-update.html>

Summary of Revisions and Rationale:

Upon review of the updated score scale and comparison information provided by TOEFL, alongside consultation with the SFU undergraduate admissions team, it is recommended that the minimum TOEFL scores outlined under GGR 1.3.3 English Language Competence be revised to reflect updated comparative minimum scores of 4.5 overall with 4.0 in each section.

Additionally, as all test scores are considered valid for a period of two years from the test date and some applicants may have taken their test prior to the updated score scale, it is recommended that the minimum scores accepted under the old scale remain listed in the GGR and can be accepted until January 21, 2028.

1.3 Admission

[...]

1.3.3 English Language Competence

English is the language of instruction and communication at the university. Accordingly, an applicant whose primary language is not English must demonstrate command of English sufficient to pursue graduate studies in the chosen field.

International applicants will not be required to complete an English-language test if they have completed a degree at an institution where the language of instruction and examination was in English in a country where English is the primary language.

All other international applicants will be required to achieve a minimum score on one of the following:

- International English Language Test System (IELTS Academic, not the general test) 6.5 overall with a minimum of 6.0 in each section
- Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) **4.5 or better overall, with a minimum of 4.0 in each section. For tests taken prior to January 21, 2026, 90 or better overall, is achieved** with a minimum of 20 in each section
- Canadian Academic English Language Assessment (CAEL) overall 70, with a minimum of 60 in each section
- Pearson Test of English – Academic (PTE) 65 overall score, with a minimum of 60 in each section
- Cambridge English Qualifications: C1 Advanced or C2 Proficiency with a minimum score of 180
- Duolingo English Test (DET) 125 overall with a minimum of 105 in each section.

All test scores are valid for a period of two years from the date of the test. Some graduate programs have higher English language proficiency requirements as described in their admission requirements.

An applicant requesting a waiver of the English language proficiency test should do so in writing and submit it with their application: in order to maintain a high academic standard, very few waivers are granted. Therefore, it is recommended that those applicants whose primary language is not English submit an English language proficiency test with their application.