



## Frequently Asked Questions

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### 1. Who is required to take the English language proficiency test?

All new degree-seeking graduate students whose first language is not English must take the test or receive an exemption from the English Language Support Program. Please read # 3 for exemption information. This requirement includes international students as well as permanent residents and U.S. citizens, and it includes students with degrees from U.S. institutions.

For exchange and other non-degree seeking graduate students, testing and classes are optional. These students should contact Mackenzie Bristow ([mackenzie.bristow@emory.edu](mailto:mackenzie.bristow@emory.edu)), director of the ELSP, for more information and to determine eligibility.

### 2. What is the purpose of the test?

The test is used for identifying students who may benefit from language support courses their first academic year and for making recommendations for participation in TATTO (the teaching assistantship program).

### 3. Are exemptions possible?

Due to an extensive educational background in an English-speaking environment, students may qualify for an exemption. To be exempted, students should be able to demonstrate exceptional English language skills through their educational background, and in most cases, an informal interview is required. To inquire about an exemption, students must contact Mackenzie Bristow before June 20<sup>th</sup> ([mackenzie.bristow@emory.edu](mailto:mackenzie.bristow@emory.edu)) before the testing date. No exemptions are given on the day of testing.

Important: Receiving an undergraduate or a master's degree from a university in an English-speaking country does not *by itself* qualify a student for an exemption. A student needs to demonstrate extensive education in an English-speaking environment.

### 4. I provided a TOEFL score (or another language proficiency test) to my program. Is that enough?

No. Students must still take the Laney Graduate School English Language Test. This test is not used for admission decisions but instead for identifying students who may benefit from language support courses their first academic year and for making recommendations for participation in TATTO (the teaching assistantship program).

### 5. When and where is the test given?

For students entering in the fall, appointments for the spoken test the written test is accessed through Canvas. Student are given an invitation to join the ELSP Canvas Page in the spring. If

a student did not receive an invitation, please contact Mackenzie Bristow ([mackenzie.bristow@emory.edu](mailto:mackenzie.bristow@emory.edu)). For information on testing, please refer to the testing information page on the English Language Support Program homepage at <https://www.gs.emory.edu/academics/elsp/testing.html> Students entering spring semester should contact Mackenzie Bristow ([mackenzie.bristow@emory.edu](mailto:mackenzie.bristow@emory.edu)) for information.

If a student, due to technological difficulties, needs a test in person it will be given at the ELSP offices, room 101 North Decatur Building. The street address is:  
1784 North Decatur Road Atlanta, Georgia 30322

On the campus map <http://map.emory.edu/>, search for “Property Name” and “North Decatur Building” in the drop-down menus.

#### **6. I will not be able to attend the assigned testing date. What should I do?**

The test is required by the Laney Graduate School, and students are expected to attend the assigned testing date. However, if a student is unable to attend because of a conflict with another graduate school event or because of other reasons, he or she should contact Mackenzie Bristow ([mackenzie.bristow@emory.edu](mailto:mackenzie.bristow@emory.edu)) to make alternative arrangements.

#### **7. What is the format of the test?**

The test has two sections: speaking and writing.

The speaking section is a 20- to 30-minute recorded zoom interview on a variety of topics based on the student’s interests, routine, experiences, and opinions. The interviewer will ask questions of varying complexity to obtain language samples. Students should listen carefully to the questions and provide detailed responses to demonstrate language proficiency. Limiting responses to improve accuracy will not improve the score.

In the interview, students may be asked to give their opinion, and the interviewer may seem to disagree or challenge the opinion. The interviewer is not critiquing the opinion but instead is listening to how ideas are expressed about a topic with opposing sides. **In addition, if a topic is introduced that a student does not want to talk about, the student should feel free to say that he or she would rather discuss something else.**

The speech sample is evaluated at 4 levels: *novice*, *intermediate*, *advanced*, or *superior* (based on the Oral Proficiency Interview by ACTFL/American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages).

The writing section is a 1-hour essay on a designated academic topic. This test is taken on Canvas using Respondus Lockdown. You will also need to allow canvas access to your computer’s camera.

No minimum word count is required; however, students should try to fully support their claim (ideas), follow academic essay organization, and use formal, academic vocabulary. They should also allow time near the end of the writing test to edit for accurate grammar and word choice. Students may use the Spelling & Grammar Check function in Microsoft Word. However, these tools may not improve a score. The essay will be evaluated with a primary focus on organization, development, content, and word choice. We encourage students to spend the allotted time on these areas.

The writing sample is evaluated at 4 levels: *novice*, *intermediate*, *advanced*, or *superior*.

#### **8. How can I prepare for the test?**

The best preparation for a language proficiency test is to keep language skills strong by reading, writing, hearing, and speaking in the language on a regular basis. In addition, students should understand the format of the test.

**9. How and when will I receive the results?**

On the day of testing, students will receive a date and time to return to the English Language Support Program to receive test results and be advised of any course requirements or recommendations.

**10. Are English language support courses required?**

If scores on the test indicate a speaking and/or writing course requirement, these courses must be taken the first academic year. ELSP courses carry 2-3 hours credit, are graded S/U, and appear on transcripts.

**Speaking scores and ELSP courses**

**Superior:** no requirement

**Advanced High:** no requirement; degree-seeking students are recommended to take the sequence

ELSP 520: Seminar in Professional Communication (fall, 3 credits)

ELSP 530: Laboratory in Professional Communication (spring, 2 credits)

**Advanced Low-Mid:** degree-seeking students are required to take the sequence

ELSP 517: Communication Skills for Advanced Speakers I (fall, 3 credits)

ELSP 518: Communication Skills for Advanced Speakers II (spring, 2 credits)

**Intermediate Low-Mid-High:** degree-seeking students are required to take the sequence

ELSP 505: Communication Skills for Intermediate Speakers I (fall, 3 credits)

ELSP 515: Communication Skills for Intermediate Speakers II (spring, 3 credits)

ELSP 516: Communication Skills for Intermediate Speakers III (summer, 2 credits)

**Writing scores and ELSP courses**

**Superior:** no requirement; writing center or tutorial assistance, as needed

**Advanced High:** no requirement; program may need to monitor student's writing

**Advanced Mid:** no requirement; program should monitor the student's writing

**Advanced Low:** degree-seeking students are highly recommended to take the sequence

ELSP 510: Fundamentals of Graduate Writing I (fall, 3 credits)

ELSP 511: Fundamentals of Graduate Writing II (spring, 2 credits)

**Intermediate Low-Mid-High:** degree-seeking students are required to take the sequence

ELSP 510: Fundamentals of Graduate Writing I (fall, 3 credits)

ELSP 511: Fundamentals of Graduate Writing II (spring,