# Program Handbook Draft

**Testing of Nonnative English Speaking Students**

Test #1: Oral English Certification Test (OECT) for International Teaching Assistants (ITAs)

*(General description for departments to use and modify.)*

Graduate students who do not speak English as their first language are required to take the Oral English Certification Test (OECT) (<https://cce.grad-college.iastate.edu/speaking/oect-for-itas/overview>) in any of the following situations:

* they have been offered a teaching assistantship
* they will have some teaching responsibilities even if they are not teaching assistants, e.g. an occasional discussion leader, a substitute presenter, etc.
* they are applying to the Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) or Graduate Student Teaching Certificate (GSTC) Programs.

This language test measures the ability to use spoken English for teaching purposes and is different from the English Placement Test (EPT) that measures general academic English proficiency. This test is administered by the [Center for Communication Excellence](https://cce.grad-college.iastate.edu), Graduate College. The OECT levels are used to make language proficiency-based recommendations to academic departments and graduate programs regarding their students’ teaching duties. Students who do not receive OECT certification, i.e. test at OECT Level 2, 3, or 4, are required to take one or more section of GR ST 540 which will provide them with English language support as necessary. These English courses must be completed during the first year of study, and registration holds are placed if the student does not register for these during the first two semesters from the time of appointment.

Graduate students who speak English as their first language can seek an exemption if they reside in certain countries where English is the official language. Additionally, graduate students can seek an exemption if they present TOEFL, IELTS, or PTE results that fall within the OECT exemption criteria (see <https://cce.grad-college.iastate.edu/speaking/oect-for-itas/candidates>).

Instructions and test registration dates are available at <https://cce.grad-college.iastate.edu/speaking/oect-for-itas/schedule>.

For questions about the OECT, please email [itas@iastate.edu](mailto:itas@iastate.edu).

*(Optional considerations for individual departments)*

Here are some additional questions you might want to consider for your handbook.

* Do all of your International Teaching Assistants (ITAs) require some teaching experiences **for graduation purposes**? If so, you may want to specify that they must attain Level 2 as a minimum requirement for recitations, discussions, and/or occasional presentations, or Level 1 for sole or stand-alone teaching as instructor of record.
* Do most or all of your ITAs have to lead **recitations and discussions**? If so, you may want to specify that they must attain Level 2 as a minimum level.
* Does your department require your students to teach by a specific semester in their program of study? If so, you may want to specify the timeline for when they should get tested and when they should attain Level 1 or Level 2 in order to meet their program of study.
* Other relevant considerations?

Test #2 English Placement Test (EPT) for all international graduate students

*(General description for departments to use and modify.)*

Graduate students whose native language is not English and whose English proficiency test scores fall below the minimum required for exemption,\* must take the English Placement Test unless they meet one of the other exemption criteria.\*\* This test is administered by the Department of English. Students must take the EPT at the beginning of their first semester of enrollment. Students who do not pass the EPT are placed into one or more courses in the English 99 or 101 series. These English courses must be completed during the first year of study, and registration holds are placed if the student does not register for these during the first year of study.  
  
 \*English proficiency test scores required for exemption from the EPT:

* Minimum TOEFL PBT score of 600, or TOEFL iBT score of 100
* Minimum IELTS Academic score of 7.5
* Minimum PTE (Pearson Test of English) Academic score of 72

 \*\*Additional exemption criteria, course fees, and other information about the test can be found at [https://apling.engl.iastate.edu/english-placement-test](https://apling.engl.iastate.edu/english-placement-test/).