**ENGLISH COMPETENCY EXAM PROCESS**

**Graduate College, Missouri State University**

The purpose of this process is to comply with RSMo §170.012. The law contains three requirements:

* A graduate student who has not previously lived in the United States shall be given a cultural orientation to prepare them for a teaching assistant position prior to filling a teaching assistant position.
* A graduate student who did not receive **both** primary and secondary education in a nation or territory in which English is the primary language shall **not** be given a teaching appointment during the student’s first semester of enrollment at any public institution of higher education in the state of Missouri.
* A graduate student who did not receive **both** their primary and secondary education in a nation or territory in which English was the primary language shall be tested for their ability to communicate orally in English in a classroom setting prior to receiving a teaching appointment.

The flowchart below illustrates the process for determining eligibility for employment as a teaching assistant. A student is deemed eligible once all questions are answered affirmatively.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Step 1**: Has the student previously lived in the United States? Yes or No? | → | **Yes** A cultural orientation is not necessary; Go to Step 2 |  | **No** Student must receive a cultural orientation; Go to Step 2 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Step 2:** Did the graduate student receive **both** primary and secondary education in a nation or territory in which English is the primary language? Yes or No? | → | **Yes** The Oral English Competency Exam is not required.  Student is eligible for employment as a Teaching Assistant. |  | **No**   Student must pass the Oral Competency Exam; Go to Step 3 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Step 3:** Has the student been enrolled at MSU or another institution in Missouri for at least one semester? Yes or No? | → | **Yes** Student is eligible for employment as a Teaching Assistant. |  | **No** Student is not eligible for employment as a Teaching Assistant. |

**Need for Cultural Orientation**

1. The decision regarding the length of time that the student should have lived in the US and the experiences the student has had is left to the discretion of the department and should be based on the specific teaching duties to be assigned to the student.
2. Cultural orientation: A cultural orientation will be provided during the New Student Orientation required by International Services **and** the Teaching Assistant Orientation required by the Graduate College. Both trainings must be completed to meet the requirement for cultural orientation.

**Determining Primary Language of Primary/Secondary Education**

1. The Graduate College will rely upon the student’s home nation (passport) and the CIA World Factbook (<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html>) unless additional information is provided as to more accurate information about the location of the student’s primary education. If the student’s home nation is listed in the CIA Factbook as having English as the official language, then the Graduate College will consider that as documentation that the student has received their Primary and Secondary education in the English language in compliance with Missouri law***. A student in this category is eligible to hold a TA in their first semester at MSU,*** ***if the student receives the cultural orientation described in the section above*.**
2. If the CIA World Factbook does not list the student’s home nation as using English as an official language, ***then the student will be required to complete the in-person Oral English Competency exam.***

Documenting Ability to Communicate Orally in English in a Classroom

1. An Oral English competency exam will be administered at no cost to the student. Departments wishing to hire the international student as a teaching assistant will request the exam by completing the form shown in **Appendix A**. The department will need to contact the Graduate College for a list of Graduate College approved faculty examiners. You will pick one of the Graduate College approved faculty examiners to serve as an examiner along with one of your faculty members.
2. The exam will be administered, and proficiency judged by two faculty reviewers. One reviewer will be from the hiring department to ensure sufficient familiarity with the academic content. A second faculty reviewer will be chosen from a pool of faculty appointed by the Graduate College. This faculty member will have expertise in communication but may not be a member of the hiring department.
3. Components of the exam
   1. Written instructions to teach a concept that would be typical of the prospective TA’s duties will be provided in advance.
   2. The demonstration lesson should take about 10 minutes to cover.
   3. At the end of the presentation, the student should be excused while the two reviewers discuss and deliberate.
   4. Reviewers will complete the form in **Appendix B** to indicate the results of the exam.
      1. Both reviewers must agree to assign a passing score to the student.
      2. If either reviewer feels that the student did not perform satisfactorily, feedback and resources regarding necessary improvements shall be given to the student. The exam may be re-taken after at least two weeks.
   5. Once a successful exam has been sent to the Graduate College (both Appendix A and B need to be sent), the Graduate College will process the PAF submitted by the Department to hire the student as a Teaching Assistant.

**Appendix A**

**Request for Exam of Classroom Oral English Proficiency**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date: |  |
| Department Requesting Exam |  |
| Semester Proposed for Teaching Assignment |  |
| Student’s Name and M Number |  |
| Student’s Home Nation and Native Language |  |
| US Colleges/Universities Attended (include hours/degree completed and GPA) |  |
| Department Faculty Member to Serve on Review Panel |  |
| If request is for a reexamination, provide date of first exam |  |

**Appendix B**

**Classroom Oral English Proficiency Exam**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date of Exam: |  |
| Departmental Faculty Reviewer |  |
| GC Faculty Reviewer |  |

Attach Lesson Instructions Provided to Student

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Exam Result (Circle) | Pass | Not Pass |

Reviewer Comments: