

PROPOSAL FOR UAC MEETING MARCH 29, 2005

NEW TOEFL TEST COMING FOR 2006 APPLICANTS

From Kim Bartlett, Director of Admissions, ARR
February 28, 2005.

Background from the College Board: The new TOEFL - Next Generation TOEFL (iBT)

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ETS (Educational Testing Service), the organization which creates and administers TOEFL, has created a new TOEFL (iBT) to begin in September 2005, replacing the current version. This new test will be phased in, beginning with the USA, and followed by Canada, France, Italy and Germany in October 2005. The rest of the world will follow in stages in 2006. As the new TOEFL comes into service in a given country, all CB (*computer-based*) and PB (*paper-based*) TOEFL testing will stop. However CBT and PBT scores will continue to be reported for two more years.

The new TOEFL (iBT) has been in development for over 10 years. This new TOEFL integrates skills and emphasizes the ability to communicate; communicative competence is being tested, i.e. how well can the test-takers understand others, and others them. Authentic language is being used which means the way people really talk, rather than read. The test will continue to be four hours in length, but note-taking will be allowed.

ETS explains that an integrated skills test is important because it emphasizes the ability to communicate using all four skills of reading, listening, speaking, and writing. The test replicates what happens in the classroom thus giving educational institutions confidence that the student can use English for academic purposes. This will be a big change for students who are very strong in all the skills but speaking.

The four sections in the new test are: Reading, Listening, Speaking, Writing, with all four sections taken in one day. The test will be administered via an official Internet-based testing network. It will work on fixed dates with up to possibly 50 testing dates available. Of course, security measures will be in place to ensure test integrity and score authenticity.

Each skill section will be scored between 0 – 30, with a total score of 0 – 120. Minimum acceptable scores can be set on all four skill sets, just on some of them, or on the total 'composite' score. ETS recommends standards being set to measure the candidate's level of English as needed for academic purposes.

New TOEFL test: Proposal for ARR-handled Faculties and Schools

Since ARR raised the TOEFL minimum score from 550 to 577 (from 550 to 600 for Management and TESL, Education) several years ago, we have not received comments about the level of English language proficiency in general, not particular comments about student weakness in verbal or written English. ARR is not inclined to slow down the review process, nor complicate the admission requirements, because TOEFL now provides sub-scores. Of course, the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research may choose to move differently on this – quite understandable given that they have proportionally more applicants presenting TOEFL, and have different expectations for graduate students.

Should any A-file faculty want to use sub-scores, I would be willing to consider this, but would want a clear indication that this was necessary to their educational goals. (In any event, both sub-score and composite score data will be provided by the College Board and stored by McGill electronically).

Current and Proposed Composite Score Conversion

Current Computer-based score <i>(score range is 0 – 300)</i>	Equals Current Paper-based Score <i>(score range is 310 – 677)</i>	Would equal in the New TOEFL Composite Score <i>(score range is 0 – 120)</i>
250	600 - 603	100
233	577	90 – 91
213	550	79 - 80

Therefore, effective for students entering in September 2006, TOEFL requirements will be specified for ARR-handled programs in the new 'composite' score format; namely:

TOEFL minimum	For Management and TESL, Education = 100
	For all other ARR-handled programs = 90

UAC - May 3, 2005

Follow-up on new TOEFL (iBT) test Proposed Minimum Component Scores

K. Bartlett and K. J'bari, ARR

In April 2005, UAC approved the use (for admission to ARR-handled programs) of the new iBT TOEFL, using composite scores as equivalent to composite scores of the former version of the TOEFL test. The table below shows equivalencies for some key scores.

	Former paper-based test McGill minima	Former computer-based test McGill minima	Equivalent new iBT composite McGill minima
Management, TESL (Education)	600	250	100
All other ARR-Handled programs	577	233	90
<i>Graduate programs</i>	<i>550</i>	<i>213</i>	<i>79 - 80</i>

UAC requested that, in addition to the minimum composite score, minimum scores be established for the four components of the new TOEFL test; namely, Writing, Speaking, Reading and Listening. This would prevent the admission of an applicant who, while meeting the overall requirement, has a serious failing in one or more specific skills.

Further to the request of UAC, ARR gathered information from recommendations established at a recent meeting of university representatives organized by the TOEFL office. At that meeting, 5 universities (including one Canadian) established the composite and component minima listed below.

	Duke	Lehigh	Texas- Austin	Carnegie Mellon	U.B.C.*
Level:	Graduate	Graduate	Graduate	Undergrad	Undergrad
Writing	20	25	22	25	20
Speaking	22	24	23	23	20
Reading	21	20	21	21	21
Listening	14	17	17	17	21
Composite Total	77	86	83	86	86

* UBC has a minimum composite score of 86 for undergraduate admission to reflect a higher level of overall English language proficiency than the level of proficiency required on each of the component skills. As a result, the minimum scores required for each component skill do not add up to 86.

As the test is new, all universities have stipulated scores are subject to change. To date, most universities in North America have not yet announced minimum composite or component scores.

Given the information above; given that we reserve the right to modify the minima and use of all scores, particularly during the first few years following implementation of this new test format; given our preference to keep our admission criteria as straightforward as possible in communicating to applicants:

It is proposed that, for ARR-handled programs, ^{each of} **the minimum component score on Writing, Speaking, Reading and Listening be \geq '21'**. In addition to meeting the minimum component score, the applicant must also meet the minimum composite score for the program.