

English Proficiency Requirement for F1 Visa International Students

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to establish the minimum requirement of English proficiency required of international non-immigrant students seeking admission to Hawai'i Community College's credit, degree programs.

Introduction:

International students must additionally comply with all regulations of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, including verification of financial support and enrollment in a health and accident insurance program.

International non-immigrant students may attend the Hawai'i Community College (HawCC) Intensive English Program, which provides English language preparation for students who wish to enter a U.S. college or university, as well as for those who wish to improve their English skills for professional or personal reasons. This program is offered on a noncredit, year-round basis.

Background:

During academic years 1997-1998 and 1998-1999, faculty who teach the credit English as a Second Language (ESL) courses and faculty who teach the non-credit Intensive English Program (IEP) courses met to examine student success, the flow of students from IEP into the credit program, and discussion of equivalencies. This resulted in an evaluation of the College's TOEFL test requirements and an internal articulation agreement.

The TOEFL test requirement was again reviewed in Spring 2003 and a recommendation made by faculty based on the introduction of two new ESL courses to the curriculum: ESL 7 (Reading/Study Skills I) and ESL 11 (Basic Grammar/Writing). A TOEFL score of 450 was decided to be sufficient for students to enter ESL 7 and 11. The change was discussed by faculty and found to be in the best interest of the ESL program and HawCC students. The internet-based TOEFL test (iBT) was introduced in 2005 and HawCC recognized 45 iBT as equivalent to a paper-based 450.

Subsequently, it was determined that international non-English-speaking students at the level of 450 TOEFL were not able to proficiently negotiate the college's administrative processes or credit classes and required ongoing support related to living in the U.S.

It was also determined that in addition to accepting TOEFL test scores for international-student admissions, HawCC will accept test scores from the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), and the EIKEN English Proficiency Test, all of which are universally accepted by US Colleges and universities.

¹ Supersedes Haw 7.220, October 10, 2012, November 4, 2004, April 2, 2003 and August 16, 1999

Therefore, based on the following factors, the HawCC faculty has found it to be in the best interests of international students to raise the admissions requirement from TOEFL 450 paper-based/45 iBT to TOEFL 500 paper-based/61 iBT, and to accept the equivalent International English Language Testing System score of IELTS 5.5², and the EIKEN Test score of Grade 2A.

1. The TOEFL 450 admissions requirement has allowed the admission of international students who lack the English language skills necessary to function independently in a community college environment.

2. The TOEFL admissions score of 500 paper-based/61 iBT is commonly used as an admissions requirement by community colleges across the country. In addition, UH System community colleges – including Honolulu, Leeward, Kapiolani, and Windward – require 500 paperbased/ 61 iBT. Maui College requires a score of 480 paper-based/55 iBT.

3. The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is an established English proficiency testing agency widely used by colleges to determine English-language proficiency.

4. In the University of Hawai‘i Community College System, Kapi‘olani, Kaua‘i and Leeward Community Colleges accept EIKEN scores. [UH Hilo](#) also accepts EIKEN scores for admission. All of the above accept an EIKEN Grade 2A test score for admission. EIKEN Step 2A is equivalent to TOEFL 500 / iBT 61, and 5.5 IELTS, which are currently accepted test scores for HawCC international admission.

5. EIKEN is recognized by approximately 400 universities and throughout the world as an admission score for Japanese students. <http://www.eiken.or.jp/eiken/en/eiken-tests/overview/> EIKEN is Japan’s most widely administered English-language proficiency testing program. The EIKEN tests, which assess all four skills and include a face-to-face speaking component, are backed by the Japanese education ministry and recognized at thousands of institutions in Japan and internationally.

6. HawCC has an Intensive English Language Program able to prepare students to meet the proposed standard of admission.

Policy:

Hawai‘i Community College requires that international non-immigrant students, whose native language is not English, seeking admission to the College’s credit, degree programs must have a minimum TOEFL score of 500 paper-based/61iBT or the equivalent score of 5.5 IELTS, or an EIKEN Test score of Grade 2A.

Revised policy issued by: Rachel Solemsaas, Chancellor