



New Jersey Institute of Technology

University Policies and Procedures

DATE OF LAST REVIEW: April 19, 2017

Subject: J1 Exchange Visitor English Proficiency Verification Requirement Policy

POLICY

The U.S. Department of State (“DOS”) has mandated that all J1 exchange visitors have the English language skills necessary to successfully participate in their programs and to function on a day-to-day basis in the United States. NJIT recognizes the objective and transparent standards developed by DOS to assess sufficient English proficiency and the evidence NJIT should accept as verification of sufficient English proficiency. NJIT has identified the minimum score requirements for various objective English exams and evaluation methods that are appropriate for the types of programs in which NJIT J-1 scholars participate.

APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all NJIT courtesy appointments and new hires who require a J1 visa to work in the United States.

PROCEDURES

One of the options below is available to document sufficient English proficiency. The host department should work with the Department of Human Resources to provide documentation that demonstrates that the potential J1 scholar meets one of the three options below. Failure to provide sufficient documentation of English proficiency will result in the denial of processing of the Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor J1 Status (Form DS2019) needed for the J1 visa.

1. **OPTION 1:** Evidence of having obtained the minimum required scores on one of the following recognized English language tests taken within the last two years:
 - a. IELTS overall score of 6.5 or higher
 - b. TOEFL (internet-based) overall score of 79 or higher
 - c. TOEFL (computer-based) overall score of 213 or higher
 - d. TOEFL (paper-based) overall score of 550 or higher

2. **OPTION 2:** Evidence of having obtained a degree from a post-secondary institution whose language of instruction is English (including U.S. institutions).
 - a. For degrees from U.S. institutions, evidence must be in the form of a transcript or diploma showing the degree conferred. No additional documentation indicating the language of instruction is English is needed for degrees from U.S. institutions.
 - b. For degrees from non-U.S. institutions, evidence must be in form of transcript in English showing degree conferred and English as the language of instruction.
 - i. If the transcript from a non-U.S. institution does not note English as the language of instruction, an official letter from the institution's registrar stating the individual attended the institution and the medium of instruction was English can be submitted with the transcript.
3. **OPTION 3:** Interview with a member of NJIT's English as a Second Language (ESL) Program. The interview can be conducted in person, or via video-conference (i.e. Skype).
 - a. The host department should contact the Department of Human Resources to inform them that the scholar has chosen the interview option. The interview fee is \$200 per interview.
 - i. Potential J1 scholars who obtain a score of **B2** or better will meet NJIT's English proficiency requirement. The proficiency scale is discussed below.
 - ii. If a potential J1 scholar does not obtain the minimum score, the host department can request another interview one (1) month from the date of the first interview, or use one of the other aforementioned methods to establish English proficiency.
 - b. English Language Proficiency Interview procedures:
 - i. Registration and fees
 1. Interviews are conducted via video-conference or in person by a member of NJIT's ESL Program.
 2. The \$200 interview fee, effective April 7, 2017, is payable by internal journal voucher. The host department is solely responsible for this fee, and no funds should be solicited directly from the scholar.
 3. Interviews cannot be conducted until payment has been made. Once the payment is received, the ESL staff member will contact the potential J1 scholar to arrange an interview date and time. The interview will last approximately 20-30 minutes.
 - ii. About the interview
 1. At the beginning of the interview, the interviewer will verify the candidate's identity by viewing an identification card that has both the candidate's name in Latin alphabetic script and a recent photo. This is usually done with a passport or other government-issued ID.
 2. The candidate should be the only person in the room during a video-conference interview. Candidates are forbidden from seeking assistance from others during the interview. If the interviewer concludes that the candidate is receiving help, the interview will end.

3. The interview takes between 20-30 minutes. It combines questions and answers with several language tasks. The interviewer uses a scoring rubric to determine if candidates meet the language proficiency requirements. The types of questions employed are not released before an interview. Once an interview is completed, the interviewer scores the interview and completes the *J-1 English Proficiency Verification Interview Assessment Report* that is sent to the Department of Human Resources. The Department of Human Resources will then communicate the overall score to the host department. The written report will not be shared with the host department or the candidate.
 4. All scores are final and not subject to dispute or negotiation.
- iii. Assessment
1. Final scores are assigned using the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) scale. The scale consists of six levels — A1 (the lowest), A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2 (the highest).
 - a. C2 (High Proficient) – Can understand with ease virtually everything heard. Can summarize information in a coherent presentation. Can express himself/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations. Can use vocabulary flexibly and precisely. Can appropriately and naturally use grammatical structures. Pronunciation is precise and poses no problems for the interlocutor.
 - b. C1 (Proficient) – Can recognize implicit meaning. Can express himself/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions and only occasional repetition. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic, and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors, and cohesive devices. Can use vocabulary flexibly with some occasional inappropriate wording.
 - c. B2 (High Independent) – Can understand concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialization. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed speech on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue. Can speak at length, but may show hesitation or exhibit a lack of coherence. May use vocabulary and grammatical structures with limited flexibility. Can usually be understood but has a limited range of pronunciation features.

- d. B1 (Independent) – Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, and leisure. Can deal with most situations likely to arise in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics that are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes, and ambitions and can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. May exhibit long pauses and slow speech. May make frequent errors in word and grammatical choices. Frequent mispronunciations may make it difficult for the interlocutor to comprehend intended meaning. The user at this level has mastered the basic structures of the language and is beginning to attempt to produce more complex language.
- e. A2 (High Basic) – Can understand frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance, such as very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, and employment. Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment, and matters in areas of immediate need. May be able to convey only basic meanings often characterized by long pauses. May have insufficient vocabulary and grammar abilities to communicate effectively. Mispronunciations may cause difficulty for the interlocutor.
- f. A1 (Basic) – Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce himself/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows, and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help. Little communication may be possible outside of the realms described above. Speech may be intelligible.

