

## English Proficiency Requirement for J-1 Scholars

### Why the need for proof of English Proficiency?

English language proficiency is a critical factor in an **Exchange Visitor's (EV)** ability to succeed in a lab or classroom, and on a **day-to-day basis** in the United States. This includes everything from negotiating rent to describing an illness to a physician. Language proficiency is essential to the **health, safety, and welfare** of an EV, as well as a critical tool for an EV **to fully understand** their rights, responsibilities, and protections during their stay in the U.S.

The U.S. Department of State, the government agency that has oversight of the **Exchange Visitor Program**, requires an Exchange Visitor to have sufficient proficiency in the English language. English proficiency must be determined by an **objective measure** to ensure EV's can successfully participate in their program, as well as on a **day-to-day basis** in the United States.

**Note:** This requirement cannot be waived (not even for transfers), as English proficiency is not just a tool to set someone up for success, but a compliance issue for the University, and necessary to meet the regulations of a J-1 visa. If an academic host department or prospective EV are unwilling to comply with the English proficiency requirement, they should consider another visa type.

### General Guidelines

English proficiency must be demonstrated by an **objective and measured assessment** in one of the following ways:

#### 1) English language proficiency test:

The following tests are acceptable to fulfill the English proficiency requirement:

- **TOEFL** - a score of **80** or higher on the iBT (internet based test) or **550** or higher on the PBT (paper-based exam)
- **IELTS** - an overall minimum band score of **6.5** or higher
- **CEFR**: Level of **C1** or higher
- **Duolingo** – a score of 105 or higher

*\*All test dates must be within two years of receipt of the DS-2019 application to be valid.*

#### 2) English language proficiency interview conducted by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party trained in language assessment:

- **English3 J-1 Interview:** The "J-1 Interview" is a recorded interview completed through English3's website. The interview generally takes about 25 minutes and can be evaluated in as little as 48 hours. A score of **3.0 or higher** is required to demonstrate language proficiency. You can go to [English3's website](#) for direct access to the interview. *\*Please select the following: English Test - E3J1 (English3 J-1 Interview) for J-1 Exchange Visitors.*

**3) Proof that an EV has satisfied any of the following:**

- An Associate, Bachelor's, Master's or Doctoral degree (completed within two years of the submit date of the DS-2019 application) from a regionally-accredited U.S. college or university
- A Bachelor's degree or higher (completed within two years of the submit date of the DS-2019 application) from an officially-recognized college or university in one of the following **countries**:
  - Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Barbados, Belize, Canada, Dominica, Federated States of Micronesia, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guyana, Ireland, Jamaica, Liberia, Mauritius, Namibia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, The Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom (England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland), United States of America, Zambia
- **Native speakers of English** who are citizens of the following countries are not required to submit proof of English language proficiency. Citizens of a country not listed below will still need to prove English proficiency through one of our approved means, even if the medium of academic instruction is English.
  - Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Barbados, Belize, Canada, Dominica, Federated States of Micronesia, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guyana, Ireland, Jamaica, Liberia, Mauritius, Namibia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, The Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom (England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland), United States of America, Zambia

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