

Deciphering English Proficiency Requirements: Perspectives from Universities and Counselors

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From [REDACTED]

Sent: Tuesday, September 23, 2025 9:07 AM

To: Admissions <admissions@cofc.edu>

Subject: College Application Issues

You don't often get email from [REDACTED] [learn why this is important](#)

EXTERNAL EMAIL: Verify sender; use caution with attachments/links.

Dear Admissions Office,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a prospective first-year applicant for the Fall 2026 academic year.

I am writing to inquire about the English proficiency test requirements for international students. I have been attending high school in the U.S. since 10th grade in 2023, and I will have completed three years of high school in the U.S. by the time I graduate.

Given my academic background in the U.S., I would like to know if I am still required to submit a TOEFL or IELTS score as part of my application.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]



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Case Study: “Dana”



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Dana: Common App Information

Language

Mandarin	First Language, Speak, Read, Write, Spoken at Home
English	Speak, Read, Write, Spoken at Home

Geography and nationality

Citizenship status	Citizen of non-U.S. country
Birthplace	Taipei, Taiwan 4 years US
Other citizenships	Taiwan
Current US Visa	F-1 Student, N6751675 Issued: 05/24/2019
Intended US Visa	F-1 Student



Term: 2020 - 2021		Grade Level: 9		Transferred:	No	Transferred From:			
Course #	Class	Teacher	Average	Credits Taken	Credits Earned	GPA	Transferred		
BIBL9-4	BIBLE 9/10	Craft, Jason Daniel	88	1	1	3.3	No		
ENG9-7	ENGLISH 9	Cooper, Allison	79	1	1	2.3	No		
FA/CPR	First Aid	Law, John		0			No		
H9/10 B-6	HEALTH/PE 9/10 B	Craft, Jason Daniel	93	1	1	3.7	No		
WH-3	WORLD HISTORY	Bartlett, Susan (Susan)	90	1	1	3.7	No		
GEO-1	GEOMETRY	Schultz, David J (David)	81	1	1	2.7	No		
ES-2	EARTH SCIENCE	Wright, Amanda	76	1	1	2	No		
				6	6	2.95			

Term: 2021 - 2022		Grade Level: 10		Transferred:	No	Transferred From:			
Course #	Class	Teacher	Average	Credits Taken	Credits Earned	GPA	Transferred		
BIBL9/10-2	BIBLE 9/10	Craft, Jason Daniel	86	1	1	3	No		
OFFApp	OFFICE APPLICATIONS	Lythgoe, Amber	93	1	1	3.7	No		
ART-4	ART	Jervis, Lisa (Lisa)	90	1	1	3.7	No		
ENG10-3	ENGLISH 10	Eshbaugh, Susan (Susan)	81	1	1	2.7	No		
H9/10B-7	HEALTH/PE 9/10 B	Craft, Jason Daniel	87	1	1	3.3	No		
ALG2-5	ALGEBRA II	Eshbaugh, Susan (Susan)	74	1	1	2.5	No		
BIO-1	BIOLOGY	Tawney, Stephanie (Stephanie)	80	1	1	2.7	No		
				7	7	3.09			

Term: 2022 - 2023		Grade Level: 11		Transferred:	No	Transferred From:			
Course #	Class	Teacher	Average	Credits Taken	Credits Earned	GPA	Transferred		
BIBLE11-1	BIBLE 11	Allen, Tim	86	1	1	3	No		
ART-5	ART	Wright, Melody Sophie	98	1	1	4	No		
ENG11-6	ENGLISH 11	Park, Kim	74	1	1	2	No		
UH-3	U.S. HISTORY	Bartlett, Susan (Susan)	88	1	1	3.3	No		
PF-4	PERSONAL FINANCE	Conley, Cheryl	87	1	1	3.3	No		
CHEM-7	CHEMISTRY	Tawney, Stephanie (Stephanie)	83	1	1	3.5	No		
				6	6	3.18			

Cumulative GPA: 3.07 Cumulative Credits Earned: 20

Credits Satisfactory August 2015: Classes were unsatisfactory before August 2015



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Dana: Common App Information

Current or most recent year courses

Full year

ENG - English 12 - (REG)

ENVSCI - Environmental Science - (REG)

OTH/ELE - Study Hall - (N/A)

HIST - Government 12 - (REG)

ART - Art - (REG)

RELG - Bible 12 - (REG)

OTH/ELE - Teacher assistant - (N/A)



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The University Perspective

Policy Drivers

- Academic standards to ensure student success
- Institutional mission (ex: access vs. selectivity)
- Institutional resources: ESL, tutoring, academic support
- Compliance with federal regulations: issuing the Form I-20, F-1 student visa

Challenges

- Balancing flexibility with standards, rigor with accessibility
- Managing expectations consistently



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High School Counselor Perspective

- Application hurdles: multiple test options, varying score thresholds
- Lack of transparency in “waiver” criteria
- Cost and accessibility of testing
- Students’ awareness of conditional pathways
- Risk of delayed or denied admissions due to unclear requirements



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Common English Proficiency Pathways

- Standardized exams: TOEFL, IELTS, Duolingo, etc.
- SAT and ACT – **no need to combine with other ENPF tests**
- English medium of instruction in high school
- AP/IB/A-Level English courses and exams
- U.S. high school enrollment
- University options: conditional admission, intensive English programs



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U.S. University Website Examples

[College of Charleston](#)

[University of Dayton](#)



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Defining Native English Speakers

- Common App information
- Established lists of English-speaking countries
- U.S. passport holders



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From Both Sides of the Table

Universities:

- Publish clear, transparent, student-friendly policies
- Offer multiple pathways
- Revisit policies regularly with outcome/retention data
- Engage counselors on policies

Counselors:

- Meeting language competency for higher education
- Advocating for students and making sure students are prepared for higher education

Shared Goal:

Ensuring student success while minimizing barriers



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Thank you!

Questions/Comments?



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Beyond Test Scores?

- Writing samples, personal statement
- Interviews, video testimonial
- Letters from counselors, teachers
- Holistic review: academic transcripts + context



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