

UC 8797 05F

TO: Lawrence Williams, Chair
Undergraduate Council

Received 11/15/05

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FROM: Richard Scamell
Academic Policies and Procedures Committee

SUBJECT: Approval of Minimum Internet-Based (iBT) TOEFL Scores Required for Admissions to the University of Houston (UC 8542 05F)

APPROVED NOV 16 2005

DATE: November 15, 2005

This report considers a request from the Office of Admissions and Ad Hoc Committee for Evaluating a New TOEFL Test to establish a ranking scale for the Internet-Based TOEFL Test which was first administered in the United States on September 24, 2005. Participating in the discussion of this request held on Wednesday, October 26 were committee members Joel Bloom, William Chernish, Willie Munson, Charles Peters, Richard Scamell, Maria Solino, and Rebecca Achee Thornton. Susanna Finnell attended the meeting as a guest.

Background

The Internet-based (iBT) TOEFL Test tests all four language skills that are important for effective communication: speaking, listening, reading and writing and will replace the current computer-based (CBT) and paper-based (PBT) versions throughout the world in 2006.

The iBT TOEFL will be administered on fixed dates at secure Internet-based test centers. Most areas where the TOEFL iBT test is offered will have 30 to 40 administrations a year, but the number will vary based on the number of test takers and test center capacity. The iBT TOEFL has been created to better measure what colleges and universities need to know: a prospective student's ability to use English in an academic setting. The new Speaking section evaluates a person's ability to use spoken English, and the new integrated Writing and Speaking tasks measure the ability to combine information from more than one source and communicate about it.

The test includes four sections and requires approximately four hours to complete.

Section	Time Limit	Number of Questions	Score Scale
Reading	60-100 minutes	36-70	0-30
Listening	60-90 minutes	34-51	0-30
Break	10 minutes		
Speaking	20 minutes	6 tasks	0-30
Writing	50 minutes	2 tasks	0-30
			0-120 Total Score

The Speaking section includes independent and integrated tasks and will be scored by human scorers who evaluate the test-taker's ability in topic development, delivery, and language use. Each of the six tasks is rated from 0 to 4, and the average of these scores is converted to a scaled score of 0 to 30. Lectures and conversations are used in the Listening section. The speech in the listening material sounds more natural, and one lecture may use a British or Australian accent. The test includes new questions that measure understanding of a speaker's attitude, degree of certainty and degree of purpose. The Reading section has new questions that ask test takers to categorize information and fill in a chart to complete a summary. The Writing section requires typing. There is an integrated task in addition to the current independent task, and the scoring guides used for rating are different from the current test. Like the Speaking section, the writing section will also be scored by human scorers who evaluate the integrated writing task on the overall quality of the writing (development, organization, appropriate and

precise use of grammar and vocabulary) and the completeness and accuracy of the content. Each of the two tasks is rated from 0 to 5 and the average of these scores is converted to a scaled score of 0 to 30.

A direct link to an online tour of the TOEFL iBT with sample test questions from each of the four sections is available at:

<http://www.ets.org/portal/site/ets/menuitem.1488512ecfd5b8849a77b13bc3921509/?vgnextoid=f348af5e44df4010VgnVCM10000022f95190RCRD&vgnnextchannel=b5f5197a484f4010VgnVCM10000022f95190RCRD>

Proposal

The Ad Hoc Committee For Evaluating the Internet-Based (iBT) TOEFL Test recommends 79-80 as the passing (i.e., minimum) score for the iBT TOEFL test. This score is equivalent to the score of 213 on the computer-based (CBT) TOEFL or the score of 550 on the paper-based (PBT) TOEFL, which are the current minimum scores needed to be considered for admissions to the University of Houston.

Recommendation

The Committee unanimously approves the proposal developed in UC 8542 05F by the Ad Hoc Committee for Evaluating the Internet-Based (iBT) TOEFL Test. In addition, although not explicitly mentioned in UC 8542 05F, the Committee recommends that scores exceeding the minimum on any of three TOEFL tests be accepted by the University of Houston until use of the computer-based (CBT) TOEFL and paper-based (PBT) TOEFL tests is discontinued throughout the world. The Educational Testing Service estimates that this will occur by September 2006. Finally, since both the computer-based (CBT) TOEFL and paper-based (PBT) TOEFL tests will be discontinued worldwide before the 2007-09 edition of the Undergraduate Studies Catalog is printed, the Committee also recommends that use of the Internet-Based (iBT) TOEFL Test be added to Item 12 under the Adult Admission Option in the Admission, Advising, Orientation, and Registration section of the current online Undergraduate Studies Catalog.