

The following Motions and Documents were considered by the General Faculties Council at its Monday, September 28, 2020 meeting:

Agenda Title: **New Members of GFC**

CARRIED MOTION: TO APPOINT/REAPPOINT:

The following academic staff member to represent University Library Academic Staff, for a term beginning July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2023:

Angie Mandeville University Library Academic Staff Representative

The following Postdoctoral Fellows Association Representative, to serve on GFC for a term of office beginning September 2, 2020 and ending June 30, 2023:

Gaser Nagah PDFA Representative

The following Management and Professional Staff Representative, to serve on GFC for a term of office beginning September 16, 2020 and ending June 30, 2023:

Susan Babcock Management and Professional Staff (MaPS) representative

The following President of the Association of Academic Staff of the University of Alberta (AASUA), for a term beginning July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2022:

Ricardo Acuna President, AASUA

The following academic staff member nominated by GFC to the Board of Governors and appointed to GFC for a term that is concurrent with the term on the Board (July 13, 2020 to July 12, 2023):

Dilini Vethanayagam Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry

The following undergraduate student representatives to serve on GFC for terms commencing August 27, 2020 and ending April 30, 2021:

David Ren Faculty of Engineering
Adrian Wattamaniuk Faculty of Engineering

CARRIED MOTION: TO RECEIVE:

The following statutory faculty members who have been elected/re-elected by their Faculty, to serve on GFC for a term of office beginning July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2023:

Michael Dyck Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences
Derek MacKenzie Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences
Cheryl Poth Faculty of Education
Robert Burrell Faculty of Engineering
Mani Vaidyanathan Faculty of Engineering
Marianne Jacquet Faculté Saint-Jean

FINAL Item 4

Agenda Title: **Duolingo English Test: Extension of Short-term Use**

CARRIED MOTION:

THAT the General Faculties Council approve the proposed temporary change to Undergraduate and Graduate English Language Proficiency requirements, as submitted by the Office of the Registrar and as set forth in attachment 1, to take effect for Spring 2021, Summer 2021, Fall 2021, and Winter 2022 admissions.

FINAL Item 5

Agenda Title: **Motion from GFC Member Andrei Tabirca**

CARRIED MOTION:

THAT the General Faculties Council recommend that the SET process will follow the ARWG process, with the effect that SET will come to General Faculties Council for discussion and a vote on its recommendation to the Board of Governors; and that to support this process, the General Faculties Council shall receive the data, consultant recommendations, and proposed scenarios or models for the "Service Excellence Transformation", with supporting rationale, so that its recommendation to the Board of Governors is informed and responsible and to ensure that proposed changes to the administrative structure and operations of the University will support the University's academic mission.

FINAL Item 7

New Members of GFC

MOTION I: TO APPOINT/REAPPOINT:

The following academic staff member to represent University Library Academic Staff, for a term beginning July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2023:

Angie Mandeville	University Library Academic Staff Representative
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The following President of the Association of Academic Staff of the University of Alberta (AASUA), for a term beginning July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2022:

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Dilini Vethanayagam	Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry
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The following undergraduate student representatives to serve on GFC for terms commencing August 27, 2020 and ending April 30, 2021:

David Ren	Faculty of Engineering
Adrian Wattamaniuk	Faculty of Engineering

MOTION II: TO RECEIVE:

The following statutory faculty members who have been elected/re-elected by their Faculty, to serve on GFC for term of office beginning July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2023:

Michael Dyck	Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences
Derek MacKenzie	Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences
Cheryl Poth	Faculty of Education
Robert Burrell	Faculty of Engineering
Mani Vaidyanathan	Faculty of Engineering
Marianne Jacquet	Faculté Saint-Jean

**Governance Executive Summary
Action Item**

Agenda Title	Duolingo English Test: Extension of Short-term Use
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Motion

THAT the General Faculties Council approve the proposed temporary change to Undergraduate and Graduate English Language Proficiency requirements, as submitted by the Office of the Registrar and as set forth in attachment 1, to take effect for Spring 2021, Summer 2021, Fall 2021, and Winter 2022 admissions.

Item

Action Requested	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approval <input type="checkbox"/> Recommendation
Proposed by	Melissa Padfield, Vice-Provost and University Registrar
Presenter(s)	Melissa Padfield

Details

Office of Administrative Responsibility	Provost and Vice-President (Academic)
The Purpose of the Proposal is <i>(please be specific)</i>	<p>To extend the acceptance of the Duolingo English Test (DET) for all applicants to undergraduate and graduate programs as an additional option to demonstrate English Language Proficiency for Spring 2021, Summer 2021, Fall 2021, and Winter 2022 admission.</p> <p>To adopt a subscore requirement, in addition to an overall score, to achieve a more nuanced assessment of an applicant's English Language Proficiency.</p>
Executive Summary <i>(outline the specific item – and remember your audience)</i>	<p>In response to the COVID disruptions to international testing centres, the Duolingo English Test (DET) was adopted as an additional option to demonstrate English Language Proficiency (ELP) for Spring 2020, Summer 2020, Fall 2020, and Winter 2021 admission to undergraduate and graduate programs.</p> <p>The DET was not accepted by the university prior to March 2020 and was put in place as an urgent measure in order to support applicants during COVID-related test centre closures. The circumstances driving the initial decision have not materially changed, and we now recommend extending the approval for one additional admissions cycle.</p> <p>Since the test was adopted, 418 undergraduate applicants and 103 graduate applicants have submitted DET scores to meet ELP requirements. Approximately 14% of admitted undergraduate applicants who submitted test scores to fulfill ELP in the current admissions cycle (214/~1500) used DET scores to meet the requirement.</p> <p>This proposal addresses:</p> <p>Accessibility: IELTS and TOEFL test centres remain closed in many parts of the world, and access to other at-home testing options is limited in regions including mainland China and Iran.</p>

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	<p>In addition, the DET is a lower-cost option for many applicants, available from anywhere in the world with an internet connection, with no need to access an in-person test centre, and results are available within 48 hours of completing the test.</p> <p>Full-cycle Consistency: The COVID pandemic remains unresolved. Through extending the existing emergency measure, we propose to make the option available for all applicants for Spring 2021, Summer 2021, Fall 2021, and Winter 2022 admission. The next admissions cycle for undergraduates will open on October 1.</p> <p>This proposal does not address:</p> <p>Long-term adoption of the DET: this would remain a short-term measure in response to COVID, but analysis of student performance data would provide information for future decisions. For example, first-term results for students accepted based on this test will be available for evaluation in late February 2021.</p>
Supplementary Notes and context	<i>This proposal was discussed by the GFC Programs Committee at their meeting of September 17, 2020.</i>

Engagement and Routing (Include meeting dates)

<p>Consultation and Stakeholder Participation (parties who have seen the proposal and in what capacity)</p> <p><For information on the protocol see the Governance Resources section Student Participation Protocol></p>	<p><u>Those who are actively participating:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brooke Milne (Vice-Provost and Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research) • Office of the Registrar <p><u>Those who have been consulted:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subcommittee on International Enrolment Management [SCIEM] (August 4, 2020) • Program Support Team (August 27, 2020) • Graduate Enrolment and Funding Advisory Committee [GEFAC; Associate Deans, Graduate from across the faculties] (August 26, 2019) • David Draper, Vice President Academic (University of Alberta Students' Union) • Administrative Committee on Enrolment Management [ACEM] (September 4, 2020) • GFC Programs Committee (September 17, 2020) <p><u>Those who have been informed:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deans' Council (TBC, Week of September 8)
Approval Route (Governance) (including meeting dates)	GFC Executive Committee (September 14, 2020); for Recommendation General Faculties Council (September 28, 2020); for Approval

Strategic Alignment

Alignment with <i>For the Public Good</i>	Alignment with the Institutional Strategic Plan – For the Public Good OBJECTIVE - Build a diverse, inclusive community of exceptional undergraduate and graduate students from Edmonton, Alberta, Canada,
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	<p>and the world.</p> <p>Strategy: Optimize our international recruiting strategies to attract well qualified international students from regions of strategic importance, and enhance services and programs to ensure their academic success and integration into the activities of the university.</p>			
<p>Alignment with Core Risk Area</p>	<p>Please note below the specific institutional risk(s) this proposal is addressing.</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Enrolment Management <input type="checkbox"/> Faculty and Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Funding and Resource Management <input type="checkbox"/> IT Services, Software and Hardware <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership and Change <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Infrastructure </td> <td> <input type="checkbox"/> Relationship with Stakeholders <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reputation <input type="checkbox"/> Research Enterprise <input type="checkbox"/> Safety <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Student Success </td> </tr> </table>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Enrolment Management <input type="checkbox"/> Faculty and Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Funding and Resource Management <input type="checkbox"/> IT Services, Software and Hardware <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership and Change <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/> Relationship with Stakeholders <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reputation <input type="checkbox"/> Research Enterprise <input type="checkbox"/> Safety <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Student Success
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<p>Legislative Compliance and jurisdiction</p>	<p>Cite reference to relevant legislation, policy, and governance committee(s) [title only is required].</p>			

Attachments (each to be numbered 1 - <>)

1. Attachment 1 (page(s) 1 - 3) Duolingo English Test (DET): Case for Action to Extend Short-term Use
2. Attachment 2 (page(s) 1 - 2) Duolingo English Test (DET) Subscore Recommendation

Prepared by: <Amy Dambrowitz, Associate Registrar, amy.dambrowitz@ualberta.ca>

Duolingo English Test (DET): Case for Action to Extend Short-term Use

Context:

In response to the COVID disruptions to international testing centres, the Duolingo English Test (DET) is currently being accepted for all applicants to undergraduate and graduate programs as an additional option to demonstrate English Language Proficiency (ELP) for Spring 2020, Summer 2020, Fall 2020, and Winter 2021 admission. The DET was not accepted by the university until March 2020, but was put in place as an urgent measure through executive authority¹ in order to support applicants during test centre closures.

The DET has been adopted temporarily by several U15 institutions in response to COVID, including McGill, McMaster, Queen's and the University of Calgary. One motivator for these decisions is that more traditional tests have not been consistently available (in person or online) to applicants from key regions including China and Iran.

418 undergraduate applicants submitted DET scores to meet ELP requirements between March 20 and August 11, 2020. Approximately 14% of admitted undergraduate applicants who submitted test scores to fulfill ELP in the current admissions cycle (214/~1500) used DET scores to meet the requirement. 103 graduate applicants submitted DET scores to meet ELP requirements up to August 24, 2020; 38 have been admitted. Most applicants who submitted the DET were applying from countries/regions where the IELTS and/or TOEFL remain inaccessible (in person or online), including mainland China, Iran, India, and Nigeria.

Minimum DET scores currently required by the University of Alberta are as follows:

- 115 for English Language Proficiency
- 125 for Spoken English Proficiency

Unlike the IELTS and TOEFL exams, the DET did not initially include subscores when it was adopted for use at the university. Duolingo has recently announced that they will provide subscores for the DET, in addition to an overall score, as of early July 2020. If the university were to continue to accept the DET going forward, we recommend accepting no subscore less than 95, which is functionally equivalent to an IELTS band score of 6.0.

International applicants continue to have limited access to ELP testing: IELTS and TOEFL test centres remain closed in many parts of the world, and at-home testing options (e.g., TOEFL iBT online) are inaccessible from regions including mainland China and Iran. It is unclear when

¹ The decision to allow the use of the DET to meet ELP for admission to all graduate and undergraduate programs was made by GFC Exec on April 6, 2020 and recorded in the Covid-19 Governance Decision Tracker. Endorsement by full GFC followed. The initial decision to accept DET to meet ELP for admission for all undergraduate programs was endorsed by Dean's Council on March 8, 2020 through an electronic vote.

these issues will be resolved. Because the circumstances driving the initial decision have not materially changed, we recommend extending the approval for an additional cycle.

The largest risk the continued use of the test presents is not knowing how applicants presenting the test for ELP will perform in their academic programs. First-term results for students admitted to Fall 2020 will not be available for analysis until February 2021, too late to support a timely decision.

Proposal:

1. Extend the acceptance of the Duolingo English Test (DET) for all applicants to undergraduate and graduate programs as an additional option to demonstrate ELP for Spring 2021, Summer 2021, Fall 2021, and Winter 2022 admission, reflecting that the situation driving the initial decision has not materially changed.
2. Adopt a subscore requirement, in addition to an overall score, to achieve a more nuanced assessment of an applicant's English Language Proficiency.

Based on our analysis of the subscore system and a comparison to our other standard ELP tests, we recommend accepting an overall score of 115 for ELP with no subscore below 95 for applicants to undergraduate programs. Duolingo has indicated that a score of 95 is functionally equivalent to an IELTS 6.0, which is the current minimum band score for our ELP requirements.

This proposal addresses:

- **Continued Accessibility:** IELTS and TOEFL test centres remain closed in many parts of the world, and at-home testing options (e.g., TOEFL iBT online) are inaccessible from some regions, including mainland China and Iran.

In addition, the DET is a lower-cost option for many applicants, available from anywhere in the world with an internet connection, with no need to access an in-person test centre, and results are available within 48 hours of completing the test.

- **Full-cycle Consistency:** The COVID pandemic remains unresolved, and circumstances will continue to change as we proceed through the next admissions cycle. Through extending the existing emergency measure, we propose to make the option available for all applicants for Spring 2021, Summer 2021, Fall 2021, and Winter 2022 admission.
- **Opportunity to assess long-term viability:** The urgent, short-term adoption of the DET has created an opportunity to assess the long-term value of adopting the test as part of our permanent suite of ELP testing options. One approach for evaluating the value of the test will be to track the academic performance of applicants admitted based on DET

results. First-term results for undergraduate students admitted to Fall 2020 should be available for analysis in February 2021.

NOTE: If we chose to extend the use of the DET to meet ELP, we would have the opportunity to evaluate a larger pool of students in the long term.

This proposal does not address:

- **Long-term adoption of the DET:** this would remain a short-term measure in response to COVID, but analysis of student performance data would provide a basis for future decisions.

Attachment

- **DET Subscore Recommendation**

Duolingo English Test (DET) Subscore Recommendation

Background

There are 4 subscores in addition to a Duolingo English Test (DET) overall score:

- Literacy (Reading and Writing)
- Comprehension (Listening and Reading)
- Conversation (Speaking and Listening)
- Production (Writing and Speaking)

Any test taken on or after July 7, 2020 and shared by applicants with postsecondary institutions will have subscores. Test subscores are scored with the max of 160 in a 5-point increment (same scoring method as the overall score). The overall score is not an average of subscores; each subscore and the overall score are calculated individually.

Recommendation

Based on our analysis of the subscore system and a comparison to our other standard ELP tests, we recommend accepting an overall score of 115 for ELP with no subscore below 95 for applicants to undergraduate programs to achieve a more nuanced assessment of an applicant's English Language Proficiency.

Duolingo has determined that a score of 95 is functionally equivalent to an IELTS 6.0, which is the current minimum band score for our ELP requirements

U of A Undergraduate Requirement for:	Overall Score	All subscores
ELP	115	95
SEP	125	105
BP1	80	65
BP2	90	75

To benchmark DET with TOEFL and IELTS, we would require DET subscores that are above 50th percentile within a group of those who achieve the overall scores we require. Based on research from Duolingo, a subscore of 90 indicates a 50th percentile performance on the Production subscore (the most challenging: LaFlair, 2020) for those with an overall score of 115.

There have been 104 DET results for undergraduate applicants with subscores sent to the U of A. If this subscore requirement is adopted, 37% of this sample would meet ELP and 17% would meet SEP.

Appendix: Median Subscores Based on Current Overall DET Score Requirement

A DET overall score is associated with a set of median subscore values. Below is a summary of median subscores based on the current overall score requirements at the University of Alberta for ELP, SEP, BP1 and BP2.

UofA Requirement for	Overall Score	Common Literacy Score	Common Comprehension Score	Common Production Score	Common Conversation Score
ELP	115	115	125	90	105
SEP	125	125	135	105	120
BP1	80	80	90	60	70
BP2	90	90	100	70	80

According to IELTS (2018), the 2018 IELTS Academic median scores among all test takers are 6.25 for Listening, 6.15 for Reading, 5.55 for Writing, 5.95 for Speaking, and 6.05 overall. U of A currently requires a score of at least 6.5 on the IELTS with no band less than 6.0.

According to ETS (2017), an overall TOEFL iBT score of 88 with each band score of 22 represents the 55th percentile, based on Percentile Ranks for TOEFL iBT Scores for all groups of test takers. U of A currently requires a score of 90 with no less than 21 on each band.

The recommended approach for U of A's DET thresholds reflects our current practice with IELTS and TOEFL requirements.

References

- Duolingo English Test. (2020). *Score Interpretation*. Retrieved from <https://englishtest.duolingo.com/scores>
- Duolingo English Test. (2020). *How can subscores be used?* Retrieved from <https://testcenter.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/360044217752-How-can-subscores-be-used->
- ETS. (2017). *Test and Score Data Summary for TOEFL iBT Tests*. Retrieved from https://www.ets.org/s/toefl/pdf/94227_unlweb.pdf

- IELTS. (2020). *Test taker performance 2018*. Retrieved from <https://www.ielts.org/research/test-taker-performance>
- LaFlair, T. G. (2020). *Duolingo English Test: Subscores*. Duolingo Research Report DRR-20-03. Retrieved from <https://duolingo-papers.s3.amazonaws.com/reports/subscore-whitepaper.pdf>

Motion from GFC Member Andrei Tabirca

Whereas under 26(1) of the Postsecondary Learning Act (PSLA), the General Faculties Council is, “Subject to the authority of the board, . . . responsible for the academic affairs of the university”;

Whereas under 26(1)(o) of the PSLA, the General Faculties Council has the authority to make recommendations to the board with respect to affiliation with other institutions, academic planning, campus planning, a building program, the budget, the regulation of residences and dining halls, procedures in respect of appointments, promotions, salaries, tenure and dismissals, and any other matters considered by the general faculties council to be of interest to the university;

Whereas under 19 of the PSLA, the Board “must consider the recommendations of the general faculties council, if any, on matters of academic import prior to providing for (a) the support and maintenance of the university, (b) the betterment of existing buildings, (c) the construction of any new buildings the board considers necessary for the purposes of the university, (d) the furnishing and equipping of the existing and newly erected buildings, or (e) the establishment of faculties, schools, departments, chairs, programs of study and any other activities the board considers necessary or advantageous”;

Whereas the Provost’s Academic Restructuring Working Group has prepared for the consideration and approval of the General Faculties Council scenarios for the restructuring of the University;

Whereas these scenarios will change the current structuring of faculties and departments;

Whereas at the same time the Provost and VP Finance are engaged in the “parallel” and “complementary” process of “Service Excellence Transformation” which aims to redesign the administrative processes of the University including academic support functions;

Whereas this “parallel” and “complementary” process will impact the University’s teaching and research mission, including student services and student, instructor and staff experience;

Whereas “coordination between the two initiatives” of academic restructuring and “service excellence transformation “will be essential”;

Whereas the General Faculties Council has a responsibility to bring its expertise and institutional knowledge to bear upon all aspects of the “restructuring” of the University;

The General Faculties Council recommends that the SET process will follow the ARWG process, with the effect that SET will come to General Faculties Council for discussion and a vote on its recommendation to the Board of Governors; and

That to support this process, the General Faculties Council shall receive the data, consultant recommendations, and proposed scenarios or models for the “Service Excellence Transformation”, with supporting rationale, so that its recommendation to the Board of Governors is informed and responsible and to ensure that proposed changes to the administrative structure and operations of the University will support the University’s academic mission.