

Assuring Effectiveness of NMT Teaching Assistants

Underlying Premise: Placing any student in a teaching assistant position at NMT where the quality of learning by students in a class is compromised is unacceptable. Communication skills are only one aspect of this, but the one dealt with here.

Recommendations for Departments

- **Do not admit (certainly as a TA) any student with a TOEFL score below the recommended minimums (540/207/76).**
- **Admit non-native English speakers as RAs only.** Once here and only if their English skills are acceptable, they may be moved into a TA capacity in a later semester.
- **Admit non-native English speakers with an assistantship, with the duties (RA vs. TA) unspecified.** If it is determined upon arrival by the department that the language skills of the student are sufficient, the student may be assigned as a TA. If a non-native English speaker is offered a TA before arriving, ensure he/she has at least a TAST of 26/30 or TSE of 50.
- **Utilize undergraduate students with known language and technical skills as teaching assistants.**

Graduate Office Practices

The dean will engage the departmental chair in a dialog regarding alternate plans for a student should language skills be unacceptable based on the following criteria.

- **TOEFL Academic Speaking Test (TAST)** - If the Academic Speaking Test (TAST) section for an applicant admitted by a department as a TA is less than 26/30. TAs with spoken interaction with students must have at least 26/30; 23/30 is recommended as the *minimally acceptable* level for all graduate students.
- **Listening/Comprehension Section of the PBT - If the listening/comprehension section (1) for an applicant admitted by a department as a TA is less than 60.**
- **TOEFL Test of Spoken English** -If the Test of Spoken English (TSE) section for an applicant admitted by a department as a TA is less than 50.