

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH POLICY AC 09 (formerly 02-02-16)

CATEGORY: ACADEMIC POLICY
SECTION: Faculty Appointment and Tenure
SUBJECT: Certification of English Language Fluency for Teaching
EFFECTIVE DATE: March 29, 1991
REVISED DATE: July 11, 2023
PAGE(S): 2

I. SCOPE

This policy establishes the responsibility of the University of Pittsburgh to determine that all individuals who teach possess adequate English language fluency for effective communication with students. This policy applies to all full-time, part-time, visiting faculty, instructional staff, and other employees who teach at either the undergraduate or graduate level, as well as teaching assistants (“TAs”) and teaching fellows (“TFs”).

In compliance with the English Fluency in Higher Education Act, the University is responsible for certifying to the Department of Education of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania that certain specified individuals who were appointed to teach after September 7, 1990 are fluent in the English language.

II. POLICY

Each academic center or department is responsible for evaluating their instructional faculty, TAs, TFs, and staff for English language fluency and certifying that those individuals will be permitted to teach only after demonstrating sufficient fluency in English to be understood in the classroom.

Full-time, part-time and visiting faculty, instructional staff, and other employees who teach who are non-native speakers of English must be evaluated by two personal interviews, one conducted by the academic dean or the department chairman and the other by a senior member of the faculty. Each academic center or department may determine individual guidelines for conducting such interviews or whether further assessment by professional presentations is necessary in making the determination.

TAs and TFs who are non-native speakers of English must be evaluated through a test designed to assess spoken English, approved by the Office of the Provost and administered by the English Language Institute (ELI). The Office of the Provost in consultation with ELI will establish minimum scores acceptable to permit a TA or TF to teach. Individual academic centers or departments may require higher scores than the established University minimums. TAs and TFs receiving unsatisfactory scores will be provided with tutoring or a class.

Certification that a faculty member, TA or TF, instructional staff, or other individual is sufficiently fluent in English to teach, or that teaching will be limited to courses in which the primary language of instruction is not English, must be made at the time of hire or appointment, before the individual teaches a class, by either the academic dean,

department chairman, or designee. If the English language fluency of an individual has been assessed as insufficient or if assessment has not occurred, the academic dean, department chairman, or designee must certify that the individual will not teach. See Procedure 02-02-16, Certification of English Language Fluency for Teaching.

Annually, the University of Pittsburgh will file a statement of certification with the Department of Education indicating that all individuals who teach and who were hired or appointed since the effective date of the English Fluency in Higher Education Act, or hired or appointed subsequent to the last annual certification, are fluent in the English language.

III. REFERENCE

Procedure 02-02-16, Certification of English Language Fluency for Teaching