

**Reference Number:** S79-041

**Senate Approval Date:** Tuesday, February 27, 1979

The purpose of these guidelines is to direct the attention of applicants to the importance of English proficiency for success in graduate studies at the University; to provide for evaluating the writing proficiency of all candidates no later than the first semester of enrollment in order to facilitate their work in the departments; and to support the development of English proficiency throughout the period of graduate study.

## **1. Definition of English Proficiency**

As used in this statement, the term "English proficiency" refers to the ability to write standard American English correctly and effectively. The writing of graduate students should be characterized by precision of rhetoric, and general control of the written word at a level appropriate to the intellectual expectations for advanced study in the field.

## **2. Determining English Proficiency Upon Entrance to Graduate Study**

Preferably before admission is granted, but no later than the end of the first semester of enrollment in the graduate program, major departments shall determine the degree of proficiency in written English of all new admittees. Specifically, the candidates are expected to be able to use correct grammar, syntax, spelling and punctuation, and to present basic concepts and information in a logically organized and coherent form appropriate for initial study in the major field.

The following methods are recommended to the departments for use in judging writing proficiency at this point:

- a. Require applicants to submit scores on an appropriate test directly to the department
- b. Require applicants to provide samples of writing for departmental review as part of an application portfolio
- c. Administer a proctored writing examination either before granting admission or during the first term of enrollment
- d. Review the written work completed in a course which is required in the official master's degree program of the department during the first term of enrollment.

If remedial work is found to be necessary, the student shall be expected to complete prescribed courses in English or other corrective work at a level acceptable to the department. A note should be placed in the student's advising file in the department stating precisely what is required, at what level, and by what date. When the student has demonstrated the acceptable level of proficiency, with or without remedial work, this fact should be noted in the advising file.

## **3. Developing Writing Skills During Graduate Study**

All graduate students shall be expected to develop writing skills which exemplify scholarly style in their chosen field during their programs of study. Students shall demonstrate such ability by the time of advancement to candidacy. In some disciplines the style may be somewhat impersonal and objective (e.g., clear statement of objectives, logical discussion and presentation of subject matter, and differentiation of fact from opinion), while in others it may be more subjective or creative. Evidence which the department accepts should show that the student who is graduating knows how to quote, paraphrase or write precis, integrate quotations and rephrasings with original ideas, cite sources, and prepare manuscripts or other works in accordance with accepted scholarly style in the field of study.

The advisor's signature on a Graduate Approved Program will certify that the student has demonstrated writing facility in the major field to the extent the department requires for advancement to candidacy. A check mark on the Graduate Approved Program form will indicate the method used to assess the proficiency.

Each department shall decide how students are to demonstrate the level of writing skill which is required for advancement to candidacy. Recommended methods are of two types, namely, a written examination administered for the purpose, and samples of assigned written work from a class to be specified. The Graduate Division can provide examples of both types of practices which departments across campus currently use.

**\*\*APPROVED BY PRESIDENT ROMBERG, MARCH 12, 1979\*\***

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