

Eastern Michigan University
Division of Academic Affairs
Office of the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs
Inter-Office Memorandum

TO: Deans Advisory Council
Associate & Assistant Deans
Department Heads
Program Directors
College Advisors
Rackham Faculty

FROM: Michael Harris, Associate Provost



SUBJECT: Revisions to EMU's TWE Requirement Policy

DATE: February 7, 2002

In 1998, Graduate Council recommended a change in the minimum TOEFL and TWE scores for unconditional admission of international students. The minimum TWE score was increased from 4 to 5. This policy change was officially approved and announced in a memorandum from the late Provost Collins dated November 3, 1998, entitled "Clarification of Language Regarding TOEFL/TWE/MELAB Requirements for Graduate Admission".

As a result of the enforcement of this policy the Office of the Provost received many comments and concerns from several departments/colleges. The main objection was that changing the admission score for TWE from 4 to 5 means that a student has to score in the 93rd percentile to gain graduate admission. This requirement was very demanding and several departments believed it to have a negative impact on their admissions. Arguments from the involved departments were brought up against the necessity of score of 5 on the TWE to assess a student's ability to succeed in most disciplines. Several questioned whether TWE scores are actually reliable predictors of academic success at EMU (as measured by grade point average).

In addition, there was an inconsistency between the percentile requirements for the TWE versus that of the TOEFL. The required score of 550 on the TOEFL is approximately the 64th percentile, which corresponds almost exactly to a TWE score of 4 (64.28 percentile). Another issue that was raised was whether our international students were required to achieve higher standards than our domestic students.

Several meetings and discussions pertaining to the TWE policy were held between the Provost and representatives of departments, department heads, advisors, various committees and myself. As a result, on August 4, 2000, the late Provost Collins placed a moratorium on the required TWE score of 5, pending study, review, and recommendation by the Graduate Council.

The Council made their recommendation and it was signed by the Associate Vice-President for Graduate Studies and Research Robert Holkeboer, and forwarded to me on May 19, 2001. I greatly appreciate the work of the Committee in reviewing the history of the TWE requirement, conducting hearings, and collecting and analyzing data in order to arrive at its recommendation.

On November 29, 2001 the Deans Advisory Council reviewed and approved a recommendation by the Graduate School Council to eliminate the TWE requirement and endorsed the recommendation. Their hard work and recommendations have been noted and well received.

The recommendation of the DAC concurred with the recommendation by the Graduate School Council's recommendation to eliminate the TWE requirement. Individual departments and programs would be able to continue to define and require minimum TWE scores as a condition of admission if they so choose.

Two months later, on January 23, 2002 the Faculty Council met and discussed the elimination of the TWE requirement. Following debate on this issue, the Council voted 24 Yes, 1 No, and 1 Abstention to accept the policy as proposed.

Based on recommendations by the Dean's Advisory Council, Graduate Council, the Associate Vice-President for Graduate Studies and Research Robert Holkeboer, and input from the Faculty Council TWE requirement policy has been approved by this office and is being distributed for your information and implementation beginning in the fall of 2002.

cc: Joy Garrett, Director of Records and Registration
Courtney McAnuff, Vice-President for Enrollment Services
Sally McCracken, President, Faculty Council
Chair, College Council, College of Arts and Sciences
Chair, College Council, College of Business
Chair, College Council, College of Education
Chair, College Council, College of Health and Human Services
Chair, College Council, College of Technology

EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
DIVISION OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

POLICY CHANGE

**APPROVED POLICY ON
GRADUATE SCHOOL TWE REQUIREMENT**

February 6, 2002

NEW GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICY ON TWE REQUIREMENT

The Graduate School does not require a Test of Written English (TWE) for admission into any graduate program; it does, however, encourage departments to verify an applicant's ability to communicate effectively in an English speaking community, using both verbal and written English.

Departments and programs may define and require minimum TWE scores as a condition of admission at their discretion. Students should check with their advisors and program descriptions to determine specific expectations and requirements. These may vary from one program to the next and may include TWE, TOEFL, MELAB, or various other methods of determining proficiency in the English language.

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