

## **May 29, 2003: Modification of the Oral English Competence Testing Policy**

BERKELEY: OFFICE OF THE DEAN OF THE GRADUATE DIVISION

May 29, 2003

To: Deans, Directors, and Department Chairs

From: Joseph J. Duggan, Associate Dean

Re: Modification of the Oral English Competence Testing Policy

At its meeting of May 5, 2003, the Graduate Council approved a change in the Oral English Competence Testing policy for prospective Graduate Student Instructors (GSIs). Since Fall 2000, the policy has stipulated that each graduate student who does not speak English as a native language must pass an English oral proficiency examination before being eligible for appointment as a GSI.

Based on the results of research conducted by the GSI Teaching and Resource Center that examined the passing rates of individuals with a B.A. or B.S. from U.S. institutions, the Graduate Council has approved the revision of the Oral English Competence Testing Policy, which now is as follows:

All prospective GSIs who do not speak English as a native language must pass a test of their proficiency in spoken English before they can be appointed to GSI positions. Exempted from this policy are those who hold a B.A., B.S., or other bachelor's level degree from an institution in the United States. The policy applies to all prospective GSIs, whatever their citizenship, country of origin, or residency status, and whatever subject they will be teaching.

Each summer the GSI Teaching and Resource Center sends the names of those incoming graduate students who need to be tested prior to being appointed as GSIs to the departments. This list will no longer include those whose bachelor's level degree is from an institution in the U.S.

The testing vehicles remain the same: 1) The Test of Spoken English (TSE), taken before the student comes to Berkeley, or 2) the SPEAK test or the Oral Proficiency Test which are administered by the GSI Teaching and Resource Center. Departments are urged to encourage potential GSIs to whom the policy applies to take the TSE before they arrive in Berkeley.

Please note that the Oral English Competence requirement also applies to undergraduate students who are appointed as GSIs.

Please contact the GSI Teaching and Resource Center at [gsi@uclink.berkeley.edu](mailto:gsi@uclink.berkeley.edu) should you have any questions about the policy.