

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

GRADUATE DIVISION, OFFICE OF THE DEAN, 424 SPROUL HALL, BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA 94720-5900, 510-642-5472

Date: July 10, 2014

To: Head Graduate Advisors

cc: Graduate Student Affairs Officers

From: Rosemary A. Joyce, Interim Dean of the Graduate Division

Re: **Change to minimum TOEFL score for admissions**

This memo announces a change in the minimum allowed iBT TOEFL score for graduate admissions, effective with applications for admission received in Fall 2014.

Beginning with the Fall 2014 applications cycle, applicants who are required to demonstrate English proficiency and who choose to use the iBT TOEFL exam must have a score of 90 or higher.

Exceptions can be requested by the department recommending admission. All other options for fulfilling this requirement remain as stated in the *Guide to Graduate Policy*.

No changes have been made to the minimum required Speaking section score for GSI appointments. This remains 26. Students who score slightly below 26 (22-25) on the Speaking section are eligible to take the Oral Proficiency Test (OPT) here on campus to demonstrate readiness to teach.

Background

In Fall 2005, Associate Dean Joseph Duggan reported the outcome of a target setting process for the then-new online (iBT) TOEFL. This set the minimum required TOEFL score for graduate admissions at 68 out of a possible 120.

Since then, Berkeley's Graduate Division has monitored the minimum TOEFL levels set by our peer institutions, both in the UC system and nationally. These range from 80 to 104 (often with program-specific, usually higher, levels for specific graduate programs).

A review of the last three years of data showed that very few applicants would have been denied admission if a higher minimum were in place that matched those of our peer institutions. Of those applicants with reported iBT TOEFL scores under 100, fully 68% would have met the new minimum score of 90.

Given that there is a mechanism to request exceptions to the minimum on a case-by-case basis, the Graduate Council of the Academic Senate (at its meeting of May 5, 2014) agreed that it is advisable to adjust the TOEFL minimum and has authorized the new level of 90.