



English Language Proficiency Assessment Writing

(see p. 2 for **speaking** descriptors)

Superior (level 4)

Demonstrates ability to explain complex matters and to present well-argued positions

Superior (4) - addresses the writing task skillfully and persuasively; narrates and describes with detailed explanations and exemplifications to support an argument or hypothesis; displays strong unity, progression, and coherence; displays precise and varied academic vocabulary; demonstrates high degree of control of grammar and syntax, though may have occasional minor lexical or grammatical errors

Advanced (level 3)

Demonstrates ability to express clear and focused opinions

Advanced High (3.7 – 3.9) – Exhibits emerging characteristics of the Superior level

Advanced Mid (3.3 – 3.6) - addresses the writing task with a clear and focused discussion; uses appropriate and sufficient explanations, exemplifications and/or details to support a thesis or illustrate an idea, though some points may not be fully elaborated; displays unity, progression, and coherence, though may contain occasional redundancy, digression, or unclear connections; displays a range of appropriate but general vocabulary; demonstrates control of grammar and syntax, though may contain errors that do not interfere with meaning

Advanced Low (3.0 – 3.2) – Demonstrates minimal control of the Advanced level

Intermediate (level 2)

Demonstrates developing ability to communicate ideas in academic style

Intermediate High (2.7-2.9) – Exhibits emerging characteristics of the Advanced level

Intermediate Mid (2.3 – 2.6) - addresses the writing task minimally with basic essay organization and development; uses somewhat developed explanations, exemplifications, and/or details often related to personal experience and immediate surroundings; displays minimal unity, progression, and coherence; displays vocabulary, grammar, and style of the spoken language rather than academic written language; displays inconsistent facility of grammar and syntax, at times obscuring meaning

Intermediate Low (2.0 – 2.2) – Demonstrates minimal control of the intermediate level

Novice (level 1)

Demonstrates no competence in academic writing

Students at this level not expected; do not meet requisites of ELSP 510 & 511

Novice High (1.7-1.9) – Exhibits emerging characteristics of the Intermediate level.

Novice Mid (1.3-1.6) - addresses the writing task with little or no development; uses inappropriate or insufficient exemplification, explanations, or details to support or illustrate generalizations in response to the task; displays serious and frequent problems with unity, progression, and connection of ideas; displays noticeably inappropriate choice of vocabulary; displays consistent errors in grammar and syntax

Revised May 2019 using partial level descriptors from ACTFL, iBT TOEFL and GRE



English Language Proficiency Assessment Speaking

Superior (level 4) <i>No requirement</i>	Demonstrates ability to discuss topics extensively, structure and defend opinions, and hypothesize Superior (4) – Communicates effectively in extended discourse on a wide range of topics from both concrete and abstract perspectives. Supports opinions and hypothesizes, and can handle linguistically unfamiliar topics and situations using native-like strategies. Sporadic errors may appear; however, listeners are not distracted.
Advanced (level 3)	Demonstrates ability to narrate and describe in major time frames with connected paragraph discourse Advanced High (3.7-3.9) – Handles at least 50% of superior tasks, though patterned errors may appear. With some consistency can support opinion with structured arguments; however, performance will feature breakdown such as discussing topics more comfortably concretely, resorting to description or narration in place of argument, or lacking the precise language needed to adequately address the task. Advanced Mid (3.3-3.6) – Handles many communicative tasks in paragraph length discourse with ease and confidence. Can discuss topics of personal and public interest, providing full accounts though with occasional difficulty and awkwardness. Can support an opinion or cite conditions but may lack the language to consistently provide a structured argument in extended discourse. Advanced Low (3.0-3.2) – Handles a variety of communicative tasks in paragraph length discourse though haltingly at times. Can discuss topics of personal and public interest, and can narrate and describe in major time frames, perhaps with self-correction and “grammatical roughness.” Conveys the message without confusion; however, vocabulary is primarily generic. Can be understood by listeners not accustomed to non-native speakers, although repetition may be needed.
Intermediate (level 2)	Demonstrates ability to express personal meaning in predictable situations with strings of sentences Intermediate High (2.7-2.9) – Handles at least 50% of advanced tasks, though errors and hesitation may occur. With some consistency can narrate and describe in major time frames; however, speech will feature breakdown such as failure to maintain narration in the appropriate time frame, disintegration of connected discourse, or inability to be understood by listeners not accustomed to non-native speakers. Intermediate Mid (2.3-2.6) – Handles a variety of communicative tasks in predictable social and work situations with strings of sentences and some paragraphing. With the advanced level tasks of narration and description, can provide information but may have difficulty linking ideas, maintaining appropriate time frame, and using communicative strategies, such as circumlocution. Intermediate Low (2.0-2.2) – Handles a limited number of communicative tasks in predictable social and work situations with strings of sentences. Creates meaning with language, though often filled with hesitancy and inaccuracies while searching for grammatical structures and vocabulary. Can generally be understood by sympathetic listeners, especially those accustomed to non-native speakers.
Novice (level 1) <i>Students at this level not anticipated</i>	Communicates minimally with mostly formulaic phrases and sentences Novice High (1.7-1.9) - Handles at least 50% of intermediate tasks, but unable to sustain performance. Conversation restricted to a few topics. Mid (1.3-1.6) / Low (1.0-1.2) - Communicates minimally and with difficulty.

Scale adapted from Oral Proficiency Interview Proficiency Guidelines (American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages)

For PhD students, teaching recommendations are:

Superior.....	Full Teaching
Advanced – all sublevels.....	Supervised Teaching
Intermediate High.....	Restricted Teaching
Intermediate Mid and Low.....	No Teaching