

Test of Oral Proficiency (TOP) Exam Information for Departments and University Personnel

Test Of Oral Proficiency
UCLA Writing Programs
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All graduate students at UCLA who are i) non-US citizens, ii) do not hold a bachelor's degree from an institution where English was the medium of communication, and iii) wish to be TA's, must first take the TOP. If a student does not take, or does not pass, the TOP by the quarter preceding his/her expected TA assignment (or in the case of Fall quarter, the September administration), he/she will not be allowed to TA under any circumstances.

Fee

- A student's first test (and second, if necessary) is free.
- Third and subsequent tests are \$50 each.
- The fee helps cover the cost of rating additional exams and encourages students to seek help in improving their oral English skills.

Specially Scheduled Exams

- There will be **NO** specially scheduled exams because of the labor-intensive nature of scheduling and staffing the exam, as well as the difficulty in finding suitable classrooms on short notice.

No-shows and Cancellations

- A \$50 no-show fee is incurred if a test is not cancelled at least 48 hours in advance.

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Test Scores

- Scores are available within 7-10 business days of the test.
- Scores are sent by e-mail to the department SAO or MSO designated to receive TOP scores.
- Students receive their results shortly thereafter by e-mail.

Oral Skills Requirement (until Spring 2024)

- Oral Skills Courses that satisfy the Provisional Pass category: ESL 310, ESL 311, ESL 312, ESL 313 (Under "ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE" on MyUCLA).
- Students satisfy their Oral Skills requirement by successfully enrolling in and completing any of the oral skills courses either before or concurrently with their TA-ship.
- It is STRONGLY encouraged that students who failed the test or received a provisional pass take advantage of counseling sessions provided after their test to learn more about ways in which they might improve their language skills for the classroom.

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Starting in Fall 2024, new policies will be applied

Starting in Fall 2024, new policies, approved by the UCLA Academic Senate Graduate Council, will be in place.

Exemptions

- A student is exempt from taking the TOP if they have earned a prior undergraduate degree from an institution at which English was the sole language of instruction and which is located in a country where English is the primary spoken language of everyday life.
- An exemption is also granted to students who have a valid TOEFL-iBT speaking score of 28 or higher or an IELTS speaking score of 8.5 or higher.

Coursework

- **Required course work when a student fails the exam** - If a student receives a non-passing score on the TOP, they are NOT permitted to TA and must take the exam again. The new policy stipulates that they must take an approved ESL course for TAs whose first language is not English (310, 311, 312, or 313) before retaking the exam. NOTE: The student may retake the exam while enrolled in the course.
- **Taking required courses when a student receives a marginal or provisional pass** –
 - When receiving a marginal pass, a student is required to take a full 10-week approved oral and presentation skills ESL course for TAs whose first language is not English (ESL 310, 311, 312 or 313) before or during the first quarter of TA work. If the student successfully completes the ESL course with a passing grade, the student may serve (or continue to serve) as TA without further testing or coursework.
 - If the student does not pass the required ESL course, they must take a second approved ESL course in a subsequent quarter and receive a passing grade in order to serve (or continue to serve) as TA.
 - NOTE: If a student has fully or partially completed an approved course prior to receiving a marginal pass, this course is considered preparatory and does not satisfy the TOP requirement for a marginal pass.

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