



**English Language Proficiency Alternatives:
What they are and What Coordinators can do**

ISEP Conference session, Fri, Nov. 3, 2006, 11:00am-12:15pm

Session Chair: Michel Darmon, Angers, U., France
Presenters: Tony Adams, Macquarie U., Australia
Michele Petrucci, Indiana U. Pennsylvania, USA
Martin Barclay, IELTS - USA

Introduction and TOEFL history (Chair: Michel Darmon, Angier, France):

1. paper-based test, available for large groups, multiple testing sites and dates
2. changed to computer-based, fewer testing centers, availability became difficult
3. internet-based= a disaster, problems with downloadability, bad comprehension, language labs not working well, not enough testing centers and testing slots
4. Test results take too long to be recorded and forwarded

Summary:

- TOEFL is a significant problem in most countries and keeps students from applying for ISEP!
- Bi-lateral agreements allow students to be admitted without TOEFL or with alternatives that are easier to obtain (Institutional TOEFL, IELTS, Cambridge, etc.)
- ISEP at a competitive disadvantage

SOLUTIONS (Presenter: Tony Adams, Macquarie U., Australia):

1. If US institutions insist on some form of English language proficiency testing, be flexible, accept alternatives to TOEFL

In addition to accepting test scores from widely used tests (e.g. TOEFL: 580/237/92; IELTS: 6.5, Cambridge: C+), Macquarie accepts proof of English language proficiency from the several countries, including the following in which ISEP has member institutions, are included:

- Norway Upper Secondary School: IEC 4
- Sweden Upper Secondary School: Very Good
- Denmark Secondary School: English B level (only) - minimum grade of 9
- Denmark Secondary School: English B level and A level - minimum grade of 7
- Netherlands VWO: 7 in English
- Netherlands HAVO: 7 in English (after at least 1 year of tertiary education)
- Germany: DAAD (5 sections) - minimum top two bands for each section, AND minimum English score in Abitur of 3.0 (grades 7-15)
- Germany: DAAD (4 sections) - minimum top three bands for each section, AND minimum English score in Abitur of 3.0 (grades 7-15)

This is based on realistic and proven assumptions on language skills obtained by students from these countries during their school years. The fluency level is such that having obtained a certain grade on their high school leaving certificate is enough testament to their English language proficiency. [Note: Macquarie's required TOEFL



score is high (580); that is the score to which the alternatives are considered the equivalent]

US institution perspective: (Presenter : Michele Petrucci – IUP, USA)

- IUP has a very liberal approach to intl. admission
- Realization that a high TOEFL score does not equal a successful student (TOEFL testing skills can be learned)
- For ISEP: IUP expects that the sending institutions vet their outgoing students to make sure they have a successful exchange!!

Proposal:

1. Respect and accept the vetting process among ISEP members and therefore accept the home university's English language proficiency report!
2. Keep ISEP competitive by being more flexible!
3. US institutions cannot change visa requirements or political climate but they can change the English language requirements at their institutions!

IELTS as alternative to TOEFL: (Martin Barclay, IELTS-USA)

- paper-based, face to face interviews
- results in 14 days
- more and more testing sites in the US and elsewhere
- tests more categories of English language

For more information see www.ielts.org