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# Online English Placement Test (EPT)

## Information and Registration Guide



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1. The Online EPT at a Glance.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. Test Components .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3. Registration Information .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4. Test Preparation .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>A. Writing Section .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>B. Oral Section .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>C. Study and Test-taking Tips.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>D. Additional Resources.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>5. During the Test Window.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>6. Scores and Score Reports .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>7. Statement about Plagiarism .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>8. Candidates with Special Needs.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>9. Frequently Asked Questions.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>10. Contact Information.....</b>	<b>15</b>

## 1. THE ONLINE EPT AT A GLANCE

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**The Online English Placement Test (EPT)** is a vehicle to determine accurate placement in the English as a Second Language (ESL) courses administered by the Department of Linguistics (formerly DEIL). The test is applicable to undergraduate and graduate students. Although graduate students typically must take the test on campus, due to circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic, graduate students may also take the Online EPT.

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**To be exempt from EPT**, students must score either:

- On TOEFL iBT: total 103 or above, and 25 or above on both speaking & writing; or
- On IELTS: 7.5 or above total, and 7 or above on both speaking & writing.

This requirement is established by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Senate. However, individual departments may set higher standards. Further details about TOEFL and IELTS requirements are given on the following websites:

- For undergraduate, transfer, and non-degree students/applicants:  
<https://citl.illinois.edu/citl-101/measurement-evaluation/placement-proficiency/cutoff-scores/2020-cutoff-scores-esl>
- For graduate students/applicants:  
<https://grad.illinois.edu/admissions/instructions/04c>

**Format:** The test is comprised of two components which elicit a comprehensive range of writing abilities and oral skills. This includes **a writing section** and **an oral section**. Both are administered online (see **2. Test Components**). The written section involves a mini-lecture and short reading passages on a given topic, followed by an essay task. The purpose of the lecture is to assure that examinees will fully understand the given topic and obtain necessary input to their writing process. The oral section involves providing spoken answers to general questions, completing a read-aloud task, and responding to questions about a video and visual information. Each section is to be completed within the 48-hour testing window as scheduled during registration. This is described in **3. Registration Information**.

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### **Registration:**

New undergraduate international students should register for this test via the website at:  
<https://linguistics.illinois.edu/languages/english-placement-test/ept-registration-undergraduate-students>

Graduate international students should register for the test via the website at:

<https://linguistics.illinois.edu/languages/english-placement-test/ept-information-and-registration-graduate-students-visiting>

Students will receive the URL and enrollment key for the test website when they register for the test. Information on test registration is available on the main EPT website.

Students will be placed into or exempted from ESL courses based on the results of the EPT. The results of the EPT will be available within about seven business days after the test is done. Test results will be sent individually via e-mail.

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## 2. TEST COMPONENTS

- A. WRITING SECTION.** This integrated writing test requires students to produce an academic essay based on the information obtained from a reading passage and a short lecture. Please check with your registration confirmation regarding when the window to complete the writing section will be.

*Specific Procedures:*

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|--|---|
| <b>1) <u>After registration</u></b>            | <b>Login</b><br>Students are required to log in to the test site provided after registration to check on technical requirements. Be prepared to install software on your computer required to complete the test, including academic dishonesty prevention software (Proctorio).   |
| <b>2) <u>Beginning the Test</u></b>            | <b>Explanation of EPT Procedure</b><br>Test-takers will watch an Online EPT Introduction Video.<br><b>Mini Lecture Video</b><br>Test-takers will watch a mini lecture video on a given topic. Note taking is allowed.<br><b>Explanation of Scoring Rubric and Academic Integrity</b><br>Test-takers will watch a video on Rubric and Academic integrity that explains two things: scoring criteria and UIUC academic code on academic integrity. Then, test-takers will take a short quiz on Academic Integrity to agree to comply with all the conditions of UIUC student academic rights and regulations.<br><b>Article Reading</b><br>Test-takers will read short reading passages on a given topic. Note taking is allowed. |
| <b>3) <u>Providing a written response.</u></b> | Test-takers will be given a series of questions to help structure their essay. This section is not graded, and it is a chance for test-takers to organize their ideas before beginning their essay. Test-takers will write an argumentative essay on a given topic. Test-takers will have 90 minutes to write the essay.  |
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- B. ORAL SECTION.** *Students who need the Oral EPT (based on the information submitted for admission) will be contacted individually prior to taking the test.*
- ★ *Please refer to **6. Scores and score interpretation** for more information.*
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**Oral EPT**

Following Written EPT (undergraduates), or same day as Written EPT (graduates)

Not all test-takers of the Written EPT are required to take the Oral EPT. You will be notified if you need to take the Oral EPT after you complete the written test and receive your score. The Oral EPT exemption criteria are as follows:

- Undergraduate students who present a TOEFL/IELTS speaking score are exempt from the Oral EPT.
- Graduate students who have a TOEFL speaking score greater than 25 or IELTS 7.5 or greater are exempt from the Oral EPT and oral ESL courses.
- Graduate students with TOEFL Speaking sub-scores between 18 and 24 or IELTS 6.5-7 are exempt from the Oral EPT, but will be recommended to take ESL 110 or ESL 510.
- Undergraduate students who have not submitted a language proficiency score and graduate students with TOEFL Speaking sub-scores of 20 or lower (or IELTS Speaking sub-score of 6 or lower) can either 1) choose to take the Oral EPT for possibility of exemption, or 2) receive 110q (required to take ESL 110 or ESL 510) as a placement result without taking the Oral EPT.

Students will be asked to respond to a series of warm-up questions, read a passage out loud, and watch a video. Students will be asked to answer discussion questions about the video and will be asked to describe a chart with information relevant to the video. Students will directly record their responses as attachments in the testing interface at the time that they read the question.

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### 3. REGISTRATION INFORMATION

New international students must register for this test via the main EPT website

<http://www.linguistics.illinois.edu/students/placement/>

The link to the EPT registration website is available on the EPT website under “Who takes the EPT?”.

After you register for the EPT, you will receive a confirmation email at the email address you provided when you registered. The email will include your EPT registration information, the link to the Online EPT website, and an enrollment key for the test website.

### 4. TEST SAMPLES AND PREPARATION

#### **A. WRITING SECTION**

- *Sample Questions and Directions*

Directions:

In this test, you will write an argumentative essay based on a lecture and a reading on a given topic.

To gather ideas on the topic, you will first listen to a mini-lecture and read short passages. You may take notes on both the article and the lecture. Once you have some information about the topic, you will write an outlined draft of your essay with a guided outline worksheet. Next, you will write your final draft of the essay. You will have a total of 60 minutes to write your first draft, revise, and compose your final essay.

Please make sure that your essay has the following features:

- a) Your essay should have a clear introduction, body and conclusion.
- b) The ideas within your essay should be explicitly connected.
- c) Your ideas should be supported with the evidence from both the lecture and the reading.
- d) Your essay should be written in your own words. Do not reproduce directly the lecture and the reading in your essay.
- e) Your essay should demonstrate the use of standard English grammar.

## **B. ORAL SECTION**

In the Oral EPT, students will be required to respond to multiple questions of a general nature, complete a read-aloud, watch a video and respond to discussion questions, and interpret a graph related to the video.

## **C. STUDY AND TEST-TAKING TIPS**

- Take notes during the lecture and the article reading
- Make sure you cite your sources within your essay
- Write a clear introduction, body and conclusion
- Build your own points based upon the reading and lecture. Do not write a summary
- Elaborate on your points; support major points with examples from the sources.
- Pay attention to the time constraints
- Start from outlining
- Practice writing essays under a time limit

## **D. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

- How to write good paragraphs  
<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/paragraphs.htm>
- How to write an effective introduction  
<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/intros.htm>  
<http://www.writing.ucsb.edu/faculty/donelan/intro.html>
- How to write an effective conclusion  
<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/composition/endings.htm>  
<http://www.writing.ucsb.edu/faculty/donelan/concl.html>
- How to organize an essay  
[http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/five\\_par.htm](http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/five_par.htm)  
<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/composition/organization.htm>
- How to incorporate sources and avoid plagiarism  
<http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QuotingSources.html>

## 5. DURING THE TEST WINDOW

The Online EPT is delivered in a 48-hour “test window” for undergraduates, and a 24-hour “test window” for graduate students. A “test window” is a period of time when the test is available. An Online EPT test window consists of an oral section and a workshop-based essay test. The essay portion of the Online EPT will be available for 48 or 24 hours after the start of a specific test window.

### **A. WHAT TO HAVE READY**

- UIUC NetID and AD Password
- Pencil and eraser: Test-takers can take notes during the test
- A pair of earphones
- A microphone
- A webcam (required)
- Check that your computer meets all the technical requirements prior to taking the test

### **B. WHAT NOT TO USE**

- Unauthorized aids in connection with the test: pagers, books, pamphlets, notes, stereos, radios, recording devices, watch alarms, dictionaries, translators, and any hand-held electronic or photographic device
- Cell phones must be **turned off** and put away.

### **C. TESTING IRREGULARITIES**

ANY OF THE FOLLOWING VIOLATIONS MAY RESULT IN A REPORT TO THE OFFICE OF STUDENT CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND VIOLATION OF THE UIUC CAMPUS CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT—  
[http://admin.illinois.edu/policy/code/FullCode\\_web.pdf](http://admin.illinois.edu/policy/code/FullCode_web.pdf) (PART 4).

- Attempting to take the test for someone else or having someone else take the test for you
- Obtaining unauthorized access to the test, a part of the test, or information about the test
- Using a cell phone during the test session
- Using any unauthorized aids in connection with the test
- Causing a disturbance with disruptive behavior
- Attempting to give or receive assistance about the content of the test
- Removing or attempting to remove the test content from the testing site



## 6. SCORES AND SCORE REPORTS

### **A. TEST REPORT**

Test takers will have their results reported to them within a week after the end of each test window.

### **B. TEST SCORES**

1) Test results for the written test indicates the test taker's obtained level of writing skills based on an academic lecture and reading texts, compared to the highest level possible, level 4.

- Graduate students with a score of 4 are exempt from taking ESL writing courses. Undergraduate students with a score of 4 can choose to register for ESL 115 or RHET 105.
- Graduate students with a score of 3 must take one ESL writing class, either ESL 515 or ESL 522. Undergraduate students with a score of 3 must take one ESL writing class, ESL 115.
- Graduate students with a score of 1 or 2 must take two ESL writing classes, beginning with either ESL 511 or ESL 521. Undergraduate students with a score of 1 or 2 must take two ESL writing classes, beginning with ESL 111.

2) The results from the Oral EPT are interpreted with reported proficiency scores. Keep in mind that undergraduate students with a TOEFL/IELTS speaking score, and graduate students with a TOEFL speaking score of 18 or greater or an IELTS speaking score of 6 or greater are exempt from the Oral EPT.

***For those who choose to take the oral EPT*** – The Oral EPT result shows the test taker's oral skill level. The result of the Oral EPT can have 4 different results:

- A score of 4 = **Exempt**: Student is exempted from ESL 110 or ESL 510.
- A score of 3 = 110c or 510c, **ESL Recommended**: Students are recommended to take ESL 110 or ESL 510
- A score of 2 = **ESL Strongly recommended** to take ESL 110 for undergraduates, and **ESL Required** to take ESL 510 for graduates.
- A score or 1 = 110q or 510q, **ESL Required**: Students are required to take ESL 110 or ESL 510.
- For more information about interpreting the EPT cutoff score for Oral Communication courses, please visit the following website:  
<https://citl.illinois.edu/citl-101/measurement-evaluation/placement-proficiency/cutoff-scores/2020-cutoff-scores-esl>

### **C. SCORE INTERPRETATION**

Test takers can interpret their scores in relation to course numbers in the ESL course sequence. Test reports will include a test taker's obtained level and indicate whether ESL courses are required or recommended. This report consists of two components: a course number and a letter (C/Q/HC).

The course number indicates the ESL course number within the ESL course sequence. The letter "C" after the ESL course number indicates that it is a **"recommended"** course, "Q" indicates it is a **"required"** course, and "HC" indicates it is a **"highly recommended but not required"** course. The final course placement is based on results from both test sections: essay and oral. For more information about interpreting the EPT score, please visit the following website: <https://citl.illinois.edu/citl-101/measurement-evaluation/placement-proficiency/cutoff-scores/2020-cutoff-scores-esl>

### **D. SCORE REPORT DATE**

Score will be available within 3 business days after the end of each test window.

### **E. GRADING RUBRIC (WRITTEN TEST)**

The lecture/reading-based written test is graded against the following rubric.

## EPT RATING RUBRIC

Score	Description of Criteria
<b>Level 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Essay should have a clear central claim and paragraph-level topic sentences.</li> <li>• Essay uses ample and relevant evidence from the sources effectively to illustrate most topic sentences.</li> <li>• Essay provides a well-developed argument that supports a single central claim.</li> <li>• Paragraph-level argumentation is composed of well-explained and logically interconnected evidence that collectively advances and strengthens the topic sentence.</li> <li>• Argumentation shows originality.</li> <li>• Essay consistently displays complex lexico-grammar that is characteristic of academic written discourse.</li> <li>• Essay has no or very minor lexico-grammatical errors.</li> </ul>
<b>Level 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Essay may have a clear central claim and paragraph-level topic sentences.</li> <li>• Essay uses relevant evidence from the sources effectively to illustrate most topic sentences.</li> <li>• Essay provides a sufficiently to well-developed argument that supports a single central claim.</li> <li>• Paragraph-level argumentation is composed of well-explained and often interconnected evidence that all supports the topic sentence.</li> <li>• Argumentation advances the central claim overall.</li> <li>• Essay displays complex lexico-grammar.</li> <li>• Lexico-grammar errors are minor and not noticeable, and they do not result in anything more than an occasional lapse of clarity or in the connection of evidences.</li> </ul>
<b>Level 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Essay uses relevant evidence from the sources to illustrate some topic sentences.</li> <li>• Essay provides a clear argument overall in support of a single claim.</li> <li>• Paragraph-level argumentation is composed of sufficiently-explained evidence that supports the topic sentences; however, evidence is not clearly connected.</li> <li>• Paragraph-level argumentation sometimes relies on a list-like organization of evidence and/or formulaic presentation of evidence without sufficient explanation.</li> <li>• Argumentation does not effectively advance the central claim.</li> <li>• Essay may attempt complex lexico-grammar but with noticeable errors.</li> <li>• Lexico-grammatical errors sometimes cause comprehension or processing difficulty for the reader.</li> </ul>
<b>Level 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Essay uses some evidence from the sources; however, the evidence may be inaccurate, or irrelevant to the main idea or recycled to support multiple topic sentences.</li> <li>• Essay may not provide an argument in support of a single central claim.</li> <li>• Paragraph-level argumentation is composed of evidence that poorly supports the topic sentence. Evidence is not interconnected and is often underdeveloped without sufficient explanations.</li> <li>• Argumentation does not advance the central claim.</li> <li>• Essay may attempt complex lexico-grammar, but the uses are mostly inaccurate or inappropriate.</li> <li>• Essay may have frequent basic errors. Errors either severely distort the message or frequently cause comprehension difficulty.</li> </ul>

## 7. STATEMENT ABOUT PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is the act of using someone else's ideas(s) and/or words (including key words or phrases, as well as longer units like sentences and paragraphs) without acknowledging the source. Please note that plagiarism extends from submitting a paper actually written by someone else to deliberately using (copying or paraphrasing) an idea, fact or phrase without giving appropriate credit to its source.

Plagiarism is considered serious academic dishonesty. The Office of the Attorney General of Illinois has announced that buying, selling and using other people's research papers is contrary to the state law and may be prosecuted. As stated above, the University of Illinois' rules about academic irregularities (which include plagiarism) are set forth in the Code on Campus Affairs and Regulations Applying to all Students. (Please see the Code: [http://admin.illinois.edu/policy/code/FullCode\\_web.pdf](http://admin.illinois.edu/policy/code/FullCode_web.pdf) , Part 4.)

The Department of Linguistics fully affirms the definition of plagiarism given above and will hold all students responsible for adhering to the University's rules and regulations regarding plagiarism.

Finally, remember that the code clearly stipulates that: "**Ignorance of a rule is never a defense.**" Thus, any form of plagiarism, accidental or intentional, is not acceptable.

Adapted from:

[http://www.ao.uiuc.edu/support/source/course\\_policies/integrity.html](http://www.ao.uiuc.edu/support/source/course_policies/integrity.html)

## 8. CANDIDATES WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The University of Illinois has an established reputation for its commitment to students with special needs. Our university counts with a [Division of Disabilities Resources and Educational Services](#), which aims to afford qualified individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from all opportunities available on this campus. EPT examinees with disabilities will be provided with services and reasonable accommodations for the purpose of the test.

If you need assistance, please contact EPT administrators at [eptillinois@illinois.edu](mailto:eptillinois@illinois.edu)

## 9. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **A. EPT TEST**

Q: Do I have to take the test?

A: The requirement to take the EPT is made by the Office of Admissions and Records, based on the student's pre-matriculation TOEFL or IELTS score.

Q: What happens if I don't pass the EPT?

A: The EPT is a placement test. It is not a 'pass-or-fail' test. Undergraduate students will be required to take ESL 111 (111-112 sequence), ESL 115, or RHET 105 based on the performance in the test.

Q: Up to how many ESL courses would I be required to take?

A: It depends on how you perform in the writing test and the oral interview. There is a maximum requirement of two ESL writing classes and one pronunciation class for undergraduate students.

Q: If I get a very low score, does that mean I won't be accepted into my program?

A: The answer is no. You have already been admitted to UIUC. You will take ESL courses (if required) in addition to courses in your program.

Q: Are the ESL courses a prerequisite for my major?

A: The answer is a qualified no. The required ESL courses are not a prerequisite to pursuing your major. However, if any ESL courses are required of you as specified on your EPT score report, you must finish them with a satisfactory grade in order to get your degree.

Q: Can I reschedule the EPT?

A: Rescheduling is strongly discouraged; you are strongly encouraged to take the EPT on the scheduled test date that you indicated upon registration.

Q: If I'm not planning to graduate from UIUC, do I have to take the courses marked "required"?

A: No, you do not have to take the 'required' classes if you are not planning to graduate from UIUC. However, if your situation changes and you choose to graduate from UIUC, you must fulfill the ESL requirement.

Q: My Summer Registration date is on June 6th, and I know I should complete placement tests at least two weeks prior to my advising and registration appointment. However, the EPT website says the earliest test date is June 6. What should I do? Should I cancel my advising appointment?

A: Academic advisors are aware that the online EPT is given in June rather than prior to June. You do not need to change your advising-and-registration appointment. Your academic advisor will work with you to create a class schedule that will allow you to add your ESL class(es) when you come to campus in August. Of course, if you would feel more comfortable re-scheduling your June 6th advising appointment, you can certainly explore that option. In that case, you may want to register for the very first online EPT testing session. Be sure to confirm a new advising date before cancelling your current advising appointment. If you do change your registration date, it should not seriously affect your choice of classes for the Fall.

## **B. EPT RESULTS AND ESL SERVICE COURSES**

Q: What do the letters "q", "hc", and "c" mean?

A: "q" means "required", "hc" means "highly recommended but not required", and "c" means "recommended."

Q: When can I start the "q" course?

A: You should begin your required ESL course(s) within the first year at UIUC, and preferably within the first semester, if you can schedule it.

Q: Can I defer my required course to the next semester?

A: Officially, you can postpone your required course up to a semester. However, the design of ESL courses is to help you with your writing or pronunciation as soon as possible. You are advised to take required courses in the semester assigned.

Q: How can I register for the ESL courses?

A: You should visit <http://www.linguistics.illinois.edu/students/esl/> to learn more about the registration procedures.

Q: In registering for courses on-line, how many credits do the ESL courses carry?

A: ESL 111 and 112 are each a 3-credit course (*\*Students placed in ESL 111 MUST take both ESL 111 and 112 in order to fulfill Comp I requirement*). ESL115 is a 4-credit course. ESL 110 is zero credit.

Q: Can I take two different levels of writing courses during the same semester?

A: No. The writing courses are designed to be taken in sequence. However, the oral pronunciation course (ESL 110 for undergraduates) can be taken with the writing course.

Q: How do I enroll in pronunciation courses?

A: Check the UIUC Timetable (<https://courses.illinois.edu/schedule/>) for a class time you would want to attend and sign up for the course on-line. You must report to either the first or second class meeting to be eligible to take a class; otherwise, you must wait until the next semester. Students will be given a diagnostic test, which will consist of reading a passage for approximately 15 minutes; this reading will be recorded and evaluated. Pronunciation classes are currently restricted to a maximum of 13 students; students are placed according to a priority system.

Q: I tried to sign up for an ESL writing class, but the computer says registration is closed. What do I do?

A: Please contact the ESL writing team at [eslwriting@illinois.edu](mailto:eslwriting@illinois.edu).

### **C. EPT GRADING**

Q: I would like to know how my essay was graded. I would appreciate if you could review my essay and inform me of your opinion. (Am I misplaced?)

A: The essay from the written section from the EPT is read by two experienced raters, each of whom would respectively make a recommendation on which class the student should be placed in. If the two recommendations don't agree on which class the student should take, the test essay is passed on to the third grader for the final decision.

Due to our department policy, the content of your test paper remains confidential after the test so it may not be possible to review your essay. Also, there is no retake of the EPT.

## 10. CONTACT INFORMATION

For general inquiries about the test, please contact the following address.

### **English Placement Test**

Email: [eptillinois@illinois.edu](mailto:eptillinois@illinois.edu)

Office: 3036 Foreign Languages Building

707 S. Matthews Ave.

Urbana, IL 61801



