

English Language Screening of International Teaching Assistants (ITAs)

General Information: The State of Ohio requires that all teaching assistants be orally proficient in English. This means that a reasonable person would judge their English understandable enough to teach clearly. To comply with this law, the University of Toledo screens all international teaching assistants. This screening consists of a "mini-lesson" that the TA gives to a small panel composed of faculty, staff, and students on a very simple topic in the TA's field. Each new ITA is given a score or ranking after this screening:

- 1 = the ITA may not teach at all
- 2 = the ITA may interact with students in very limited ways* (see description below)
- 3 = the ITA may teach without restriction

Those ITAs who do not achieve a score of 3 on the screening must enroll in a training course if their department wants to utilize them as a teaching assistant. This training course meets daily, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 8:50 a.m., in Snyder Memorial from Monday, September 1 until Friday Dec. 12, 2008. During the week of Dec. 8 to Dec. 12, each ITA in the course will have the chance to be screened again to improve his or her score.

* ITAs with a score of "2" may have only limited contact with students in an instructional context. They may assist with one-on-one help sessions like those that typically take place during office hours, but they may not conduct any regularly scheduled event such as a lab, recitation or course section.

Procedure -- What you must do:

1. Get your group appointment time from your department. (Also available at the American Language Institute, the Office of International Student Services and the Graduate School.)
2. One half hour before your group appointment, go to Snyder Memorial room 1150. There, you will be given two topics. These are very simple topics in your field that any TA should be able to explain without much preparation at all. In math, you will be given two very easy story problems requiring no calculus.
3. Choose one of the topics. You will have 30 minutes to prepare a mini-lesson on the topic. You should prepare for a lesson of five or six minutes.
4. At your appointment time, go to Snyder Memorial room 1160. You will have ten minutes from the time you enter the room to the time you leave to:
 - write your name and ID on the board
 - introduce yourself briefly (1 minute)
 - "teach" your mini-lesson
 - answer questions on your lesson or on other basic topics
5. After you leave the room, the panel will discuss your "lesson" and decide together what your score is. This score will be sent to your department as soon as possible.

The Evaluators

The evaluating panel will be made up of faculty, staff, and students. You should expect from three to six people.

Some Advice for a Successful Screening

Remember that this screening is to assess your ability to use English in an academic setting. Its purpose is not to assess your knowledge in your field. (We assume that you are knowledgeable in your field or your department would not have selected you for an assistantship).

Some members of your panel may have little or no background in your field, so keep your explanations as simple and clear as possible.

Don't worry if you don't finish. This will not affect your score. You may be interrupted with questions. It is more important to answer questions clearly than to finish your presentation. When your time is up, you must stop, finished or not.

Start with a general statement of your topic: "Today, I would like to tell you about"

Math TAs: The panel will have a copy of your problem. Just tell them the problem number before you start. You can start by reading it out loud to them.

If you have any questions about the screening, you can contact the Director of the American Language Institute, Ms. Barbara Sayers at this e-mail address: barbara.sayers@utoledo.edu