

Position Statement on English Entrance Exams for Nonnative English Speakers at Schools and Universities

Assessment practices play an increasingly important role in determining access to educational and employment opportunities. Not only are assessments used to evaluate student performance and the quality of education, but they also function as entrance criteria to educational programs at colleges and universities.

TESOL is concerned about the growing practice that formal, standardized English language tests are being used as the sole criterion to determine entrance to education programs at the tertiary education level. Moreover, the validity and reliability of the language tests used for this purpose are not always transparent. The high-stakes nature of this kind of testing makes it imperative that assessment practices are designed to fairly and accurately assess candidates' skills for program entrance.

Following current recognized good practices in assessment, TESOL therefore advocates, first, for the development of tertiary admission policies that promote the use of valid and reliable language assessment instruments. Further, TESOL strongly encourages colleges and universities to use more than one form of entrance evaluation to determine candidacy for academic programs. TESOL also recommends that these policies be formed through professional consultation with English language experts.

*Approved by the Board of Directors
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