[**https://www.isso.iastate.edu/departments/english-proficiency-requirement--j-scholars-**](https://www.isso.iastate.edu/departments/english-proficiency-requirement--j-scholars-)

**English Proficiency Requirement (J Scholars)**

The U.S. Department of State requires all J-1 scholars to demonstrate sufficient proficiency in the English language, as determined by an objective measurement of English language proficiency, to successfully participate in his or her program activity and to function on a day-to-day basis.  To understand the reason this requirement is now being more closely monitored by the Department of State, it is important to review the purpose of the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program (underlined text is our emphasis).

22 C.F.R. § 62.20(b)

"Purpose.  The purpose of the Exchange Visitor Program, in part, is to foster the exchange of ideas between Americans and foreign nationals and to stimulate international collaborative teaching, lecturing and research efforts.  The exchange of professors and research scholars promotes the exchange of ideas, research, mutual enrichment, and linkages between research and educational institutions in the United States and foreign countries.  It does so by providing foreign professors and research scholars the opportunity to engage in research, teaching, and lecturing with their American colleagues, to participate actively in cross-cultural activities with Americans, and ultimately to share with their countrymen their experiences and increased knowledge of the United States and their substantive fields."

There are several options for meeting the English language proficiency requirement.

**(1)          Standardized English Test:  TOEFL or IELTS**

Iowa State University is currently a minimum score of “5” for the IELTS and a “40” for the TOEFL iBT (internet-based test).  We discourage the use of alternative English tests unless you can provide documentation which explains the scoring matrix and how the score equates to a score on either the TOEFL or IELTS test.  Determining the legitimacy of other English tests and the minimum scores for these tests will be the responsibility of the host department.

**(2)          Personal interview with ISU host department in one of the following formats:**

♦ In-person

♦ Videoconference

♦ Telephone (option on when video conference not a viable option and when the department already knows the future scholar)

The interview must be conducted solely in English using the set of [questions](https://www.isso.iastate.edu/sites/default/files/uploads/Files%20%26%20%20PDFs/Resources/Employment/English_Verification_Interview_Questions.pdf) provided by ISSO.  It must be a minimum of 8 minutes long, but no longer than 12 minutes.  At least 75% of the time should be listening to the J-1 applicant respond to the question.  A copy of the interview must be retained by the host department for three years following the completion of the scholar's J program.

**(3)          Signed document from academic institution (not ISU) or English language school**

Document must verify that the applicant has sufficient proficiency in the English language, as determined by an objective measurement of English language proficiency, to successfully participate in his or her program activity and to function on a day-to-day basis and the basis for this assessment.

**(4)          Earned a degree from a school where the language of instruction was English**

The applicant must provide a copy of the diploma and documentation that the language of instruction for his/her degree program was English.

**(5)          Citizen of a**[**country**](http://www.admissions.iastate.edu/intl/pdf/language.pdf)**in which English is the ONLY OFFICIAL language**

This country list is the same used by ISU Admissions when determining which students must provide a TOEFL score as part of the admissions process.