GUIDELINES FOR THE ASSIGNMENT OF
NON-NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKING GRADUATE EMPLOYEES

Adopted by the University of Oregon Graduate Council, January 1991
References to the Test of Spoken English (TSE) were removed Fall 2014 as that test is no longer available.
The terms “Graduate Teaching Fellow” and “GTF” were replaced with “Graduate Employee” and “GE” in 2016.

These guidelines are designed to insure that Graduate Employees (GEs) are assigned duties that are
consistent with their ability to communicate effectively in spoken English. There are no restrictions on the
work assignments of GEs who score 50 or above on the revised SPEAK test. The work assignments of
GEs scoring below 50 on the SPEAK, however, are subject to the limitations outlined below. It is the
responsibility of the department head, graduate advisor, and/or supervising faculty member to make sure
that GEs who have scored below 50 on the SPEAK are assigned responsibilities appropriate to their level
of English language proficiency and that they take the required language courses.

There are also no restrictions on GEs who score 26 or above on the speaking section of the internet-based
(iBT) TOEFL exam or who score 7 or above on the speaking band of the IELTS (academic module).
However, students who score below 26 on the TOEFL or 7 on the IELTS will be required to take the
SPEAK test.

Departments wishing to assign GE duties that deviate from these guidelines must obtain prior written
approval from the Assistant Dean of the Graduate School. Requests for waiver of these guidelines should
describe in detail the proposed duties and responsibilities of the GE and provide evidence that the quality
of undergraduate instruction is not impaired by the GE’s failure to communicate effectively.

A student who believes their score does not accurately reflect their true oral English skills may contact the
SPEAK Test Coordinator, who will either schedule an interview with the student or require the student to
attend the first meeting of the required GE training course and participate in a diagnostic oral English test
to discern appropriate placement.

**SPEAK Score 50-60** (and iBT TOEFL Speaking Score of 26+ or IELTS Speaking Score of 7+)
*Assignment Guidelines*: No restrictions on GE assignment duties. Supervising faculty should
supervise/meet with the GE on a regular basis.

*Language Training*: No further language training is required. GEs desiring language training
assistance should contact the American English Institute.

**SPEAK Score 45**
*Assignment Guidelines*: The GE shall not serve as the primary instructor of a course, except for a
language course taught in the GE’s native tongue. GEs leading laboratory and discussion sections shall be
closely supervised by a faculty member. Supervising faculty shall observe on a regular basis the teaching
of GEs in order to ensure that they have the speaking proficiency necessary for the satisfactory
completion of duties.

*Language Training*: The GE is required to complete the GRST 624: “Teaching in US Universities”
course at the American English Institute and pass the course exit exam demonstrating skills sufficient to
achieve a SPEAK score of 50.
SPEAK Score 40
Assignment Guidelines: The GE shall not serve as the primary instructor of a course, except for a language course taught in the GE's native tongue. GEs leading laboratory and discussion sections shall be closely supervised by a faculty member. Supervising faculty shall observe on a regular basis the teaching of GEs in order to ensure that they have the speaking proficiency necessary for the satisfactory completion of duties.

Language Training: The GE is required to complete the GRST 621: “Academic Discourse” course and the GRST 624: “Teaching in US Universities” course in subsequent terms at the American English Institute and pass the GRST 624: “Teaching in US Universities” course exit exam demonstrating skills sufficient to achieve a SPEAK score of 50.

SPEAK Score 35
Assignment Guidelines: The GE shall not serve as the primary instructor of a course. The department shall minimize any duties that require the GE to interact in English with undergraduates. Supervising faculty should mentor and assist the GE on a regular basis.

Language department faculty should ascertain whether GEs teaching in their native language are able to communicate in English (if English is to be used) for classroom instruction or during office hours.

Language Training: The GE is required to complete the coursework prescribed by the American English Institute that is sufficient to achieve a SPEAK score of 50. GEs with a score of 35 should schedule an interview with AEI staff to determine course requirements.

SPEAK Score 20-30
Assignment Guidelines: The GE shall not conduct lectures, laboratory or discussion sections, office hour meetings, or be involved in the direct instruction of students unless the professor or a GE with English language proficiency is present. If the GE is assigned as a grader, they may grade multiple-choice assignments/examinations only.

Language Training: The GE is required to complete the coursework prescribed by the American English Institute that is sufficient to achieve a SPEAK score of 50.

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March 17, 2010