



English Proficiency Requirement for J-1 Scholars

The U.S. Department of State mandated that J-1 exchange visitors including short-term scholars, research scholars, professors, specialists, and student interns have sufficient English proficiency [22 CFR §62.10(a)(2)].

Sponsors must establish and utilize a method to screen and select prospective exchange visitors to ensure that they are eligible for program participation, and that:

- (1) The program is suitable to the exchange visitor's background, needs, and experience; and,
- (2) The exchange visitor possesses sufficient English proficiency as determined by an objective proficiency measurement to successfully participate in his or her program and to function successfully on a day-to-day basis

The host faculty must verify an applicant's English language proficiency through a recognized English language test, by signed documentation from an academic institution or English language school, or through a documented interview conducted by the sponsor either in-person or by videoconferencing, or, if videoconferencing is not possible, by telephone. If the host faculty member cannot firmly establish sufficient English proficiency, then it is not appropriate to request a DS-2019 for the J-1 exchange visitor, as s/he is not eligible for J-1 status.

To comply with this regulation, host faculty must submit documentation of a prospective J-1 scholar's English proficiency as part of the DS-2019 request process. ISSS will not issue a DS-2019 without valid documentation

The English Proficiency Requirement can be satisfied by submitting documentation of at least one of the following:

1. Documentation that the prospective J-1 exchange visitor is a Native English speaker from Australia, Belize, Botswana, Canada (except Quebec), Commonwealth Caribbean, Ghana, Great Britain, Ireland, New Zealand, Nigeria, Scotland, Singapore, South Africa, or Zimbabwe.
2. Copy of diploma from U.S. institution or foreign institution where instruction occurred in English, and, if applicable, documentation that the instruction occurred in English.
3. Completion of the [English Proficiency Requirement \(EPR\)](#) at University of Houston-Victoria (UHV) the test scores can be sent directly to International Programs Office (IPO) or email international@uhv.edu the username and the password of the ETS website.
4. A signed letter from an academic institution or English language school that is internationally recognized indicating prospective exchange visitor's level of English proficiency. The letter must be: 1) dated within the last two years; 2) state the dates when the potential scholar attended the institution or school; and 3) affirm that the prospective exchange visitor achieved at least intermediate level skills.

5. J-1 English Proficiency Assessment Report (see attached template) from an interview conducted in English by host faculty member with the prospective exchange scholar. The interview can be conducted in person, via Skype or other videoconferencing method, or if videoconferencing is not available, telephone. The host faculty conducting the interview must be proficient in English. The interview should address the content area of the proposed J-1 program and include the following questions:

- Please share a little about your previous experiences traveling and/or living abroad. If you have not traveled outside your home country, please share a little about what you will do to prepare for your time in the U.S.
- What motivated you to pursue a research scholar position at the University of Houston-Victoria (UHV)?
- What do you think will be the most challenging aspect of living and working in the U.S?
- How do you think that the time you spend at the University of Houston-Victoria (UHV) will benefit you personally and professionally? The interview should be assessed according to the TOEFL Independent Speak Rubric Scoring Standards at https://www.ets.org/s/toefl/pdf/toefl_speaking_rubrics.pdf

Independent SPEAKING Rubrics

SCORE	GENERAL DESCRIPTION	DELIVERY	LANGUAGE USE	TOPIC DEVELOPMENT
4	The response fulfills the demands of the task, with at most minor lapses in completeness. It is highly intelligible and exhibits sustained, coherent discourse. A response at this level is characterized by all of the following:	Generally well-paced flow (fluid expression). Speech is clear. It may include minor lapses, or minor difficulties with pronunciation or intonation patterns, which do not affect overall intelligibility.	The response demonstrates effective use of grammar and vocabulary. It exhibits a fairly high degree of automaticity with good control of basic and complex structures (as appropriate). Some minor (or systematic) errors are noticeable but do not obscure meaning.	Response is sustained and sufficient to the task. It is generally well developed and coherent; relationships between ideas are clear (or clear progression of ideas).
3	The response addresses the task appropriately but may fall short of being fully developed. It is generally intelligible and coherent, with some fluidity of expression, though it exhibits some noticeable lapses in the expression of ideas. A response at this level is characterized by at least two of the following:	Speech is generally clear, with some fluidity of expression, though minor difficulties with pronunciation, intonation, or pacing are noticeable and may require listener effort at times (though overall intelligibility is not significantly affected).	The response demonstrates fairly automatic and effective use of grammar and vocabulary, and fairly coherent expression of relevant ideas. Response may exhibit some imprecise or inaccurate use of vocabulary or grammatical structures or be somewhat limited in the range of structures used. This may affect overall fluency, but it does not seriously interfere with the communication of the message.	Response is mostly coherent and sustained and conveys relevant ideas/information. Overall development is somewhat limited, usually lacks elaboration or specificity. Relationships between ideas may at times not be immediately clear.
2	The response addresses the task, but development of the topic is limited. It contains intelligible speech, although problems with delivery and/or overall coherence occur; meaning may be obscured in places. A response at this level is characterized by at least two of the following:	Speech is basically intelligible, though listener effort is needed because of unclear articulation, awkward intonation, or choppy rhythm/pace; meaning may be obscured in places.	The response demonstrates limited range and control of grammar and vocabulary. These limitations often prevent full expression of ideas. For the most part, only basic sentence structures are used successfully and spoken with fluidity. Structures and vocabulary may express mainly simple (short) and/or general propositions, with simple or unclear connections made among them (serial listing, conjunction, juxtaposition).	The response is connected to the task, though the number of ideas presented or the development of ideas is limited. Mostly basic ideas are expressed with limited elaboration (details and support). At times relevant substance may be vaguely expressed or repetitious. Connections of ideas may be unclear.
1	The response is very limited in content and/or coherence or is only minimally connected to the task, or speech is largely unintelligible. A response at this level is characterized by at least two of the following:	Consistent pronunciation, stress and intonation difficulties cause considerable listener effort; delivery is choppy, fragmented, or telegraphic; frequent pauses and hesitations.	Range and control of grammar and vocabulary severely limit or prevent expression of ideas and connections among ideas. Some low-level responses may rely heavily on practiced or formulaic expressions.	Limited relevant content is expressed. The response generally lacks substance beyond expression of very basic ideas. Speaker may be unable to sustain speech to complete the task and may rely heavily on repetition of the prompt.
0	Speaker makes no attempt to respond OR response is unrelated to the topic.			

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Integrated **SPEAKING** Rubrics

SCORE	GENERAL DESCRIPTION	DELIVERY	LANGUAGE USE	TOPIC DEVELOPMENT
4	The response fulfills the demands of the task, with at most minor lapses in completeness. It is highly intelligible and exhibits sustained, coherent discourse. A response at this level is characterized by all of the following:	Speech is generally clear, fluid, and sustained. It may include minor lapses or minor difficulties with pronunciation or intonation. Pace may vary at times as the speaker attempts to recall information. Overall intelligibility remains high.	The response demonstrates good control of basic and complex grammatical structures that allow for coherent, efficient (automatic) expression of relevant ideas. Contains generally effective word choice. Though some minor (or systematic) errors or imprecise use may be noticeable, they do not require listener effort (or obscure meaning).	The response presents a clear progression of ideas and conveys the relevant information required by the task. It includes appropriate detail, though it may have minor errors or minor omissions.
3	The response addresses the task appropriately, but may fall short of being fully developed. It is generally intelligible and coherent, with some fluidity of expression, though it exhibits some noticeable lapses in the expression of ideas. A response at this level is characterized by at least two of the following:	Speech is generally clear, with some fluidity of expression, but it exhibits minor difficulties with pronunciation, intonation, or pacing and may require some listener effort at times. Overall intelligibility remains good, however.	The response demonstrates fairly automatic and effective use of grammar and vocabulary, and fairly coherent expression of relevant ideas. Response may exhibit some imprecise or inaccurate use of vocabulary or grammatical structures or be somewhat limited in the range of structures used. Such limitations do not seriously interfere with the communication of the message.	The response is sustained and conveys relevant information required by the task. However, it exhibits some incompleteness, inaccuracy, lack of specificity with respect to content, or choppiness in the progression of ideas.
2	The response is connected to the task, though it may be missing some relevant information or contain inaccuracies. It contains some intelligible speech, but at times problems with intelligibility and/or overall coherence may obscure meaning. A response at this level is characterized by at least two of the following:	Speech is clear at times, though it exhibits problems with pronunciation, intonation, or pacing and so may require significant listener effort. Speech may not be sustained at a consistent level throughout. Problems with intelligibility may obscure meaning in places (but not throughout).	The response is limited in the range and control of vocabulary and grammar demonstrated (some complex structures may be used, but typically contain errors). This results in limited or vague expression of relevant ideas and imprecise or inaccurate connections. Automaticity of expression may only be evident at the phrasal level.	The response conveys some relevant information but is clearly incomplete or inaccurate. It is incomplete if it omits key ideas, makes vague reference to key ideas, or demonstrates limited development of important information. An inaccurate response demonstrates misunderstanding of key ideas from the stimulus. Typically, ideas expressed may not be well connected or cohesive so that familiarity with the stimulus is necessary to follow what is being discussed.
1	The response is very limited in content or coherence or is only minimally connected to the task. Speech may be largely unintelligible. A response at this level is characterized by at least two of the following:	Consistent pronunciation and intonation problems cause considerable listener effort and frequently obscure meaning. Delivery is choppy, fragmented, or telegraphic. Speech contains frequent pauses and hesitations.	Range and control of grammar and vocabulary severely limit (or prevent) expression of ideas and connections among ideas. Some very low-level responses may rely on isolated words or short utterances to communicate ideas.	The response fails to provide much relevant content. Ideas that are expressed are often inaccurate, limited to vague utterances, or repetitions (including repetition of prompt).
0	Speaker makes no attempt to respond OR response is unrelated to the topic.			

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J-1 English Proficiency

English Proficiency Assessment Report

Prospective Scholar: _____ Country of Citizenship: _____

Host Faculty Name: _____ Department: _____

Date of Assessment/ Interview: _____

Interview Method: ____ In Person ____ By video conferencing ____ By Telephone

Question	Score	Assessment Comments
Please share a little about your previous experiences traveling and/or living abroad. If you have not traveled outside your home country, please share a little about what you will do to prepare for your time in the U.S.		
What motivates you to pursue a research position at the University of Houston-Victoria (UHV)		
What do you think will be the most challenging aspect of living and working in the U.S.?		
How do you think that the time you spend at the University of Houston-Victoria (UHV) will benefit you personally and professionally?		

Please enter additional J program content-area questions and questions developed to gauge whether the prospective scholar will be able to function on a day to day basis in the U.S. and this specific J program

Questions	Score	Assessment comments

Does the prospective J-1 exchange scholar have sufficient English proficiency requirement to participate fully in the proposed J program and function on a day-to-day basis? ____ Yes ____ No

Other Comments:

Host Faculty Member's Signature: _____ Date: _____