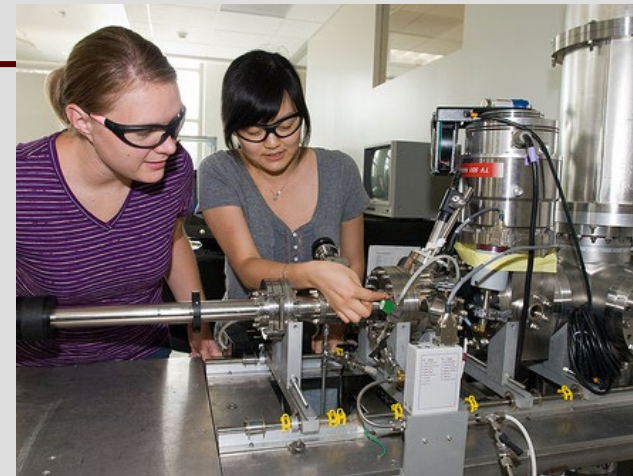


English Language Proficiency Overview and Updates



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Verification vs. Certification

- **English Language Proficiency (ELP) Verification**

Required of *all* TAMU international students for whom English is not the native language (as defined by the Office of Admissions).

- **English Language Proficiency (ELP) Certification**

Required of *all* TAMU international students who will serve as Graduate Assistants – Teaching.

Federal Oversight

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) agency. The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) is a part of ICE associated with international students and monitors school and exchange visitor programs.

SEVP requires that prospective F-1 students receive acceptance into SEVP-certified schools. SEVP-certified schools must require international students to have a certain level of English proficiency to receive a *Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status* (Form I-20) and admittance.

At TAMU, this level is called **ELP verification**.

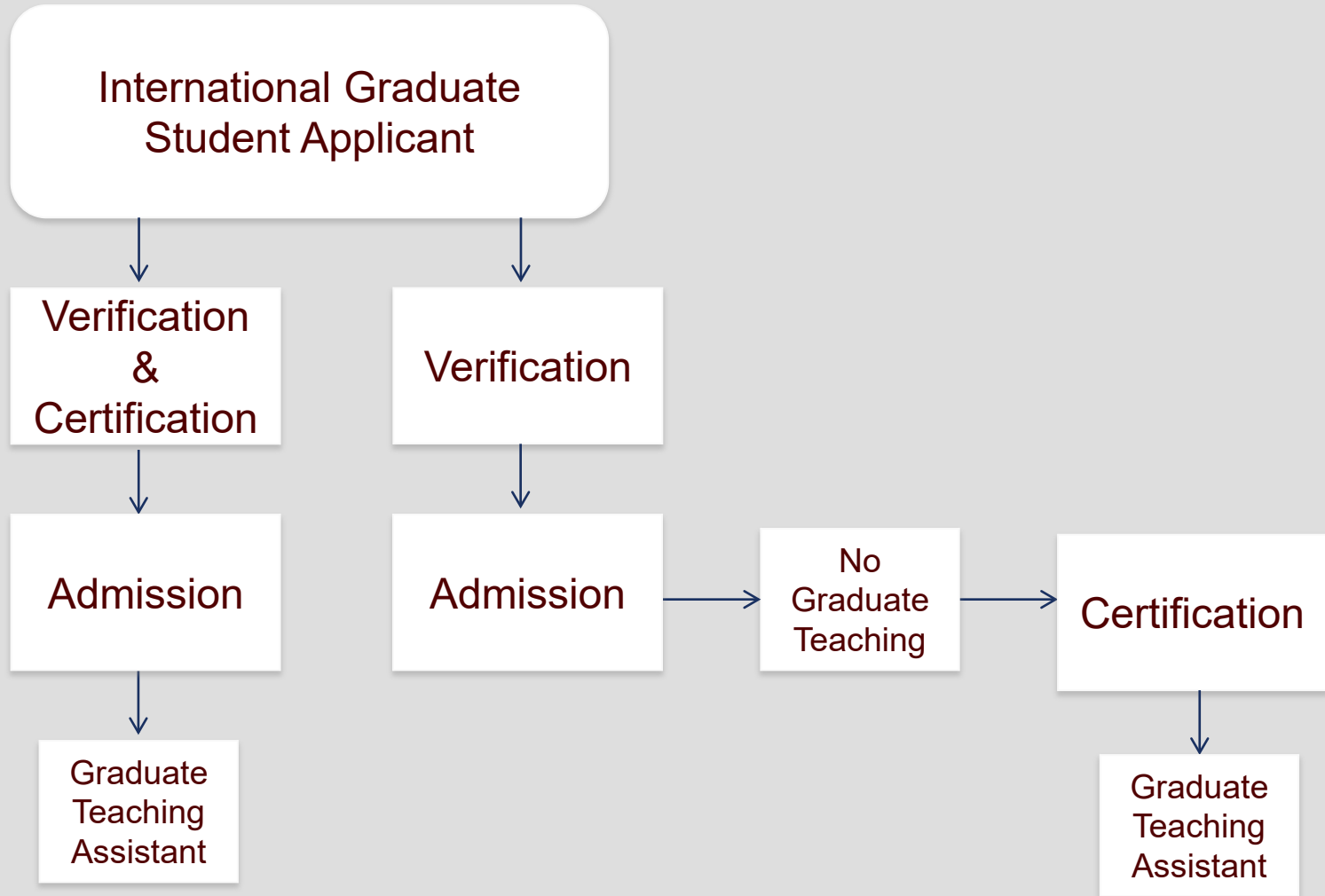
International graduate student applicants to TAMU must attain ELP **verification** to receive ISS documents and achieve admission.

Verification can be attained by:

- a minimum TOEFL score (from a test date within two years) of: 550 for paper-based or 80 internet-based testing, OR
- a minimum IELTS overall score of 6.0, OR
- a minimum PTE Academic score of 53, OR
- a GRE Verbal Reasoning score of at least 146, OR
- a GMAT Verbal Score of at least 22 subject to departmental approval

Individual colleges may choose to establish verification test score standards that exceed the University minimum for English Proficiency Verification.

ELP Requirements



Departments may initiate alternative verification requests on behalf of applicants **during the admissions process.**

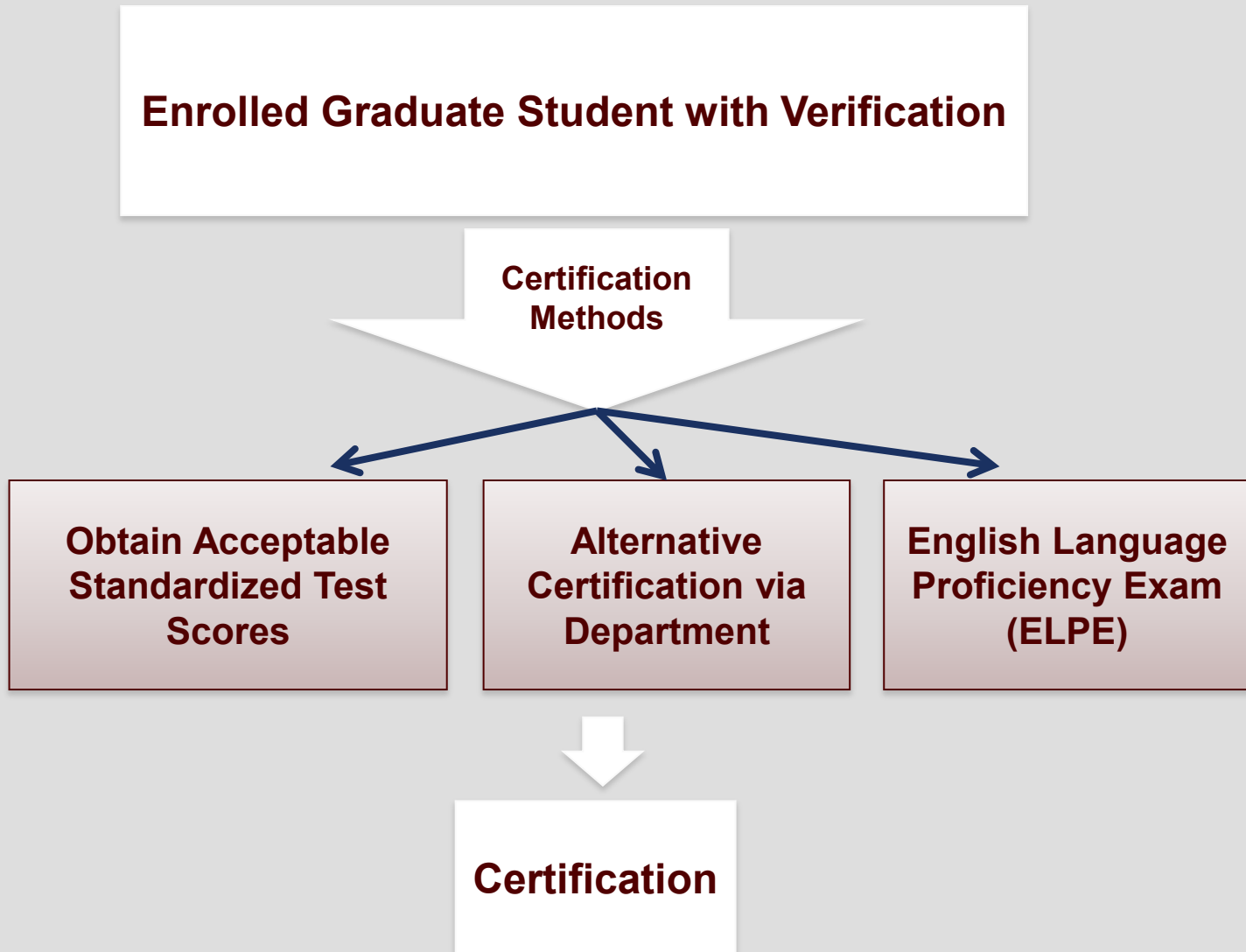
The student should provide the department with documentation to support alternative verification.

If the department deems the documentation sufficient to merit alternative verification, the department will submit, with an authorized departmental signature, the [Request for Alternative Verification Form](#) recommending and requesting alternative verification (with supporting documentation attached) to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies.

The Office of Graduate and Professional Studies will determine on a case-by-case basis whether to grant alternative verification.

Examples of experiences and/or training that may justify alternative verification:

- Completing a training program in English oral skills or courses at a university and/or institution other than Texas A&M University. Students must provide associated transcripts.
- An international student holding a master's degree from an accredited institution located in the U.S. qualifies for alternative verification. Texas A&M requires an official transcript submitted to the Office of Admissions denoting the degree conferral date.



Eligibility levels for international graduate students serving in teaching positions:

Level 1: Students eligible for teaching assignments

Level 2: Students conditionally eligible for teaching assignments for one semester only, but must simultaneously participate in CTE-ELP instruction and achieve a certifying score on the ELPE by the end of the semester.

Level 3: Students not eligible for teaching assignment. Students should participate in spoken language training (such as those provided by CTE-ELP) to assist them in meeting English language proficiency requirements. Student must retake ELP-certifying test.

- The Texas Education Code requires proficiency of English language speaking for graduate student teachers. Thus, for **ELP Certification**, acceptable scores on **spoken language sections of standardized tests** can be used as a basis for that certification to teach.


| | Global Standardized Tests | | |
|----------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Level # | TOEFL speaking section | IELTS speaking section | PTE speaking section |
| 1 | 26-30 | >=8.0 | >=85 |
| 2 | 23-25 | 7.0-7.5 | 75-84 |
| 3 | <23 | <7.0 | <75 |

- A department can request that a student have **Alternative Certification** if the student:
 - has received a bachelor’s degree after 4 years of study at an accredited U.S. institution*
 - OR
 - has previous experience / training that would deem the student proficient in the English language.*
- Departments initiate alternative certification requests.
- The Office of Graduate and Professional Studies will determine on a case-by-case basis whether to grant alternative certification.

*Students must provide associated official transcripts.

Alternative Certification Method

The student should provide documentation that the department deems sufficient to merit alternative certification. The department submits the Request form for Alternative Certification to OGAPS.

Office of Graduate and Professional Studies 

Alternative Certification Form
English Language Proficiency Requirements

Departments initiate alternative certification requests.

Date: _____

Student Name: _____

Student UIN: _____

Department Head Name (Print): _____

Department Head
Signature: _____

Check one of the following options:

Option One: The student listed above has received a baccalaureate degree following four years of study at an accredited U.S. institution or institutions, and therefore qualifies for alternative certification.

Option Two: Other Alternative Certification Requests

All other requests for alternative certification require strong department justification and review in compliance with Office of Graduate and Professional Studies policies and guidelines. The student should provide the department with documentation to support alternative certification requests based on previous experiences and/or training. Departments should provide a brief justification below for the alternative certification request. Attach all supporting documentation to this form.

- The Texas Education Code requires proficiency of English language speaking for graduate student teachers. To satisfy this requirement, Texas A&M University currently offers the English Language Proficiency Exam (ELPE) in the area of oral communication.
- A Graduate Student must score **at least 80 on the ELPE** to be English Language Proficiency Certified.

ELPE Certification Method

The ELPE consists of three tasks designed to assess the language demands associated with college level instruction:

1. a reading, which targets careful language production;
2. a presentation, which targets planned language production; and
3. an interview, which targets extemporaneous language production.

| | Locally Administered (on Texas A&M campus) Exam |
|---------|---|
| Level # | ELPE oral exam |
| 1 | ≥ 80 |
| 2 | 75 |
| 3 | < 75 |

- International students should visit [Testing Services](#) for more information on upcoming exam dates and how to register for the English Language Proficiency Exam.

Upcoming ELPE Test Dates:

January 12th

February 16th

March 2nd

April 6th

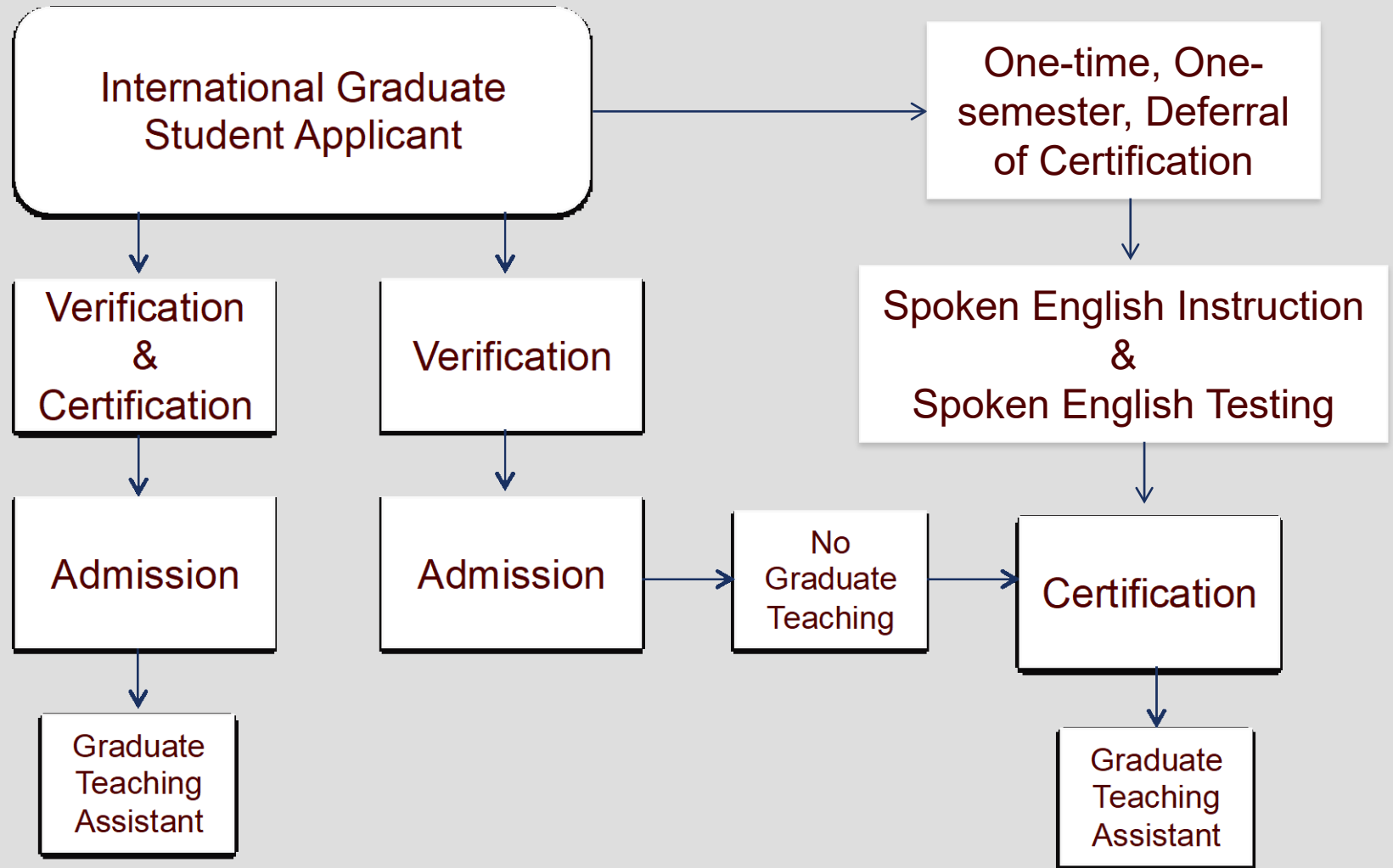
May 11th

Emergency One-Semester Deferral of ELP Certification

On rare occasions, a department may need to hire an international graduate student as a Graduate Assistant – Teaching (GAT) who has not achieved English Proficiency Certification based on standardized test scores, ELPE or Alternative Certification.

In such a case, a department may request a **One-time, One-semester Emergency Deferral of Certification**.

Emergency One-Semester Deferral of ELP Certification



Emergency One-Semester Deferral of ELP Certification



Emergency One-Semester Deferral of ELP Certification

The level of justification for approval of an emergency deferral is very high.

Examples of justifiable conditions for a case in which the student has not been certified and the following conditions exist:

- The department had not anticipated hiring this student as a GAT for this semester; and
- The student is ELP verified; and
- The student did not have an opportunity to take the ELPE before the start of classes; and
- The department has no other options of graduate students with the expertise/knowledge needed to TA the course.

New! ELP Compass Report

A new report, **PWS_ELP_CERTIFICATION_XX** provides current ELP levels on international students.

Access through: **G_CLGR_####_XXXX_RPRT** departmental report group or **G_CLGR_###_XX_GOCX_RPRT** college report group.*

*If you do not have access, please request through your Primary Authorizing Agent (PAA).

ELP-Related Questions

For questions about English Language Proficiency Requirements please contact:

The Office of Graduate and Professional Studies
ogaps@tamu.edu or 979.845.3631

The Center for Teaching Excellence
<http://cte.tamu.edu/Graduate-Student-Support/English-Language-Proficiency>

ELP Portal

<http://ogaps.tamu.edu/elp-portal>