Why take the OEPT?
The Oral English Proficiency Test (OEPT) is one method departments use to determine which of their graduate students may be best suited to assist with an undergraduate class at Purdue.

By University policy, any student whose first language is not English must be certified for oral English proficiency prior to being offered a position involving the direct instruction of undergraduate students. A student may be certified by:

- A speaking score of 8.0 or above on the IELTS speaking section.
- A score of at least 27 on the speaking portion of the TOEFL iBT.
- A score of at least 76 on the Pearson Test of English (PTE) Academic;
- A score of 50 or above on Purdue’s Oral English Proficiency Test;
- If OEPT score is below 50: Successful completion of the ENGL 620 course, “Classroom Communication in ESL for International Teaching Assistants.”

Please note: Being certified by any of the above methods is not a guarantee of receiving a teaching assistantship. Departments make their decisions based on many different factors.

OEPT scores will be available to academic departments approximately 1-2 weeks after students take the test. Students should contact their graduate studies office, not the OEPP, for test results.

What do the scores mean?
A score of 50, 55, or 60 means a student is certified for oral English proficiency and can be considered for TA positions involving the direct instruction of undergraduate students. Students with any of these passing scores may not retake the OEPT.

A score of 45 means a student is borderline and must take ENGL 620 to be certified. Students scoring 45 may be allowed to hold an instructional TA position if their department makes prior arrangements with the OEPP. In these cases, the student must be concurrently enrolled in ENGL 620 while holding the teaching position. Students scoring 45 who do not take the ENGL 620 course may retake the OEPT test after at least 6 months.

A score of 40 means a student is not ready for a classroom position and will be placed on the waiting list to take the ENGL 620 course. OEPP approval is required to enroll in the course and registration is only done through a student’s department. Students who score 40 and are not enrolled in ENGL 620 may retake the OEPT after one year.

Students scoring 35 are not eligible to take ENGL 620 and must wait for at least 6 months to retake the OEPT. See the OEPP website for community ESL resources: http://www.purdue.edu/oepp/resources/community.html

How do students enroll in ENGL 620?
Students are enrolled in ENGL 620 only at the request of their department. If you are not certified by the test, your department will work with the OEPP to decide when you should take ENGL 620.

Students who are most immediately needed to be teaching assistants are given priority for the course. Because there is
always a high demand for ENGL 620, some students will have to wait until a following semester to be enrolled.

All requests to take, cancel, or change ENGL 620 class sections must be made through your department. Once you have been selected by your department to take the course, you choose from a list of class sections based on your OEPT score, and your department will then notify the OEPP. Override codes will be entered and then you may enroll in the approved course section in MyPurdue. Class sizes are small and fill quickly, so be aware that it is not always possible for students to have their first choice of class times or to switch sections.

ENGL 620 offers 5 equivalent credits. This means the credits count toward the minimum credits you must take as an international student, but they will not factor into your GPA or apply to your plan of study.

**ENGL 620**

ENGL 620, “Classroom Communication in ESL for International Teaching Assistants” is a one-semester course that may be repeated for up to 2 additional semesters if necessary. Students are taught classroom communication skills, strategies for overcoming language barriers, and conversational interaction skills. The class also covers such topics as American university classroom norms, undergraduate student values and lifestyles, and TA-student relations. Students gain experience speaking English in a classroom setting by giving presentations to and interacting with undergraduate student volunteers who then provide individual feedback.

In addition to class time, each student meets one-on-one with their instructor once a week for 30 minutes, and individually with a tutor for 50 minutes each week, to work on pronunciation and other language skills.

At the end of the semester students are either certified or recommended to repeat the course. Many students are certified after taking ENGL 620 for one semester. Others, especially those who score 40 on the test, may need to take the course more than one semester to be certified. Students are allowed to take the course up to 3 times.

Students who are certified may be interested in enrolling in the Professional Development section of ENGL 620. This course focuses on advanced skills and is especially useful to students preparing to enter the job market. For more information see the column on the far right.

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**Community Resources**

The OEPP maintains a web list of resources in the community for students who wish to improve their spoken English skills. For example, the International Center, English Department Writing Lab, and other local organizations offer English language conversation groups that provide opportunities to practice English and make new friends. Some students have benefitted from participating in the local Toastmaster’s club. Toastmasters offers a supportive atmosphere where individuals can practice public speaking. ESL classes are also available from Purdue Village and the Lafayette Adult Resource Academy. The OEPP also maintains a list of private tutors who offer language instruction for a fee. Visit the OEPP website to view our complete list of Community Resources in ESL.
Students can also work on their own by listening to books on tape or to radio and TV programs, and actively seeking opportunities to converse with fluent speakers of English.

Many ESL resources can also be found on the internet. Check out the OEPP web page “Resources” menu for more information.

Professional Development Class
Many students will be certified by the Oral English Proficiency Test, and therefore not put on the waiting list for ENGL 620. However, some certified students may still wish to have the opportunity to continue improving their spoken English speaking skills so they can feel more confident in their language abilities. To fill this need, the OEPP offers a professional development section of ENGL 620 especially for students approaching graduation and preparing to enter the job market.

Like other sections of ENGL 620, Professional Development offers 5 credit hours that count toward the minimum number of credits required of international students but do not factor into a student’s GPA or credits required for graduation.

Professional Development is offered as space allows, generally in the Spring semester. Students are asked before applying to carefully consider their ability to attend the class and the weekly conference appointments for the entire semester. The class size is limited to eight students. Applications are accepted year round.

For more information and an application go to: http://www.purdue.edu/oepp/engl62000/development/index.html

Questions? E-mail oepp@purdue.edu.

For more information on the OEPP and its services, please visit the OEPP website or speak with your department’s graduate studies office.

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