TRANSFER PLACEMENT EXAM IN ENGLISH COMPOSITION

WHO TAKES THE TRANSFER PLACEMENT EXAM IN ENGLISH COMPOSITION?

All transfer students who have achieved at least a “C” in a course judged (by the Office of Undergraduate Studies, in consultation with the Director of Composition) equivalent to English 150 take the Transfer Placement Exam in English Composition. This exam determines whether or not the student must complete an additional composition course at Case. A student must EITHER pass the Transfer Placement Exam in English OR complete English 148 & 150, English 150, English 150-ESL, or English 180 with a “C” or better to satisfy the Writing Proficiency Requirement.

The Transfer Placement Exam in English may only be taken once and must be taken within one year of matriculation at Case.

WHEN IS THE EXAM OFFERED?

The Exam is offered from 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. on the first day of each semester.

Students must receive an entrance ticket (including name, social security number, and signature) from the Office of Undergraduate Studies (Sears 357, Claudia Anderson, Director of Advising & Evaluation for Off-Campus Study, x2928). Students must present the ticket AND a valid photo ID that includes the student’s signature to be admitted to the exam.

Students will be provided with scratch paper and with Examination Blue Books. They should provide their own writing instruments. Notes, dictionaries, etc. are not allowed during the Exam.

HOW ARE THE EXAMS GRADED?

The Transfer Placement Exam in English is more than a test of whether a student “can write.” (As that phrase is typically used, it means simply that a student demonstrates the basics of English grammar and usage and can write a simple paragraph.) Instead, the Transfer Placement Exam in English tests both reading and analysis skills. Over the 3-hour test, students are expected to read, analyze, and synthesize the ideas from a college-level text. Students are also expected to develop a coherent argument in relation to the ideas presented in the text and to provide adequate evidence and supporting details (both from the text itself and from the student’s own experiences).

Full-time English Department Faculty members grade each Transfer Placement Exam in English. They are given the following instructions:

*Imagine the following essay to have been an assignment in your English 150 class, perhaps at the end of the term. You should expect the Proficient student to have read and understood the text, to have discussed it in a tightly organized way, and to have answered the question. In short, you are not looking simply for basic literacy, grammar, and editing skills. You are looking for thoughtful, well-supported analysis and a coherent argument/controlling idea.*

WHEN/WHERE ARE THE RESULTS POSTED?

We make every effort to complete the evaluation process before the end of the drop/add period. A list of students who have passed the Exam (and are therefore finished with their Writing Proficiency Requirement) will be posted outside the English Department (106B Guilford), outside the Writing Center (104 Bellflower) and outside the Office of Undergraduate Studies (357 Sears). If a student’s name does not appear on the list, she/he should contact the Writing Center (104 Bellflower Hall, x3799) for further information.

WHAT HAPPENS IF A STUDENT DOES NOT PASS?

If a student does not pass the Transfer Placement Exam in English Composition, she/he should contact the English Department Writing Center (104 Bellflower Hall, x3799). In most cases, the student will be advised to enroll in 1-credit hour of English 180 (which includes weekly, one-on-one tutoring appointments and a series of 4-5 writing assignments). Occasionally, a student may be recommended for placement into English 148, 150, or 150-ESL. These placements are made
in consultation with the Office of Undergraduate Studies, the Director of Composition, and Faculty in the English Department.

Students who have received transfer credit for ENGL 150 and either do not pass or choose not to take the Transfer Placement Exam in English Composition must earn a “C” or better in English 180 (or English 148 & 150/150/150-ESL) to satisfy the Writing Proficiency Requirement.

Students should register for English 180 by the end of the drop/add period. Late registrations will be processed during the third week of the semester, if the student has made every effort to contact the Writing Center and/or if the results of the Exam were not available before the end of the drop/add period. If a student cannot register before the end of the third week of the semester, she/he should wait until the following semester to enroll.

WHOM CAN A STUDENT TALK TO ABOUT HER/HIS EXAM?

After the exams have been graded, they are kept in the English Department Writing Center (104 Bellflower Hall). Students may make appointments with a Writing Center Tutor to discuss their exams, but they may not take their exams away from the Writing Center. Appointments with Writing Tutors can be made online at: http://ess.case.edu/writing.

If a student would like further consultation on her/his Exam, she/he can make an appointment with the Director of Composition (Prof. Kimberly Emmons, 322 Guilford, kke1@case.edu).

Please note, however, that the decisions of the Faculty Readers are final; consultations will be about writing strengths and weaknesses and strategies for future writing tasks.

GENERAL WRITING ADVICE

• You must write a minimum of four blue-book pages in your response to the writing prompt. While this is not a lot of text, it should be well organized, detailed, and thoughtful. Take advantage of the scratch paper provided to plan and/or draft your essay.

• This Exam is not a test of your poetic genius; it is a test of your ability to write a college-level argumentative/analytical essay. Though this is not the place for a series of Shakespearean sonnets, your readers will certainly appreciate the application of your creativity to your choice of examples and your execution of explanations.

• In most cases, there will be more than one essay prompt – be sure that the reader will be able to tell which question you are answering. While you may choose to indicate the question number at the head of your essay, you should take care to ensure that the text of your essay directly answers the question you have chosen. If there are several parts to the question, plan your answer carefully to address all of the key components.

• Read the text (& question) carefully and analyze what you have read. Your essay should clearly demonstrate that you have read and understood the text itself. This includes accurate paraphrasing (and quoting where appropriate), as well as engaging with the general topic of the text.

• Organize your answer carefully – you will be given scratch paper for planning. Especially if there are several questions included in the writing prompt, make sure that you have a plan for answering the whole prompt. Please note, however, that the sequential answering of a list of questions is not a terribly successful organizational strategy. Instead, identify the key question and make that the focus of your organization. Address subsequent questions as they become relevant to your own argument.

• Provide accurate, specific, and detailed examples in support of your claims. This may include direct quotation from the text itself, as well as examples drawn from your own experiences. For each example, be sure to provide specific details and also to explain how/why the example supports your argument(s).

• The English Faculty Readers understand that this is a timed writing test – you will not be expected to produce 100% error-free prose. However, numerous spelling, mechanical, or usage errors will affect your credibility as an author. Please proofread carefully before you turn in the final draft of your essay.