

## Graduate Access Program (GAP) at the University of Toledo

The purpose of this report is to provide stakeholders for graduate level admission at the U of Toledo a brief overview of the following topic:

- I. The benchmark report on provisional graduate admission practice
- II. The ALI effectiveness report since the curriculum revision in 2016
- III. The proposed Graduate Access Program (GAP)

### ❖ **Benchmark report on provisional graduate admission practice**

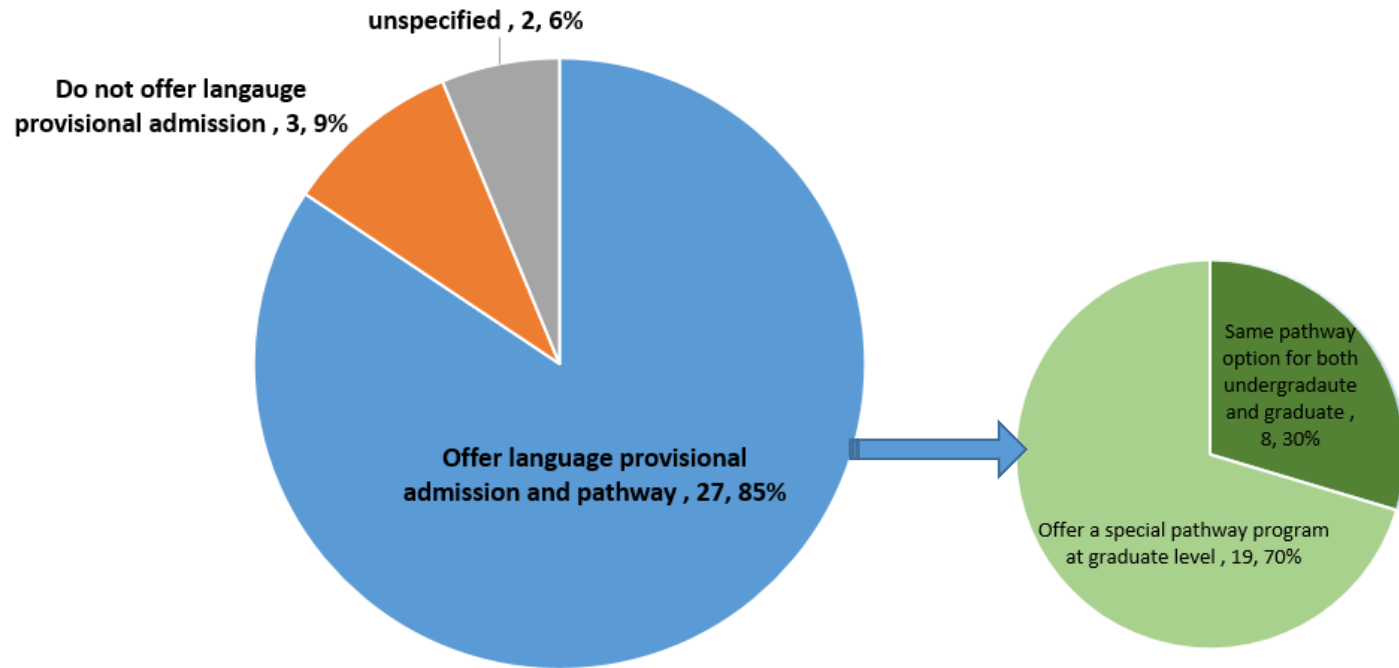
Due to the continuing efforts and competition in international student recruitment, more and more American universities are offering flexible admission policies to international applicants. At the graduate admission level, whereas the traditional model is only to admit students who demonstrate English proficiency by meeting one of the standard test scores, a growing number of higher education institutes have created pathway programs through which graduate applicants can satisfy the language proficiency requirement by attending intensive English training and academic preparation programs on campus before they are fully admitted to graduate programs.

A benchmark research report was conducted on the graduate-level provisional admission practices among **32 aspirational and peer institutes** (please see appendix. 1 for the full report), including:

- 6 Aspirational Institutes: University at Buffalo; Northern Illinois University; University of Louisville; University of Alabama at Birmingham; University of Houston; University of Pittsburgh-Pittsburgh Campus
- 12 Ohio-based peer institutes: Ohio University; Wright State University; University of Cincinnati; Miami University; Ohio State University; Kent State University; University of Akron; Cleveland State University; Youngstown State University; University of Dayton; University of Findlay
- 5 Michigan-based peer institutes: Eastern Michigan; Michigan State; University of Michigan; Northern Michigan; Western Michigan
- 5 Indiana-based peer institutes: Ball State; Purdue; Indiana University Bloomington; Notre Dame University; Indiana State University;
- 4 Kentucky-based peer institutes: Eastern Kentucky University; Kentucky State University; The University of Kentucky; Western Kentucky University;

Below please see a brief summary of the findings:

**Graduate Provisional Admission Practice - Benchmark Institute Analysis**



As demonstrated by the data, 27 out of the 32 researched institutes offer provisional admission to graduate applicants. Among these 27 institutes, 8 use the same language proficiency standards for both undergraduate and graduate admission once students are conditionally admitted, which means students who complete the highest level at the Intensive English Program are granted with language proficiency credential at both undergraduate and graduate levels. However, a majority of these 27 institutes (19, 70%) require conditionally admitted graduate applicants to complete a **graduate-level language pathway program** before starting their studies in the admitted graduate programs. Below please see some **alternative names** for such programs, which is in equivalent to the proposed Graduate Access Program (GAP) at UT:

- *Graduate Conditional Admission*
- *Graduate Provisional Admission*
- *Graduate Pathway program*
- *Graduate Academic preparation program*
- *Graduate Access Program*

## ❖ **ALI Effectiveness Report**

Since the program curriculum structure changes in summer 2016, the ALI administration has been collecting direct and indirect data to investigate the program's effectiveness in providing students, scholars, and area residents of international origin with academic language skills and American cultural knowledge to foster meaningful engagement with the university and the community. Please see findings below:

### **A. ALI Program External Validity**

According to the Open Door report conducted by Institute of International Education (IIE, 2018), there are over 500 Intensive English Programs (IEP) in the country and over 40 IEP programs in the state of Ohio. In comparison to all the IEPs,

- i. ALI is the **only** Intensive language program in Ohio/Michigan region that is entitled with all of the three accreditation/membership: CEA, UCIEP, and English USA
  - Five-year initial accreditation by CEA, the only specialized accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education
  - University and College Intensive English Programs (UCIEP) membership since 2014, one of the 4 IEP in the state of Ohio
  - EnglishUSA membership since 2016, the only organization in the United States that includes all types of intensive English programs
- ii. TOEFL/IELTS waiver for UT undergraduate programs: Students who complete the highest level at ALI with a 3.0 GPA are granted with satisfaction of the language proficiency requirement for all undergraduate programs at UT.

### **B. ALI Program Internal Validity**

- iii. Standardization of ALI Curriculum and Procedure;
  - The ALI curriculum aligns course goals, teaching objectives and student learning outcomes to represent significant level progression.
  - Courses in each level are interrelated and levels are sequenced to ensure effective student learning.
  - The instructional materials and methodologies are appropriate and supportive of course objectives.
  - All of the ALI employees hold MA and above degrees in ESL and all of them have had at least 1 year of teaching experience in IEP.
  - The placement testing allows valid and reliable placement of students into levels.
  - Level progression assessment tools accurately measure student learning outcomes, and reflect curriculum, course goals and objectives.
- iv. Evidence Showing Successfulness of ALI Graduates in UT;  
There have been 79 graduated students from ALI since the curriculum structure change in the summer of 2016, 65 of whom have matriculated to undergraduate programs at UT. Data analysis suggests:

- ALI graduates have a high matriculation rate to UT, and their ALI academic performance (GPA) significantly correlates with their academic performance at the university level.

<b>ALI Graduates Academic Performance Analysis (Summer 2016 - Summer 2018); N = 79</b>	
Average ALI GPA	<i>M = 3.39 (SD = 0.51)</i>
Average UT GPA	<i>M = 3.14 (SD = 0.75)</i>
Correlation between ALI GPA and UT GPA	<i>r = 0.375 ( p &lt; 0.001)</i>
Earned credit hours in UT	<i>Mean = 39 (credit hours)</i>
Matriculation rate of ALI students to UT	<i>82.23%</i>

- To compare ALI students’ academic performance with their counterparts who have been directly admitted to the University between fall 2016 and fall 2018, 4 research questions are answered with data provided by the UT Institutional Research\*:

<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Data Analysis</b>	<b>Finding</b>
Q#1 - Is there any significant group difference between ALI and UT directly-admitted students’ academic performance, measured by accumulated GPA?	A Welch’s independent sample t-test was used to investigate the group differences on the DV of accumulated GPA by the IV of Admission Channel (UT direct, <i>N = 692</i> , <i>GPA Mean = 3.03</i> ; ALI graduates, <i>N = 65</i> , <i>GPA Mean = 3.11</i> ). The results found no group difference ( <i>p = 0.422</i> ).	ALI graduates perform as well as the other international students, measured by their undergraduate GPA.
Q#2- Is there any significant group difference between ALI and UT directly-admitted students’ academic performance, measured by earned credit hours?	A Welch’s independent sample t-test was used to investigate the group differences on the DV of earned college credits by the IV of Admission Channel (UT direct, <i>N = 692</i> , <i>Earned Credit Mean = 40.49</i> ; ALI graduates, <i>N = 65</i> , <i>Earned Credit Mean = 39.66</i> ). The results found no group difference ( <i>p = 0.786</i> ),	There’s no difference on earned credit hours between ALI graduates and directly-admitted UT students.

<p>Q3- What's the predictive power of admission language proficiency score on international students' academic performance, measured by accumulated GPA?</p>	<p>A simple linear regression was calculated to predict accumulated GPA based on students' admission language proficiency score. No significant regression equation was found (<math>f(1, 303) = 1.66, p = 0.198</math>), with an insignificant <math>r</math> of 0.074 and <math>R^2</math> of 0.005.</p>	<p>The results suggest that admission language proficiency score is not a significant predictor of academic performance for this group of students.</p>
<p>Q4- For ALI graduates, since there's a significant correlation between their GPA in ALI and in UT, does the ALI GPA have a significant predictive power on students' UT GPA?</p>	<p>A simple linear regression was calculated to predict ALI matriculated students' (<math>N = 65</math>) accumulated UT GPA based on ALI GPA. A significant regression equation was found (<math>f(1, 63) = 10.284, p &lt; .01; r = 0.375</math>), with an <math>R^2</math> of .140.</p>	<p>The results suggests that students' GPA at ALI is a significant predictor of their later GPA at UT (<math>\beta = 0.534, p &lt; 0.01</math>).</p>

\* Between fall 2016 and fall 2018, 305 international students have been admitted to UT with one of the following 5 language proficiency criteria: TOEFL iBT, TOEFL pBT, IELTS, SAT Evidence-based section, ACT Reading and writing session, and PET. A score comparison chart\* (Hobbs, 2015) was used to convert all the test score into a standardized score scale, ranging between 1 and 12.

## ❖ **Proposal: UT Graduate Provisional Admission Policy and ALI Graduate Student Access Program (GAP)**

### ➤ **Program Description**

The International Graduate Student Access Program (GAP) at the University of Toledo provides intensive language and test preparation training to international graduate applicants who have not met the U of Toledo graduate level language proficiency requirement and/or do not have an admission test score (GRE/GMAT/MAT). Students enrolled in the GAP will be provisionally admitted to their graduate program and enroll as a full-time student at the American Language Institute.

### ➤ **Program Goal**

The GAP aims at helping international graduate applicants improve their English and academic skills (multiple 7.5-week terms, depending on testing results and progression pace), fulfill any applicable prerequisite classes at the undergraduate level and provide adjustment opportunities to academic life in the United States through a series of graduate level academic preparation courses.

### ➤ **Eligibility**

Any international graduate applicant can directly enter or progress to the GAP if he/she meets all the other admission requirements as determined by the student's chosen graduate program with the exception of language proficiency test score, and are granted with provisional admission by the College of Graduate Studies. The student will lose the provisional admission status if he/she cannot meet the language proficiency requirement within one academic year.

### ➤ **Admission Procedure**

- An eligible international graduate applicant can directly enter the GAP, if
  - he/she obtains a minimum test score of TOEFL iBT 61, TOEFL pBT 500, and IELTS 6.0 within 6 months before applying
  - or take the ALI Versant placement test and is placed at the High Advanced level (level 6)
- An international graduate applicant can progress to the GAP program if
  - he/she does not have a language proficiency test score
  - or has a test score lower than TOEFL iBT 61, TOEFL pBT 500, and IELTS 6.0

The student will be admitted and take the Versant Placement Test at the American Language Institute, which will place him/her into the appropriate level for all language skills. After successfully completing the Low Advanced Level (Level 5) at the ALI, the student is eligible to enter the GAP.

➤ **Assessment and Completion Procedure**

Students enrolled in the GAP program will take 18 credit hours of intensive English training (30 hours of in-class instruction per week) preparing them for graduate-level course work in a regular 7.5 week ALI term. They will receive a letter grade for each of the four courses listed in the program curriculum. Successful completion of all courses with a minimum of 3.0 GPA and no course grade below B- will grant students the English Proficiency credential for their future graduate program admission. Students who do not meet the GAP completion requirement will need to retake the GAP courses or meet the language proficiency test scores for direct admission, as required by the College of Graduate Studies.

➤ **Program Curriculum**

Students enrolled in the GAP will take a series of advanced intensive English courses within a 7.5 - week ALI term to gain academic English skills they need to succeed in their graduate-level academic work:

Course Name	Credit Hours/ meeting time	Course Description/Objectives	Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)
<b>Graduate Research and Writing</b>	6 credit hours/meet 10 hours per week (M-F, 3:00PM- 5:00PM)	This course provides an overview of typical graduate level writing and helps students refine their academic writing skills through multiple project-based tasks that utilize library research and field-appropriate citation.	<p><i>After successful completion of this course, students can:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Synthesize information from two or more academic texts, and incorporate a counterargument</li> <li>- Write a clear summary of a complex factual or discursive text, maintaining its original tone and message</li> <li>- Use strategies such as subheadings and abbreviations to take effective notes on academic texts</li> <li>- Use persuasive techniques and cohesive devices write effective and well-structured essays in a range of genres</li> <li>- Fluently express ideas in writing, with different level of formality appropriate to the audience</li> <li>- Use a range of idiomatic phrases</li> <li>- Support thesis with statistical examples/numerical values</li> <li>- Use and quote citations effectively and appropriately</li> <li>- Proofread their own academic work and make corrections</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop a research paper between 1,300-1,500 words, cite at least 5 academic sources in the final draft, have a working bibliography of 10-15 sources, and follow either the MLA or APA citation format</li> </ul>
<p><b>Graduate Reading and Vocabulary Strategies</b></p>	<p>6 credit hours/meet 10 hours per week (M-F, 8:30AM-10:30AM)</p>	<p>This course facilitates students to develop reading skills to increase academic reading (e.g. textbooks, journal publications) comprehension, reading speed, and note-taking efficiency. Through the exploration of advanced readings in individual disciplines, students will learn how to use technology to discuss readings, organize and manage literature review articles, cite sources, and expand academic vocabulary.</p>	<p><i>After successful completion of this course, students can:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understand the use of paraphrasing and inferred meaning</li> <li>- Recognize writer’s point of view and purpose of writing (e.g. persuasive, descriptive, informative)</li> <li>- Make inferences about the author’s intention and degree of certainty</li> <li>- Distinguish among the main ideas/related ideas/parallel ideas</li> <li>- Identify logical flaws and lines of argument</li> <li>- Recognize the author’s use of irony and infer the author’s attitude</li> <li>- Extract information, ideas and opinions from highly specialized sources within their field</li> <li>- Understand details of long complex instructions in field of study or interests</li> <li>- Quickly scan texts (e.g. interview transcripts) for key information</li> <li>- Recognize organization patterns of text styles</li> <li>- Use a variety of reference materials to distinguish between fact and opinion</li> <li>- Use introductory and summary statements to predict the content</li> <li>- Use a wide variety of common affixes to help expand vocabulary</li> <li>- infer the meaning of an unfamiliar word from context in academic writings</li> </ul>
<p><b>Graduate Oral Communication and Academic Presentation</b></p>	<p>3 Credit hours/ meet 5 hours per week (M-H, 12:50PM-1:50PM)</p>	<p>This course prepares students for the demands of graduate-level course works by practicing public speaking and group discussion skills. Through multiple project-based assignments, students improve the content, organization and delivery of academic presentations. Through discipline –</p>	<p><i>After successful completion of this course, students can:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Follow lines of argument and evaluate the speaker’s strength of argument</li> <li>- Understand most TV news, current affairs programs, and detailed medical advice</li> <li>- Identify a speaker’s point of view &amp; supporting details</li> <li>- Recognize paraphrasing, repetition, clarification, and summarization</li> <li>- Follow a wide range of factual and creative speeches and summarize themes and opinions</li> <li>- Distinguish between main ideas and supporting details</li> <li>- Infer opinions, implied meaning, and recognize rhetorical questions</li> <li>- Follow a fast-paced conversation between fluent speakers</li> <li>- Identify the speaker’s bias and differentiate between rhetorical and genuine questions</li> </ul>



		<p>focused group discussion, students will gain interpersonal language and cross-cultural skills in an academic environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Critically evaluate the effectiveness of a presentation</li> <li>- Recognize the use of language expressing doubt and certainty</li> <li>- Develop an argument on an academic topic, including supporting points and relevant examples</li> <li>- Respond to complex and controversial questions</li> <li>- Make a clear strong argument, give detailed response to a counter-argument, and refer to reference sources to support a position</li> <li>- Effectively discuss the meaning and implications of research data</li> <li>- Effectively chair a debate, managing contribution and reaching a conclusion</li> <li>- Carry out a fluent interview, spontaneously following up on interesting replies</li> <li>- Deliver an academic presentation with sufficient visual aids, professional presenting manners, and effective interaction with the audience</li> </ul>
<p><b>Grammar &amp; Editing for Academic Writing</b></p>	<p>3 Credit hours/ meet 5 hours per week (M-H, 11:40AM-12:40PM)</p>	<p>This course guides students to synchronize and practice grammar concepts that are essential for academic writing. Through individualized and case-specific writing analysis, students will evaluate, identify, and correct recurring grammar errors. Students will be able to refine their research writings with authentic and professional academic expressions.</p>	<p><i>After successful completion of this course, students can:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- skillfully use all twelve major verb tenses (present/past/future) in academic writing</li> <li>- review basic structures, distinguish sentences from fragments, maintain subject-verb agreement, &amp; avoid run-on sentences</li> <li>- - Passive voice: overall review and expansion (describe situations &amp; report opinions)</li> <li>- - Direct and indirect speech: statements, yes/no questions, wh- questions</li> <li>- Modals: degree of necessity &amp; degree of certainty</li> <li>- Nouns and articles: overall review &amp; reinforcement of functions and rules</li> <li>- Quantifiers: review usage for count and non-count nouns</li> <li>- Noun clauses: subjects, objects, &amp; complements</li> <li>- Adjective clauses vs. adjective phrases (e.g. He’s the actor who plays the king. / He’s the actor playing the king.)</li> <li>- Adverbial phrases of time, place, reason, condition, &amp; contrast</li> <li>- Gerunds and infinitives: overall review of functions and rules &amp; parallel structure with gerunds or infinitives</li> <li>- Connectors: coordinating/subordinating conjunctions &amp; transitions that connect sentences and texts</li> <li>- Conditionals: overall review of real &amp; unreal conditionals</li> </ul>

➤ **GAP Faculty**

Students in the GAP will study with an English as a Second Language (ESL) specialist at the ALI, who has obtained a minimum qualification of master's degrees in TESOL and at least 3 years' of teaching experience in the ESL field. Each student in the GAP will also be assigned to an academic advisor at the ALI, who will support and monitor students' progress in the program. The advisor will also serve as a liaison between the student and stake-holder department.

➤ **Participating Programs**

Individual graduate units in consultation with the College of Graduate Studies determine programs that elect to participate in the Graduate Access Program. Currently, the graduate colleges or programs offering provisional admission through the GAP include graduate programs in the:

- College of Business and Innovation
- College of Communication and the Arts
- College of Engineering
- College of Medicine and Life Sciences (excludes the M.D., MPH, MSOH, PA, MSBS in medical science and MSBS in oral biology programs)
- College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics
- College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences (excludes the PharmD program)

Although the list above indicates colleges interested in considering applicants for the GAP program, not all programs in all colleges will be considering applicants for this program.