

Pacific Lutheran University
School of Nursing

TOEFL Fact Sheet

Participation as a student in all nursing programs at PLU requires eligibility for unrestricted nursing licensure in the State of Washington. Please refer to the code established by Washington and the Washington State Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission at <http://www.doh.wa.gov/hsqa/Professions/nursing>. Licensure regulations pertaining to criminal background checks, drug use, professional conduct, etc., are extrapolated to students participating in most schools of Nursing. A major component of licensure in all 50 US States and US territories is the requirement for English language competency to ensure unencumbered communication between those in nursing roles, fellow health care professionals and patients. In this context, the PLU School of Nursing performs criminal background checks, requires health screening, and requires documentation of English language proficiency as prerequisite for final approval of participation in any and all nursing programs.

1. *Which TOEFL test do I take, and do you accept other tests of language proficiency?*

The TOEFL Internet Based Test (TOEFL-iBT) is the only test we accept; for more information about test preparation, scheduling and pricing, please see <http://www.ets.org/toefl/ibt> and/or contact the local Embassy CES at 253-535-8661.

2. *What are the minimum required TOEFL scores?*

The minimum total acceptable score is 86, with minimums of 26 in speaking and 20 or more in listening, reading and writing. Scores must be above (or very close to) the minimum to be eligible to apply to the School of Nursing.

3. *Can my application be reviewed before my TOEFL scores are received by the School of Nursing?*

No. We need your scores in hand before considering your application. It is strongly recommended that you schedule to take the TOEFL-iBT well in advance of the application deadline (4-6 months ahead).

4. *Who needs to take the TOEFL?*

Any person whose first language is other than English, regardless of country of origin or citizenship, is required to take the TOEFL-iBT. The following exceptions are considered: (1) persons who have attended US-based schools for K-12 education may provide documentation of K-12 education in the US in lieu of TOEFL; and (2) persons currently holding unrestricted RN or LPN licensure in the US.

5. *What kinds of documentation of English proficiency can I provide?*

Transcripts, graduation certificates, certificates of completion, grade reports, letters from school officials (sent directly to us), etc. are examples of acceptable documentation for proving proof of attendance in US-based schools for K-12 education. The following are examples of commonly requested reasons for TOEFL waiver that are NOT acceptable: (1) completion of college courses or degrees in US colleges in any subject area (including ESL); (2) completion of a college-level language bridge program; (3) living in US for any amount of time after completion of formal education; (4) graduation from a US high school without K-8 education in the US; (5) completion of 1 or more years at PLU...

6. *English is one of the official languages of my country and I have been educated in English (or bilingually) since primary/grade school. Do I still need to take the TOEFL?*

Yes. If English is not your first language, you need to take the TOEFL-iBT unless you were educated in the US or US-run schools since kindergarten. If you still feel strongly that your education meets our standards for exclusively English-based education, please contact the School of Nursing **IN WRITING well in advance of the application deadline** to discuss your individual circumstance, and be prepared to take the TOEFL-iBT to document your English language proficiency.

7. *I'm an LPN (Licensed Practical Nurse)/LVN (Licensed Vocational Nurse) or RN. Do I need to take the TOEFL?*

Typically, no. If you have current unrestricted US licensure, you are exempt from taking the TOEFL, although TOEFL may be requested by the School of Nursing in instances where English language proficiency is not demonstrated in the application or in communications with the School of Nursing. Students matriculating to the School of Nursing who demonstrate that they are not proficient in English may be required to take the TOEFL-iBT to progress in the Nursing program on a space-available basis.

8. *I was admitted to PLU, and met their language proficiency requirements. Do I have to meet yours as well?*

Yes. Different departments and schools at PLU may maintain separate discipline-specific standards.

9. *The TOEFL is very expensive; I don't think I can afford it.*

Unfortunately, we do not offer financial aid for the TOEFL, but to make applying to the School of Nursing as affordable as possible, PLU charges no fee for the online domestic university application, no fee for the undergraduate nursing application, and just \$40 for graduate-level applications.

10. *I am insecure in my English language ability, although I meet your eligibility criteria (i.e., meet all TOEFL-iBT score requirements, or have LPN or RN licensure). Does the School of Nursing have special accommodations for ESL students?*

No. English language proficiency is a requirement for attendance PLU; PLU does not offer ESL-specific or remedial courses. That said, PLU values and welcomes students from different cultures, and wishes to facilitate their transition to campus and to assist in their development of English language skills. All international students at PLU have access to services through International Student Services, and all PLU students have access to academic and personal support services through the Office of Student Life. Incoming students should, however, be aware that the nursing major is a predominantly junior- and senior-level college curriculum that is academically intense; students who for any reason take longer to complete classroom, lab/clinical assignments, or need extra time to prepare for exams or complete homework may be unable to progress in the program. Students who seek assistance early and often are more likely to succeed. However, the program pace does not allow for significant remediation, and part-time courses of study are not offered to new students. All students are held to the same progression standards as outlined in the School of Nursing Handbook. Therefore, we strongly recommend that students wait to start the nursing program until they are confident in speaking, reading and writing standard US English.