

**Summary Minutes of a Meeting of the  
COUNCIL OF THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH  
Held in the Council Chamber, University Hall  
Wednesday, November 18, 2009, 2:00 pm**

Attendance

M Shirvani in the Chair                      L McGann  
M Allen    P Schiavone

Department Representatives

L Dossdall, Agriculture, Food & Nut Sci	B Fleck, Mechanical Engineering
A Palmer, Anthropology	D Burshtyn, Medical Microbiology & Imm
S Caulfield, Art & Design	E Le, Modern Lang & Cultural Studies
R Kaufman, Biological Sciences	H Bashaw, Music
J White, Business MBA	S Gosgnach, Neuroscience
D Cooper, Business PhD	Y Labiuk, Nursing
B Hayes, Chemical & Materials Eng	A El-Kadi, Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sci
T Lowary, Chemistry	B Linsky, Philosophy
A Jordan, Physical Education & Recreation	G Walker, Physical & Recreation
M Loewen, Civil & Environmental Eng	C Benishin, Physiology
I Sywenky, Comp Literature Program	L Harder, Political Science
R Greiner, Computing Science	A Joyce, Psychiatry
F Peters, Educational Policy Studies	N Galambos, Psychology
R McKay, Educational Studies	S Jeffrey, Rural Economy
J McClay, Elementary Education	K Hughes, Sociology
T Zackodnik, English & Film Studies	C Boliek, Speech Pathology & Audiology
M Cavanagh, Faculté Saint-Jean	
H Madill, Health Promotion Studies	
J Martin, Lab Medicine & Pathology	
L Reif, Law	
H Julien, Library & Information Studies	
S Rice, Linguistics	
T Hillen, Mathematics and Stat Sciences	

Graduate Program Administrators

G Mathew, Anthropology

Graduate Student Representatives

M Rahman, GSA VP Academic	M Azadi, Mechanical Engineering
D Manolescu, GSA VP Labour Relations	B Farnesi, Pediatrics
B Jensen, Earth & Atmospheric Sci	L Mazzino, Physics

Ex officio

G Pavlich, Office of the VP (Research)

Observer

J Bohun, Grad Student Ombudsperson  
T Krukoff, Assistant Dean Research (Medicine & Dentistry)  
H Zwicker, Associate Dean Graduate Studies (Arts)

**1. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

The agenda was approved.

**2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

**a) Approval of the September 16, 2009 summary minutes**

The minutes were approved.

**b) Matters arising**

None.

**3. FORMAL BUSINESS**

**3.1 Proposal for a Post-baccalaureate Certificate in Stroke Rehabilitation**

Councillors had before them the following motion:

That FGSR Council approve the proposal for a Post-baccalaureate Certificate in Stroke Rehabilitation

MOTION It was moved by M Allen and seconded by L McGann that the motion be approved.

VOTE After some brief discussion, the motion was PUT and CARRIED, unanimous

**3.2 Proposal for the English Language Requirement**

Councillors had before them the following notice of motion:

That FGSR Council approve the proposal to add Pearson Test of English Academic (PTE Academic) as an approved examination to meet the English language requirement; and

That FGSR Council approve the removal of MELAB as an approved examination to meet the English Language test.

C Pallett presented Council with an overview of the PTE Academic. FGSR has no concerns about security. If PTE is approved, FGSR will monitor student success through annual reports and their abilities as TA/RAs.

Discussion regarding the PTE Academic included:

- The FGSR will investigate how the PTE test students 'in his/her field of specialization' (Council of Europe level descriptor)
- If the test is approved in December, FGSR can implement virtually immediately (subject to approval by the Academic Standards Committee). Students would be advised via the website.
- Cost to student is approximately \$200, though it can vary by country. FGSR will research costs for all English language tests.
- The minimum score of 59 was determined by the concordance table. Departments may raise their minimums.
- Will the PTE allow the U of A any leverage as an early adopter? Perhaps we can trade support for testing tracking.

Discussion regarding the MELAB included:

- According to the statistics from Campus Solutions, the MELAB has been used six times since 2003 by University of Alberta applicants (only two graduate students; of the two, one registered)
- MELAB is offered in only a few locations in Canada and the USA, and not all locations offer the speaking component
- If MELAB is considered to still be a valid assessment, perhaps FGSR should maintain it as an option.
- Council requested cost and test comparisons for the December meeting. (Secretary's note: see attached new information)

**4. INFORMAL BUSINESS**

**a) Discussion Topics**

**1. Quality of Supervision and Mentoring**

FGSR Associate Dean P Schiavone addressed Council regarding the level of involvement supervisors are taking in helping students get to the completion point of their programs. In essence, who is supervising the supervisors? The graduate program manual and the collective agreements present supervisor guidelines on their roles and responsibilities, but accountability varies with department. Associate Dean L McGann, chair of the Quality of Supervision Committee, added that the committee is reviewing the U of A model of graduate student 'apprenticeship' and is looking at new supervisory models being used successfully at other institutions. We might pilot some models and develop tools to monitor their performance in relation to the current system.

Discussion included:

- Completion times for students may be extended due to a lack of supervision and direction.
- Some departments prepare a handout for students regarding what to expect of supervisors, and conduct yearly reviews with the supervisors and other professors (eliminating conflict of interest)
- Several models were presented including one used in Australia where the student and supervisor appear both together and separately before a panel in order to give honest feedback, and another model of group supervision of five professors supervising 20 students.
- Some supervisors, particularly new ones, may not realize what they are doing wrong. Mentorship may help new faculty.
- Multiple models and styles can work as long as responsibilities and guidelines are made clear to everyone. There is value to experimentation and variation across departments.
- Departments are expecting supervisors to take increasing numbers of students.
- If there are supervisors who are not performing, perhaps FGSR should send a letter to the department chair.
- It is the graduate coordinators' responsibility to ensure the supervisor-student relationship does not break down.
- No need for new rule, just enforcement of what is already in place.
- Though FGSR has the ability to deny supervision, it cannot formally investigate claims. Denial of supervision may be seen as a disciplinary action.
- Denial of supervision is difficult, as in some smaller faculties there is only one supervisor in a given area.

**2. A Vision of Graduate Education at the University of Alberta**

FGSR Associate Dean M Allen presented a document outlining the values and beliefs to be incorporated into the vision and requested feedback.

Feedback included adding points regarding:

- independence or independent thought to graduate students
- ethical behaviour, preparing students for future careers
- graduate students seen as junior colleagues
- high academic standing, or excellence as a target
- graduates are prepared to be global citizens and leaders

The vision statement is being developed to explain the fundamentals of graduate education at the U of A. The statement will be presented to the President, and will be used in policy development and to determine budget allocations.

Anyone willing to help develop the vision can contact M Allen

([marion.allen@ualberta.ca](mailto:marion.allen@ualberta.ca)).

**b) Question Period**

None.

**c) Announcements and Reports by the Chair and Councillors**

**1. A Guide to Academic Integrity for Graduate Students**

C Hackett informed Council that the current blue guide, *A Guide to Academic Integrity for Graduate Students*, will no longer be printed but will be available in electronic form. Departments are asked to help to get the information to students. The guide for Teaching and Research Assistants will still be printed.

**2. Vanier Adjudication Process**

Vanier nominations were submitted. As the national committee moved the deadline with one week's notice, the FGSR provided some extra time to the departments. Departments are asked to consider what process works best for them and which design will best suit their needs. Further discussion on this issue was deferred to the December Council meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 pm.

**Re item 3.2: November 18, 2009 FGSR Council follow-up information for PTE and MELAB**

**PTE Response:**

1. PTE Concordance estimates between PTE - IELTS iBT/TOEFL

The Level Descriptor B2 from the Council of Europe states

"Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussion in his/her field of specialization." *Does PTE have measures in place to ensure that applicants are completing the examination in the current field of specialization?*

No, we do not test everybody in their own field. That is not possible because many applicants decide on their field of study after they find out where they can get accepted. The test does sample language from many different domains without making undue demands on content knowledge but offering the kind of language use that one may encounter in these domains.

2. PTE Concordance estimates between PTE - IELTS iBT/TOEFL

The Level Descriptor C1 from the Council of Europe - *What does this mean for a score used?*

"C1 is a level at which a student can comfortably participate in all postgraduate activities including teaching." *Since doctoral students teach as part of the academic program, why is the teaching component at a higher level than our current TOEFL iBT and IELTS requirements, and the FGSR recommended minimum score of 59?*

It is up to institutions to decide what score they require. PTE Academic is designed to provide accurate and reliable information over a range of scores that we have found to be relevant to institutions. Some have to make decisions about entering first year students. These students would generally not be involved in teaching from the day they enter. Teaching successfully requires a higher level of command than following first year classes. Please also note that each of the levels represent quite a wide range of ability (expressed by increasing PTE Academic scores within each level. Whereas, for entry in first year classes the lower end of B2 may be considered sufficient by most institutions, in order to teach one would generally wish to see a higher level of command. For many, the upper range of the B2 scores may be sufficient but it is at C1 that one can have a higher level of certainty about the success of teaching academic level classes.

3. I did locate cost information on your website for 20 countries. Your information states PTE will be available in 22 territories. Cost currently varies from \$150 USD to \$210 USD.

The cost for the PTE Academic in Canada will be the same as TOEFL, \$200 (I believe IELTS is \$232). Throughout the rest of the world the cost ranges from

\$150 to \$210; very much inline with the market. In our initial launch phase, which started Oct. 26<sup>th</sup>, we will offer the PTE Academic in 22 territories/countries at 184 Pearson VUE Test Center locations globally. This covers 90% of all the major sending countries according to IIE research data (China, India, Korea, Japan, etc.). The launch phase will be the first 6 to 12 months. Depending on test demand, we will continue to rollout the PTE Academic to a few hundred Pearson VUE Test Center locations.

We will now be offering the PTE Academic in 35 territories/countries at 200 Pearson VUE Test Center locations globally during our launch phase!

<b>TOP 10</b> China India USA South Korea Japan Australia UK Canada Taiwan Hong Kong	<b>ASIA</b> Philippines Thailand Singapore Indonesia Malaysia Pakistan New Zealand Vietnam	<b>EUROPE</b> Greece Germany France Italy Spain Switzerland Turkey	<b>LATIN AMERICA</b> Brazil Mexico Guatemala Colombia Chile <b>MIDDLE EAST/AFRICA</b> Israel UAE Nigeria Kuwait Saudi Arabia
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4. *Would PTE be in a position to provide free examinations to applicants from low income countries? Is there a plan to expand the PTE to lower income countries?*

We are currently offering incentives to every potential test-taker through discount vouchers for learning resources to prepare for the PTE Academic, such as our online practice tests, official guides, etc. The PTE Academic is offered globally and would need to be taken at a Pearson VUE Test Center. These test centers are strategically located where there are fairly good numbers of potential test takers, regardless of income levels.

Cost of other English Language examinations

TOEFL: \$150 – 225 USD dependent upon location

IELTS: up to \$265 CAN

CAEL: \$175 CAN majority

MELAB: \$80 USD, \$120 USD with speaking component

## **MELAB**

The MELAB is a secure test battery and is administered up to six times annually in the following locations:

### Canada

Alberta - Calgary  
 BC – Vancouver/Victoria  
 Manitoba - Winnipeg  
 New Brunswick – St John  
 Ontario – Brockville, Hamilton, Kingston, Toronto (Ottawa office temporarily closed)  
 Prince Edward Island – Charlottetown  
 Quebec – Montreal, Lennoxville

### United States

Colorado – Denver, Lamar, Littleton, Pueblo  
 District of Columbia - Washington  
 Georgia - Tifton  
 Idaho - Moscow  
 Illinois - Urbana  
 Indiana - Bloomington  
 Kentucky – Bowling Green  
 Michigan – Ann Arbor, Berrien Springs, East Lansing, Mount Pleasant, Rochester, University Centre  
 Minnesota - Minneapolis  
 New Jersey – Newark  
 New York – Flushing, Riverdale  
 North Carolina - Charlotte  
 Ohio - Youngstown  
 Oregon – Eugene, Salem  
 Pennsylvania - Philadelphia  
 Tennessee - Gallatin  
 Texas - Houston  
 Utah – St George  
 Washington – Seattle  
 Wisconsin- Madison, Milwaukee, Racine

### MELAB Content from website

The content of the test is aimed toward the level of English a student might encounter in an American university setting. On the listening test, the speakers use standard American English at a normal rate of delivery. The grammar items on the test focus on control of forms and structures of English which people might use when talking with each other. The vocabulary words tested are those frequently encountered in written

sources. The reading comprehension passages, on a variety of subjects, are taken from books and magazines.

The test consists of 3 required parts (composition, listening, grammar/cloze/vocabulary/reading) and one optional part (speaking test). The entire test takes from 2½ to 3½ hours, including check-in procedures. Detailed descriptions can be found below.

- [Part 1: Composition; Part 2: Listening; Part 3: Grammar, Cloze, Vocabulary, Reading](#)
- [Optional Speaking Test](#)