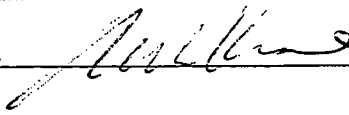




S.07-61

OFFICE OF THE
ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT ACADEMIC AND ASSOCIATE PROVOST

MEMO

ATTENTION Senate	TEL
FROM Bill Krane, Chair Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies	
CC	
RE Revisions to Admissions Requirements (SCUS reference 07-14)	
DATE March 13, 2007	TIME 10:02:56 AM

Action undertaken by the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies at a meeting held March 6, 2007 gives rise to the following recommendations:

That Senate approve changes to the undergraduate admissions requirements as follows:

- SFU's requirements for admission of students from high school will be changed from five to four courses:
 - English 12 and three (3) additional examinable courses (see Appendix A for list of examinable courses).
- SFU will harmonize the English Language Requirement and the Literacy Requirement as the 'English Language and Literacy Requirement'.
- These changes would be effective for admission of students in Fall, 2007.

Rationale

At the SCEMP meeting held on November 22nd, a discussion took place regarding the complexity of our current admissions requirements. There was general agreement that simplification of the requirements is necessary, in conjunction with the work currently underway to streamline the enrollment business processes in Student Services.

It is important to note that the harmonization of the English Language Requirement with the Literacy Admissions requirement does not lower the standard of the Literacy requirement.

Proposed Changes to SFU Admission Requirements

Summary

- SFU's requirements for admission of students from high school will be reduced from five to four courses:
 - English 12 and three (3) additional examinable courses (see Appendix A for list of examinable courses).
- SFU will harmonize the English Language Requirement and the Literacy Requirement as the "English Language and Literacy Requirement" (see Appendix B for revised wording).
- Changes would be effective for admission of students in Fall, 2007.

Rationale

In BC and across Western Canada the competition for new students entering post-secondary education had increased significantly, for a number of reasons:

- A declining population of 17-24 year olds
- An increase in the number of post-secondary seats (gov't access targets)
- An increase in the number of degree granting institutions
- A booming economy resulting in higher employment
- The differential costs of post-secondary education

A recent review of SFU's admissions requirements has determined that, over the past 10 years, the requirements have evolved to a daunting level of complexity. In addition to some general university requirements, many Faculties and departments have further requirements, creating a multiplicity of lists and a discouraging maze for prospective students to navigate. If SFU is to be competitive in facing emerging enrollment challenges, the structure of admissions requirements must be streamlined as much as possible, while at the same time retaining core academic preparation.

Four Course Admission Model

Currently, SFU admissions are based on a five-course model; prospective students choose five courses drawn from a number of lists and groupings appropriate to the discipline to which they seek admission. Common to these requirements is English 12, and Mathematics at the level of either Grade 11 or 12 (see Appendix C).

Prior to 2000, SFU required four provincially examinable courses for admission. The move to a five-course model was intended to be supportive of breadth and accessibility in that it removed the requirement that courses be provincially examinable, and the addition of the fifth course was hoped to support the principles of flexibility and diverse admissions to which SFU had always been committed. However, the unintended consequence of adoption of the five-course model was to create the perception that SFU

had a more stringent admissions requirement than UBC's admission, which is based on a four-course (provincially examinable) model. Admissions at UVic are also based on a four-course model, comprised of 3 examinable courses and a fourth course that is "academic" but not necessarily provincially examinable and chosen by the applicant. The distinction between provincially examinable high school courses and non-examinable courses became obscured for many prospective students and their decision influencers (e.g., parents and teachers) when reviewing admissions criteria.

Unfortunately, comparisons to UBC are inevitable. The Office of Analytical Studies has determined in the past that a significant number of SFU high school applicants also apply to UBC. Trends of the past 10 years have shown that the top performing high school students are more likely to accept an offer of admission to UBC than to SFU when applying to both institutions. Consequently, the perception that SFU's admission requirements are more stringent than UBC's compounds the challenge of finding a competitive edge against a marketing adept institution.

UBC presents admissions requirements that are streamlined and simple to understand. Students can easily identify what is required to enter the university, UBC is able to respond to applicants in a timely manner, and although some UBC Faculties have additional requirements, the fundamental message that admission will be based on English 12 and three additional provincially examinable Grade 12 courses is consistent. From this simple platform, applicants are then led to program specific requirements appropriate to their intended areas of study, rather than being presented with a surplus of information about all Faculty or program specific requirements. To be sure, much of the difference between SFU and UBC admissions can be attributed to careful marketing, but the perceptions of high school students formed during the process of reviewing admission information are strong and biased in favour of UBC. This bias is reinforced when SFU appears to require additional courses for admission.

English Language Requirements and Literacy Requirements

Further complicating SFU's admissions requirements was the separate presentation of the English Language Requirement (applicable to students for whom English is an additional language) and the Literacy Requirement, which serves as both an English admissions screen and a pre-requisite for Writing Intensive courses. Given the overlap in the two sets of requirements, incoming students have found the parallel requirements confusing. In proposing streamlined Admissions Requirements, it seemed useful to harmonize the English Language and Literacy requirements and clarify the minimum level of competency in English required for study at SFU. The proposed combination of the ELR and Literacy Requirements is detailed in Appendix B.

Appendix A

Admission Requirements for BC and Yukon Secondary Schools

Note: Grade 11 requirements remain unchanged.

- English 12 and three (3) of the following examinable Grade 12 courses:

Applications of Math	History	Science Courses
BC First Nations Studies	Japanese	Biology
Communications	Mandarin	Chemistry
English Literature	Principles of Math	Geography
French or Francais Langue	Punjabi	Geology
German	Spanish	Physics

- Faculty requirements are as follows:

FAS	One examinable course must be Principles of Math (except for admission to Communication)
FASS	None
FBA	One examinable course must be Principles of Math
FOE	None
FHS	One examinable course must be Principles of Math
FSc	One examinable course must be Principles of Math Two other examinable courses must be chosen from the Science courses above

- Additional program-specific requirements are as specified in the Calendar entries for Programs, Departments, Schools and Faculties.

Appendix B

Harmonizing English Language Requirement With Literacy Admission Requirement

New Calendar title: English Language and Literacy Admission Requirement

English is the language of instruction at SFU. All applicants, regardless of country of origin or citizenship status, will be required to demonstrate competence and literacy in the English language prior to admission. Competence is expected in all four of the following skills: listening, reading, speaking, and writing.

Applicants to undergraduate programs must demonstrate English language competence and literacy in ONE of the following ways:

- Obtain a grade of 60% or better in English 12 or English Literature 12 (BC or Canadian high school); or
- Obtain a grade of 60% or better in an equivalent to English 12 or English Literature 12 (BC or Canadian high school) at an eligible international secondary school that uses English as the language of instruction but operates in a country where the primary language is not English; or,

Note: Students admitted with a grade of 75% and above in either of English 12 or English Literature 12 (or international secondary school equivalent) are exempt from the following as a pre-requisite to entering certified W (writing intensive) courses:

- Achieve 4 or better on the essay section of the Language Proficiency Index (LPI) and 50% or higher on all other parts, or
 - Complete Foundations of Academic Literacy (FAL X99-4) with a C grade or better.
- Obtain a grade of C- or better in a course (three credits or more) that transfers to SFU as English (ENGL) transfer credit from another post-secondary institution in which the language of instruction and examination is English; or,
 - Obtain a grade of C- or better in a certified W (writing intensive) course that is transferable to SFU from another post-secondary institution in which the language of instruction and examination is English; or,
 - Graduate from a bachelor's or higher degree program at a recognized university in which the language of instruction and examination is English, and with a C- or better grade in a course that transfers to SFU as English (ENGL) or W transfer credit; or,

Note: Students achieving a grade of C- or better in a post-secondary English or W course are exempt from the LPI and FAL X99 and qualify for registration in W courses.

- Obtain a satisfactory score on a test of English as an additional language for academic purposes (IELTS is preferred):

International English Language Testing System (IELTS) with a minimum score of 6.5 on the Academic Modules; or

International English Language Testing System (IELTS) with a minimum score of 5.5 and satisfactory completion of the SFU English Bridge Program; or

TOEFL iBT (Test of English as a Foreign Language internet based test) with an overall score of 88 or better with a minimum score of 20 in each of the four components (listening, speaking, writing, reading); or

TOEFL CBT (Test of English as a Foreign Language computer based test) with a minimum of 230 including a minimum essay score of 4.5; or

TOEFL CBT with a minimum score of 250; or

TOEFL iBT with a minimum score of 76 (no minimum in any sub-test) and satisfactory completion of the SFU English Bridge Program; or

TOEFL CBT with a minimum score of 207 and completion of the SFU English Bridge Program

Note: Students admitted to SFU with a TOEFL score must satisfy one of the following as a pre-requisite to entering certified W (writing intensive) courses:

- Complete Foundations of Academic Literacy (FAL X99-4) with a C grade or better, or
- Achieve 4 or better on the essay section of the Language Proficiency Index (LPI) and 50% or higher on all other parts.

Appendix C

Current Admission Requirements for BC and Yukon Secondary Schools

Please see pages 20-21 of the 2006/2007 Calendar.