



*Sultanate of Oman
Ministry of Manpower
Directorate General of Technological Education*



Colleges of Technology General Foundation Program

Common GFP Structure

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| To be implemented by: | All GFP across the CoTs. | | |

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A. Document development details and summary of revisions

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| .00 | FPC Head | 16/06/2016 | A proposal on cancelling PFET and using L4 as entry criteria to the College programs was submitted to the Ministry by the Head of the English Specialization Committee. With reference to the proposal, administrative decree numbers 2 & 3 /15-16 were issued as an appendix of Dean's Council meeting #4 on 16 June 2016 to be implemented throughout the CoTs in Sept. AY 2016/2017. | English, Math & IT Specialization Committees |
| .01 | Ditto | 19/04/2018 | Developed flowcharts of program structure, GFP exit and entry criteria and student progression in English, Math and IT. | QA Team Leader and Math & IT Team leaders |
| .02 | Ditto | 7/01/2019 | Developed the common document & circulated for feedback. Revised the program structure section and the GFP entry and exit criteria section. | QA Team Leader and Math & IT Team leaders |
| .03 | Ditto | 15/01/2019 | Revised version .02 of section 2, section 4, diagram 2 & Math & IT flowcharts based on stakeholders' feedback and developed the final version and disseminated to all stakeholders. | GFP Working Groups |
| 1.0 | Ditto | 5/09/2019 | Revised the title of the document by replacing the word 'standards' with 'structure'. Also, added a new section showing the GFP management structure, a table showing the English level placement test scores, and an equivalency table of L4 accumulative mark with IELTS bands. | DGTE Expert |

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1. Aims of the General Foundation Programⁱⁱ

The General Foundation Program aims to:

1. help students gain effective command of the required skills in English Language, Mathematics and Information Technology
2. provide realistic learning opportunities for students to speak, listen to, read and write social, workplace and academic English confidently and effectively
3. provide a solid foundation in English, Mathematics, and Information Technology to allow students to perform successfully in a variety of academic programs at a higher educational level
4. equip students with the skills and attitudes to successfully participate in lifelong learning in their academic programs and future careers
5. develop social competence by helping students acquire teamwork and decision-making skills
6. develop academic competences which will include logical and abstract reasoning, problem solving, as well as higher level cognitive and critical thinking

2. General Foundation Program Management

The GFP is managed by the English Language Center (ELC) in coordination with the IT Department. The Head of Center and IT Head are responsible for the overall management of the program and they report directly to the college dean. The ELC has two heads of sections and the IT department assigns coordinators to liaise with the ELC. The GFP Management Committee is instituted to facilitate the coordination between the two entities as depicted in diagram 1.

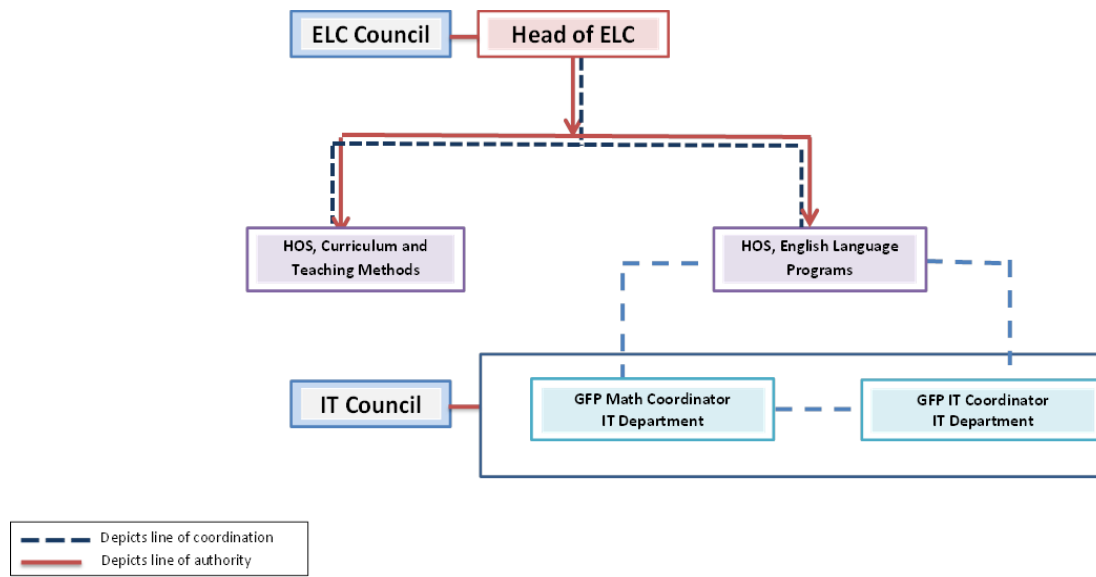


Diagram 1: GFP Management Committee Structure

3. General Foundation Program Structure

The GFP prepares students in four areas: English, Math, IT and General Study Skills. The General Study Skills standards are embedded in all GFP courses.

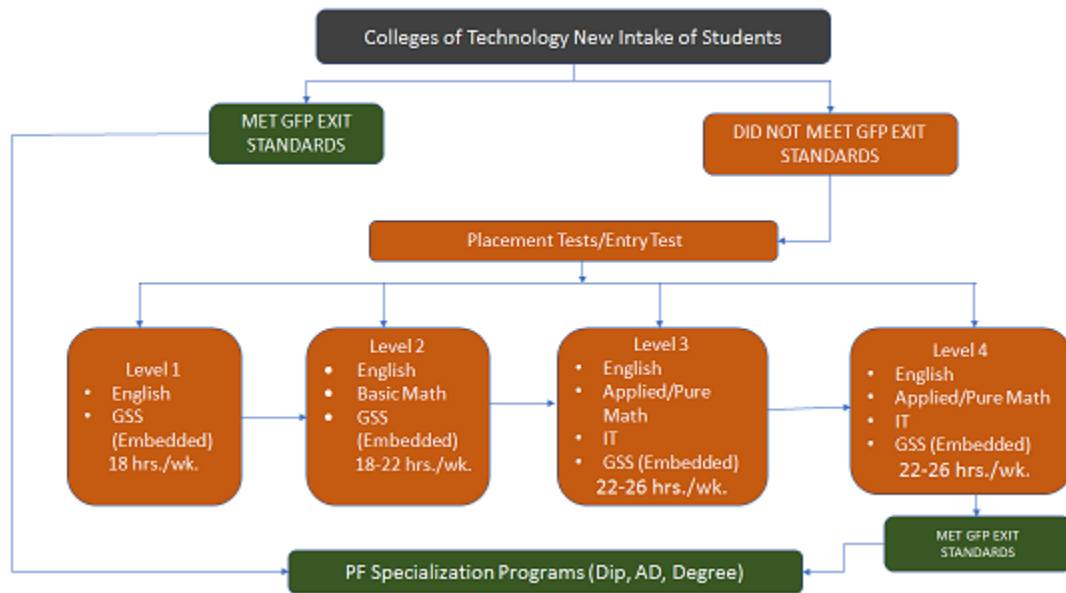


Diagram 2: GFP Structure: Course Offerings

The above GFP structure shows that the Program offers four levels of English Language, in addition to three courses of Math and one course of ITⁱⁱⁱ. The Math courses are offered to students from level 2 to 4 and the IT course is offered in level 3 or 4 depending on availability of resources at each College. The Applied and Pure Math courses are simultaneously offered in levels 3 & 4 to allow students to register according to their specialization and the Basic Math course is also offered in levels 3 & 4 besides level 2. The GFP structure is flexible as it is designed to offer all GFP courses every semester to meet the needs of all students.

The total number of teaching hours in each term varies depending on the level the student is enrolled in as shown in diagram 2. The teaching hours of the GFP courses are distributed as follows: English 18 hrs./wk./level, Math 4hrs./wk./course and IT 4 hrs./wk./course. The maximum number of teaching hours per level is circumscribed to ensure that students do not register for more than one Math course at a time and their registration is subject to completing the prerequisites.

Table 1 shows the type of English courses offered in each level and the weekly teaching hours allocated for each course at each level:

Table 1: English Program Courses and Weekly Teaching Hours Per Level

| Levels 1-3 | Level 4 |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Reading & Writing (10 hrs./wk.) | Reading & Writing (8hrs./wk.) |
| Listening & Speaking (8 hrs./wk.) | Listening & Speaking (7hrs./wk.) |
| | Projects & Presentations (3hrs./wk.) |

4. GFP Entry and Exit Standards

Students admitted to the Colleges of Technology (CoTs) are required to sit for the English Placement Test (PT), the Math PT and the IT Entry Test (ET). The majority of our students are placed in one of the four levels the English program offers based on their language competency as shown in table 2. Highfliers, who score 76 and above in the placement test, are exempted from studying English if they pass Level 4 Exit Exam. Failure to pass the exam, means they are required to study level 4.

Table 2: English Level Placement Scores

| Level | Placement Test Score |
|-------|----------------------|
| ONE | 0-30 |
| TWO | 31-45 |
| THREE | 46-60 |
| FOUR | 61-75 |

Students are also re-grouped to study Math and IT courses based on their competency in these subjects. Diagram 3 illustrates the progression route for the new intake. It shows that students may exit the GFP and enter the specialization programs only if they successfully achieve the required GFP standards in all subject areas.

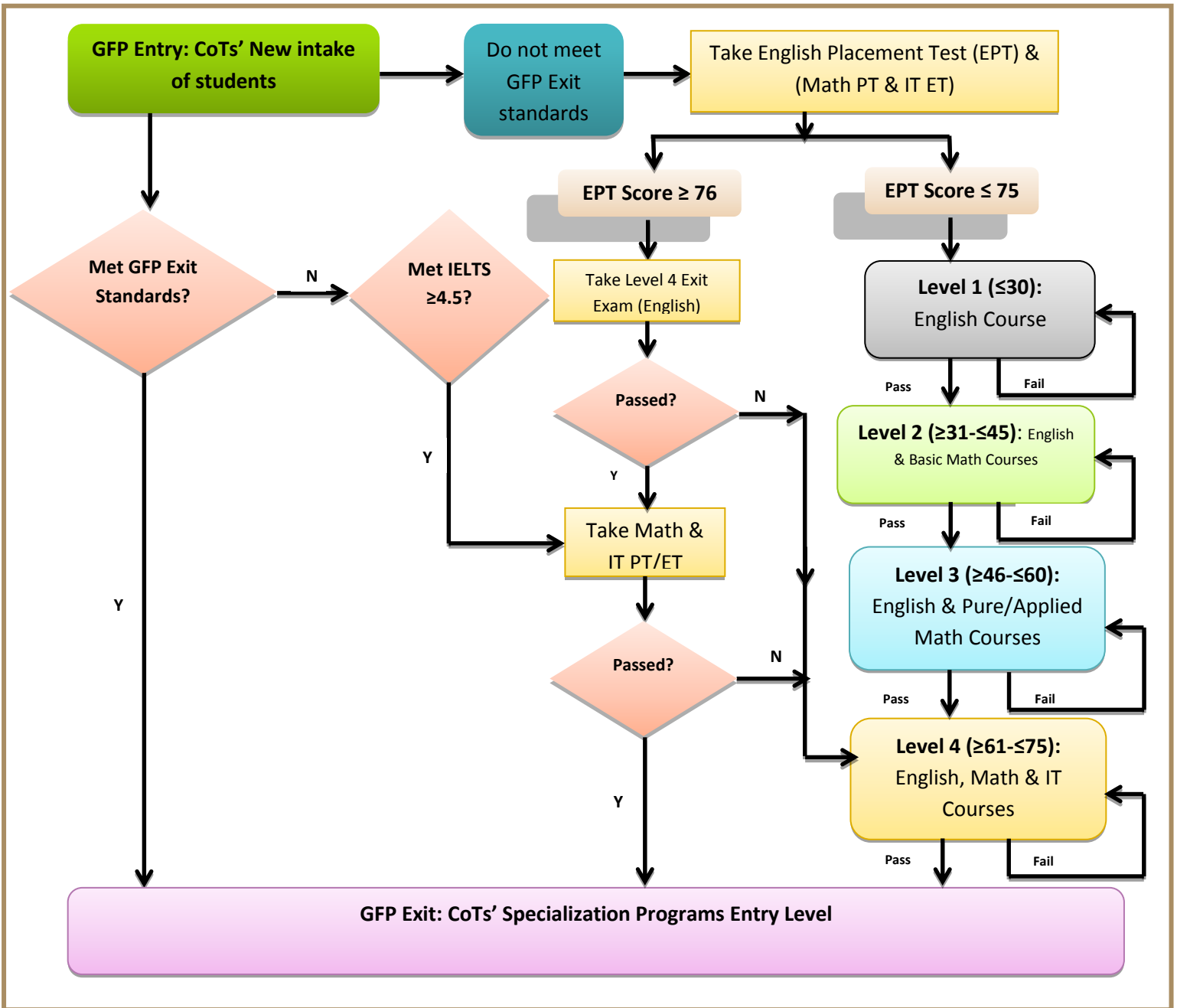


Diagram 3: GFP Entry and Exit Standards

5. GFP Student Progression Requirements

Student progression in English is different from Math and IT subjects (refer to endnote no. iii). The main difference lies in the number of chances students are given to study and repeat a course.

5.1 *Student Progression in English*

All GFP students newly admitted to CoTs are required to sit for the English Placement Test as shown in flow chart A on the following pages. Based on their results, they are initially placed in one of four different levels: Level 1 (0-30), Level 2 (31-45), Level 3 (46-60) and Level 4(61-75). Those students who score 76 and above in the test are identified as ‘highfliers’ and accordingly they qualify to sit for Level 4 English Exit Exam. If they score 71 and above in L4 Exit Exam, they will be exempted from studying the English Foundation Program, but they will not be exempted from studying Math and IT and if they score less than 70 they will be required to study level 4. Newly admitted students in any level may get promoted to a higher level during the first week of study if they are recommended by their teachers to sit for the Level Exit Exam and they subsequently achieve 71 and above in the exam.

Alternatively, some of these students may be exempted from studying English if they submit an academic IELTS certificate (band ≥ 5 for degree level or 4.5 for Advanced Diploma level) or TOEFL iBT equivalence (iBT ≥ 64 and iBT 56 respectively).

The repeat policy for English allows students to repeat any of the levels they may fail and they are given one chance of repeating during the entire English program. For example, students who study a level and fail are given a chance to repeat the level. If they re-study the level and fail again, they are suspended for one academic year. Those who re-study and pass get promoted to the next level. However, if they fail they are suspended as they have exhausted their one chance of repeating. Suspended students are academically supported by the Centers but they are not allowed to enroll in any of the GFP courses while they are on suspension. They will be allowed to continue their studies if they pass the level 4 Exit Exam resit scoring ≥ 71 or manage to obtain band ≥ 4.5 in the academic IELTS during the suspension period. They are given one chance to resit the L4 Exit Exam.

5.2 *Student Progression in Math*

All GFP students admitted to CoTs are required to sit for Part 1 of the Math Placement Test as shown in flow chart B in the following pages. Students who score < 50 on part 1 of the PT are required to register for the Basic Math course. Once this is successfully completed, they can register for Pure or Applied Math as per their specialization. Those who score between $\geq 50 - \leq 79$ on part1 of the PT are exempted from studying the Basic Math course. They are allowed to register for the higher level course in Applied or Pure

Math according to their specialization. Once this is successfully completed, the students can progress to PF programs as long as they have met all other GFP requirements as shown in flow charts A & C.

Students who score ≥ 80 in part 1 of the PT are given part 2 of the Placement Test. If they successfully pass part 2 of the placement test scoring ≥ 50 , they are exempted from studying Math; otherwise they are placed in Applied or Pure Math depending on their area of specialization. Exempted students will not be released from studying English or IT unless they have met all GFP requirements.

The repeat policy for the Math courses provides students with a number of chances to make up for their failure in any one course. Flow chart B shows that students who fail a course are allowed to re-study the course once more. If they fail after re-studying the course, they will be given a chance to sit for the resit exam. If they fail the resit exam, they are suspended for one semester after which they will be required to sit for the Math Exit Exam. If they fail the Exit Exam scoring < 50 , they are dismissed. Students are not allowed to enroll in any GFP courses while they are on suspension. However, they are academically supported through blended learning courses.

5.3 Student Progression in IT

All GFP students admitted to CoTs are required to sit for part 1 of the IT Entry Test as shown in flow chart C in the following pages. Students who score < 15 on part 1 of the Entry Test are required to enroll in the IT course. Upon successful completion of the course, they can progress to PF programs as long as they have met all other GFP requirements as shown in flow charts A & B. Those who score ≥ 15 out of 25 in part 1 of the Entry Test are given part 2 of the Entry Test. If they score ≥ 35 out of 75 in part 2 of the test, they will achieve a total score of 50 (part 1 & part 2). Students who achieve ≥ 50 in total are exempted from studying the IT course; otherwise they will have to take the course. GFP students are also exempted from studying the GFP IT course if they submit one of the following international certificates: International Computer Driving License (ICDL), Internet and Computer Core Certification (IC3) and Cambridge Diploma in IT skills. Exempted students will not be released from studying English or Math unless they have met all GFP requirements.

The repeat policy for the IT course is similar to the Math courses. It provides students with a number of chances. Flow chart C shows that students who study a course and fail are allowed to re-study the course once more. If they fail after re-studying the course, they will be given a chance to sit for the resit exam. If they fail the resit exam, they are suspended for one semester after which they will be required to sit for the IT Exit Exam. If they fail the Exit Exam scoring < 50 , they are dismissed. Students are not allowed to enroll in any GFP courses while they are on suspension. However, they are academically supported through blended learning courses.

6. Specialization Programs Entry Level

Students who meet the GFP exit standards in all subject areas either by studying the program or by submitting valid alternative assessment certificates are enrolled to pursue their study in one of the three educational levels the CoTs' offer: Diploma, Advanced Diploma, and Degree. They are initially placed to study one of the three levels according to their overall performance in Level 4^{iv} which has been benchmarked against IELTS bands accordingly:

Table 3: Level 4 IELTS Equivalency

| Educational Level | Level 4-Accumulative Mark | IELTS Band |
|-------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| Diploma | 50-63 | 4.5 |
| Advanced Diploma | 64-70 | 4.5 |
| Degree | 71-100 | 5 |

Students who obtain ≥ 71 in English and meet the GFP exit standards in Math and IT are initially qualified to study at a bachelor level. However, to progress to the bachelor level, they need to fulfill other college and departmental requirements. Other students, who were initially qualified to study at Advanced Diploma or Diploma level, and would like to pursue their education at a level higher than the one they were initially qualified for, may do so if they meet college and departmental requirements and attain the required band in IELTS or its TOEFL iBT equivalent as specified in Diagram 4 below.

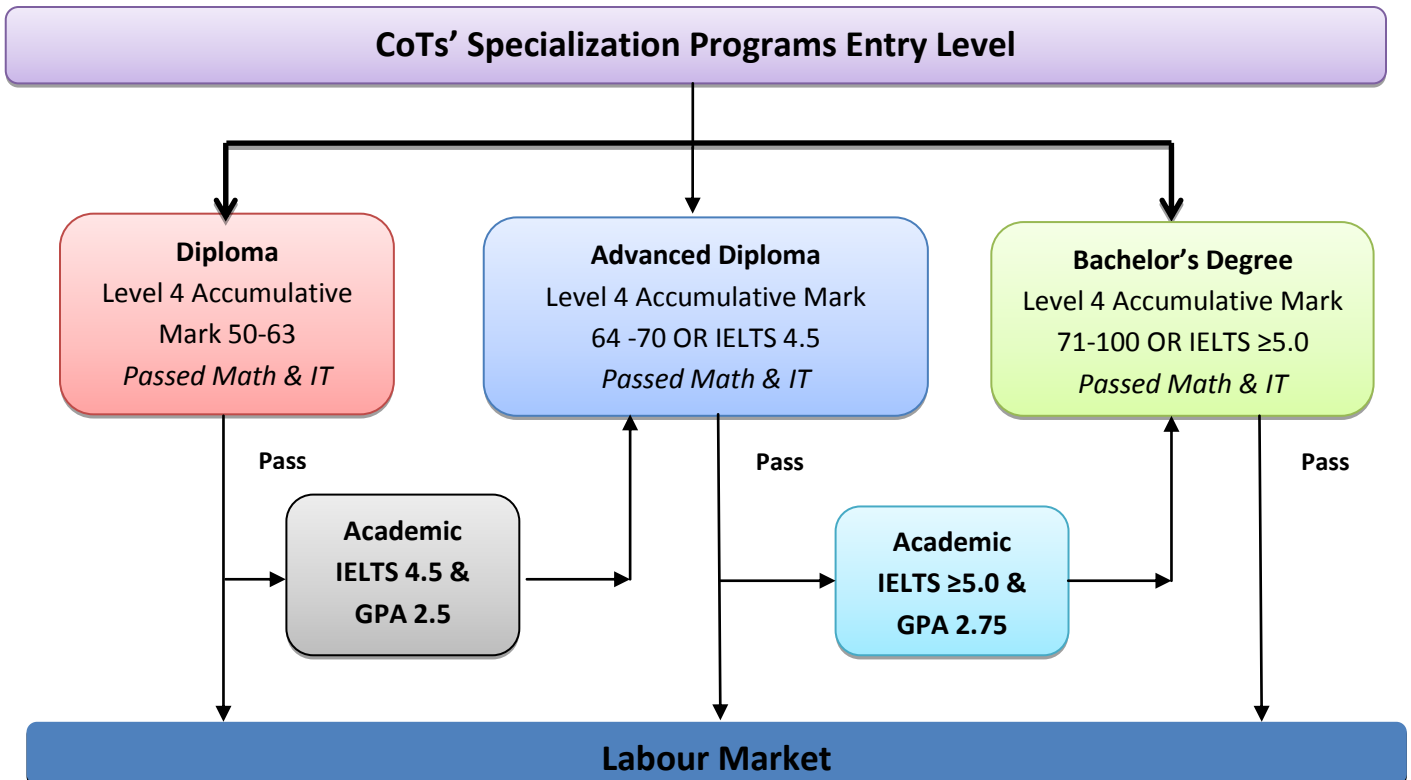
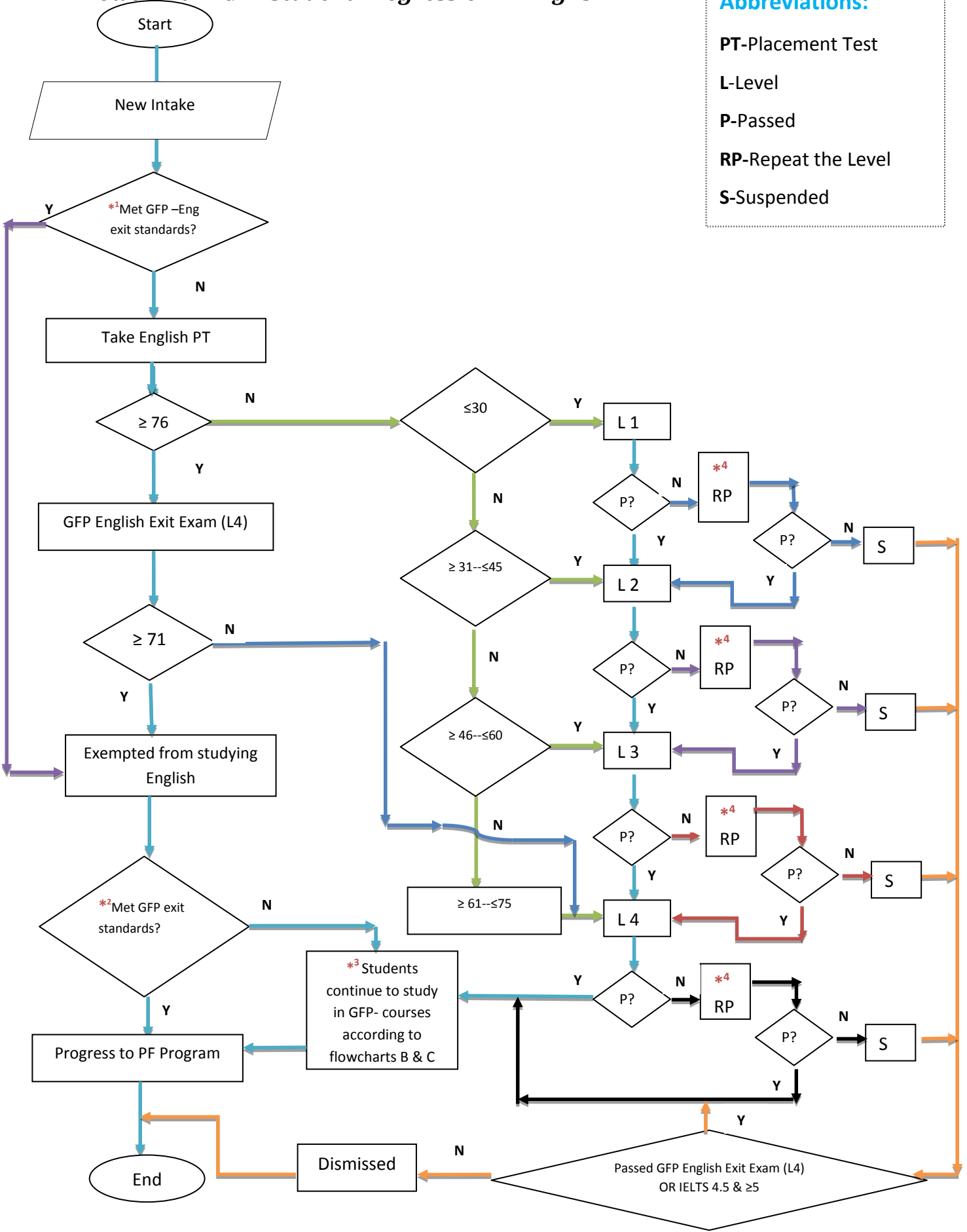


Diagram 4: CoTs' Specialization Programs Entry Level

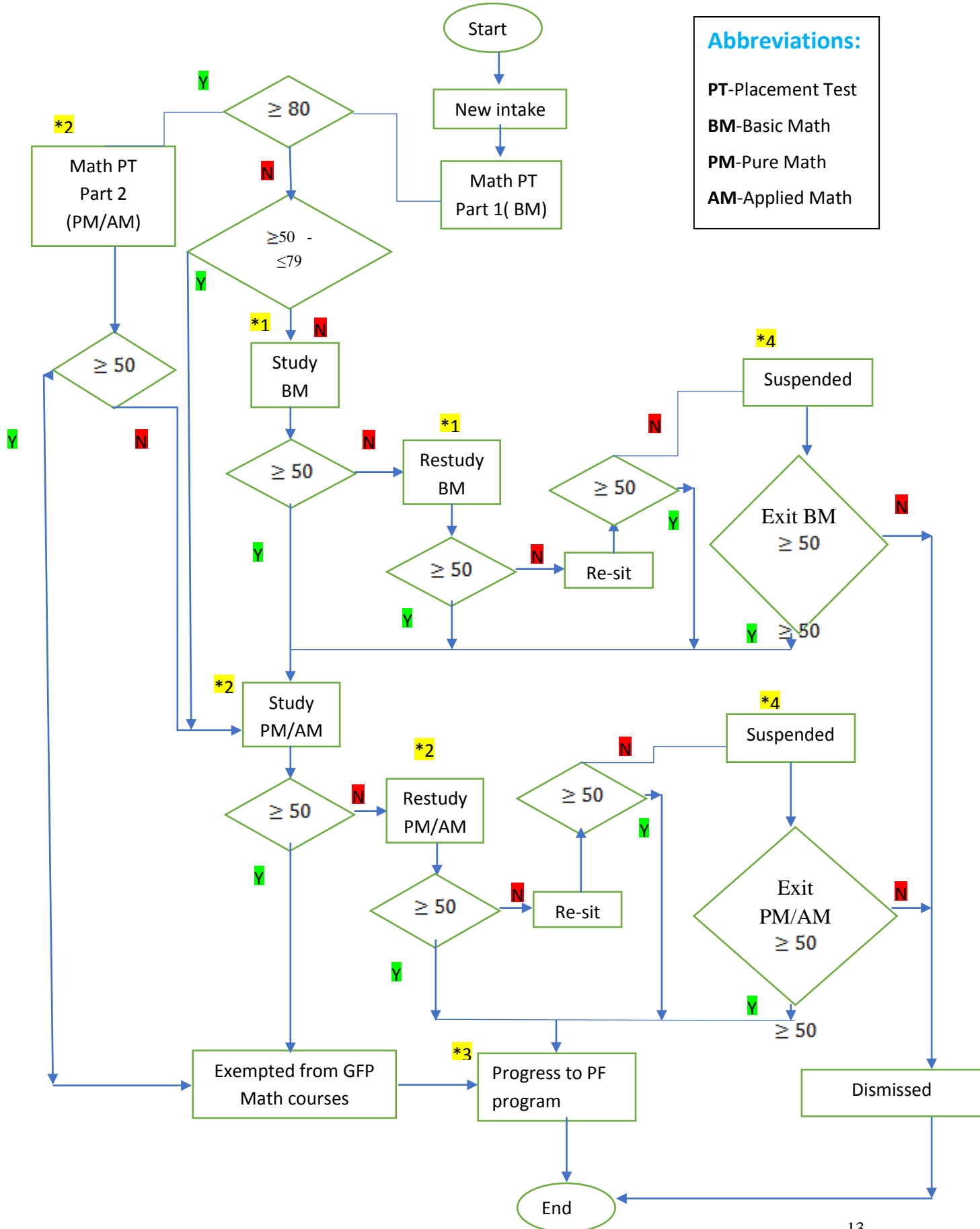
Flowchart A: GFP Student Progression in English

Abbreviations:

- PT**-Placement Test
- L**-Level
- P**-Passed
- RP**-Repeat the Level
- S**-Suspended



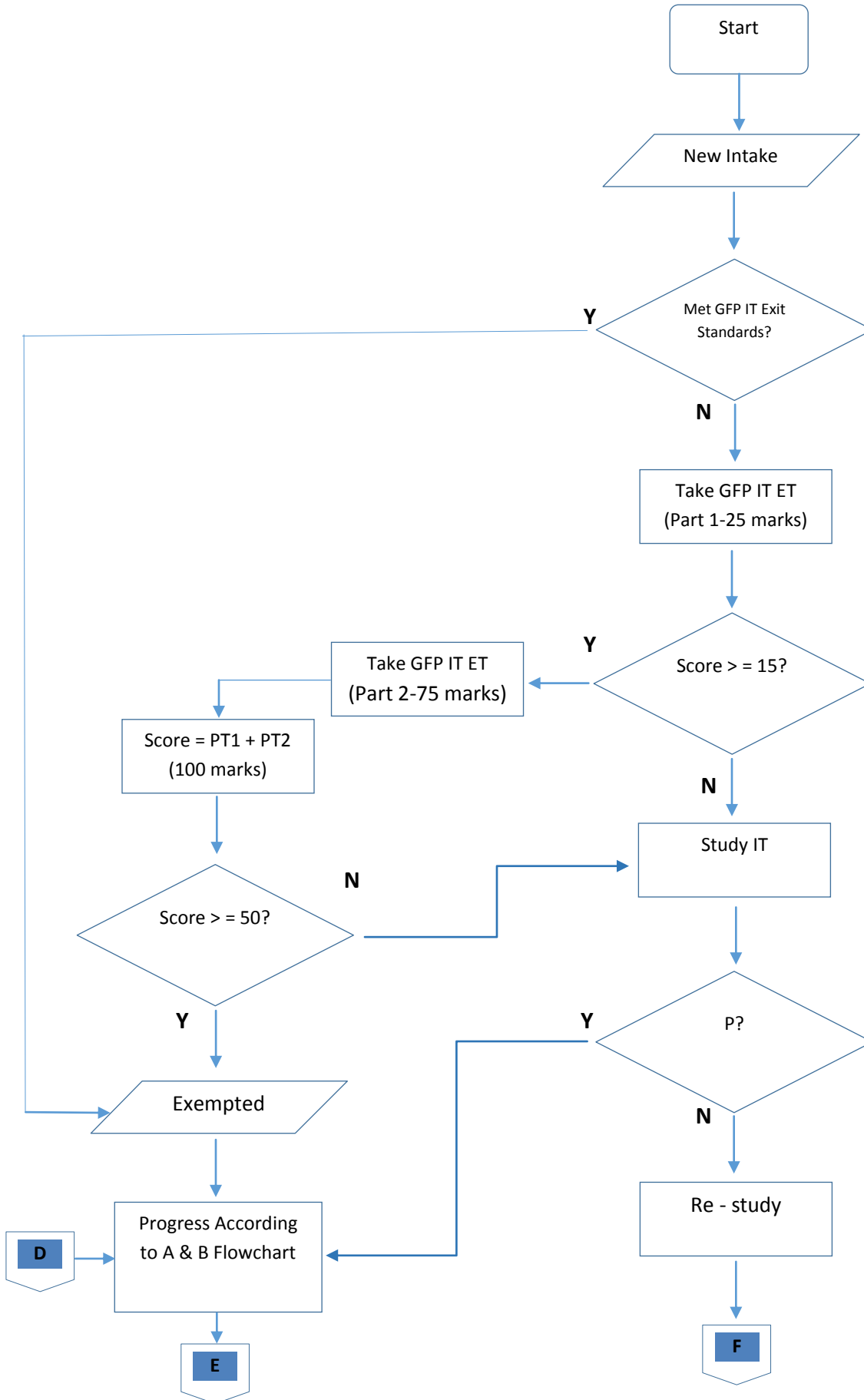
Flowchart B: GFP Student Progression in Math

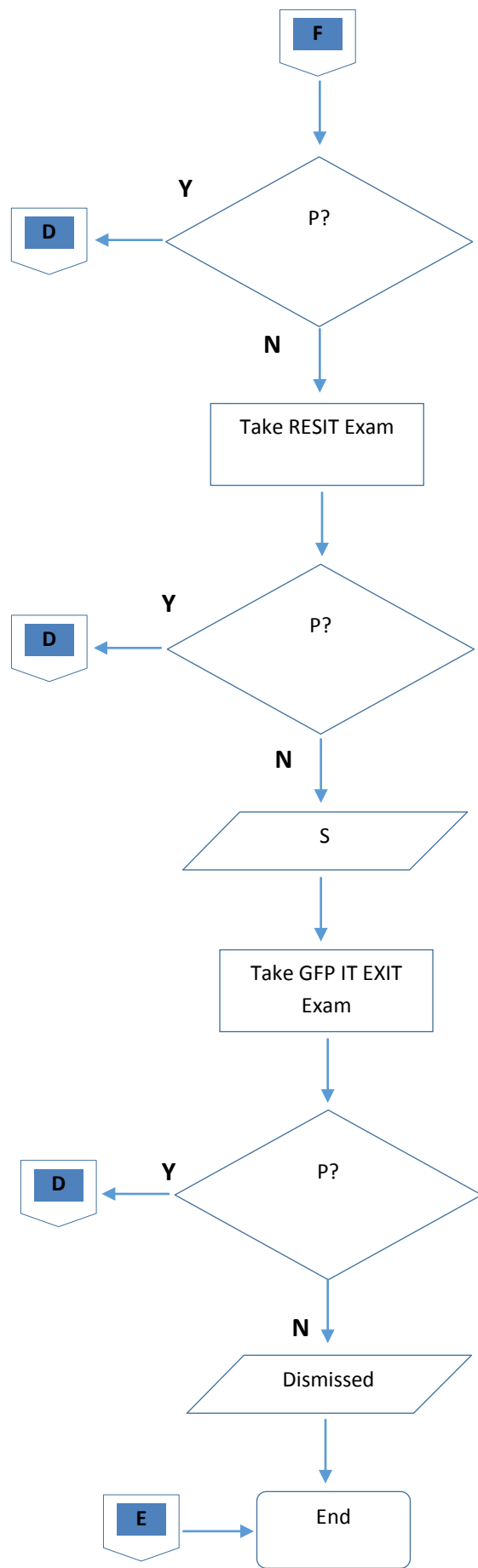


Flowchart C: GFP Student Progression in IT

Abbreviations:

- P**-Passed
- S**-Suspended
- ET**-Entry Test
- D**-Progress route
- E**-End
- F**-Re-study route





Legends:

Legend: Flow Chart A English

*¹ IELTS 4.5 for Advanced Diploma, IELTS ≥ 5.0 for Degree (or equivalent 56 and 64 in IBT respectively).

*² Standards for English (*¹), Math flowchart B, IT flowchart C

*³ Will progress to PF courses /be dismissed according to the courses passed/failed in Math or/and IT and meet the conditions specified in flowcharts B & C.

*⁴ A student will be allowed to repeat a level only once in the entire GFP-English Program. If s/he fails the repeated level, s/he will be suspended and will be able to re-enter into the system within 1 AY by producing certificates mentioned in *¹ or clear the GFP English Exit Exam (L4) provided he passes Math and IT as illustrated in flowcharts B and C. Failing this the student will be dismissed from the system.

Legend: Flow Chart B Math

*¹ Students will study/re-study Basic Math (BM) from level-2 onwards.

*² According to their specializations students will study/re-study Pure Math (PM)/ Applied Math (AM) in levels 3 & 4.

*³ The students will progress to PF only if they meet the criteria of GFP standards shown in flowcharts A (Eng), B (Math) & C (IT) or else they will be dismissed.

*⁴ Students will be suspended for a semester. They may re-enter the system after clearing the course they were suspended for by sitting for the Exit Exam or else they will be dismissed.

Legend: Flow Chart C IT

1. ET – Entry Test
 - ET Part 1 - Entry Test Part 1 (Online Modules 1, 2 & 6)
 - ET Part 2 - Entry Test Part 2 (Practical Modules 3, 4 & 5)
 - Score - Sum of Part 1 and Part 2 Tests
2. The course will be offered in level 3 or 4 depending on College resources.
3. Students if not dismissed will progress according to the criteria specified in flowcharts A and B.

ⁱ Implementers and users of this document are kindly requested to send comments and suggested revisions to the assigned contact person as part of the document review process.

ⁱⁱ Refer to the Mapping Document of the GFP Aims with the CoTs' Mission Vision Values & Graduate Attributes dated 11/17_V0.1. and the Colleges of Technology Strategic Plan (3rd Cycle 2014-2018) for more details.

ⁱⁱⁱ Refer to decree no 2/4/15-16 & 3/4/15-16 dated 16th June, 2016 and amendments to decree no 3/4/15-16 in letter no. 201800115053 dated 8th Nov., 2018.

^{iv} The cut-off score for each educational level was determined through a study carried out to examine the possibility of phasing out the PFET exam (Post Foundation Entry Test). The cut off score for the degree level was then benchmarked with IELTS band 5 by having a random sample of students who scored ≥ 71 to sit for the exam. (for more details, refer to the study report).