



HEALTH PROFESSIONS LICENSING AUTHORITY	
TITLE: English Language Proficiency Requirement for – International Medical Graduates Policy	
EFFECTIVE DATE: 1 July 2004	AMENDED POLICY DATES: 14 May 2004 1 December 2004 28 January 2005 11 May 2005 29 August 2006 1 July 2007 6 July 2009
BOARD: MEDICAL BOARD OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY	

Purpose

This policy has been developed to provide clear direction to the staff of the Health Professions Licensing Authority, members of the Medical Board of the Northern Territory and intending registrants regarding English language proficiency requirements of all overseas trained medical practitioners seeking registration in the Northern Territory under the *Health Practitioners Act*.

National Policy

Many international medical graduates come from a non-English speaking background and the level of English competency varies greatly. Through national agreement, the state and territory registration boards have implemented an English Language Proficiency Policy that is consistent. This policy is congruent with the nationally agreed policy.

Guiding Principle

The Medical Board of the Northern Territory has an obligation to ensure public protection by only registering persons who are able to deliver health care in a professional, safe and competent manner. An acceptable level of English language proficiency is necessary to enable practitioners to communicate with patients, other medical practitioners and health professionals, and for the maintenance of continuing professional education.

Legislative Requirements

Section 22(d) of the *Health Practitioners Act* 2004 requires applicants for registration to have an adequate command of the English Language to be eligible for registration in the Northern Territory.

English Language Model

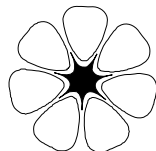
A high level of English language proficiency is essential to enable practitioners to communicate with patients, other doctors and health professionals, and for maintenance of professional standards.

The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is an appropriate language-testing model for international medical graduates seeking registration.

The University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, The British Council and IDP Education Australia developed the IELTS test. IELTS Australia and The British Council administer the test at least once a month at over 230 centres worldwide.

Requirements

Applicants need to submit evidence to the relevant registration authority of competency in speaking and communicating in English, as demonstrated by having completed the IELTS examination (Academic model) to the following standard:



1. The Board requires all overseas trained applicants to provide documentary evidence that they have achieved a minimum score of 7.0 in each of the four components.
2. Alternative English language proficiency tests that will be accepted are:
 - a) Completed and obtained an overall pass in the Occupational English Language Test (OET) administered by the Centre for Adult Education with grades of A or B in each of the four components; or
 - b) A pass in the Professional Linguistic Assessment Board (PLAB)) in the United Kingdom; or
 - c) A pass in the New Zealand Registration Examination (NZREX) in New Zealand.
3. Results must be obtained within 2 years prior to applying for registration.
4. An IELTS (or approved equivalent) Test Report Form more than two years old will be accepted as evidence of present level of ability if accompanied by proof that a candidate has actively maintained employment as a medical practitioner in a country where English is the native or first Language. Test results must comply with the current requirements of this policy.
5. Results from any of the above mentioned English language examinations must be obtained in one sitting.

Exemptions

The Board may grant exemption where the applicant provides evidence of secondary education in English in one of the countries, listed below, where English is the native or first Language:

- Canada
- Republic of Ireland
- New Zealand
- United Kingdom and Northern Ireland
- United States of America
- South Africa

At the Board's discretion, an exemption may be approved in special circumstances to applicants applying for registration. Examples would be, but not limited to:

- perform a demonstration in medical techniques; or
- undertake research which involves limited or no patient contact; or
- undertake postgraduate study or training while working in an appropriately supported environment which will ensure patient safety is not compromised.

Note:

The applicant is responsible for the cost of English tests.

Applicants should contact IELTS Australia on all matters relating to the administration of the IELTS English test, examination dates and its associated procedures. The IELTS English Test is held throughout Australia as well as overseas.

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