

Authority

This standard was approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council in December 2011 pursuant to the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act* (the National Law), as in force in each state and territory, with approval taking effect from 1 July 2012.

Summary

All internationally qualified applicants for registration or applicants who qualified for registration in Australia but did not complete their secondary education in English must demonstrate that they have the necessary English language skills for the safe and competent practice of occupational therapy.

All applicants must be able to demonstrate English language skills at the required International English Language Testing System (IELTS) academic level or Occupational English Test (OET) level (see 'Definitions' below), or specified alternatives.

Scope of application

This standard applies to applicants for initial registration. It does not apply to students.

Requirements

1. An applicant who is:
 - a) internationally qualified; or
 - b) who did not undertake and complete their secondary education in English and in one of the countries specified under the 'Exemptions' heading below, must submit evidence or, in the case of test results, arrange for evidence to be provided of their competency in English language.
2. English language competence can be demonstrated by having completed one of the following tests of English language proficiency:
 - a) The IELTS examination (academic module) with a minimum score of 7 in each of the four components (listening, reading, writing and speaking); or
 - b) Completion and an overall pass in the OET with grades A or B only in each of the four components.
3. Results of the tests in 2(a) and 2(b) above must be obtained in one sitting and must have been obtained within two years prior to applying for registration.

4. An IELTS or OET Test Report Form more than two years old will be accepted as current if accompanied by proof that the applicant has actively maintained employment as an occupational therapist using English as the primary language of practice in a country listed below. Test results must comply with the current requirements of this policy.
5. The applicant is responsible for the cost of the English tests.
6. The applicant must make arrangements for test results to be provided directly to the Board by the testing authority; for example, by secure internet login or as a formal transcript.

Exemptions

1. The Board may grant an exemption from the requirements where the applicant provides evidence that:
 - a) They undertook and completed secondary education that was taught and assessed in English in one of the countries listed below, where English is the native or first language; and
 - b) The applicant's tertiary qualifications in occupational therapy were taught and assessed in English in one of the countries listed below, where English is a native or first language:
 - Australia
 - Canada
 - New Zealand
 - Republic of Ireland
 - South Africa
 - United Kingdom
 - United States of America
2. The Board may grant an exemption for an application for limited registration in special circumstances, as described in the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act* (the National Law) as in force in each state and territory Part 7 'registration of health practitioners', Division 4 'limited registration' (see <http://www.ahpra.gov.au/Legislation-and-Publications/Legislation.aspx>).
3. These special circumstance exemptions will generally be subject to conditions requiring supervision by a registered occupational therapist and may also require the use of an interpreter.

4. The Board reserves the right at any time to revoke an exemption and/or require an applicant to comply under the heading 'Requirements'.

Definitions

IELTS means the International English Language Testing System developed by the University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate, The British Council and IDP Education Australia (see www.ielts.org/).

OET means Occupational English Test administered by the Centre for Adult Education (see www.occupationalenglishtest.org/)

An **Internationally qualified applicant** means a person who qualified as a health practitioner outside of Australia.

One sitting means the period of time set by the testing authority for completion of the test, for example IELTS states that the listening, reading and writing components of the test are always completed on the same day. However, depending on the test centre, the speaking test may be taken up to seven days either before or after the test date.

Review

This standard will commence on 1 July 2012. The Board will review this standard at least every three years.

