

## English language skills registration standard

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11 November 2010

### Summary

All applicants seeking initial registration as a nurse or midwife must demonstrate English language skills at a level that ensures safe and competent care is delivered to the public. The Board may require this capacity to be demonstrated in a number of ways.

The Board requires all applicants seeking initial registration to demonstrate English language skills on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) academic module examination by achieving, in a single sitting, a score of level 7 on each of the four components of the test, being listening, speaking, reading and writing. Alternatively, applicants may submit results achieved in a single sitting of an Occupational English Test for Nurses (OET) with a minimum A or B score on each of the four components of the test, being listening, speaking, reading and writing.

The Board considers that applicants who have been taught **and** assessed in English in their tertiary, entry to practice nursing and/or midwifery education in the countries listed here should meet this requirement. The countries are:

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

Test results need to be obtained within the two years preceding application for registration. The Board may grant an exemption in specified circumstances (see *Requirement 3*).

### Scope of application

This registration standard applies to all applicants seeking initial registration as a nurse or midwife in Australia, including students holding student registration at the time of application. It does not apply to applicants:

- a) who are currently registered with the Board in any other category of registration or
- b) who have been registered under previous legislation as a nurse or midwife in any jurisdiction in Australia.

## Requirements

1. An applicant who was taught and assessed in his or her tertiary, entry to practice nursing and/or midwifery education in English in the countries listed here:
  - Australia
  - Canada
  - New Zealand
  - Republic of Ireland
  - South Africa
  - United Kingdom and/or
  - United States of America

may be considered to have met the English language skills registration standard. For graduates from programs of study approved by the Board (as published at the Board's website at [www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au](http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au) under *Accreditation: Approved programs of study*), it is a requirement that the head of school confirms to the Board that the applicant is safe to practise nursing and/or midwifery in a clinical setting, using the English language.

2. All other applicants must submit evidence to the Board, or, in the case of test results, arrange for evidence to be provided of competency in English language skills, demonstrated by having completed the following tests of English language proficiency:
  - a) **completion in a single sitting of 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 in a single sitting and an overall pass in the OET with grades A or B only in each of the four components.**
3. Results must have been obtained within two years preceding application for registration.
4. An IELTS (or approved equivalent) Test Report Form older than two years may be accepted as current if accompanied by proof that an applicant:
  - a) has maintained employment in the workplace as a nurse and/or midwife using English as the primary language of practice in a country where English is the native or first language or
  - b) is a registered student who was required to provide an IELTS of 7 or equivalent at the commencement of his or her program of study and who has successfully completed the program of study in a full-time or part-time capacity in English, in a period that is greater than two (2) years.
5. Results from any of the English language examinations mentioned in this registration standard must be obtained in one sitting.
6. The applicant is responsible for the cost of IELTS / OET or other English tests accepted by the Board.
7. The applicant must make arrangements for test results to be provided to the Board for verification.
8. The Board reserves the right at any time to require an applicant seeking initial registration to undertake an English language test as specified by the Board.

## Exemptions

1. The Board may grant an exemption where an applicant is seeking limited registration in special circumstances, such as:
  - a) **to perform a demonstration in clinical techniques**
  - b) **to undertake research that involves limited or no patient contact and/or**
  - c) **to undertake a period of postgraduate study or supervised training while working in an appropriately supported environment that will ensure patient safety is not compromised.**

These special circumstances exemptions will be subject generally to conditions requiring supervision by a registered health practitioner and may also require the use of an interpreter.

2. The Board reserves the right at any time to revoke an exemption and/or require an applicant to undertake an English language test specified by the Board.

## Definitions

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

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

An **internationally-qualified applicant** means a person who qualified as a health practitioner outside 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. Depending on the test centre, the speaking test may be taken up to seven days either before or after the test date.

## Review

This registration standard will commence on ddmm 2010. The Board will review this standard at least every two years.