

Authority

This standard has been approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council on 31 March 2010 pursuant to the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (2009)* (the National Law) with approval taking effect from 1 July 2010.

Summary

An internationally qualified applicant or an applicant who is an international student must have the necessary English language skills for registration purposes by achieving an overall total score of 7.5 in the IELTS academic module, or OET alternative (see 'Definitions', below).

Test results will generally need to be obtained within two years, but preferably within 12 months prior to applying for registration. The Board may grant an exemption in specified circumstances.

Scope of application

This standard applies to all internationally qualified applicants and applicants who are international students seeking registration in Australia.

Requirements

1. An applicant who is:
 - a) an internationally qualified applicant, or
 - b) an applicant who did not undertake and complete their secondary education in English and in one of the countries specified in exemption (1) below

must submit evidence of secondary education or arrange for evidence to be provided (in the case of test results), to the Pharmacy Board of competency in English language skills as demonstrated by having completed the IELTS examination (academic module) to the following standard:

- The applicant must have achieved an overall total score of 7.5 with a minimum score of 7 in each of the four components (listening, reading, writing and speaking).
2. An alternative English proficiency test that will be accepted is completion 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 prior to applying for registration.
 4. An IELTS (or approved equivalent) Test Report Form more than two years old will be accepted as current if accompanied by proof that a candidate has actively maintained employment as a registered health

practitioner using English as the primary language of practice 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 abovementioned English language examinations must be obtained in one sitting.
6. The applicant is responsible for the cost of English tests.
7. 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.

Exemptions

1. The Board may grant an exemption from the requirements where :
 - a) the applicant provides evidence of successful secondary education in English, and that the applicant's tertiary qualifications in the relevant professional discipline were taught and assessed 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
 - United States of America
 - South Africa
 - Australia.
 - b) an applicant applies for limited registration in special circumstances, such as:
 - to perform a demonstration in clinical techniques
 - to undertake research that involves limited or no patient contact
 - to undertake postgraduate study or training while working in an appropriately supported environment that will ensure patient safety is not compromised.

These special circumstances exemptions will generally be subject to conditions requiring the use of a translator and/or supervision by a registered pharmacist.

2. The Board reserves the right at any time to require an applicant who has been granted an exemption to undertake a specified English language test.

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. The test is administered at least once a month by IELTS Australia and The British Council at more than 230 centres worldwide.

OET means Occupational English Test (OET) administered by the Centre for Adult Education.

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 standard will commence on 1 July 2010. The Board will review this standard at least every three years.

Policy on the application of the English Language Skills Registration standard

1 January 2012

English language skills registration standard

Introduction

The English Language skills registration standard (the standard) was implemented by the Pharmacy Board of Australia (the Board) on 1 July 2010. The standard outlines exemptions which applicants for registration may be eligible to claim.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to clarify how exemptions to the standard are to be applied to applications for registration.

Scope of application

The standard states:

“This standard applies to all internationally qualified applicants and applicants who are international students seeking registration in Australia.” (Please see Definitions below).

Applicants for general registration and certain types of limited registration under the Health Practitioner National Regulation National Law Act (the National Law) as in force in each state and territory are required to meet the requirements of the standard.

Applicants applying for student registration, provisional registration or limited registration (for postgraduate training or supervised practice pursuant to s66 of the National Law) are not required to meet the requirements of the standard until applying for general registration.

If required to meet the standard, evidence of a current English language (EL) test result is required (*Note: these test results must comply with the current requirements of the standard*).

Exemptions:

A. Applicants who completed at least the last two years of secondary education and all of their tertiary (pharmacy) qualifications taught and assessed in English in one of the following countries:

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

B. Applicants who are graduates of a Board approved program of study, and whose EL test results are more than two years old:

Those interns whose EL test results meet the current EL standard but which have expired at the time of applying for general registration may apply for an exemption.

An exemption will only be considered if accompanied by proof that the applicant has continuously participated in a Board approved program of study since the EL test was undertaken and the applicant, using English as the primary language of practice in a country where English is the native or first language, has completed a minimum of 1000 hours of supervised practice or if he/she was employed in an equivalent capacity (excludes being employed as a dispensary assistant, pharmacy technician or pharmacy sales assistant) within a 12 month period, each and every year until applying for registration, otherwise a new test must be undertaken and a current test result presented at registration

C. Internationally qualified applicants commencing an internship on or after 1 July 2010 – with a current EL test result at 1 July 2010

Those interns whose EL test results met the current EL standard at 1 July 2010 but expired after commencement of supervised practice approved by the Board may apply for an exemption.

An exemption will only be considered if the applicant provides evidence of the following - using English as the primary language of practice in a country where English is the native or first language, has completed a minimum of 1000 hours of supervised practice or if he/she was employed in an equivalent capacity (excludes being employed as a dispensary assistant, pharmacy technician or pharmacy sales assistant) within a 12 month period, each and every year until applying for registration, otherwise a new test must be undertaken and a current test result presented at registration.

No further exemptions to those outlined in the standard and this policy are authorised by the Board.

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

Definitions

National Law Act – Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act as in force in each state and territory.

EL Test – English language test, examples of which are provided in the Pharmacy Board of Australia English language skills registration standard.

Current EL standard – IELTS (academic): an overall total score of 7.5 with a minimum score of 7 in each of the four components (listening, reading, writing and speaking) in one sitting; or, OET - an overall pass with grades A or B only in each of the four components in one sitting. Results must have been obtained within two years prior to applying for general registration.

International students - applicants who did not complete all their secondary schooling in Australia.

Internationally qualified applicants – pharmacists who completed their pharmacy qualification overseas (other than New Zealand) who have completed the applicable Australian Pharmacy Council assessments and examinations

Board approved program of study – Australian and New Zealand pharmacy courses approved by the Board

Date of issue

1 January 2012

Review

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