

## 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

All internationally qualified applicants for registration as an optometrist, or applicants for registration who did not complete their secondary education in English must be able to demonstrate that they have the necessary English language skills for registration. All applicants must be able to demonstrate English language skills at IELTS academic level 7 or the equivalent, and achieve the required minimum score in each component of the IELTS academic module or OET (see 'Definitions', below).

Test results must be obtained within two years prior to applying for registration. The Board may grant an exemption in specified circumstances.

## Scope of application

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

## Requirements

1. An applicant for registration as an optometrist who is:

- an internationally qualified applicant; or
- an applicant who has graduated from an approved program of study but did not undertake and complete their secondary education in English and in any 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 relevant Board of competency in English language skills.

2. The following tests of English language proficiency are accepted by the Board for the purpose of meeting this standard:

- 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 must have been obtained within two years prior to applying for registration. An IELTS or OET Test Report Form more than two years old may be accepted as current if accompanied by proof that a candidate:
  - a) 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; or
  - b) is a registered student and has been continuously enrolled in an approved program of study since the test result was obtained.
4. Results from any of the English language examinations listed above must be obtained in one sitting.
5. The applicant is responsible for the cost of 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.

## 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 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:
    - Australia
    - Canada
    - New Zealand
    - Republic of Ireland
    - South Africa
    - United Kingdom
    - United States of America.
2. The Board may grant an exemption where an applicant applies for 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
- 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 generally be subject to conditions requiring supervision by a registered health practitioner and may also require the use of an interpreter.

3. 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

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