

## Information for applicants: how to provide evidence of your English language skills (ELS)

To register as a health practitioner in Australia, you must demonstrate that you have the necessary skills to communicate in English at a level that is safe to practise your profession.

The [English language skills registration standard](#) sets out the ways you can demonstrate your English language skills for registration in the following professions:

- Chinese medicine
- Chiropractic
- Dental
- Medical radiation practice
- Medical
- Occupational therapy
- Optometry
- Osteopathy
- Paramedicine
- Pharmacy
- Physiotherapy
- Podiatry, and
- Psychology.

This ELS evidence guide is designed to help you understand the types of evidence that you need to provide, depending on which pathway is most suitable for your individual circumstances:



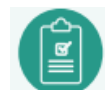
The combined education pathway



The advanced education pathway



The school education pathway



The test pathway

### Important notes:

- If your documents are not in English, you will need to provide certified translations of the documents.
- This is a guide to help applicants submit a complete application and support timely processing of your application for registration. Depending on your individual circumstances and the documents provided, the National Board may require additional evidence in order to decide whether you meet the English language skills registration standard.

### Determining the most suitable pathway for you

To work out which pathway is most suitable for you to demonstrate your English language skills, you can:

- use the English language skills pathway selection tool on our website
- read the standard.

Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency  
National Boards

GPO Box 9958 Melbourne VIC 3001 [Ahpra.gov.au](http://Ahpra.gov.au) 1300 419 495

Ahpra and the National Boards regulate these registered health professions: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice, Chinese medicine, chiropractic, dental, medical, medical radiation practice, midwifery, nursing, occupational therapy, optometry, osteopathy, paramedicine, pharmacy, physiotherapy, podiatry and psychology.

## Evidence requirements for each pathway



### The combined education pathway

To satisfy this pathway, you must have a combination of secondary education and qualifications, where you have carried out and successfully completed:

- a) at least two years of your **secondary education** which was taught and assessed solely in English in a **recognised country**, and
- b) your **qualification(s)** for your profession, which were taught and assessed solely in English in a **recognised country**.

### Checklist for applicants:

To apply under the combined education pathway, you need to provide the following evidence:

- ☐ Complete the online application form for registration, including details of your secondary education provider and the dates that you were enrolled, and
- ☐ For any periods of home schooling undertaken in your secondary education, you need to provide evidence that you have met the required curriculum, including dates of all periods of home schooling. This should be documented in a letter from the relevant Department of Education.
- ☐ Upload official transcripts of your **qualifications** from a **Board approved program of study**, or
- ☐ If your **qualification** was not from a **Board approved program of study**, upload certified copies of official transcripts of your **qualifications** including confirmation that the qualification was taught and assessed solely in English.
  - If your transcript does not show that the program of study was taught and assessed solely in English, you will also need to upload a letter from your education provider on official letterhead confirming that the program of study was taught and assessed solely in English.



### The school education pathway

To satisfy this pathway, English is your **main language** and you have carried out and successfully completed:

- a) at least 10 years of your **primary** and **secondary** school education, which was taught and assessed solely in English in a recognised country, and
- b) your **qualification(s)** for your profession, which were taught and assessed in any country solely in English.

### Checklist for applicants:

To apply under the school education pathway, you need to provide the following evidence:

- ☐ Complete the online application form for registration, including details of your primary and secondary education provider and the dates you were enrolled.
- ☐ For any periods of home schooling undertaken in your primary and/or secondary education, you need to provide evidence that you have met the required curriculum, including dates of all periods of home schooling. This should be documented in a letter from the relevant Department of Education.
- ☐ Upload official transcripts of your **qualifications** from a **Board approved program of study**, or
- ☐ If your **qualification** was not from a **Board approved program of study**, upload certified copies of official transcripts of your qualifications, including confirmation that the qualification was taught and assessed solely in English
  - If your transcript does not show that the program of study was taught and assessed solely in English, you need to upload a letter from your education provider on official letterhead confirming that the program of study was taught and assessed solely in English.



### The advanced education pathway

To satisfy this pathway, you have successfully completed at least six years in total of education (**full-time equivalent**), all taught and assessed in English, in a **recognised country** which includes:

- a) your **qualification(s)** for your profession, and
- b) your **advanced education** (or tertiary) at a degree level (**AQF** level 7 or higher), which requires you to read, write listen to and speak English.

A maximum of two years break is allowed while obtaining your **qualifications** and **advanced education**.

The last period of education must have been completed no more than two years before applying for registration.

### Checklist for applicants:

To apply under the advanced education pathway, you need to provide the following evidence:

- ☐ Complete the online application form for registration, including dates of any breaks taken during completion of your **qualification** and **advanced education** and the date you completed study prior to applying for registration.
  - The date you completed study prior to applying for registration may be the date you completed your **qualification** or the date that you completed your **advanced education**, depending on the order in which you have undertaken this study.
- ☐ If you have completed your **qualification** in a **Board approved program of study**, upload official transcripts of your **qualifications** for your profession.
- ☐ If you have completed **advanced education** in a **Board approved program of study**, upload official transcripts of your **advanced education**.
- ☐ If your **qualification** and/or your **advanced education** were not in a **Board approved program of study**, upload certified official transcripts of your **qualification(s)** for your profession and your **advanced education** (tertiary), including confirmation that the qualification and advanced education were taught and assessed solely in English in a recognised country.
  - If your transcripts do not show that the program of study was taught and assessed solely in English, you need to upload a letter from your education provider on official letterhead confirming that the program of study was taught and assessed solely in English.

### Additional information

Advanced education can be in any field. Advanced education programs that are fully completed online will not be accepted.

### Calculating breaks in study

When calculating breaks taken during study, the National Board will consider the relevant university calendar. Please note that regular scheduled breaks (i.e., summer holidays) within the relevant university calendar are not considered as a 'break' under this pathway and these periods do not need to be counted as 'breaks' while obtaining qualifications and advanced education.

If you have taken a break of two years while completing study, the National Board will consider the relevant university calendar and accept breaks of slightly more than two years. Multiple breaks will be accepted as long as they total less than two years. Breaks can be taken at any point during the completion of a qualification and/or advanced education.

Example one – northern hemisphere (academic year September – April)		
Qualification	Course completed April 2018	Acceptable break This would be considered to be a ‘two year’ break during study, as per the university calendar.
Advanced education	Course commenced September 2020	
Example two – southern hemisphere (academic year February – November)		
Advanced education	Course completed December 2018	Break not accepted This break is more than two years and outside the university calendar breaks.
Qualification	Course commenced July 2021	



### The test pathway

To satisfy this pathway, you must achieve the required minimum scores in one of the following English language tests *and* meet the requirements for **test results** outlined in Appendix one.

1. Cambridge (C1 Advanced or C2 Proficiency – paper and computer at test centre only)
2. International English Language Testing System (Academic – paper and computer at test centre only) (IELTS)
3. Occupational English Test (OET) (on paper or computer based in testing centre)
4. Pearson Test of English Academic (PTE Academic) (computer at test centre only)
5. Test of English as a Foreign Language internet-based test (TOEFL iBT) (computer at test centre only)

To apply using this pathway, we will only accept test results from:

- a) one test sitting, or
- b) a maximum of two test sittings in a 12-month period.

And *only* if the requirements for the **test results** are met as set out in the appendix and below.

The Medical Board of Australia will also accept successful completion of one of the following profession specific tests:

- New Zealand Registration Examination (NZREX)
- Professional and Linguistic Assessments Board test (PLAB test).

### Checklist for applicants:

To apply under the test pathway, you need to provide the following evidence:

1) For tests taken within the last two years:

- ☐ Complete the online application form for registration, including specifying which accepted English test you have undertaken.
- ☐ Upload a copy of your test results, which includes your candidate number issued to you by the test provider. Ahpra staff will use this number to verify your results.
  - For PTE Academic tests only, you will need to authorise Ahpra to access your test results through the test provider's system.

2) For tests taken more than two years ago, but you have been **continuously working**<sup>1</sup>, (which extends your test validity timeframe):

- ☐ Complete the online application form for registration, including specifying which accepted English test you have undertaken. You must also specify the dates that you started working and (if relevant) the date that you stopped working.

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<sup>1</sup> As a registered health practitioner in the Chinese medicine, chiropractic, dental, medical radiation practice, medical, occupational therapy, optometry, osteopathy, paramedicine, pharmacy, physiotherapy, podiatry, or psychology profession<sup>1</sup>, (which extends your test validity timeframe):

<sup>1</sup> 'Continuously working' means working for at least 26 weeks full-time equivalent per year. For example, 52 weeks part-time work (five days per fortnight) which in total adds up to the equivalent of 26 weeks full-time.

- ☐ Upload a copy of your test results, which includes your candidate number issued to you by the test provider. Ahpra staff will use this number to verify your results.
- ☐ Upload a copy of your curriculum vitae (in Ahpra's [standard format](#)).
- ☐ Upload a letter from your employer/s confirming your continuous employment.

3) For tests taken more than two years ago, but you have been continuously enrolled in a **Board approved program of study** (which extends your test validity timeframe):

- ☐ Complete the online application form for registration, including specifying which accepted English test you have undertaken.
- ☐ Upload a copy of your test results, which includes your candidate number issued to you by the test provider. Ahpra staff will use this number to verify your results.
- ☐ Upload a copy of your transcript, which shows that you have been continuously enrolled in a **Board approved program of study**, and that:
  - You commenced this study within 12 months of sitting the test; and
  - You finished your study within 12 months of submitting your application.

4) For medicine applicants only, if you did the PLAB or NZREX test, you need to provide the following evidence:

- ☐ Complete the online application form for registration, including specifying which accepted English test you have undertaken.
- ☐ Upload a certified copy of your test results.

### **IELTS One Skill Retake**

National Boards have agreed to accept the IELTS One Skill Retake to provide further flexibility to applicants applying for registration. This is not available for the other accepted English language tests.

The IELTS One Skill Retake allows eligible test takers to re-sit one component of the test *within a 60-day period*, if all other components and certain requirements are met. Successful completion of an IELTS One Skill Retake is not considered an additional test sitting by National Boards; however, if you are relying on results from two test sittings *and* an IELTS One Skill Retake, all three of these tests must have been completed within a 12-month period.

## Glossary

**Advanced education (which may also be known as tertiary education)** means successful completion of education at a level comparable to an Australian bachelor degree (AQF7) or higher which leads to an award of a degree or above. The advanced education can be in any field, however, programs that are fully completed online will not be accepted. This is because this pathway requirement is to show the applicant's exposure to English at this level and requires applicants to give evidence of the course requirement to read, write, listen to and speak English in the education environment. Your qualification does not need to be completed before the advanced education you wish to count. A maximum of two years break while obtaining your **qualifications** and **advanced education** will be accepted in the advanced education pathway and all other criteria set out in the pathway must be satisfied.

**AQF** means the Australian qualification framework which is the national policy for regulated qualifications in Australian education and training. You can find out more about a bachelor degree at AQF level 7 on the [Australian Qualifications Framework website](#)

**Board approved program of study** means an accredited program of study approved by the relevant National Board under section 49(1) of the National Law and published on the list of approved programs of study on the Board's website.

**Continuously working** means working for at least 26 weeks **full-time equivalent** per year. For example, 52 weeks part-time work (five days per fortnight) which in total adds up to the equivalent of 26 weeks full-time. Continuously working can include some periods of leave. However, as this requirement is to demonstrate exposure to English in the working environment the minimum hours worked per year must total 26 weeks *full-time equivalent*.

**Full-time equivalent** means the normal course load that a student would need to take in order to complete a course in the minimum time (not including accelerated or fast-track courses). For the purpose of:

- education, is the successful completion of a course load which meets the education provider's definition of full-time enrolment and does not include recognised prior learning. For example, a student enrolled in a full-time four-year undergraduate degree would be expected to complete the degree in four years. This is set by the relevant educational institution. This could include a combination of part-time courses, which together make up a full-time course load. For example, two part-time courses taken at the same time, each consisting of a 50 per cent course load that together meet the full-time load requirement. This pathway requirement is to show exposure to English in the education environment. For that reason, concurrent education, accelerated courses, fast track courses and/or additional education taken during semester breaks cannot be counted for more than one full-time equivalent course load. For example, an applicant that has studied two programs in a year concurrently, one at half full-time equivalent and the other at three quarters full-time equivalent, could only count a maximum of one full-time equivalent year. Where a course is delivered in a shorter time such as an accelerated or fast-tracked course (for example a four-year course delivered over three years) only the duration of the delivery of the course is to be counted (i.e. the three-year course delivery period in this example)
- work means the equivalent to working full-time hours typically ranging from 35 to 38 hours per week.

**Main language** means the language primarily used for reading, writing, listening, and speaking and the language known best and most comfortable with and used most frequently on a day-to-day basis.

**National Law** means the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory.

**NZREX** means New Zealand Registration Examination administered by the New Zealand Medical Council.

**PLAB** test means the test administered by the Professional and Linguistic Assessments Board of the General Medical Council of the United Kingdom.

**Primary education** means Australian school years from year one (1) or first year through to year six (6) inclusive (or equivalent).

**Recognised countries** means the following list of countries or territories:



- Antigua and Barbuda
- Anguilla
- Australia
- The Bahamas
- Barbados
- Belize
- Bermuda
- British Indian Ocean Territory
- Canada
- Cayman Islands
- Dominica
- Falkland Islands
- Gibraltar
- Grenada
- Guernsey
- Guyana
- Isle of Man
- Jamaica
- Jersey
- Malta
- New Zealand
- Republic of Ireland
- Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha
- South Africa\*
- St Kitts and Nevis
- St Lucia
- St Vincent and the Grenadines
- Trinidad and Tobago
- United Kingdom
- United States of America
- US Virgin Islands

\*In the revised ELS standard, South Africa has been removed as a recognised country however, there will be a 12-month transition period for removing South Africa as a recognised country. This change will come into effect on 17 March 2026.

Other **recognised countries** approved by the National Boards from time to time will be published on the Board's website. National Boards reserve the right at any time to revoke their approval of a recognised country.

**Secondary education** means Australian school years seven (7) through to twelve (12) inclusive (or equivalent), even when year seven is classified as primary education in a particular state or territory.

**Qualifications** means the qualifications in the relevant health profession which you are relying on to support your eligibility for registration under Part 7 of the National Law.

**Test results** means the official results provided by the English language test provider. If you are providing test results from two test sittings as set out in the standard, the results from both sitting must meet the requirements of the standard.

**Two test sittings in a 12-month period** means that the dates of the sittings must not be more than 12 months apart. For example, if your first test sitting was on 1 March, the second sitting must be no later than 1 March of the following year. If you are providing test results from two sittings, you may provide results of any two tests taken within a 12-month period as set out in this standard. Results cannot be combined from different test providers.

## Appendix one

### Test results and minimum requirements

Test	Profession	Overall score needed <sup>a</sup>	Component scores needed	Test results accepted from <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>one test sitting, or</li> <li>a maximum of two test sittings in a 12-month period only if:</li> </ul>
<b>Cambridge</b> (C1 Advanced or C2 Proficiency) (Paper and computer at test centre only)	<b>Chinese medicine</b> <b>Chiropractic</b> <b>Dental</b> <b>Medical</b> <b>Medical radiation practice</b> <b>Occupational therapy</b> <b>Optometry</b> <b>Osteopathy</b> <b>Paramedicine</b> <b>Pharmacy</b> <b>Physiotherapy</b> <b>Podiatry</b> <b>Psychology</b>	Minimum score of 185	Minimum overall score of 185 in each of the three components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>listening</li> <li>reading</li> <li>speaking</li> </ul> and minimum score of 176 in the one component: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>writing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>you are tested in all four components in each sitting</li> <li>you achieve a minimum score of 185 in each component for listening, reading and speaking and a minimum score of 176 for writing across the two sittings, and</li> <li>when using two test sittings no score in any component of the test(s) for either test sitting is below 176.</li> </ul>
<b>IELTS</b> (Academic paper and computer at test centre only)	<b>Chinese medicine</b> <b>Chiropractic</b> <b>Dental</b> <b>Medical</b> <b>Medical radiation practice</b> <b>Occupational therapy</b> <b>Optometry</b> <b>Osteopathy</b> <b>Paramedicine</b> <b>Pharmacy</b> <b>Physiotherapy</b> <b>Podiatry</b> <b>Psychology</b>	Overall score of 7	Minimum score of 7 in each of the three components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>listening</li> <li>reading</li> <li>speaking</li> </ul> and minimum score of 6.5 in the one component: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>writing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>you achieve a minimum overall score of 7 in each sitting, and</li> <li>you achieve a minimum score of 7 in each component for listening, reading and speaking and a minimum score of 6.5 for writing across the two sittings, and</li> <li>when using two test sittings no score in any component of the test(s) for either test sitting is below 6.5.</li> </ul>

Test	Profession	Overall score needed <sup>a</sup>	Component scores needed	Test results accepted from <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>one test sitting, or</li> <li>a maximum of two test sittings in a 12-month period only if:</li> </ul>
<b>OET</b> (On paper or computer based in testing centre) (Any profession-specific OET test can be accepted)	<b>Chinese medicine</b> <b>Chiropractic</b> <b>Dental</b> <b>Medical</b> <b>Medical radiation practice</b> <b>Occupational therapy</b> <b>Optometry</b> <b>Osteopathy</b> <b>Paramedicine</b> <b>Pharmacy</b> <b>Physiotherapy</b> <b>Podiatry</b> <b>Psychology</b>		Minimum score of B in each of the three components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>listening</li> <li>reading</li> <li>speaking,</li> </ul> and minimum score of C+ in the one component: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>writing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>you are tested in all four components in each sitting, and</li> <li>you achieve a minimum score of B in each component for listening, reading and speaking and a minimum score of C+ for writing across the two sittings, and</li> <li>when using two test sittings no score in any component of the test(s) for either test sitting is below C+.</li> </ul>
<b>PTE Academic</b> (Computer at test centre only)	<b>Chinese medicine</b> <b>Chiropractic</b> <b>Dental</b> <b>Medical</b> <b>Medical radiation practice</b> <b>Occupational Therapy</b> <b>Optometry</b> <b>Osteopathy</b> <b>Paramedicine</b> <b>Pharmacy</b> <b>Physiotherapy</b> <b>Podiatry</b> <b>Psychology</b>	Minimum overall score of 66	Minimum score of 66 in each of the three communicative skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>listening</li> <li>reading</li> <li>speaking</li> </ul> and minimum score of 56 in one communicative skill: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>writing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a minimum overall score of 66 is achieved in each sitting, and</li> <li>you achieve a minimum score of 66 in each of the communicative skills of listening, reading and speaking and a minimum score of 56 in writing across the two sittings, and</li> <li>when using two test sittings no score in any of the communicative skills for either test sitting is below 56.</li> </ul>

Test	Profession	Overall score needed <sup>a</sup>	Component scores needed	Test results accepted from <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>one test sitting, or</li> <li>a maximum of two test sittings in a 12-month period only if:</li> </ul>
<b>TOEFL iBT</b> (Computer at test centre only)	<b>Chinese medicine</b> <b>Chiropractic</b> <b>Dental</b> <b>Medical</b> <b>Medical radiation practice</b> <b>Occupational therapy</b> <b>Optometry</b> <b>Osteopathy</b> <b>Paramedicine</b> <b>Pharmacy</b> <b>Physiotherapy</b> <b>Podiatry</b> <b>Psychology</b>	Minimum total score of 94	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>24 for listening</li> <li>24 for reading</li> <li>24 for writing, and</li> <li>23 for speaking.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a minimum total score of 94 is achieved in each sitting, and</li> <li>you achieve a minimum score of 24 for listening, 24 for reading, 24 for writing and 23 for speaking across the two sittings, and</li> <li>when using two test sittings no score in any of the test sitting sections is below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>20 for listening</li> <li>19 for reading</li> <li>24 for writing, and</li> <li>20 for speaking.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### Further resources

Please refer to our website for additional resources, including Frequently Asked Questions and a pathway selection tool.