



**MEDICAL SCIENCES COUNCIL
OF NEW ZEALAND**

TE KAUNIHERA PŪTAIAO HAUORA O AOTEAROA

POLICY AND GUIDELINES: ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

AUGUST 2018

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Scope	This policy applies to all practitioners seeking registration with the Medical Sciences Council

Associated Policy Documents	
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Policy Overview

Sections 16(a) and (b) of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 require the Medical Sciences Council (the Council) to be satisfied that any applicant is able to communicate effectively for the purpose of practising in the scope for which they are seeking registration in New Zealand, and adequately comprehends English to protect the health and safety of the public.

This policy document sets out the Council's standard for applicants to meet the requirements for demonstrating English language proficiency.

English Language Proficiency

Registration applicants must satisfy the Council they are able to communicate effectively for the purpose of practising in the medical laboratory science or anaesthetic technology professions. Their communication in, and comprehension of English, is sufficient to protect the health and safety of the public.

English language proficiency is inclusive of speaking, reading, listening, and writing.

Demonstration of English Language Proficiency

Registration applicants must meet at least one of the following:

1. The applicant graduated from a Council-accredited New Zealand qualification programme;
or
2. The applicant's qualification programme was taught (inclusive of both instruction and assessment) solely in English in one of the following countries:
 - Australia
 - Canada
 - Republic of Ireland
 - South Africa
 - United Kingdom
 - United States of America

The applicant must have been resident in the respective country for the entire duration of the qualification programme. For medical laboratory scientist registration the qualification programme must be of at least 3-years duration. For registration in the medical laboratory technician, medical laboratory pre-analytical technician, or anaesthetic technician scopes of practice, the qualification programme must be of at least 2-years duration; **or**

3. The applicant is resident in New Zealand and can satisfy **all** of the following:
 - New Zealand residency has been for a continuous period of at least 2-years fulltime equivalency within the 5-years immediately prior to application: **and**
 - Provide written certification of the applicant's proficiency in English language from two referees both of whom:

- Have English as their primary language; **and**
 - Do not have a personal relationship with the applicant; **and**
 - Hold registration as a health practitioner under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003
 - Complete a Council-issued *Certification of English Language Proficiency* substantiating the applicant's ability to comprehend and communicate effectively in English in a health professional setting; **and**
- One referee must be a work colleague of the applicant.
- Applicants who do not meet any of 1 – 3 above will be required to provide evidence of successful completion of a Council-approved English language test.

English Language Test

Applicants required to sit an English language test will need to complete the International English Language Testing (IELTS) to the following standards:

- IELTS results were achieved within 2-years immediately prior to their registration application; **and**
- The results were achieved in one sitting; **and**
- The test was in the academic band of IELTS; **and**
- The applicant scored a minimum of a 7 in each of the 4-components of listening, reading, writing, and speaking; **and**
- The applicant scored a minimum of a 7.5 average across all 4-components

English Language Proficiency: Ongoing Competency Requirements

Should concerns be raised about the communication competencies (including their proficiency in English) of a practitioner registered with the Council, a competency review may be undertaken under sections 34 and 36 of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003.