

English language requirements

The Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (HPCA ACT) section 16(a)–(b) requires the Board to be satisfied that any person accepted for registration to practise psychotherapy in New Zealand is able 'to communicate effectively and comprehend English sufficiently to protect the health and safety of the public'¹ and for the purposes of practising within a scope of practice in which they are registered.

The Board reserves the right to review an applicant's fitness to practise at any time HPCA ACT section 16.

If English is not the applicant's first or home language and/or the applicant has not completed an acceptable psychotherapy qualification solely in the English language, the Board requires them to demonstrate proficiency in English by completing an academic module International English Language Testing System (IELTS).

Implementation

International English Language Testing System (IELTS)

Applicants are required to pass an IELTS if English is not the applicant's first language or the applicant has not completed a Board-approved psychotherapy qualification solely in the English language.

- Minimum pass marks for the IELTS test are 7 on the IELTS Academic Module (i.e. no less than 7 in each band).
- The results must be less than three years old from the date the test has been sat by the applicant.
- Multiple test report forms will not be accepted and therefore applicants will need to pass IELTS within one result. IELTS test scores will only be accepted for up to 24 months after the test has been taken. Results from 'IELTS One Skill Retake' on the IELTS Academic Module (for one band only: Writing, Speaking, Reading, or Listening) are accepted.)

Occupational English Test (OET)

- Grades A and B
- The applicants may retake one band only (Writing, Speaking, Reading or Listening)
- The results must be less than three years old from the date the test has been sat by the applicant.

The results for the tests described must be valid at the time registration is approved, rather than when the registration application is submitted. This is important for applicants to note as some registration processes can take some time to complete.

Exemptions to completing the above

Applicants may apply for an exemption to sitting and passing the IELTS or the OET. All exemption requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis and may require an interview with Board-appointed representatives at the applicant's own expense.

¹ Te reo and sign language are also official languages of Aotearoa New Zealand

An exemption will be considered when the Board is satisfied that all the following requirements have been met:

- The applicant has provided the Board with two references from registered psychotherapists who have observed and are familiar with the applicant's English language competency.
- All referees must speak English as a first language and must comment on the applicant's competence in reading, writing, speaking and listening in their clinical mahi.

Referees must complete the English language referee form (attached).

Right of review

The Board reserves the right to review any applicant's English competence at any time.

<i>Approved by: The Board February 2024</i>	<i>Policy in effect from: October 2008</i>
<i>Previous review dates: April 2015, November 2020</i>	<i>Date to be reviewed: November 2022</i>