



Policy on English Competence and English Tests

Introduction

Under s6(2) of the Veterinarians Act 2005 the Veterinary Council must be satisfied that those seeking to be registered are able to “communicate in and understand English to an appropriate standard for practising as a veterinarian in New Zealand”.

Effective English and communication skills are required to practise as a veterinarian in New Zealand. The Council considers that an objective test of English language skills is the best way of ensuring that applicants for registration can comprehend and communicate to the required level.

Policy Guideline

Applicants for registration are normally considered to have met the Sn 6(2) requirements if:

- English is their first language; or
- They have passed a Council approved English test to the required level; or
- They hold a primary veterinary degree or specialist qualifications from programmes recognised by the Council for registration purposes and they gained these qualifications in a country where English is the first and prime language and where English was the sole language of their instruction and assessment and they have worked or studied in a country where English is the first and prime language for at least four of the previous five years; or
- They have passed a Veterinary Council prescribed assessment programme (ECFVG or NEB in English) and they have worked or studied in a country where English is the first and prime language for at least four of the previous five years

Note that applicants may be asked to provide evidence of having continuously worked as veterinarian in a country where English is the first and prime language for a period of four years within the previous five years immediately prior to the application.

Approved English Tests

The Council recognises a pass in the following English tests:

International English Language Testing System, IELTS.

Applicants are required to

- sit the academic band
- score **at least 7** in **each** band of the four individual components of listening, reading, writing and speaking
- pass all four components of IELTS (academic) at one sitting

Occupational English Test (OET)

A pass with A or B grades in each of the four sections is required.

A pass in an approved English test is valid for 2 years for new registration and examination applicants, but the validity of this pass may be extended for up to five years for applicants who can demonstrate that they have continuously lived and worked in a country where English is the first and prime language for at least 4 years of the previous 5 years

The Council requires applicants to:

- either arrange for English test results to be sent directly from the examining body to the Veterinary Council; or
- (in the case of IELTS centres using the latest version of ESOL software which allows the Council to download electronic results) advise the Council of the date and venue of the English test sat

Applicants must meet the Council's English language requirements as at the date when registration is about to be granted and not at some date before - for example, the date they apply to sit the registration examinations. Despite this the Council is entitled to use a pass in an approved English test to the required level as a screening measure. In most circumstances any previous decision by the Registration Committee (that an applicant appears to meet the statutory English language requirements by having sat and passed an English test to the required level) is likely to remain the same at the point of registration. However in circumstances where examiners raise any concerns about communication skills during the final examination or English language policy requirements change, applicants may be required to sit and pass an approved English test to the required current standard before registration is granted

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