



Psychologists Board of Queensland

File Number: S37

Policy Topic: **ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY POLICY**

AMENDMENTS TO POLICY WERE APPROVED BY THE BOARD ON 23 FEBRUARY 2006, 21 JUNE 2007 AND 15 NOVEMBER 2007

Date of Approval: 10 November 2005

1.0 BACKGROUND TO POLICY

The Psychologists Board of Queensland is charged with the responsibility of ensuring that psychology is practised in accordance with the *Psychologists Registration Act 2001* (“the Act”). Section 45 of the Act requires the Board to consider that an applicant is “fit to practise the profession”. This includes ensuring that only applicants who are competent, have a sound knowledge and command of the English Language, and are of good character, are registered as Psychologists.

Many applicants seeking to become registered as Psychologists come from non-English speaking backgrounds and the level of English language competency varies greatly.

A high level of English language proficiency is essential to enable psychologists to communicate with clients, other psychologists and other professionals, to write reports that often deal with complex matters and to maintain professional standards.

2.0 ENGLISH LANGUAGE MODEL

The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is currently used to assess the English Language ability of applicants from non-English speaking backgrounds. The IELTS was developed by the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, The British Council and the IDP Education Australia. IELTS is available at testing centres in more than 120 countries.

Applicants should contact IELTS Australia on all matters relating to the administration of the IELTS English test, examination dates and its associated procedures. The contact for IELTS Australia is:

Tel: + 612 6285 8222

Website: www.ielts.org

Email: ielts@idp.edu.au

3.0 POLICY

Applicants for registration as a Psychologist in Queensland, for whom English is not the first or native language, must submit evidence to the Board of competency in both oral and written communication in English, as demonstrated by having completed the IELTS examination (Academic module) to the following standard:

- The Board requires the applicant to have achieved a minimum score of seven (7) in each of the four components (Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking) of the IELTS examination.
- Results must have been obtained within two (2) years prior to applying for registration.

- At the discretion of the Board, an IELTS Test Report Form more than two years old will be accepted as evidence of present level of ability if accompanied by proof (eg a Curriculum Vitae and/or references) that, since the date of the IELTS Report, the applicant has actively maintained employment in professional practice of a psychological nature in English in a country where English is an official language.
- Alternative English proficiency tests that will be accepted by the Board are:
 - a. Completed and obtained an overall pass in the Occupational English Test (OET) administered by the Centre for Adult Education with grades A or B only in each of the four components; or
 - b. A pass in the Professional Linguistic Assessment Board (PLAB) in the United Kingdom.

NOTE:

1. **The applicant is responsible for the cost of the English tests.**
2. **Pass results in each component of either the IELTS or OET must be obtained at the one sitting, i.e. pass results in a module from a previous attempt at either examination cannot be carried forward to a subsequent sitting which, when combined, would give an overall pass in the examination.**

4.0 GROUNDS FOR EXEMPTION

At its discretion, the Board may consider an exemption to this policy when:

1. the applicant can provide evidence (eg reference/s) of at least three years practice of the profession as a registered Psychologist (or equivalent) using English as the primary means of communication. This practice must be undertaken in a country where English is an official language;

OR

2. all components of the applicant's academic qualification for registration were completed in a country where English is an official language at a tertiary institution where programs and assessments are conducted in English and the applicant can provide evidence of completion of secondary education in English in a country where English is an official language. Applicants requesting this exemption must provide a certified copy of their Year 12 secondary (high) school certificate, demonstrating a satisfactory pass in English.

Note: The Board reserves the right to interview any applicant or require further English language testing, if it has any concerns in relation to an applicant's capacity to communicate at an effective level in English.