

3 English Language Skills Standard

Effective communication is a vital component of counselling, psychotherapy and Indigenous healing practice. As such, PACFA registrants must possess a sufficient level of English language proficiency to effectively engage with clients, understand their needs and provide appropriate support. PACFA's English Language Skills Standard specifies the minimum level of English language competency applicants must demonstrate to obtain registration with PACFA. This standard ensures that registrants meet the necessary language proficiency to practice competently and safely.

Does this standard apply to me?

This standard applies to all applicants for PACFA registration.

What must I do?

When you initially apply for PACFA registration you must demonstrate your English language competency in one of the following ways:

1. your successful completion of a tertiary qualification at AQF level 7–9 delivered in Australia that you are using for your application for PACFA registration (and you are therefore exempt from completing an English language test)

OR

2. your successful completion of a tertiary qualification in a designated overseas country¹ that is equivalent to an AQF level 7–9 that was taught and assessed in English that you are using for your application for PACFA registration (and you are therefore exempt from completing an English language test)

OR

3. your successful attaining of the required minimum scores in one of the English language tests listed below with having met the requirements for test results specified in this standard.

Requirements for an English language test

If you are not exempt from completing an English language test, you must submit your results from one of the following English language tests along with your application for PACFA registration.

English Language test results must be obtained from a test undertaken at a secure testing site. Test results from 'at home' tests are not accepted.

¹ Designated overseas countries are: New Zealand, Canada, Republic of Ireland, South Africa, United Kingdom, and United States of America, and are specified by the National Alliance of Self Regulating Health Professionals (NASRHP) Standards May 2024.

1. Approved English language tests

PACFA accepts the following English language tests:²

- › IELTS: International English Language Testing System Academic (*IELTS General is not accepted*) <https://ielts.com.au/australia>
- › OET: Occupational English Test <https://oet.com/>
- › TOEFL iBT: Test of English as a Foreign Language internet-based Test <https://www.ets.org/toefl.html>
- › PTE/A: Pearson Test of English Academic <https://www.pearsonpte.com/pte-academic>

2. Minimum acceptable scores

The minimum scores accepted by PACFA are:

TEST	Overall Score	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
IELTS (Academic)	7	7	7	7	7
OET	B (185)	B (185)	B (185)	B (185)	B (185)
TOEFL iBT	98	24	23	24	27
PTE/A	65	65	65	65	65

Test results must be attained from:

- › one test sitting in which both the overall score and the minimum scores listed above for Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing have been achieved

OR

- › an IELTS (Academic) test plus an IELTS One Skill Retake test undertaken in a six month period in which the IELTS overall score was attained in the first test sitting and the minimum scores listed above for Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing have been achieved in either the first or Retake test

OR

- › a maximum of two test sittings from the same test provider in a six month period in which:
 - the overall score listed above was attained in each test sitting, and
 - the minimum scores listed above for Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing have been achieved in either the first or second test sitting, and
 - no score for Listening, Speaking, Reading or Writing in either test sitting was below the following scores:

IELTS	OET	TOEFL iBT	PTE/A
6.5	C+	23 for listening 22 for speaking 23 for reading 25 for writing	58

2. The listing of English language tests accepted by PACFA has been informed by the May 2024 Membership Standards of the National Alliance of Self Regulating Health Professionals (NASRHP).

3. Evidence of English language test scores

PACFA will accept the following forms of evidence of approved English language test results:

- › Original test results in accordance with the testing body requirements
- › Certified copy of your test results.³

4. Recency

Approved English Language test results are valid for 2 years and must be obtained prior to applying for PACFA registration.

- › The English language test results must show that the test was completed no more than two (2) years prior to the date of application to PACFA.
- › Where tests results are from two sittings, the two years begins on the date of the initial test.

If your English language test results are more than two years old, they may still be valid if you:

- › can provide evidence that you gained continuous employment as a registered practitioner, practicing in English and within 12 months of the date of the test, and
- › your application to PACFA for registration is lodged within one year of leaving your last employment.

5. English language test fees

Applicants for PACFA registration who are required to provide evidence of an approved English language test score with their PACFA application are responsible for all costs associated with the English Language testing.

3. A certified copy is a copy of your original test results document that has been endorsed by an official as a true copy (<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/help-support/applying-online-or-on-paper/on-paper/certified-copy>).

Document version control

Version	Description	Originator	Reviewed	Approved	Date	Next review
B	Effective July 2025	Professional Standards Committee	PACFA Office	Board	July 2025	June 2027

For further information, please email admin@pacfa.org.au