

## Frequently Asked Questions: English language competency

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## English language competency when applying for a place with an initial teacher education provider

### Who does the policy apply to?

Every person applying for entry to Initial Teacher Education (ITE) must provide evidence of their competency in either English or te reo Māori, the languages of New Zealand's two national curriculum documents.

### What changed in the English language competency policy on 1 January 2019?

From 1 January 2019 the Teaching Council changed its English language policy to offer people a wider range of test options to demonstrate this competency and to provide us with evidence that they are proficient in English.

A full list of our requirements is [here](#).

### What about New Zealand students who are not recent school leavers and cannot provide school records, for example because the records no longer exist?

In these circumstances we anticipate you will have the right level of English language competency through your schooling in New Zealand, and we expect that ITE providers will continue to use their expert judgments if they have concerns.

### What is the place of University Entrance in the new English language competency requirements?

University Entrance is accepted as evidence, including gaining the New Zealand University Entrance literacy credits at either NCEA level 2 or 3. A New Zealand tertiary entrance qualification gained on completing senior secondary school prior to the introduction of current University Entrance is also evidence. University Entrance by special admission is not accepted as evidence.



### Why do you accept schooling and qualifications from Australia, the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada and Ireland as evidence?

The education systems and the way English is used in these countries means that schooling and qualifications from these countries provides evidence of the right level of English competency for teaching in New Zealand.

### What do you mean by face-to-face learning and assessment?

This means learning and assessment that has required you to interact in English extensively to gain your qualification - speaking, listening, writing and reading. It does not include qualifications gained solely through distance learning without interacting in English using all four language competencies.

### There are Master's degrees of 240 points, 180 points, and even less. Is there a limit regarding point value?

All Master's degrees will be accepted as evidence provided that the Master's degree met our other requirements for tertiary qualifications - that is, at NZQF level 7, took two or more years of full-time study to complete, taught in English as the primary language of instruction and through face-to-face learning and assessment, and gained while living in one of the specified countries.

## I have a question about the language tests

### What is the difference between the IELTS test, and the tests accepted from 1 January 2019?

There is no real difference, except they are offered by different providers. They all test reading, writing, listening and speaking. Some of the tests can be done online. All these tests are used and approved by other education agencies. The marks we are asking for have been assessed as being the same as level 7 in IELTS.

### Do you recommend one test over another?

No, all test results require candidates to meet the same standard

### What about multiple test scores?

You can meet the requirements through using results from more than one test where they show that you achieve or exceed the specified outcome in each of the four competencies (listening, reading, writing and speaking).

This means you can:

- use multiple test results from the same test provider; or
- use test scores from more than one test provider

This does not require an exemption request. It does require documentation from all approved tests.



### Do the test results need to have been achieved in the last two years, as is required currently by NZQA?

Yes, the results must have been achieved within the last two years.

### Do any of the language tests allow a person to sit only one component at a time, for example just writing?

Only one we are aware of – ISLPR.

### What are the language test costs?

Costs for all existing and new tests are between \$350 and \$400 as at June 2019.

## I have a question about exemptions

### Will the Teaching Council consider exemptions to the requirement?

Only where there is evidence of a high standard of English language competency. For initial teacher education, the provider makes the request on behalf of the student to the Council. Providers are not obliged to make a request.

### What kind of evidence do you consider?

We make decisions on a case-by-case basis. We need to be assured of your competency and require several pieces of strong evidence, for example you might provide us with:

- evidence of postgraduate qualifications gained in English **and**
- demonstration of a substantial period of successful work experience requiring a high level of speaking, writing, listening and reading in English **and**
- letters of support of your competence in an education setting from members of the profession / registered teachers.

### What form does the evidence have to be in?

We need to see either original or verified copies of documents/transcripts. For overseas tertiary qualifications you need a NZQA International Qualification Assessment. Any letters of support from an education setting must come from a registered teacher.

### My application for an exemption was declined. What are my options?

The Council will consider appeals. Contact the Council in the first instance. You can apply directly to the Council and do not need to include the provider in your appeal.



## I still can't meet the requirements

If you have extra evidence of English language competency that you did not originally submit, you are welcome to give this to your preferred ITE provider, who can submit this as additional information; or to the Council if you are an overseas trained teacher.

Alternatively, you can consider sitting one of the English tests on offer.

## English language competency and applying for registration

Overseas trained teachers, who gained their teaching qualification outside of New Zealand, will also have to provide evidence of their competency in either English or te reo Māori.

### Do the changes mean if I came to New Zealand to do my teacher training, I automatically get registration?

No - your ITE provider must assess your English language competency using the types of evidence we specify; and you must meet our other [requirements](#) for registration as well. If your ITE provider did not obtain the right evidence of your competency, you may be required to sit an English language test.

### Under the Council's previous policy my registration was declined / closed. If I reapply now under the 1 January 2019 policy, do I still need to sit an English language competency test?

The Teaching Council will not reopen closed applications, but you are welcome to submit a new application. It will be assessed based on our new approach, which takes into account a wider range of evidence.

We need to go through an assessment process for every application - we need to make sure all our requirements for registration are fulfilled. This includes an assessment of the evidence that a person is competent in English or te reo Māori. You must still meet the language requirement and you will be required to provide evidence of your proficiency in either English or te reo Māori. We reserve the right to ask you to provide more evidence and/or sit an English language competency test.

