

Verification of English language competency checks

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One Call 24’s English language checking procedure is fully compliant with NHS Employment Check Standards and the Government’s Code of Practice on the English Language Requirement for Public Sector Workers. It is designed to ensure that anyone working in the healthcare sector has the required level of English language competence to enable them to undertake their role effectively, assure the delivery of safe care, and communicate effectively with colleagues and patients. Assessment of language competence prior to appointment offers protection for patients, contracting authorities / client organisations and the workers themselves.

Our assessment of English language competence is fully compliant with the Equality Act 2010 and does not unlawfully discriminate against any protected characteristic group.

Technically applicants may demonstrate their proficiency in the English language in a number of ways including:

1. Being a national of a majority speaking English country. In addition to the UK, the Home Office has issued the following as majority English speaking countries: Antigua & Barbuda, Australia, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Canada, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Irish Republic, Jamaica, New Zealand, St Kitts & Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent & the Grenadines, Trinidad & Tobago and the United States of America.
2. Having worked in an organisation where English was the primary language used.
3. Having pursued part of their education in the UK.
4. Holding a degree or relevant educational qualification that was taught in English by a recognised institution abroad. If the qualification has been obtained in one of the countries listed in point 1 above, we will ask the individual to present their original qualification certificate and/or obtain a UK NARIC confirmation letter as evidence of their qualification being taught in English. The qualification should be verified by emailing verify@naric.org.uk and providing the UK NARIC reference number, full name, title of qualification, year of award, comparable UK qualification level and our company name.
5. Having lived in a multi-lingual household in which a relative or carer used English as their primary form of communication.
6. Having passed an English language competency test.

If the candidate is registered with a professional regulatory body, they will also have met the minimum standard of communication set by that body (as specified in **Appendix 1**).

Interview Process

To ensure that staff being placed into the provision of the services have competency in understanding and using medical English (oral and written), One Call 24 carries out checks as part of the Interview stage to ensure that this area is sufficiently met by the candidate. Evidence is recorded on the interview form to support the compliance and recruitment process undertaken. All of the above information will be sought in order to initially ascertain a candidate's level of English. However, past this – One Call 24 have incorporated an English Language testing system within the Face to Face interview stage. This process helps identify and confirm as to whether the suitable levels expected for English Language proficiency have been met. This is done via:

- Questions asked in the English Language, with written responses required from the candidate
- Questions asked of the candidate, for which verbal responses must be given
- Drugs Calculation Testing
- Scenario based testing

The interviewer will rate the 'test paper' and the candidate's levels of English language – indicating whether the candidate has passed the 'test' process, or whether concerns have been highlighted. Evidence of the Q&As and verbal ratings are held in the candidate's file and made readily available upon request.

One Call 24 understand that even though the new language controls undertaken by regulators as of 2015 (updated in 2019) have been implemented, this will not replace the checks completed by One Call 24, who will continue to have a role in ensuring that candidates have the necessary language knowledge to perform their professional duties in the workplace.

Knowledge & Skills Framework (KSF)

A face to face interview is included in our recruitment process and amongst other skills, it enables us to assess the candidate's proficiency in spoken English. The Knowledge & Skills Framework can help us measure communication skills including proficiency in English during interview if required. The KSF has 4 levels of communication and includes simple behaviours to check against. It also provides positive indicators and warning signs which will help us identify if the candidate is able to communicate effectively.

International English Language Testing System (IELTS)

The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) measures an individual's ability to communicate in English across four language skills: listening, reading, writing and speaking. It has

been specifically developed for people who intend to study or work where English is the main language.

This is often considered to be the standard of English required to function competently and expertly in a degree-holding profession and as a registrant with the regulatory bodies.

To assess English language skills of non-exempt candidates, we will request the original copy of their International English Language Testing System (IELTS), unless they have certification from one of the alternative organisations below that is approved by their regulatory body.

Occupational English Test (OET)

OET is an international English language test for the healthcare sector. It assesses the language communication skills of healthcare professionals who seek to register and practice in an English speaking environment and covers all four language skills with an emphasis on communication in a healthcare environment.

This qualification may be used for some roles as an alternative to IELTS.

Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)

The CEFR is an international standard for describing English language competency on a six point scale (A1 – beginner, A2 – elementary, B1 – intermediate, B2 – upper intermediate, C1 – advanced and C2 – proficient).

This qualification may be used for some roles as an alternative to IELTS.

Regulatory Body Requirements for EEA Nationals & International Graduates

The table in **Appendix 1** displays the various ways regulatory bodies permit applicants to demonstrate language competency when registering with them. Non EEA nationals must prove their English competency using the routes below, while EEA nationals can demonstrate competency via their application. If this is not sufficient, they may be asked to use one of the routes shown in **Appendix 1** before being added to the register.

Appendix 2 shows language test equivalents across the different tests/standards.

Language Testing Process

One Call 24 requires non-exempt candidates to provide evidence of IELTS, OET or CEFR to the current professional standards to register for work. Only those candidates who maintain professional registration are allowed to be placed and continue into assignments.

The candidate must provide original documentation to demonstrate their test results alongside their original professional certificate.

The process of checking and re-checking is outlined below:

- The candidate name and any other identifying details are cross checked with the application to confirm that the certificate relates to that individual.
- We check the original document to ensure it is valid, take a colour scan and sign and date (or date stamp) it to state that the original was seen and upload it to our recruitment software, where it is stored in line with GDPR guidelines.

Upon submitting a candidate for an assignment, further checks are made. These checks ensure the candidate is fully registered with a license to practice in the UK for the assignments they are being submitted for. If a candidate's language skills are found not to be sufficient, it is possible for them to be referred to their regulatory body.

Audits

All professional registration and language assessment certificates are verified at point of registration and scanned onto our systems with a date stamp. It is retained in a format that cannot be altered.

The system will automatically flag an alert for each candidate's professional registration expiry date 2 months prior to expiry. This allows sufficient time to contact the candidate and ensure the continuity of their professional registration.

We conduct regular internal audits of all our compliance processes, and these are carried out by our Compliance Manager to demonstrate that we adhere to legislative, contractual and industry best practice. We are subject to external audits. We also welcome client audits.

Appendix 1 – Regulatory Body Language Requirements

Regulatory Body	Language Requirements				
	IELTS	OET	TOEFL	CEFR	Other
General Medical Council	IELTS overall score of minimum 7.5	Level B			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualifications – accepted where course and activities taught in English and 75% clinical interaction. • References – original references from employers over the last 2 years where English is the first and native language. • Registration – a pass in a language test for registration with a medical regulator in a country where English is the first and native language. If the test was completed more than 2 years ago, evidence of practise in an English speaking country will also be required.
Nursing & Midwifery Council	IELTS overall score minimum 7.0	Level B			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practise – at least 1 years’ practise where English is the first and native language and English language assessment needed for registration. • Qualifications – accepted where course and activities taught in English and 50% clinical interaction. • Registration – a pass in a language test for registration with a medical regulator in a country where English is the first and native language
General Dental Council	IELTS overall score of min 7.0 with no less than 6.5 in any section				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualifications – dental professional qualifying in a country where English is the first and native language do not routinely need to provide additional evidence.

General Optical Council	IELTS score of at least 7.0 with no less than 6.0 on any individual section except for “speaking” where a minimum score of 7.0 is required.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The GoC is currently reviewing the assessment of non-EEA applicants.
General Osteopathic Council	IELTS overall score of 7.0 with no element scoring less than 7.0.	C1 equivalent	C1 equivalent	C1	
Health and Care Professionals Council	IELTS score of 7.0 with no single score less than 6.5. For language therapy an IELTS score of 8.0 is required with no single score less than 7.5.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other tests are generally accepted but applicants must demonstrate their competence is equivalent to the IELTS standards that have been set. See Appendix 2.
General Pharmaceutical Council	IELTS score of 7.0 in every category				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practise – at least 2 years’ practise in an English-speaking country. Qualifications – accepted if taught and examined in a country where English is the first and native language and 85% clinical interaction.
General Chiropractic Council	IELTS score of minimum 7.0				<p>The GCC will seek additional evidence of English competence on a case by case basis.</p> <p>Practise – at least 2 years’ practise in and English-speaking country.</p> <p>Qualifications – accepted if taught and examined in a country where English is the first and native language and 75% clinical interaction.</p>

Appendix 1 – Language Test Equivalents

IELTS Score	CEFR Language Level	OET Level
IELTS 8.0 / 8.5+	C2 (Proficient)	OET A
IELTS 7.0 / 7.5		OET B
IELTS 6.5 / 7.0	C1 (Advanced)	
IELTS 6.0 / 6.5		OET C
IELTS 5.0 / 5.5	B2 (Upper Intermediate)	OET D
IELTS 4.0	B1(Intermediate)	OET E