

Verification of English language competency checks

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Policy Statement

One Call 24 Limited (OneCall24) English language assessment process is fully aligned with the NHS Employment Check Standards and the Government’s Code of Practice on the English Language Requirement for Public Sector Workers. This procedure ensures that all healthcare workers possess the necessary level of English language proficiency to perform their duties effectively, deliver safe and high-quality care, and communicate clearly with colleagues and patients.

Evaluating English language competence prior to appointment protects not only patients and client organisations but also the workers themselves.

Our approach is compliant with the Equality Act 2010 and ensures that no applicant is unlawfully discriminated against based on any protected characteristic.

English language competency at OneCall24 is primarily assessed through a structured interview-based assessment, supported where appropriate by documentary evidence or formal testing.

Routes to Demonstrating English Language Proficiency

Applicants can demonstrate their English language proficiency through several routes, including:

1. **Nationality:** Being a national of a majority English-speaking country. In addition to the UK, the Home Office recognises the following as majority English-speaking countries:
Antigua & Barbuda, Australia, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Canada, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Republic of Ireland, Jamaica, New Zealand, St Kitts & Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent & the Grenadines, Trinidad & Tobago, and the United States of America.
Nationality alone does not remove the requirement for interview-based assessment of effective communication.
2. **Work Experience:** Previous employment in an organisation where English was the primary language of communication. This route must be supported by evidence and will be assessed for relevance, recency, duration and setting. Interview assessment remains mandatory.
3. **Education in the UK:** Having completed part of their education in the United Kingdom.
4. **Education Taught in English Abroad:** Holding a degree or relevant qualification taught in English at a recognised overseas institution. If the qualification was obtained in one of the countries listed above, applicants must present the original certificate and/or provide a UK NARIC (now UK ENIC) confirmation letter. Verification can be completed by contacting verify@naric.org.uk with the UK NARIC reference number, full name, qualification title, year awarded, comparable UK qualification level, and our company name.

5. **Multilingual Household:** This route has been removed as a standalone method of evidence. Supporting contextual information may be considered but must be accompanied by successful interview-based assessment.
6. **English Language Testing:** Successful completion of an approved English language competency test. Formal language testing is not routinely required where interview assessment demonstrates safe and effective communication, unless mandated by a regulatory body.

In cases where the candidate is registered with a professional regulatory body, they will have already demonstrated the minimum communication standards required by that body (as outlined in Appendix 1). Regulatory registration is considered supporting evidence but does not replace OneCall24's internal assessment.

English Language Assessment During the Interview Process

As part of One Call 24's commitment to ensuring candidates possess the necessary English language proficiency—particularly in medical English, both written and spoken—a comprehensive language assessment is built into the interview stage of our recruitment process. This is essential to verify that staff placed in healthcare settings can communicate effectively, deliver safe care, and meet regulatory standards.

The interview is OneCall24's primary method for assessing English language competence.

Initial screening includes a review of documentation and background (as outlined previously) to establish the candidate's English language competence. However, beyond this, a structured English language assessment framework is incorporated into the face-to-face interview to provide a more accurate assessment. This process includes:

- Written response tasks to questions posed in English
- Verbal response assessments to questions asked by the interviewer
- Drug calculation tests requiring comprehension and correct application
- Scenario-based exercises to assess understanding and communication in clinical contexts

The interviewer evaluates the candidate's performance, recording written responses, rating verbal communication, and noting any concerns. This information is documented on the interview form and retained in the candidate's file, available upon request to support compliance and audit processes.

Where a candidate does not demonstrate clear, safe and effective communication, they will not progress, regardless of documentation or test results provided.

In addition, OneCall24 utilises the NHS Knowledge & Skills Framework (KSF) as a supplementary tool where needed. The KSF helps measure communication skills by offering four levels of competence, behavioural indicators, and warning signs, providing further insight into a candidate's ability to communicate effectively.

Although language control requirements introduced by professional regulators in 2015 (updated periodically by regulatory bodies) are in place, OneCall24 maintains its own internal checks. These

ensure that candidates not only meet regulatory minimums but also demonstrate the practical language skills required to perform safely and effectively in real-world healthcare environments.

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 a benchmark used by regulatory bodies for degree-holding professions.

To assess English language skills of non-exempt candidates, we may request the original copy of their IELTS certificate where required by a regulatory body or where interview assessment identifies gaps.

Occupational English Test (OET)

OET is an international English language test for the healthcare sector and assesses communication skills in a clinical context.

This qualification may be used for some roles where accepted by the relevant professional regulator and where additional evidence is required.

Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)

The CEFR is an international standard for describing English language competency on a six-point scale.

CEFR equivalence may only be accepted where explicitly permitted by the relevant regulatory body and supported by documentary evidence.

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

OneCall24 primarily relies on interview-based assessment of English language competence. Formal test evidence is required only where mandated by a regulatory body or where interview assessment indicates concerns.

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. |

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| 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 2 – 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 |