



Australian Government

Department of Immigration
and Citizenship

Migrating to Australia English language assessment

Form

966i

This information form is about how the English language ability of applicants applying for certain visas is assessed.

English assessment

English speakers have a better chance of settling in Australia and finding employment. English is not a criterion for all migrants but all migrants are encouraged to learn it before or shortly after arrival.

Who needs to be assessed?

There is no requirement for family stream or humanitarian migrants to have their English assessed as part of the visa process. After arrival they may be tested to assess their need for tuition.

If you apply for a visa with a threshold English language requirement

If you apply for one of the permanent General Skilled Migration (GSM) visa categories the main applicant must have 'competent' English or 'vocational' English if you nominate a skilled trade occupation.

If you apply for a Skilled – Regional Sponsored (provisional) visa and do not have 'competent' English and are not nominating a skilled trade occupation, you may still be able to meet the English language requirement. You will need to make acceptable arrangements with the State/Territory government that has nominated you or in the State/Territory where the relative sponsoring you lives, to upgrade your language skills to a 'competent' level. To take up this option you must have an IELTS average band score of at least 5.5.

Sometimes a higher level of English is needed for your skills to be recognised in Australia. For example, certain health professions require their applicants to pass an Occupational English Test (OET) as part of their skills assessment process.

If you are applying under the Employer Nomination Scheme, you must have 'vocational' English unless special circumstances apply.

Note: If the main applicant is unable to meet threshold English requirements, the application will be refused.

If you are being awarded points for your English language ability

Applicants for a points tested GSM visa or the Business Skills – Established Business in Australia visa are awarded points based on their English language ability.

If members of your family unit included in your application are 18 years or older

Skill stream applicants (the main applicant's spouse/interdependent partner/adult dependents) with less than 'functional' English must pay the second instalment of the Visa Application Charge. See below 'Visa Application Charge'.

For more information see booklet 6, *General Skilled Migration* or booklet 7, *Business Skills Entry* available on the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (the department) website www.immi.gov.au/allforms/

Evidence of English

Generally, the results of an English test will be used to determine your level of English language ability although this will depend on which visa category you apply for. The following test results are accepted:

- International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test; or
- Occupational English Test (OET).

For visas other than the GSM categories, evidence such as where you completed your primary, secondary or tertiary education may be accepted as evidence of your English ability. For information on what evidence is required, visit the department's website and follow the links to the visa category you intend applying for.

If your visa application is successful but evidence of your or your family's English language ability was not verified before processing of your application was finalised, an assessment will be made by an Adult Migrant English Programme (AMEP) service provider in Australia, if you are eligible for the AMEP.

Visa Application Charge

If you, your spouse, interdependent partner or adult dependant:

- are 18 or older;
- have less than 'functional' English; and
- applied under the:
 - Skilled – Independent
 - Skilled – Sponsored
 - Skilled – Regional Sponsored
 - Business skills
 - Employer nomination (excluding religious workers)
 - Labour agreement (excluding religious workers)
 - Distinguished talent
 - Former resident
 - Former citizen
 - Family of New Zealand citizen;

visa classes, you must pay a second instalment and any other charge due before visa grant. Other visa sub-class applicants don't pay. The visa officer will tell you when/how to pay.

AMEP eligible clients are entitled to up to 510 hours of tuition, or achievement of 'functional' English, whichever comes first. Registration with an AMEP service provider **must** occur within **3 months** of arrival, though you do not need to start at that time.

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International English Language Testing System (IELTS)

IELTS tests the 4 language skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening.

IELTS test results are used by visa officers when considering your application and by educational organisations for referral and placement in English courses in Australia.

The IELTS test is managed by the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, the British Council and IDP Education Australia with test centres in over 100 countries.

The IELTS test has 2 modules – Academic and General Training. If you intend applying for a visa that requires applicants to provide evidence of their English language ability you only need to sit the **General Training Module**.

English language ability required by some professional organisations

Certain professional organisations will require evidence of a higher level of English language ability. For example, if you are applying for a GSM visa and nominate a skilled health professional occupation, the authority responsible for assessing your skills may require you to provide the results of an OET as part of their assessment process. These results will be accepted as evidence of your English language ability so you do not need to sit an IELTS test.

Validity of English test results

If you are applying for a GSM visa, as evidence of your English language ability, you will need to submit the results of an English language test undertaken within 2 years of the date you lodge your application. If you are in Australia and applying for a Graduate or Regional Sponsored visa and are unable to sit a test before lodging your application you can submit the booking number and date that you are scheduled to do the test.

English skill level

Following is a table which sets out the various English skill levels for the GSM and Business Skills visa categories and the number of points awarded for each level. They are a guide only for persons wanting to assess their English. The level of English language ability required for each visa is set out in the Migration Regulations.

Home page **www.immi.gov.au**

General enquiry line Telephone **131 881** during business hours in Australia to speak to an operator (recorded information available outside these hours).
If you are outside Australia, please contact your nearest Australian mission.

'Proficient' English	IELTS Standard	Points available
You have an operational command of English with the ability to use and understand complex language well and comprehend detailed reasoning.	An IELTS test score of at least 7 on each of the 4 components of the test — speaking, reading, writing and listening, OR an equivalent score in a recognised test.	25 points in the GSM points test.

'Competent' English	IELTS Standard	Points available
You read and understand a variety of English texts with reasonably good comprehension; you write English well enough to communicate effectively for most purposes; you understand spoken English competently in a range of situations; you speak English fairly fluently and accurately in a range of contexts.	An IELTS test score of at least 6 on each of the 4 components of the test — speaking, reading, writing and listening, OR an equivalent score in a recognised test.	15 points in the GSM points test.

'Concessional competent' English	IELTS Standard	Points available
You have basic competence in the English language, but your skills may not be consistent across the 4 areas of reading, writing, listening and speaking.	An average band score of IELTS 5.5.	15 points in the GSM points test if you have applied for the Skilled – Regional Sponsored visa and have paid a fee to attend English language tuition in a participating State or Territory.

'Vocational' or 'Better than functional' English	IELTS Standard	Points available
You have a reasonable command of the English language, coping with overall meaning in most situations. You must be able to communicate effectively in your own field of employment.	An IELTS score of at least 5 on each of the 4 components of the test — speaking, reading, writing and listening.	15 points in the GSM points test if you nominate a skilled trade occupation or 30 points in the Business skills – Established Business in Australia visa subclass. The minimum English requirement for Skilled – Independent and Skilled – Australian-sponsored applicants and a requirement for the Employer nomination scheme.

'Functional' English	IELTS Standard	Points available
You read and understand English texts about familiar topics; you write English well enough to communicate ideas or information for a variety of purposes but make some errors; you understand spoken English about familiar topics; you speak English well enough to handle everyday communication adequately, despite some errors.	An IELTS average band score of at least 4.5 on the 4 test components of the test — speaking, reading, writing and listening.	0 points in the GSM points test. 20 points in the Business Skills – Established Business visa in Australia visa subclass. If you or members of your family aged over 18 years who are included in your application have less than functional English and require English tuition, you may be liable to pay the second instalment of the Visa Application Charge.

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'Limited' English	IELTS Standard	Points available
<p>You read and extract basic information from everyday written texts in English; you write enough English to communicate simple messages but with frequent inaccuracies; you understand enough spoken English to comprehend some of the main points in simple conversations about familiar topics; you speak English well enough to handle basic everyday situations but you make a lot of errors.</p>	<p>An IELTS average band score of at least 4 based on the 4 test components — speaking, reading, writing and listening.</p>	<p>0 points in the GSM points test. 10 points in the Business Skills – Established Business in Australia visa subclass.</p>

'No English'	IELTS Standard	Points available
<p>You read and understand only some words and phrases in very simple everyday English texts; you write enough English words and phrases to communicate a restricted range of very simple information on familiar topics but with many inaccuracies; you understand a limited range of common English words and phrases in simple conversations; you speak enough English to have a very elementary conversation but with many errors and hesitations.</p>		<p>0 points Described as 'no English' in the Business skills visa subclasses.</p>