



Policy on exemption from an approved English test

Policy Statement

Sections 16(a) and (b) of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 requires the Medical Council of New Zealand to be satisfied that any person given registration to practise medicine in New Zealand is able to communicate in and comprehend English sufficiently to protect the health and safety of the public, and for the purposes of practising within a scope of practice in which they are registered.

Rationale

An objective test of English is the best way of ensuring that medical practitioners can comprehend and communicate effectively.

Background

1. The English test requirements apply to all applicants for registration or assessment for registration. However, the Council's experience is that graduates from New Zealand, Australia, the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland, the United States, Canada and some South African medical schools where English is the sole language of instruction, and where English is the graduate's first language, are able to comprehend and communicate effectively in English and therefore are not required to pass an approved English test.
2. If graduates from these medical schools are reported as being below the standard expected in effective comprehension and communication in English, they may be required to undertake remedial English training and then pass an approved English test.
3. Candidates for NZREX Clinical would normally provide evidence of competence in English comprehension and communication skills by passing Council's approved English test within two years (new candidates) or five years (repeat candidates) of applying to sit the exam.

Procedures

An applicant **may** be exempt from passing an approved English test if he or she provides:

4. Evidence of continuous work as a registered medical practitioner in an institution where English was the first and prime language for a period of at least two years within the five years immediately prior to application; **and**

5. The names and contact details of at least two referees who are senior suitable medical practitioners who speak English as a first language, and who can attest to the applicant's ability to comprehend and communicate effectively in English in a clinical setting with both patients and professional colleagues. Referees will be contacted directly by the Council or a body Council authorised to do this (employer or recruitment agency).

Note

If comprehension and communication deficiencies are noted during NZREX Clinical, the candidate will be required to sit and pass IELTS before he or she is able to apply for registration.

If comprehension and communication deficiencies are notified by an employer, Council may direct the candidate to sit and pass IELTS or undertake remedial training in communication.

There will be a fee of \$125.00 for each exemption from an approved English test requested. This fee will not be refunded to the candidate if his/her exemption is either accepted or declined.

Examinations Committee:	5 May 2003
Council:	24 June 2003
Administrative amendments:	22 August 2003
Updated for HPCAA 2003:	May 2004
Updated at Council meeting:	August 2007