



DIETITIANS BOARD

Te Mana Mātanga Mātai Kai

English Language Requirements Policy

This policy refers to the following key legislation:

[Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003](#)

This policy has been developed in conjunction with [Right Touch Regulation](#)

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following associated Dietitians Board policy documents:

[Professional Standards & Competencies for Dietitians](#)

[Code of Ethics & Conduct for Dietitians](#)

All Board Practitioner Policies (PRA)

Policy Statement

The Dietitians Board (the Board) is required by the [Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003](#) (HPCA Act) to ensure that applicants are able to communicate and comprehend effectively in English in order to work as a Registered Dietitian in New Zealand ([section 16](#) (a&b)).

This document sets out Board policy concerning the English Language proficiency requirements for applicants seeking registration with the Board.

Purpose

Under [section 15](#) of the HPCA Act the Board may register an applicant within the **Scope of Practice: Dietitian** if the applicant:

- is fit for registration in accordance with [section 16](#);
- has the qualifications that are prescribed, under section 12, for that scope of practice; and
- is competent to practise within that scope of practice.

There are eight criteria relating to fitness for registration set out under [section 16](#) — satisfying the Board of English language competence is one of those criteria.

Policy

If English is not an applicant's first language¹, the Board requires an applicant to demonstrate proficiency in English before registration can proceed.

To demonstrate proficiency in English, an applicant with a New Zealand dietetic qualification must submit a declaration from their Board-accredited education provider that states they are able to communicate and comprehend effectively in English in order to work as a Registered Dietitian in New Zealand.

All other applicants must demonstrate the following level of achievement in one of the two tests accepted by the Board before registration can proceed:

- *International English Language Testing System* (IELTS) at the Academic level with an overall score of 7.5 and a minimum of 7 in each band, OR
- *Occupational English Test* (OET) with A or B in all four sections.

All components of the test must be passed and dated within the 12 months preceding the Board's receipt of the application form.

¹ 'First Language' (native language/mother tongue) is defined as the language a person learns first, usually from their family.

The Board shall not approve registration where there is doubt about an individual's ability to communicate effectively in English. Applicants in this situation shall be managed on a case by case basis. The Board reserves the right to make further enquiries by:

1. seeking additional information from sources such as dietetic workplace training educators/supervisors,
OR
2. requiring the applicant to attend an interview with a Board nominated assessor.

The Dietitians Board has discretionary power to require proof of English language competence at any time for any applicant.

If deficiencies in skills are reported after Registration, practitioners may be required to undertake remedial English language training and then pass one of the two tests accepted by the Board as outlined above.