

Postgraduate English Language Proficiency Requirements and International English Language Equivalencies



Overview

The University of Auckland (UoA) sets standards for English Language proficiency for admission to the University for international applicants. All international applicants are required to provide satisfactory evidence of their proficiency in English.

This could be an acceptable English language test, such as IELTS or TOEFL, or previous academic study completed in English. The purpose of this document is to outline what will be accepted as satisfactory evidence for this requirement.

Note: [Domestic applicants](#) are not included.

Pathways for Meeting English Language Proficiency

1	International Applicants from Majority English Speaking Countries.....	3
2	English Proficiency Tests	3
3	Prior Study in English	4
3.1	Foundation English Programmes	5
3.2	Tertiary Study in the English Medium	5
3.3	Qualifications taught in Offshore Campuses.....	7
3.4	Graduate Diplomas from New Zealand Universities and Polytechnic Institutions.....	7
4	Special Cases	7
4.1	Studies in English Language	7
4.2	Teaching in English	8
4.3	Law Applicants from Norway	8
4.4	The Occupational English Test	8
5	English Language Waivers.....	8
5.1	English Language Waiver Conditions	8
5.2	Marginal Test Scores	9
6	Postgraduate Degree-Specific English Language Proficiency Requirements.....	10

1 International Applicants from Majority English Speaking Countries

Passport holders of the countries listed below will satisfy English language proficiency requirements if they have successful academic tertiary study in the English medium:

- Canada
- Ireland
- Singapore
- United Kingdom
- United States of America

2 English Proficiency Tests

Validity Period - All test results are valid for two years from the date on the test certificate to the start of the UoA programme. Requirements must be met on one test certificate.

Exceptions - Some programmes have higher requirements; for these please refer to the degree specific requirements on page [10](#).

Minimum Requirements

IELTS (Academic) ¹	Overall score of 6.5 and no bands below 6.0
IELTS (Academic) Online	Overall score of 6.5 and no bands below 6.0
Internet-based TOEFL (iBT): 120-point Scale ²	Overall score of 90 and a writing score of 21
Internet based TOEFL (iBT) – Special Home Edition	Overall score of 90 and a writing score of 21
Internet-based TOEFL (iBT): 6-point Scale ²	Overall score of 4.5 and a writing score of 4.5
C1 Advanced (previously Cambridge English: Advanced (CAE))	Overall score of 176 and no bands below 169
C2 Proficiency (previously Cambridge English Proficiency (CPE))	Overall score of 176 and no bands below 169
Pearson Test of English (PTE) Academic ¹	Overall score of 58 and no PTE Communicative score below 50
PTE Online ³	Overall score of 58 and no PTE Communicative score below 50
Michigan English Language Assessment Battery (MELAB)	85

¹ IELTS and PTE UKVI tests are also accepted.

² TOEFL iBT 120-point scale until January 2026 and TOEFL iBT 6-point scale from January 2026

³ Must undertake Diagnostic English Language Needs Assessment (DELNA) screening and any stipulated follow-up action within 2 weeks of enrolment at the University of Auckland.

Trinity College London Integrated Skills in English (ISE)	ISE III with a pass in all 4 components
LanguageCert - Academic	A minimum score of 70 overall and no skill below 65
LanguageCert – International ESOL	C1 Expert (LRWS) with a high pass overall and no less than a pass in each skill OR C2 Mastery with a pass overall and no less than a pass in each skill
AEMG English for Academic Purposes Direct Entry Program (AEAP DEP) Final Exam	Overall score of 70% with no section below 65%
English New Zealand Accredited Pathway Assessment	Assessment Level 3 overall and no skill below Level 2
Oxford Test of English	Overall score of 140 and no module score below 126

3 Prior Study in English

Validity Period – Prior study in English is valid for two years from the date you completed your previous study to the date you begin your study at UoA

The validity period can be extended to five years with evidence of further study in English, English language work experience, or if you hold a passport from a “predominantly” English-speaking country⁴. The decision to extend the validity period to five years will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Completion of the following qualifications with the required English grade will meet our Postgraduate English Language Proficiency Requirements. Each of these English grades also has an assigned IELTS equivalency. Some of the programmes below only have IELTS equivalency for IELTS 6.5 (no band below 6.0). If you are applying for a programme with a higher IELTS requirement, you will need to sit one of the approved English proficiency tests on page 3.

⁴ American Samoa, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Botswana, Fiji, Gibraltar, Ghana, Guyana, Jamaica, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, South Africa, The Gambia, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Zambia, Zimbabwe

3.1 Foundation English Programmes

Foundation Programme	English grade required	IELTS equivalence
University of Auckland Foundation Certificate in English for Academic Purposes (FCertEAP)	A-	Overall score of 7.0 and no bands below 6.5
	B-	Overall score of 6.5 and no bands below 6.0
University of Auckland English Pathway for Postgraduate Studies (EPPS)	A-	Overall score of 7.0 and no bands below 6.5
	B-	Overall score of 6.5 and no bands below 6.0
Auckland University of Technology Certificate in English for Academic Study	A overall, minimum A in Writing, all other grades B+ or higher	Overall score of 6.5 and no bands below 6.0
Lincoln University Certificate in English for Academic Purposes	70%	Overall score of 6.5 and no bands below 6.0
University of Otago English for Postgraduate Academic Purposes (English for Otago)	C	Overall score of 6.5 and no bands below 6.0
NCUK International Master's Preparation Year English for Academic Purposes module (EAP)	A overall with no bands below B	Overall score of 7.0 and no bands below 6.5
	B overall with no bands below C	Overall score of 6.5 and no bands below 6.0

3.2 Tertiary Study in the English Medium

For prior tertiary study, applicants are required to meet one of the following requirements:

Sub-doctoral

- A bachelor's degree (minimum 3 years duration); OR
- A postgraduate qualification (minimum of one year duration)

Doctoral

- A bachelor's degree (minimum three years duration); OR
- A postgraduate qualification (minimum one year duration) AND a bachelor's degree (minimum 3 years duration), with no greater than two years between the completion of the bachelor's degree and the beginning of the postgraduate study; OR
- A postgraduate qualification (minimum 2 years duration)

The qualification must be from a university, or polytechnic institution recognised by UK ENIC⁵ or NOOSR⁶ and the degree must be comparable to a New Zealand university or polytechnic degree⁷.

This is valid for the following countries and territories:

- Australia
- Barbados
- Botswana
- Canada (if the degree has been taught in English)
- Cayman Islands
- Cyprus (if the degree has been taught in English)
- Fiji
- Ghana
- Guyana
- Hong Kong (if the degree has been taught in English)
- India (if degree has been taught in English, and the awarding institution is on [this list](#))
- Ireland
- Jamaica
- Kenya
- Lesotho
- Malaysia (if the degree has been taught in English)
- Malta
- Mauritius
- Nigeria
- New Zealand
- Papua New Guinea
- Philippines
- St Vincent and the Grenadines
- Samoa
- Sierra Leone
- Singapore
- South Africa (if the degree has been taught in English)
- Sri Lanka (if the degree has been taught in English)
- Sweden
- Tanzania
- The Netherlands
- Uganda (if the degree has been taught in English)
- UK
- USA
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

⁵ UK National Information Centre for the recognition and evaluation of international qualifications and skills

⁶ National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition – Australia

⁷ At the request of the Board of Graduate Studies, doctoral applicants may be required to supply further evidence of their English language proficiency.

Also:

- University of the South Pacific: all campuses
- University of the West Indies: all campuses

3.3 Qualifications taught in Offshore Campuses

Some universities offer qualifications from their offshore campuses in multiple locations around the world. Successful completion of qualifications at bachelor's degree level or higher from these campuses is acceptable for English Language equivalency for admission to postgraduate studies⁸.

3.4 Graduate Diplomas from New Zealand Universities and Polytechnic Institutions

Applicants must have completed a one-year full-time Graduate Diploma from a New Zealand university, or polytechnic institution. Please note that this does not meet the English language requirement for Doctoral programmes.

4 Special Cases

4.1 Studies in English Language

Completion of a postgraduate qualification at least one year in duration and in the subject of English language, from a university recognised by UK ENIC⁹ or NOOSR¹⁰. Note: The same validity period which is stated in [Section 3](#) also applies here.

4.2 Teaching in English

Experience teaching at a tertiary level in the English medium, for two years or more, in a recognised university where English is the language of instruction. Please refer to the list of acceptable countries in [Section 3.2](#). Note: The same validity period which is stated in [Section 3](#) also applies here.

4.3 Law Applicants from Norway

Applicants from Norway who are applying for postgraduate programmes in law will qualify for admission and English equivalency provided they have obtained a pass (minimum 4) in Vitnemål English.

⁸ At the request of the Board of Graduate Studies, doctoral applicants may be required to supply further evidence of their English language proficiency.

⁹ UK National Information Centre for the recognition and evaluation of international qualifications and skills

¹⁰ National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition – Australia

4.4 The Occupational English Test

The Occupational English Test (OET) will be accepted for all Faculty of Medical and Health Science programmes.

OET Score	IELTS Equivalence
Grade B or minimum score of 400 out of 500 in each of the four skills	Overall score of 7.5 and no bands below 7.0
Grade C+ or minimum score of 300 out of 500 in each of the four skills	Overall score of 6.5 and no bands below 6.0

Note: The same validity period which is stated in [Section 2](#) also applies here.

5 English Language Waivers

Applicants who have not met English proficiency through the above standards may, in some circumstances, be granted a waiver. An applicant's eligibility for a waiver to sub-doctoral programmes will be assessed on a case-by-case basis by Applications and Admissions and may require further supporting evidence. All applicants who are awarded a waiver will be required to sit a Diagnostic English Language Needs Assessment ([DELNA](#)) no later than two weeks after the start of their first semester. Any recommended enrichment/support must be undertaken. For Doctoral applicants seeking a waiver, a recommendation must be submitted by the Academic Head of the relevant academic unit to the Doctoral Admissions team. All cases will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

5.1 English Language Waiver Conditions

For a waiver to be considered, an applicant needs a combination of at least two of the following:

- Completion of a bachelor's degree from a university, or polytechnic institution from a country not listed in [Section 3.2](#). The medium of instruction during this study must have been English and must not have been completed more than 2 years before the beginning of study at UoA.
- Completion of a postgraduate qualification (at least one year in duration)¹¹, or a bachelor's degree from a university, or polytechnic institution, from one of the countries listed in [Section 3.2](#). This prior study must have been completed more than 2 years for the countries listed or more than 5 years, for those who are also citizens of predominantly English-speaking countries, before the start of study at UoA^{12 13} This means that completed qualifications that fall outside the normal validity periods to meet English proficiency may be considered in conjunction with other forms of evidence.
- Published research in English where the applicant was the lead researcher and presented in English at conference(s).
- Evidence of extensive work experience in English

¹¹ Any postgraduate programme that is one or more years in duration.

¹² American Samoa, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Botswana, Fiji, Gibraltar, Ghana, Guyana, Jamaica, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, South Africa, The Gambia, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Zambia, Zimbabwe

¹³ Under normal circumstances, completed programmes may meet PG English requirements within 2 years of completion or 5 years for applicants also from predominantly English-speaking countries.

5.2 Marginal Test Scores

Applicants who have not achieved the required scores in an IELTS, TOEFL or PTE Academic test may be considered for an English Language Waiver.

IELTS: Where the applicant has submitted an IELTS test, in which one of Speaking, Listening or the Overall Score components is lower than the minimum requirement by 0.5 points. An IELTS with a low writing or reading score will not be considered.

TOEFL: Where the applicant has submitted an overall TOEFL score (internet 120-point scale) which is lower than the minimum requirement by up to 2 points, but the written English score meets or exceeds the minimum.

PTE: Where the applicant has submitted an overall PTE result which is lower than the minimum requirement by up to 8 points, but the communicative score meets the minimum.

6 Postgraduate Degree-Specific English Language Proficiency Requirements

Postgraduate Programmes	IELTS		TOEFL 120 Point Scale ¹⁴		TOEFL 1-6 Point Scale ¹⁴		CAE or CPE		FCertEAP	PTE Academic		MELAB	AEMG AEAP DEP Final Exam	
	Overall score	Minimum band score	Overall score	Writing score	Overall score	Writing score	Overall score	Minimum band score	Overall score	Overall Score	Minimum communicative skills score	Overall score	Overall score	Minimum section score
Bachelor of Arts (Honours)	6.5	6.0	90	21	4.5	4.5	176	169	B-	58	50	85	70%	65%
Bachelor of Commerce (Honours)	6.5	6.0	90	21	4.5	4.5	176	169	B-	58	50	85	70%	65%
Bachelor of Science (Honours)	6.5	6.0	90	21	4.5	4.5	176	169	B-	58	50	85	70%	65%
Postgraduate programmes in Architecture	6.5	6.0	90	21	4.5	4.5	176	169	B-	58	50	85	70%	65%
Postgraduate programmes in Arts	6.5	6.0	90	21	4.5	4.5	176	169	B-	58	50	85	70%	65%
Postgraduate programmes in Biomedical Science	6.5	6.0	90	21	4.5	4.5	176	169	B-	58	50	85	70%	65%
Postgraduate programmes in Commerce	6.5	6.0	90	21	4.5	4.5	176	169	B-	58	50	85	70%	65%
Postgraduate programmes in Dance Studies	6.5	6.0	90	21	4.5	4.5	176	169	B-	58	50	85	70%	65%
Postgraduate programmes in Education	6.5	6.0	90	21	4.5	4.5	176	169	B-	58	50	85	70%	65%
Postgraduate programmes in Engineering	6.5	6.0	90	21	4.5	4.5	176	169	B-	58	50	85	70%	65%
Postgraduate programmes in Fine Arts	6.5	6.0	90	21	4.5	4.5	176	169	B-	58	50	85	70%	65%
Postgraduate programmes in Health Sciences	6.5	6.0	90	21	4.5	4.5	176	169	B-	58	50	85	70%	65%
Postgraduate programmes in Health Leadership	6.5	6.0	90	21	4.5	4.5	176	169	B-	58	50	85	70%	65%
Postgraduate programmes in Law	7.0	6.5	98	24	5.0	5.0	185	176	A-	65	58	90	N/A	N/A
Postgraduate programmes in Music	6.5	6.0	90	21	4.5	4.5	176	169	B-	58	50	85	70%	65%
Postgraduate programmes in Nursing	6.5	6.0	90	21	4.5	4.5	176	169	B-	58	50	85	70%	65%
Postgraduate programmes in Optometry	6.5	6.0	90	21	4.5	4.5	176	169	B-	58	50	85	70%	65%
Postgraduate programmes in Planning	6.5	6.0	90	21	4.5	4.5	176	169	B-	58	50	85	70%	65%
Postgraduate programmes in Property	6.5	6.0	90	21	4.5	4.5	176	169	B-	58	50	85	70%	65%
Postgraduate programmes in Public Health	6.5	6.0	90	21	4.5	4.5	176	169	B-	58	50	85	70%	65%
Postgraduate programmes in Science	6.5	6.0	90	21	4.5	4.5	176	169	B-	58	50	85	70%	65%
Master of Audiology	7.5	7.0	106	24	5.5	5.5	191	185	N/A	73	65	92	N/A	N/A
Master of Business Administration	6.5	6.0	90	21	4.5	4.5	176	169	B-	58	50	85	70%	65%
Master of Global Studies	6.5	6.0	90	21	4.5	4.5	176	169	B-	58	50	85	70%	65%
Master of Health Practice	6.5	6.0	90	21	4.5	4.5	176	169	B-	58	50	85	70%	65%
Master of Health Sciences (Nutrition and Dietetics)	7.5	7.0	106	24	5.5	5.5	191	185	N/A	73	65	92	N/A	N/A
Master of Social Work (Professional)	6.5	6.0	90	21	4.5	4.5								

Approved by Education Committee in March 2026 and effective for applications received on or after 1 May 2026, for commencement in Semester 2 2026 and onwards.

Master of Speech Language Therapy Practice	7.5	7.0	106	24	5.5	5.5	191	185	N/A	73	65	92	N/A	N/A
Postgraduate programmes in Translation Studies	7.0	6.5	98	24	5.5	5.5	185	176	A-	65	58	90	N/A	N/A
Doctoral programmes*	6.5	6.0	90	21	4.5	4.5	176	169	B-	58	50	85	70%	65%

* At the request of the Board of Graduate Studies, doctoral applicants may be required to supply further evidence of their English language proficiency.

¹⁴ The TOEFL iBT 6-point scale replaced the 120-point scale in January 2026, the latter may continue to be used as long as the test was taken within the normal 2-year validity period.

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