



# Postgraduate English Language Proficiency Requirements and English Language Equivalencies

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## Overview

The University of Waikato sets standards for English language proficiency for admission to the University for applicants whose first language is not English or te reo Māori. All international applicants, as well as New Zealand and Australian permanent visa holder applicants, are required to provide satisfactory evidence of their proficiency in English.

The purpose of this document is to outline what will be accepted as satisfactory evidence for this requirement.

For any queries related to this document, international students may contact [international@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:international@waikato.ac.nz).  
For any queries related to this document, domestic students may contact [info@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:info@waikato.ac.nz).

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## APPENDIX 3: English Language Entry Requirements (Postgraduate & Higher Research Degrees)

Applicants whose first language is not English or te reo Māori are required to provide satisfactory evidence of English language proficiency, generally in the form of an IELTS (academic) or TOEFL examination score. Scores can vary according to the qualification sought.

### 1. International students for whom English is a First Language

English will be considered the first language of citizens (passport holders) of the following countries, regardless of their actual place of residence and who have evidence of successful tertiary study or a senior secondary qualification in the medium of English:

- The United Kingdom
- The Republic of Ireland
- The United States of America
- Canada (including all provinces, if the qualification has been taught in English)
- Singapore

International applicants, as well as New Zealand and Australian permanent resident applicants with te reo Māori as their first language will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Divisions.

### 2. English Proficiency Tests

All test results are valid for two years from the date of the test to the proposed start date at the University of Waikato. The requirements must be met within one sitting, unless stated otherwise, or on one certificate.

IELTS (Academic) (includes One Skill Retake (OSR) and IELTS Indicator <sup>1</sup> )	Overall score of 6.5 and no bands below 6
iBT TOEFL (internet and Home based)	Overall score of 90 with a minimum writing score of 21
Certificate of Attainment in Academic English	a B grade or better at Level 8
PTE Academic	Overall score of 58 with no communicative skills score below 50
LanguageCert International ESOL (LRWS)	C1 Mastery with a pass overall and no less than a pass in each skill
LanguageCert Academic	Overall score of 70 with no skill less than 65
Awarded a New Zealand Certificate in English Language (Academic)	Level 5
Trinity College London Integrated Skills in English (ISE) III	Pass in all four components
B2 First (formally known as Cambridge English: First (FCE))	With an overall score of 176 and no bands below 169

<sup>1</sup> Students who are accepted using the IELTS Indicator will be required to undertake a supplementary language assessment.

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C2 Proficiency (formally Cambridge English: Proficiency (CPE))	With an overall score of 176 and no bands below 169
Michigan English Test (formally known as Michigan English Language Assessment Battery (MELAB))	Minimum score of 59
Duolingo English Test (DET)	120 with no band less than 105
Oxford Test of English (OTE)	Overall score of 140 with no module score below 126
IGCSE (English as a First language (500/0522))	C
IGCSE (English as a Second language (510/0511))	B
Kings Education <sup>2</sup> Advanced Level Foundation (Communication and Study Skills module)	65%
IELTS Online	As per existing IELTS requirements, applicable for both sub-doctoral and doctoral.

All other evidence is considered on a case-by-case basis.

### 3. Admission to Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes (GradDipTchg, PGDipTchg and MTchgLn)

The following minimum scores are considered to be evidence of such competence:

The following minimum scores are considered to be evidence of such competence:

- an Academic IELTS overall score of 7.0 (with no less than 7.0 in any band) including any results from the IELTS OSR test;
- International Baccalaureate full diploma in English medium (24 points minimum). This must be completed at an IB school;
- Cambridge International Examinations minimum 120 points on the UCAS Tariff plus meeting the CIE literacy requirements;
- Awarded Cambridge Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (CELTA);
- Awarded Trinity College London Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (CertTESOL);
- Cambridge English exams C2 Proficiency (CPE) or C1 Advanced (CAE) or Cambridge English exams B2 First (FCE). A minimum score of 185, with no band score less than 185;
- International Second Language Proficiency Ratings (ISLPR). A minimum score of 4 in all modules;
- A computer-based Academic Pearson Test of English (PTE) with an overall score of 69, including minimum scores of 61 in Listening, 62 in Reading, 73 in Writing, and 79 in Speaking
- Trinity ISE III (3). A pass with Merit in all four modules;

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- LanguageCert C2 Mastery IESOL. No less than 25/50 overall and in any band score;
- LanguageCert C1 Expert IESOL. No less than 35/50 overall and in any band score;
- TOEFL Internet-based test (IBT) taken before 21 January 2026 must meet the following overall score of 98 and the following scores in each module: Listening - 24; Reading - 24; Writing - 27; Speaking - 23.
- TOEFL iBT (Internet Based TOEFL) taken after 21 January 2026 must meet an overall score of 5 and the following scores in each module: Listening - 5; Reading - 5; Writing – 5.5; Speaking – 4.5.

All other evidence is considered on a case-by-case basis.

### 4. Prior Study in English

Prior study in English is valid for two years from the completion of the English programme to the start date of the student's programme at the University of Waikato.

If applicants can provide evidence of further study or work in the medium of English or hold a passport from a country where English is the predominant language<sup>2</sup> and where there is evidence of further study or work in the medium of English, this validity is for five years. Each applicant will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

#### 4.1 English Language Programmes

Programme	English Grade required <sup>3</sup>	IELTS equivalent
University of Waikato Certificate of Attainment in Academic Language (CAAE)	B at level 8	6.5
University of Auckland (FCertEAP and EPPS)		6.5
AUT Certificate in English for Academic Study (CertEAS)		6.5
Lincoln University Graduate Certificate in Academic English		6.5
University of Otago English for Postgraduate Academic Purposes (EUAP)		6.5
Victoria University (ELI) EAP Programme		6.5

<sup>2</sup> As defined by UK ECCTIS: American Samoa, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Botswana, Canada, Fiji, Gibraltar, Ghana, Guyana, Jamaica, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malaysia, Nigeria, PNG, Republic of Ireland, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, The Gambia, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, UK, USA, Zambia, Zimbabwe

<sup>3</sup> Passing grades that are deemed equivalent to IELTS 6, according to each institution's grading scales and concordancing exercises.

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New Zealand Certificates in English Language (NZCEL)	Level 5 (Academic)	6.5
Accredited Pathways Assessment <sup>2</sup> (APA) English NZ accredited schools	English New Zealand Accredited Pathway Assessment Level 3 (with no skill lower than Level 2)	6.5

### 4.2. Tertiary study in the Medium of English or te reo Māori

Students are required to meet one of the following requirements:

#### Taught qualification (non-doctoral)

- A bachelor's degree (three-year minimum duration), or
- A qualification considered comparable to a New Zealand graduate/postgraduate diploma or master's degree on NZQF (one-year minimum duration).

#### Doctoral (including MPhil)

- A bachelor's degree (three-year minimum duration), or
- A postgraduate qualification (one-year minimum duration) and a bachelor's degree (three-year minimum duration), with no more than two years between the completion of the bachelor's degree and the commencement of the postgraduate qualification, or
- A postgraduate qualification (two years minimum duration).

The following list identifies countries where English is the predominant language, as defined by UK ENIC/ECCTIS. Qualifications completed in these countries may be considered to meet the English language requirement where all other criteria are satisfied.

- Australia
- Botswana
- Canada (if the degree is taught in English)
- Cayman Islands
- Cyprus (if the degree is taught in English)
- Fiji
- Ghana
- Guyana
- Hong Kong (if the degree has been taught in English)
- India (if the degree has been taught in English, and the institution is approved by UK ECCTIS)
- Ireland
- Jamaica
- Kenya
- Lesotho
- Malaysia (if the degree has been taught in English)
- Malta
- Mauritius
- Nigeria
- Norway
- Papua New Guinea
- Philippines

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- 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

Also:

- University of the South Pacific
- University of West Indies

### 4.3. Offshore Campuses

Some qualifications are offered by universities and polytechnics at offshore campuses in the medium of English. Successful completion of qualifications at bachelor's degree level or higher from these campuses within timeframes specified in this document is deemed acceptable for English Language equivalency for admission to postgraduate studies.

China	<b>New Zealand Bailie Training Base Limited (NZBTB)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A pass in Academic English 5 meets the English requirement for postgraduate and doctoral programmes</li><li>• Successful completion of the Postgraduate Preparation Programme meets the English and academic requirement for conversion postgraduate programmes</li></ul>
	<b>Hangzhou City University (HZCU)</b> <p>A pass in ENSLA310 meets the English requirement for postgraduate and doctoral programmes</p>

## 5. Study Abroad and Exchange

In the case of exchange and study abroad students (who are not applying for degrees at the University of Waikato), study must have been completed no more than two years before the commencement of their programme at the University of Waikato in addition to meeting one of the following requirements:

### 5.1. Tertiary Study in English Medium

Prior enrolment in bachelor's degree study or above at a university or polytechnic from a country listed under (4.2).

### 5.2. Letter of Recommendation

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A letter of recommendation is acceptable from an authorised faculty staff member from a partner university, or from the home university of a student using the services of an agent or third provider, from one of the countries below, stating that the applicant has sufficient proficiency in English to cope with English medium tertiary study. This letter must be based on the applicant's study of English as a Second Language or study in the medium of English.

Direct applicants should provide evidence of English language proficiency as per University of Waikato guidelines. These countries are:

- Denmark
- Finland
- Germany
- Norway
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- The Netherlands

A letter of recommendation is acceptable from applicants from partner institutions from the following countries:

- France

### 6. Waivers

Students who do not meet the English language admission requirements as outlined above may in some circumstances be granted a waiver. Applications will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Applicants who are issued a waiver may be required to undertake a supplementary language assessment within the first two weeks of their first semester enrolled in a University of Waikato programme and may be required to undertake recommended English language support.

Waiver requests must be submitted by the relevant Division to the Postgraduate Research Committee through the Associate Deans/Director (Postgraduate).

#### Grounds for a waiver include:

##### Sub-doctoral including MPhil:

#### 6.1. Studies in English Language

Completion of a postgraduate qualification of at least one year's duration in the subject of English language from a recognised university no more than two years prior to the commencement of their programme.

#### 6.2. Other

A combination of factors where one on its own is insufficient:

- Current GRE or GMAT Score
- Medium of Instruction for bachelor's degree in English
- Published research in English and presented at conference(s)
- Evidence of extensive work experience in the English language
- A postgraduate qualification (at least one year) or bachelor's degree from a university

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or polytechnic located in one of the countries listed under 4.2, and completed at least two years before beginning study at Waikato.

### Doctoral:

#### 6.3. Teaching in English

Past significant experience of teaching in English (two years or more) at tertiary level, in a recognised university where English is the first language no more than two years prior to the commencement of their programme.