



# Undergraduate 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 holders, 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 2: English Language Entry Requirements (Undergraduate)

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.

Applicants who have achieved University Entrance through NCEA, International Baccalaureate or Cambridge International in New Zealand are not required to provide further evidence of English language proficiency. IELTS and TOEFL may not be used as replacements for these literacy requirements.

### 1. Students whose first language is English or te reo Māori

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 English medium:

- 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 (excluding admission to LLB and ITE programmes)

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 6.0 and no bands below 5.5
iBT TOEFL (internet based and home versions)	Overall score of 80 with a writing score of 21
New Zealand Certificate in English Language (Academic)	Level 4
Certificate of Attainment in Academic English	B grade or better at Level 7
Pearson Test of English (PTE) Academic <sup>2</sup>	Overall score of 50 with no communicative skills score below 42

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

<sup>2</sup> PTE Academic online is not accepted

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LanguageCert – International ESOL (LRWS)	C1 Expert with a pass overall and no less than a pass in each skill
Trinity College London Integrated Skills in English (ISE) II	with distinction in all 4 components
B2 (formerly known as Cambridge English Proficiency (CPE))	Overall score of 169 and no bands below 162
C2 Proficiency (formerly Cambridge Proficiency Exam CPE)	Overall score of 169 and no bands below 162
Michigan English Test (formerly known as English Language Assessment Battery (MELAB))	Minimum score of 54
Duolingo English Test (DET)	105 with no band less than 95
Oxford Test of English (OTE)	Overall score of 126 with no module score below 111
IGCSE (English as a First language (500/0522))	C
IGCSE (English as a Second language (510/0511))	C
Kings Education <sup>3</sup> Advanced Level Foundation (Communication and Study Skills module)	60%
IELTS Online	As per existing IELTS requirements on a per programme basis.

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

### 3. Admission to professional undergraduate programmes

A number of professional bodies specify the English language competency requirements for the following qualifications:

#### 3.1 Admission to LLB

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

- an Academic IELTS overall score of 6.5 (with no less than 6.0 in any band), or
- an iBT (Internet Based TOEFL) score of 90 with a Writing score of 21, or
- a B grade or better at Level 8 in the Certificate of Attainment in Academic English, or
- a PTE Academic overall score of 56 with no band less than 46. All other evidence is

considered on a case-by-case basis.

#### 3.2 Admission to Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes (BTchg, GradDipTchg, PGDipTchg) and MTchgLn

<sup>3</sup> The Kings Advanced Level Foundation as one-year pre-university programme based on the UK A levels system, and assured by Pearson. This programme is currently accepted by Auckland, Dunedin, St Andrews LSE, Lancaster and others.

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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;
- 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.

### 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>4</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.

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<sup>4</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

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### 4.1 Foundation Studies Programmes

Programme	English Grade required <sup>5</sup>	IELTS equivalent
University of Waikato Certificate of Attainment in Foundation Studies (CAFS)	B-	6
UP International College – University of Auckland Certificate in Foundation Studies		6
UP International College – Auckland University of Technology Certificate in Foundation Studies		6
UP International College – Victoria University of Wellington		6
Taylors Auckland Foundation Year		6
NZ University Foundation programmes (1 year)		6
Australian Group of 8 Universities* (1-year programmes) *unless listed below		6
Taylors College, Melbourne Monash University Foundation Programme		6
Taylors College, Sydney University of Sydney Foundation Programme		6
A Recognised Australian Foundation Programme (1-year programme)		6
A recognised UK Foundation Programme (1-year programme)		6
NCUK International Foundation Year (1-year programme)	C grade overall and no less than D grade in each component	6

### 4.2 English Language Programmes

Programme	English Grade required <sup>6</sup>	IELTS equivalent
University of Waikato Certificate of Attainment in Academic Language (CAAE)	B grade at level 7	6

<sup>5</sup> Passing grades that are deemed equivalent to IELTS 6, according to each institution's grading scales and concordancing exercises.

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

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University of Auckland FCertEAP and EPUS		6
AUT Certificate in English for Academic Study (CertEAS)		6
Lincoln University Certificate in English for Academic Purposes (EAP)		6
University of Otago English for Undergraduate Academic Purposes (EUAP)		6
New Zealand Certificates in English Language (NZCEL)	Level 4	6
Accredited Pathways Assessment (APA) <sup>2</sup> English NZ accredited schools		6

### 5. International Secondary Qualifications

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.

#### GCE Advanced Level

General Certificate of Education (GCE) Advanced-Level, or any qualification recognised by UK ECCTIS (British Council) being equivalent to GCE A-levels, which is fully taught/examined in English. These include:

Applicants who gain an E (pass) grade in one of the following English-intensive GCE A-Level subjects are deemed to have achieved an IELTS equivalency of 6.0:

- Biology
- Business Studies
- Classical Studies
- Economics
- English First Language
- English Literature General Paper
- General Studies
- Geography
- History

#### GCE Advanced Subsidiary Level (AS – Levels)

General Certificate of Education (GCE) Advanced Subsidiary, or any qualification recognised by UK ECCTIS as being equivalent to GCE AS-Levels, which is fully taught/examined in English including:

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GCE AS level English Language or Literature	IELTS equivalent
E	6.0

### General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE)

GCSE, or any qualification recognised by UK ECCTIS as being equivalent to General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), which is fully taught/examined in English including:

GCSE English Language or Literature	IELTS equivalent
C	6.0

### Singapore-Cambridge GCE

Recommended English proficiency requirement deemed equivalent to IELTS 6.0, no bands less than 5.5

Subject	H2 level	H1 level
English language & linguistics	E	-
Literature in English	E	C
General Paper	-	C
Knowledge & Enquiry	E	-
History	E	-
Economics	E	-
Principles of Accounting	E	-
Management of Business	E	-
Geography	E	-
Biology	E	-

### 5.1 International Baccalaureate (IB)

Recommended English Proficiency requirement deemed equivalent to IELTS 6.0:

		English grade required
Higher level	English A: Literature or Language & Literature	4
	English Language B	5
Standard level	English A: Literature or Language & Literature	5

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### 6. Country Specific Qualifications

The study must have been completed no more than two years before the commencement of the programme at Waikato.

Australia	50% in an English-intensive subject in a recognised Year 12 qualification
Canada	50% in a Grade 12 English-intensive subject in a recognised Canadian High School Diploma. Completion of a recognised two-year community college associate degree
Denmark	Weighted grade average of 7 in English A, or 10 in English B (Studentereksamen)
Fiji	60% in an English-intensive subject at Year 13 Certificate Examination (7th Form) Form 7: Aggregate over 4 subjects of 250 marks out of 400 with a minimum of 50 in English USP Foundation in Arts, Business or Social Science with a grade average of B or higher and no grade lower than C in the 8 required courses
Finland	Grade of 5 (scale 0-7) in English Language in Ylioppilastutkinoto or Studentexamen, Grade of 8 (scale 4-10) in English or English A language in the Upper Secondary School Certificate
France	Grade 12 Option Internationale du Baccalaureat (American and British)
Germany	Abitur English Language Grade of 3 (scale 1-6) or 10 (scale 1-15) DAAD language certificate for undergraduate: level B2 (checked at least 4 stars)
Hong Kong	Level 4 in English language in Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE)
India	Minimum of 60% in English from one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Indian School Certificate (ISC);</li> <li>ii. All-India Senior School Certificate (AISSC);</li> <li>iii. Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Higher (Secondary) School Certificate;</li> <li>iv. Karnataka Pre-University Certificate;</li> <li>v. West Bengal State Board;</li> </ul> A minimum of 65% in English in the Senior School Certificate awarded from all other India State Boards

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Malaysia	<p>C Grade in English in STPM</p> <p>C Grade in SPM English 1119 (English as a First Language)/CEFR B2</p> <p>B+ Grade in English in Foundation Programme (Foundation course must be a MQA approved programme and taught and examined in English)</p>
Netherlands	<p>Grade of 7 (in a scale 0-10) in English Language in the Voorbereidend Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs (VWO) (Gymnasium A/B and Atheneum A/B) Diplomas</p> <p>(university preparatory education)</p>
Norway	<p>Pass (minimum 4 on the 1-6 scale) in English Language in the Vitnemal</p>
Samoa	<p>Grade of C1 (60-64%) in HEN004 Foundation English in Foundation Certificate from</p> <p>National University of Samoa</p>
Singapore	<p>Completion of National University of Singapore (NUS) High School Diploma</p> <p>Completion of three-year diploma (full-time) conducted in English, from one of the following polytechnics: Singapore Polytechnic, Ngee Ann Polytechnic, Temasek Polytechnic, Nanyang Polytechnic and Republic Polytechnic</p>
Sweden	<p>C grade in the Hogskoleforberedande examen English 7</p>
South Africa	<p>Grade of 5 or C in English in the National Senior Certificate / Senior Certificate / Matriculation English</p>
South Pacific Countries	<p>Merit in English in South Pacific Form Seven Certificate</p>
Sri Lanka	<p>Completion of The Foundation Certificate in Higher Education (FCHE) from the Informatics Institute of Technology (IIT) as equivalent for academic entry into the Bachelor of Business and Bachelor of Computer Science</p>
Tonga	<p>Merit in English in the Tonga National Form Seven Certificate</p>
USA	<p>Completion of a recognised two-year community college associate degree</p> <p>Completion of High School Diploma with a minimum attendance of at least 2 years SAT Reasoning Test with an Evidence-Based Reading and Writing score of 550</p> <p>ACT ELA score of 25</p>

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

Students are required to have successfully completed a minimum of one-year full-time study at a university or polytechnic recognised by UK ECCTIS, or relevant government body in the countries listed below, and the programme must be comparable to programmes at NZQF Level 5 or above. The study must have been completed no more than two years before the commencement of their programme at Waikato. This is valid for:

- 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 ECCTIS)
- Ireland
- Jamaica
- Kenya
- Lesotho
- Malaysia (if the degree has been taught in English)
- Malta
- Mauritius
- Nigeria
- New Zealand
- Norway
- Papua New Guinea
- Philippines
- 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

### 8. Offshore Campuses

Some qualifications are offered by universities and polytechnics in a number of locations in the world and are deemed acceptable for English language equivalency regardless of location.

China	<b>Dalian University:</b> A pass grade in ENSLA100 meets the English language requirement for the Bachelor of Business
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	<p><b>Yanshan University:</b> A pass grade in ENSLA100 meets the English language requirement for the Bachelor of Business</p> <p><b>Minzu University of China (Minzu):</b> A pass grade in ENSLA100 meets the English language requirement for the Bachelor of Computer Science</p> <p><b>New Zealand Bailie Training Base Limited (NZBTB)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Successful completion of the Foundation Programme meets the English and academic requirement to most undergraduate programmes</li><li>• A pass grade in Academic English 4 meets the English requirement for most undergraduate programmes,</li></ul>
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### 9. Study Abroad and Exchange

In the case of exchange and study abroad students (who are not applying for degrees at the University of Waikato):

#### 9.1. Tertiary Study in English Medium

Successful completion of bachelor's degree study or above at a university or polytechnic from a country listed under (7).

#### 9.2. Certificat de Competences en Langues de l'Enseignement Superieur (CLES)

Successful completion at level 2.

#### 9.3. General English Proficiency Test (GEPT)

Applicants must pass all four components at high or intermediate level or above.

#### 9.4. Partner Universities: Letter of Recommendation

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

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

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- Switzerland

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

- France

### 10. 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.