



Guidance on English Language Requirements for Membership

Introduction:

This guidance outlines the English language requirements for doctors holding or wishing to apply for membership of The British College of Aesthetic Medicine (“the College”) and is written to clarify the situations in which the College may require applicants to provide evidence in relation to their competence in English.

All doctors who practise medicine in the UK must have the necessary knowledge of English to communicate effectively so they do not put the safety of their patients at risk. Communicating includes speaking, reading, writing and listening.

Under Regulation 16(2)(aa) of the Medical Profession (Responsible Officer) Regulations 2010 as amended:

16(2) In relation to the entry by the designated body into contracts of employment or for the provision of services with medical practitioners, the responsible officer must—

(aa) ensure that medical practitioners have sufficient knowledge of the English language necessary for the work to be performed in a safe and competent manner;

The GMC publication *Good Medical Practice 2013* (GMP) states that doctors ‘must have the necessary knowledge of the English language to provide a good standard of practice and care in the UK’. GMP also highlights a number of key reasons why it is essential that doctors have the necessary language skills to practise in the UK. At a minimum these include the need for doctors to be able to communicate effectively with patients and relatives; work in partnership with other healthcare colleagues; and clearly and accurately document their work. If a doctor does not have the necessary knowledge of English there is a risk that they may not be able to fulfil these requirements.



Whether the College asks an applicant to provide evidence that they have the necessary knowledge of English depends on a number of things.

1. Medical graduates of Universities within the United Kingdom:
 - a. There will be no routine requirement to demonstrate English language competence where an applicant has graduated with a Primary Medical Qualification (PMQ) from a University within the United Kingdom.

2. International medical graduates (non-EEA graduates):
 - a. The GMC requires evidence of competence in English before granting registration and a license to practice to international medical graduates. Applicants simply need to provide a copy of the PLAB certificate or IELTS certificate which was accepted by the GMC or written confirmation from the GMC that the applicant was exempted from the requirement to provide either of the above at the time of their full registration. No further routine language testing requirements apply above those which were required for full GMC registration with a license to practice.
 - b. Where an applicant is unable to provide any of the above, the Responsible Officer may require that the applicant provides an IELTS (Academic) test certificate, less than 2 years old at the time of application, with an overall score of 7.5 or above.

3. European Economic Area (EEA) graduates, Swiss nationals and those with an EC right which exempts them from the provision of (2) above under EC law:
 - a. Where an applicant does not hold a PMQ which has been taught and examined (over 75% of clinical interactions & written assessments) in English; or
 - b. where an applicant cannot demonstrate practice of at least 1 year full time duration in the last 2 years in a country where English is the first and native language (see [GMC List](#) of acceptable countries); or
 - c. where, during the application or the annual appraisal process concerns arise as to the competence (eg: communication difficulties, use of



translators or other persons as intermediaries, content or written documents),

then the Responsible Officer may require that the applicant provides an IELTS (Academic) test certificate, less than 2 years old at the time of application, with an overall score of 7.5 or above.

Acceptable Evidence of English Language Competence:

1. Where a doctor provides evidence other than that specified in this guidance the Responsible Officer may exercise discretion in accepting alternative evidence or in seeking further evidence from an applicant or member including requiring the applicant or member to undertake a IELTS (Academic) test and that they achieve a specified overall minimum score.
2. An original IELTS (Academic) certificate which has been completed with 2 years of the date of application for membership with an overall score of 7.5 or greater.
3. An original PLAB certificate accepted by the GMC at the point of full registration with a license to practice.
4. Evidence of a PMQ which has been taught and examined in English (over 75% of clinical interactions & written assessments) within the last 2 years (and evidence of ongoing competence if longer than 2 years).
5. A pass, within the last 2 years (and evidence of ongoing competence if longer than 2 years), in a language test for registration with a medical regulatory authority in a country where the first and native language is English;
6. Evidence of satisfactory completion of at least 1 year full time practice in the last 2 years, in a supervised training post in a country where the first and native language is English. This may include references from employers detailing English competence.

Notwithstanding the above, where a concern is raised in respect of any applicant or member at any time as to their competence in English, the Responsible Officer may require the applicant or member to provide evidence in the form of an IELTS (Academic) test certificate, less than 2 years old, with an overall score of 7.5 or above.



Where a member fails to comply with such a requirement the Responsible Officer may refer the matter to the Board for consideration of suspension of membership and to the GMC for consideration of further action.

Where an applicant fails to comply with any requirements made by the Responsible Officer pursuant to this guidance, then their application for membership will be refused.

Dr Philip Dobson
Responsible Officer