



**Social Workers  
Registration Board**  

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**Kāhui Whakamana Tauwhiro**

## **ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCE AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE TESTING**

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### **POLICY STATEMENT**

**Last Reviewed:  
For Review:**

**August 2015  
May 2018**

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCE AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE TESTING

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This policy statement is based on the social workers registration act 2003 (the Act).

### **Rationale**

The Social Workers Registration Board considers effective English speaking and communication skills are a pre-requisite to safe social work practice. Section 7 (d) of the Act requires that the Board is satisfied that applicants for registration who do not have a recognised New Zealand qualification can speak and write English reasonably effectively, and understand spoken and written English reasonably well. Section 47 (2) (b) requires that the Board is satisfied that that an applicant for registration is a fit and proper person in that they are able to perform adequately the functions required to practise social work satisfactorily. The Board has determined that for all applicants for registration this requires effective English speaking and communication skills. An objective communications skills test is the best way of ensuring that registered social work practitioners can comprehend and communicate effectively.

### **Policy**

All applicants for registration with an overseas qualification must demonstrate English language competency in one of the following ways:

1. You have undertaken and successfully completed all of your primary and secondary education and your professional social work qualification, all of which were taught and assessed solely in English.

*or*

2. You have achieved the required minimum overall score of 7 and a minimum score of 7 in each of the four components in the IELTS academic module in one test sitting, or you achieved a minimum overall score of 7 in each sitting with a minimum score of 7 in each component across two sittings within a six month period, with no score in any component below 6.5.

All applicants for registration who have a recognised New Zealand social work qualification, or who meet the requirements outlined above are deemed to have English language competence unless their application or character reference indicates otherwise. In these cases applicants may be required to provide evidence of English language competence, from at least two placement or work supervisors who can speak and write English reasonably effectively, and understand spoken and written English reasonably well and who have observed and are familiar with the applicant's English competency in a practice setting,

IELTS results remain valid for 2 years.

The test results must be sent directly to the Board.