

Gateway reference: 7289

IMPLEMENTING LOCAL COMMISSIONING FOR PRIMARY CARE DENTISTRY

Factsheet 17 Language Testing for Dentists Applying for Inclusion in PCT Dental Performers Lists

Introduction

1. This guidance replaces the Chief Dental Officer's letter of 3 November 2004 (Gateway reference 4007) with updated guidance including a revised list of English language testing qualification, which are acceptable as evidence of the knowledge of English required to perform NHS primary care dental services.

Policy

2. Under regulation 6 (2) (b) of the National Health Service (Performers Lists) Regulations 2004 a PCT may refuse to include a performer in its performers list where
" it is not satisfied he has the knowledge of English which, in his own interests or those of his patients, is necessary in performing the services, which those included in the relevant performers list perform, in its area;"
3. The PCT's duty to ensure appropriate language skills applies in the case of both doctors and dentists being considered for inclusion on a performers list, but since 2001 language testing for dentists has been subject to additional guidance to reflect the circumstances in which dentists typically practise and the nature of the procedures they undertake".

Provisions for testing the knowledge of English of overseas dentists

4. Overseas dentists who are not nationals of the European Economic Area (except those eligible to be treated as an EEA national as below,) wishing to practise dentistry in the UK have to pass the General Dental Council's International Qualifying Examination (IQE). To be eligible to sit the IQE, the dentists are required to submit an academic International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test report form, showing a minimum overall score of 7.0.
5. Dentists with IQE have therefore undergone a formal test of their knowledge of English.
6. The European Community Sectoral Directive for Dentistry provides for mutual recognition of dental qualifications obtained by dentists who are nationals of the EEA or dentists who are entitled to be treated as EEA nationals because they are family members of an EEA-national (other than a UK national) who is moving to work or reside in the UK. As a result, these dentists are exempt from the IQE and are admitted to the GDC's register without any formal test of their knowledge of English. The members states of the EEA are listed at Annex A.

Assessing knowledge of English of dentists from the EEA

7. Information on language tests has been collected to enable common standards to be applied to the assessment of dentists from the EEA. Annex **B** contains an updated list of approved English language testing qualifications with passes/scores judged to be evident of sufficient knowledge of English required to perform NHS primary care dental services.
8. PCTs are advised to require all overseas dentists, who are EEA nationals or eligible to be treated as EEA nationals, to produce evidence of a pass in one of the listed tests at the prescribed level with the exception of dentists who have a certificate of graduation from
 - a UK or Irish Republic dental school; or
 - any other dental school where the dental degree course is taught in full in English (we could advise on whether a dental school outside the UK or Irish Republic taught students in English).

Supporting dentists

9. Where EEA dentists apply for inclusion to a PCT's dental lists and the PCT is aware of funded vacancies in local practices which the dentists might fill, PCTs may wish to advise or support them in undergoing English language training. Many colleges of further education offer training and some of the providers of the testing systems referred to in Annex **B** also offer training courses. Where PCTs offer financial support they are advised to obtain a written undertaking that, the dentist will practise in the NHS.

Action

10. PCTs are advised to
 - require all EEA dentists (except those trained in English) to produce evidence of a pass in one of the tests listed at Annex **B** before including them in their dental performers lists.
 - advise and consider supporting EEA dentists, for whom they have funded vacancies, who do not have a language testing certificate but wish to undergo training.

Enquiries

11. Enquiries about this advice should be directed to Amit Bose on:
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Annex A

Member states of the European Economic Area

Austria
Belgium
Bulgaria
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Denmark
Estonia
Finland
France
Germany
Greece
Hungary
Iceland
Ireland
Italy
Latvia
Liechtenstein
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Malta
Netherlands
Norway
Poland
Portugal
Romania
Slovakia
Slovenia
Spain
Sweden
United Kingdom

Annex B

English Language Testing Qualifications

Awarding body	Title of Qualification	Pass/Minimum Average Score
Cambridge University Certificate in English (ESOL) www.cambridgeesol.org	Business English Certificate (BEC)	BEC Vantage
London Chamber of Commerce Institute Examination (LCCIEB) www.lccieb.com	English for Business (EFB)	EFB Level 2
National Open College Network NOCN www.nocn.org.uk	NOCL Entry Level Certificate in ESOL Skills for Life	Entry 2
City & Guilds www.cityandguilds.com	City & Guilds International ESOL examinations	Communicator (B2)* CEF Level
Trinity www.trinitycollege.co.uk	Certificate in Integrated Skills in English (ISE I)	B2 *CEF Level
University of Bath www.bath.ac.uk/ubelt/	English Language Assessment	2.5
Linguarama www.linguarama.com	Linguarama English Test	2.5
Eutopia Medical Solutions www.eutopiamedical.com	Eutopia Certificate in Dental English Language	60%
International English Language Testing System www.ielts.org	General International English Language Testing System	7
International English Language Testing System www.ielts.org	International English Language Testing System Academic	6
Educational Testing Service www.ets.org	Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) Internet Based Test	80
Educational Testing Service www.ets.org	Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) Computer Based Test	200
Educational Testing Service www.ets.org	Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) Paper Based Test	450
Educational Testing Service www.ets.org	Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC)	660

*CEF : Common European Framework