**AASW**
Australian Association
of Social Workers

*International Qualifications Assessments*

# AASW English Language Policy

## 1. Background

English language proficiency is essential for respectful, effective and safe social work practice in Australia.

**AASW REQUIREMENTS MAY BE DIFFERENT TO DIBP REQUIREMENTS**

The Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) sets the English language requirements for migration and visa purposes in Australia. The AASW sets the English language requirements for professional social work practice in Australia. Given that social work is a communication based profession, it is essential that social workers have a high level of English language proficiency, which is why the AASW's English language requirements are higher than the DIBP's requirements in some instances.

**FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS COMPLETING AASW ACCREDITED COURSES**

Higher Education Providers (HEP) set the English language entry requirements for social work education in Australia. The AASW sets the English language requirements for professional social work practice in Australia. It is important to note that the AASW's English language requirements for practice in Australia may be higher than some HEP entry requirements. All international graduates of AASW accredited courses will be required to meet the AASW English language requirements for migration purposes.

## 2. AASW English Language Skills Standard

All applicants who are applying for an AASW assessment for migration and/or employment purposes must prove their English language proficiency. This requires:

- A minimum score of 7.0 or higher in EACH component (listening, reading, writing and speaking), in one sitting of the Academic IELTS (International English Language Testing System) test. This may be waived where applicants have met the educational requirements for English language. See Exemptions below.

- Test results must be obtained within three years prior to submitting for an AASW qualification assessment.

## 3. Exemptions

The AASW may grant an exemption from the requirements where the applicant provides evidence that they:

- Completed all secondary education, that was taught and assessed in English, in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Republic of Ireland, South Africa, United Kingdom or United States of America, and;

- Successfully completed (with a pass grade or higher) the equivalent of three years or more full-time tertiary study (at Bachelor Degree level or higher), that was taught and assessed in English, in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Republic of Ireland, South Africa, United Kingdom or United States of America.

The AASW reserves the right to ask an applicant to take the Academic IELTS examination if there is uncertainty about their level of English proficiency.

## 4. English language tests accepted by the AASW

Currently the AASW only accepts the Academic IELTS test.

Our policy is aligned with industry and health professions' standards.  We regularly monitor industry standards and review our policy as required.

## 5. More information about English language test requirements

Applicants may take the Academic IELTS test as many times as required to achieve the required scores.

Applicants are responsible for the cost of the IELTS test.

The AASW advises applicants to contact IELTS (www.ielts.org) for further information regarding Academic IELTS tests, test times, test centre locations and costs associated with undertaking the test.

**NB. Please only send your IELTS test results to the AASW when accompanied by an application for an assessment of your international qualifications and/or AASW membership eligibility.**

Under no circumstances should applicants submit an English language test report that does not comply with the above conditions.

## 6. General Information

The AASW reserves the right to verify any information submitted, interview any applicant and their education provider, employer or referee, or request further English language testing, if the AASW has concerns in relation to the applicant's capacity to communicate at an effective level using the English language.