

English Language Proficiency Requirements for HDR Candidature

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1. Governing Policy

[Higher Degrees by Research Policy](#)

2. Purpose

- a. This document sets out the minimum required English language proficiency requirements for admission to all candidatures for Flinders University higher degrees by research (HDRs).
- b. Further details about English language requirements are available on the University's [admissions](#) web pages.
- c. For applicants to a postgraduate coursework award course—see the [English Language Proficiency Requirements for Coursework Award Courses and Topics](#).

3. Minimum requirements

3.1. Masters by Research degrees, PhDs, Professional Doctorates and Higher Doctorates

The minimum English language proficiency requirement for admission to these degrees is one of the following:

- a. the applicant's first language is English
- b. the applicant has successfully completed their prior qualifying study in English, i.e., the applicant has:
 - i. an Australian tertiary qualification at AQF Level 8 or higher, or
 - ii. an equivalent tertiary qualification taught in the English language in a country where English is the official language or the main language spoken
- c. the applicant has sat the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Academic proficiency test and has achieved an overall score of at least 6.5 with a minimum score of 6.5 in the Writing component and 6.0 in all other components, or has sat one of the following other international English proficiency tests and has achieved equivalent scores as determined by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Training and Capabilities) and Dean of Graduate Research. Equivalent scores are published on the [English language requirements webpage](#):
 - i. Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) internet-based test (iBT)
 - ii. C1 Advanced by Cambridge Assessment English
 - iii. Pearson Test of English (PTE) Academic
 - iv. Duolingo English Test (DET)
 - v. LanguageCert Academic.

For applicants who have sat the full IELTS Academic test, the IELTS Academic One Skill Retake (OSR) is also accepted where needed to meet the required score in a specific test component.

Where an accrediting or regulatory body does not accept a particular international English language proficiency test, that test will not be considered valid for admission to courses or programs governed by that body. These exceptions will be clearly identified on the University's English Language Requirements webpage.

- d. the applicant has successfully completed an approved English language course from a registered English Language Intensive Course for Overseas Students (ELICOS) Provider or
- e. the applicant has an equivalent to one of the above requirements, as determined by the delegated authority specified in the [HDR Admission and Enrolment Procedures](#).

3.2. PhD (Clinical Psychology)

The minimum English language proficiency requirement for admission to this degree is one of the following:

- a. the applicant's first language is English
- b. the applicant has successfully completed their prior qualifying study in English, i.e., the applicant has:
 - i. an Australian tertiary qualification at AQF Level 8 or higher, or
 - ii. an equivalent tertiary qualification taught in the English language in a country where English is the official language or the main language spoken
- c. the applicant has sat the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Academic proficiency test and has achieved an overall score of at least 7.0 with a minimum score of 7.0 in all components, or has sat one of the following other international English proficiency tests and has achieved equivalent scores as determined by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Training and Capabilities) and Dean of Graduate Research. Equivalent scores are published on the [English language requirements webpage](#):
 - i. Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) internet-based test (iBT)
 - ii. C1 Advanced by Cambridge Assessment English
 - iii. Pearson Test of English (PTE) Academic
 - iv. LanguageCert Academic.

For applicants who have sat the full IELTS Academic test, the IELTS Academic One Skill Retake (OSR) is also accepted where needed to meet the required score in a specific test component.

Where an accrediting or regulatory body does not accept a particular international English language proficiency test, that test will not be considered valid for admission to courses or programs governed by that body. These exceptions will be clearly identified on the University's [English Language Requirements webpage](#).

- d. the applicant has successfully completed an approved English language course from a registered English Language Intensive Course for Overseas Students (ELICOS) Provider, or
- e. the applicant has an equivalent to one of these requirements, as determined by the delegated authority specified in the [HDR Admission and Enrolment Procedures](#).

3.3. Currency of proficiency

- a. The evidence of proficiency under 3.1.b. or 3.2.b. must be no more than five years old on the proposed date of commencement of the course.
- b. The evidence of proficiency under 3.1.c. or d. or 3.2.c. or d. must be no more than two years old on the proposed date of commencement of the course.

4. Authorities

Delegate	Authority
Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Training and Capabilities) and Dean of Graduate Research	Approve the equivalent scores for the other international English language proficiency tests specified in 3.1.c and 3.2.c to the specified minimum IELTS scores.

Approval Authority	Academic Senate
Responsible Officer	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Training and Capabilities) and Dean of Graduate Research
Approval Date	19 November 2025
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* Unless otherwise indicated, this policy or procedures still apply beyond the review date.

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