English Language Competency Policy

Effective date: 28 October 2025

victorian institute of teaching

Purpose

To be eligible for teacher or early childhood teacher registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT), a person must produce evidence of their ability to effectively communicate in English.

This policy sets out the criteria approved by the Minister for Education under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic). The criteria are nationally consistent.

Scope

This policy applies to applicants for permission to teach, provisional and full teacher or early childhood teacher registration.

In this policy, 'teacher registration' refers to those qualified to teach in school settings and 'early childhood teacher registration' refers to those qualified to teach in early childhood settings.

Key policy points

Teachers in school settings	An applicant for teacher registration satisfies English language competence (ELC) requirements if they provide evidence that their teacher education qualifications, consisting of four full years of higher education study that includes an approved initial teacher education program (or qualifications assessed as comparable), were undertaken in English in Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, United States of America, Canada or the Republic of Ireland.
Teachers in early childhood settings	An applicant for early childhood teacher registration satisfies ELC requirements if they provide evidence that their teacher education qualifications (ACECQA approved or assessed as equivalent) were undertaken in English in Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, United States of America, Canada or the Republic of Ireland.
Approved English language tests	If an applicant is required to undertake an English Language test, it must be one of the following: • International English Language Testing System (IELTS) (Academic) – with a minimum of 7 in both reading and writing, and a minimum of 8 in speaking and listening • International Second Language Proficiency Rating (ISLPR) - with a standard of 4 in all areas of speaking, listening, reading and writing. ISLR tests must be completed at an approved testing site where the assessment is teaching focused.

1. Policy statement

1.1 This policy articulates the qualification requirements for teacher and early childhood teacher registration in Victoria.

1.2 The principles that guide this policy are

Statutory functions	Alignment with VIT's functions, including to • recognise and regulate members of the teaching profession • maintain the standards or professional practice for entry into and remaining in the teaching profession • having regard to raising the quality of teaching • consider the wellbeing and safety of children, including by taking into account community expectations.
Competency	ELC is assessed as a core requirement for registration, ensuring that teachers can demonstrate the communication skills necessary for safe, effective and contemporary teaching practice in diverse educational settings.
Consistency and Fairness	ELC requirements are applied consistently, with fairness and there is a transparent assessment process.
National Consistency	ELC expectations are aligned with relevant legislation and national standards.
Regulatory Integrity	The policy supports the VIT's role in ensuring only suitably skilled individuals are registered to teach, upholding the credibility and integrity of the teaching profession.

2. Requirements for provisional or full teacher registration

2.1 An applicant for teacher registration satisfies English language competence requirements if they provide evidence that their teacher education qualifications, consisting of four full years of higher education study that includes an approved initial teacher education program (or qualifications assessed as comparable), were undertaken in English in Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, United States of America, Canada or the Republic of Ireland.

2.2 If an applicant cannot meet criterion in section 2.1, then they may provide evidence that they have undertaken an approved English language test as specified in section 5.

3. Requirements for provisional or full early childhood teacher registration

3.1 An applicant for early childhood teacher registration satisfies English language competence requirements if they provide evidence that their teacher education qualifications (ACECQA approved or assessed as equivalent) were undertaken in English in Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, United States of America, Canada or the Republic of Ireland.

3.2 If an applicant for early childhood teacher registration cannot meet criterion in section 3.1, then they may provide evidence that they have undertaken an approved English language test as specified in section 5.

4. Requirements for permission to teach (PTT)

4.1 An applicant for PTT satisfies English language competence if they provide evidence that the qualifications demonstrating their skills and experience in the subject/s to be taught were all

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undertaken in English in Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, United States of America, Canada or the Republic of Ireland.

4.2 If an applicant for PTT cannot meet criterion in section 4.1, then they may provide evidence that they have undertaken an approved English language test as specified in section 5.

4.3 An applicant for PTT may meet alternative ELC requirements under the PTT Policy.

5. Approved English language tests and standards

5.1 International English Language Testing System (IELTS) (Academic) – with a minimum of 7 in both reading and writing, and a minimum of 8 in speaking and listening. The IELTS must be taken at a test centre.

5.2 International Second Language Proficiency Rating (ISLPR) - with a standard of 4 in all areas of speaking, listening, reading and writing. ISLPR tests must be completed at an approved testing site where the assessment is teaching focused.

6. Evidence of approved English language tests and standards

6.1 English language test results can be completed over multiple test sittings of the same test, provided that none of the results are older than three years at the time of application for registration.

6.2 Results completed over multiple test sittings will only be accepted where acceptance is consistent with the guidelines set by the approved testing providers.

7. Costs

7.1 Any costs associated with the English language tests are the responsibility of the applicant.

8. Exceptional circumstances

8.1 An applicant who does not meet the ELC requirements as outlined in this policy may submit evidence of exceptional circumstances and request an exemption from completing an English language test.

8.2 Consideration of exceptional circumstances does not operate to lower the ELC requirements for registration. Its intent is to provide an option to applicants who can clearly demonstrate sufficient English language to be registered as a teacher or early childhood teacher

8.3 The VIT's CEO may grant an applicant an exemption where it can be demonstrated that

a. exceptional circumstances exist in relation to the applicant; and

b. the applicant's English language skills, both written and oral, are suitable for registration.

8.4 The exceptional circumstances provision is intended to provide an option to an applicant where it would be unreasonable for them to undertake a test to satisfy English language requirements where native, near native or fluent levels of English exist.

8.5 The onus is on the applicant to provide sufficient evidence to enable the CEO to grant an exemption.

8.6 Submitting a request for consideration of exceptional circumstances is not a guarantee that an exemption from completing an English language test will be granted.

8.7 The VIT reserves the ability to reject an application if the applicant has not demonstrated the ELC exemption requirements.

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Relevant legislation and policy

- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)*
- Qualification for Registration Policy
- Permission to teach (PTT) policy

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Document control

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This document replaces / supersedes all previous documents that relate to the same or similar subject matter. This includes, but is not limited to, the following documents

Superseded document	
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Version history

Version	Description	Change date
1.0	Policy approved by Minister for Education and Training	16/07/2011
2.0	Policy approved by Minister for Education and Training	30/07/2013
3.0	Transcribed into new template, removed PEAT references and minor grammar edits	14/07/2021
4.0	Modifications to IELTS scores-acceptance over multiple sittings	17/01/2024
5.0	Modification to include exceptional circumstances in line with national consistency. Approved by Minister for Education	29/01/2025
6.0	Inclusion of PTT in the policy. Approved by Minister for Education	28/10/2025
6.1	Hyperlink added to exceptional circumstances	22/12/2025
6.2	Minor amendment to align age of test results accepted with the National Framework for Teacher Registration.	11/06/2026

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