

Coordinating Officer,
AHPRA English Language Requirement Review Panel.
15th December, 2013.

I hereby tender my submission and contribution towards a review of English Language requirement for graduate Nurses applying for registration. I wish the following points are put into subtle consideration:

1. English language speaking (like any other language) is a complex phenomenon. However, the words spoken, written or heard only form part of communication. This means that effective communication with clients and co-staff in any clinical setting is more than just ability to speak, understand or write good English.
2. It has been a strong argumentative that examination IS NOT or IT IS A true test of knowledge. Whichever way one look at it, I believe examination is an instrument of test of knowledge but is not the ultimate or the best approach every time or for every body in all situations. Ability to communicate pleasantly in English does not equate to ability to pass English language test examination being conducted as OET or IELTS. This is why a new look should be applied to requiring applicants to sit for English test. We should be honest to believe that not every body with university education born to English-speaking country like Australia, USA or UK will pass the English test examination being imposed to those candidates applying for registration.
3. In the light of the above point, I personally wish other parameters, criteria or yardsticks should be considered to serve as instrument of exempting some applicants from English language requirement. Such criteria could be some of the following:
 - Full time study of nursing program in an Australian university: successfully completed with academic transcript showing satisfactory performance;
 - Attestation of a student ability in English language during the academic years as submitted by the institution;
 - Applicant originating from country where English is the official language of communication. There is a need to differentiate countries where official language of communication is English with many other languages existing as dialects or sectional languages; and others where English is entirely non-official language.
 - Applicant who has been in active job or work settings (within Australia) with exposure / relationship with minimum of certain number of co-staff or clients during each day work duration for not less than 2 or 3 years. The authenticity of this status of an applicant can be confirmed in different ways which include attestation from employer and record of pay slip or Taxation record.

4. In a nutshell, I wish to state that there is a need to review the English language requirement with intent of working towards making life less cumbersome or difficult for some of the graduate nurses applying for registration. There are many challenges of immigrating as an adult to another country. In true recognition of and compliance with worldwide human right with avoidance of elements of discrimination, a positive review of English test requirement should be given consideration. I believe in and respect all moves towards promoting the standards of health care delivery in Australia and worldwide. Health is wealth; cannot be compromised; and effective communication is essential for healthcare providers. Inability to pass English test examination (OET or IELTS) is not entirely amounted to inability to render safe / efficient nursing care for every individual.

Thank you.

Remi Ogunsina


Australian Citizen.