

Patient and Consumer Health and Safety Impact Assessment – National Boards’ English language skills registration standards

March 2025

Assessment purpose

The National Boards’ Patient and Consumer Health and Safety Impact Assessment¹ explains the potential impact of a proposed registration standard, code or guideline on the health and safety of the public, vulnerable members of the community and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

The four key components considered in the Assessment are:

1. The potential impact of the revised registration standard, code or guideline on the health and safety of patients and consumers particularly members of the community vulnerable to harm including approaches to mitigate any potential negative or unintended effects.
2. The potential impact of the revised registration standard, code or guideline on the health and safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples including approaches to mitigate any potential negative or unintended effects.
3. Engagement with patients and consumers particularly members of the community vulnerable to harm about the proposal.
4. Engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples about the proposal.

The National Boards’ Health and Safety Impact Assessment aligns with the National Scheme’s [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Health and Safety Strategy 2020-2025](#), [National Scheme engagement strategy 2020-2025](#), [National-Scheme-Strategy 2020-2025](#) and reflect key aspects of the revised consultation process in the [Ahpra Procedures for developing registration standards, codes and guidelines and accreditation standards](#).

This assessment relates to the Ahpra/National Boards’ review of the English language skills standards (except the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia).

¹ This assessment has been developed by Ahpra and the National Boards in accordance with section 25(c) and 35(c) of the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law* as in force in each state and territory (the National Law). Section 25(c) requires AHPRA to establish procedures for ensuring that the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme) operates in accordance with good regulatory practice. Section 35(c) assigns the National Boards functions to develop or approve standards, codes and guidelines for the health profession including the development of registration standards for approval by the COAG Health Council and that provide guidance to health practitioners registered in the profession. Section 40 of the National Law requires National Boards to ensure that there is wide-ranging consultation during the development of a registration standard, code, or guideline.

Below is our assessment of the impact of the revised English language skills registration standards on the health and safety of patients and consumers, particularly members of the community vulnerable to harm and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

1. How will the revised English language skills registration standards impact on patient and consumer health and safety, particularly members of the community vulnerable to harm? What are the actions that have been taken to address or prevent this?

The National Boards have carefully considered the impacts that the revised English language skills registration Standards (ELS standards) could have on patient, client and consumer health and safety, particularly people vulnerable to harm within the community. The ELS standards are based on best available evidence, best practice approaches and monitoring the ELS standards since the last reviews. The standards are more clearly and simply expressed, which should make it easier for patients, clients and consumers to understand. While the changes are relatively minimal they are expected to slightly strengthen the standards' effectiveness in ensuring that newly registered practitioners have the English language skills they need to practise safely.

Our assessment is that there will be no negative impact of the changes to the standards on the health and safety of patients, clients and consumers, particularly people vulnerable to harm within the community, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and possible minor positive impacts. In line with our consultation processes, National Boards undertook wide-ranging consultation using tailored approaches with peak community and consumer groups, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak bodies.

The National Boards have carefully considered consultation feedback to identify any unintended impacts (including potential negative impacts) for the revised ELS standards. We have fully considered and taken actions to address any potential negative impacts for patients and consumers. We will continue to monitor any feedback from peak community and consumer groups, in order to get input and views from vulnerable members of the community, about the revised standards.

Submissions will be published on Ahpra's [Past Consultations](#) page.

2. How will the revised English language skills registration standards impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples? What are the actions that have been taken to address or prevent this?

The National Boards are committed to the National Scheme's [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Cultural Safety Strategy 2020-2025](#) which focuses on achieving patient safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the norm, and the inextricably linked elements of clinical and [cultural safety](#). The National Boards have carefully considered any potential impact of the revised ELS standards on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and how the impact compared to non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples might be different in order to put forward the revised ELS standards.

As part of the consultation process, we sought input from Ahpra's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Strategy Group and included Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health peak bodies in our wide-ranging consultation. Our engagement through consultation has further informed the revised English language skills registration standards to help facilitate patient safety and health care quality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Our assessment is that there will be no negative impact of the changes to the standards on the health and safety of patients, clients and consumers, particularly people vulnerable to harm within the community, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and only minor positive impacts, as there are only minor improvements to the standards currently in place.

We will monitor feedback from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples organisations, stakeholders during the life of the revised standards.

3. How will the impact of the revised English language skills registration standards be actively monitored and evaluated?

Part of the National Boards' work in keeping the public safe is regularly reviewing all standards, codes and guidelines. Accordingly, these National Boards will regularly review the English language skills registration standards, so the standards remain contemporary and fit for purpose. This includes evaluating the reach and effectiveness of the supporting resources developed, as well as any regulatory insights arising from our National Scheme data as well as relevant notifications.