

UK Professional Regulators: IELTS & Alternative English Language Requirements



Regulator	Profession(s)	IELTS requirement	OET / alternative accepted	Validity	Source
 GMC	Doctors	7.5 overall; 7.0 in each of the four sub-tests (Academic)	OET Grade B in all four papers	Not specified as fixed; check currency with GMC	gmc-uk.org
 NMC	Nurses & midwives	7.0 in all four sections (Academic), no exceptions	OET Grade B in all four components = equivalent to IELTS 7.0	2 years	nmc.org.uk
 GDC	Dentists & dental care professionals	6.5 minimum in each section, 7.0 overall average (Academic)	None	2 years (case-by-case flexibility with evidence)	gdc-uk.org
 GPhC	Pharmacists & pharmacy technicians	7.0 overall, no element below 7.0 (Academic)	Pharmacy OET, Grade B in all four areas	Check current GPhC guidance	pharmacyregulation.org
 HCPC	Allied health professions (physio, OT, radiography, dietetics, podiatry, SLT etc.)	7.0 overall, no element below 6.5 (Academic); Speech & Language Therapists: 8.0 overall, no element below 7.5	OET (profession-specific test); TOEFL iBT 100/120 (118/120 for SLTs)	Check current HCPC guidance	hcpc-uk.org
 Social Work England	Social workers	7.0 overall (full Academic test only – general test, IELTS Online, Online Indicator and One Skill Retake all excluded)	None – IELTS is the only test route (or qualifying/practice-based exemptions)	2 years	socialworkengland.org.uk
 SRA	Solicitors (qualified lawyers exempt from SQE2 only)	7.5 overall (IELTS for UKVI Academic – non-UKVI certificates not accepted)	Pearson PTE Academic UKVI 71; LanguageCert 80; Trinity ISE III	3 years	sra.org.uk
 Bar Standards Board	Barristers (Bar Training Course students; non-native speakers)	7.5 in each section (Academic)	Pearson Test of English (Academic) 73 in each part	Current at time of enrolment	barstandardsboard.org.uk
 Teaching Regulation Agency – standard QTS route	Teachers (overseas-trained)	CEFR B2 via a SELT – equivalent to IELTS 5.5 in all four papers	Any Home Office-approved SELT provider at CEFR B2 (Trinity, PTE, LanguageCert, PSI, IELTS)	Check current TRA guidance	gov.uk – QTS
 Teaching Regulation Agency – iQTS route	Teachers (training entirely overseas)	6.5 or higher (or equivalent) – no fixed per-component breakdown specified by DfE	Equivalent scores from other English tests; exempt if educated in English	Check current provider guidance	gov.uk – iQTS

Notes

- ✓ Scores shown are for the Academic version of IELTS unless stated otherwise; UKVI-specific versions are noted where a regulator requires them (SRA).
- ✓ Regulator-set English requirements are separate from, and often higher than, UK immigration (Home Office/SELT) requirements for the equivalent visa route – meeting one does not automatically satisfy the other.
- ✓ Where OET is accepted, it is generally treated as an equal alternative to IELTS for healthcare regulators, not a lesser option.
- ✓ Requirements are reviewed periodically by each regulator (the GDC's English language guidance was under review as of mid-2026); always verify current figures directly with the regulator before publishing or advising candidates.

