



English Language Information

For residence and business categories

This leaflet will give you information on how well you must speak and understand English for a residence class visa, or a long-term business visa.

We call this the 'minimum standard of English'. It will tell you who must meet the minimum standard, what it is, and what you must do to meet it. It will also tell you what you can do if people in your family do not meet the minimum standard.

Why do we have a minimum standard of English?

If you can speak and understand English, it will help you to get a job in New Zealand, and help you and your family to settle successfully here.

Who needs to meet the minimum standard?

Skilled Migrant Category – the principal applicant and everyone aged 16 or over included in the application.

Business categories – the principal applicant and everyone aged 16 or over included in the application (with the exception of the Investor Plus (Investor 1 Category)).

Parent Category – all applicants.

Residence from Work Category – principal applicants under the Religious Worker instructions must meet the minimum standard of English.

All other principal applicants under Residence from Work categories do not need to meet the minimum standard.



Partners and any children aged 16 and over included in any Residence from Work application must meet a minimum standard of English.

If your partner and children (aged 16 and over) do not meet the minimum standard, they must pay for English language classes before we approve your application. Then, they can learn English when they arrive in New Zealand.

How do you show that you meet the minimum standard?

There are different ways to show that you meet the minimum standard depending on the category you are applying under. See the minimum standard for each of the categories on pages 4-7 to find out which applies to you. You may be able to:

- show us that you have an English-speaking background, or
- show us that you are a competent user of English for other reasons, or
- provide us with an acceptable English language test result (see the 'Acceptable English language test results' section on pages 10-13).

If your partner and/or dependent children aged 16 and over do not meet the minimum standard, they can pay us for ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes, which they can attend when they arrive in New Zealand. See 'Pre-purchasing ESOL tuition' on page 14.

If you provide evidence that you have an English-speaking background or you are a competent user of English, we may still ask you to provide us with an English language test result to show that you meet the minimum standard.

Showing that you have an English-speaking background (Parent, Residence From Work and Business Categories)

If applying under the Parent, Residence From Work or Business Categories, you can show that you have an English-speaking background by providing evidence that you completed:

- all your primary education, and at least three years of your secondary education, at a school or schools that taught in English, or
- at least five years of your secondary education at a school or schools that taught in English, or
- a course taught in English that took at least three years and led to a tertiary qualification,

or, you can show us evidence that you hold one of the qualifications in the following table.

Qualification	Requirements
General Certificate of Education (GCE) 'A' levels from Britain or Singapore	Minimum C pass. Subjects must include English Language or Literature or Use of English.
International Baccalaureate	Full diploma in English medium.
Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English	Minimum C pass.
Hong Kong Advanced Level Examinations (HKALE)	Minimum C pass in Use of English.
STPM 920 (Malaysia)	A or B pass in English Literature.
University of Cambridge in collaboration with University of Malaya, General Certificate of English (GCE) 'A' levels	Minimum C pass. Including English or General Paper subjects.
South African Matriculation Certificate	Minimum D pass in English (higher grade).
South African Senior Certificate	Minimum D pass in English (higher grade). Endorsed with the words 'matriculation exempt'.
New Zealand tertiary entrance qualification	Gained on completing year 13 (seventh form).

Showing that you are a competent user of English (Parent, Residence From Work and Business Categories)

If applying under the Parent, Residence From Work or Business Categories, and you do not have an English-speaking background, you may show us that you meet the minimum standard for other reasons. For example, you may be able to show us that you are a competent user of English because:

- of the country you live in/countries you have lived in previously, and the length of time you lived in each country
- of other languages you speak, or your family speaks
- you needed English language ability for your current and/or previous employment
- you needed English language ability to study for qualifications that you have.

Providing English language test results

The tests that we recognise provide an assessment of ability in English, including performance in listening, reading, writing and speaking. You can show us that you meet the minimum standard of English by providing us with one of the following tests:

- International English Language Testing System (IELTS) – General or Academic Module
- Test of English as a Foreign Language Internet-based Test (TOEFL iBT)
- Pearson Test of English Academic (PTE Academic)
- Cambridge English: First (FCE) or Cambridge English: First (FCE) for Schools
- Occupational English Test (OET)

See the requirements for each category on pages 5-7 and see the 'Acceptable English language test results' section on pages 10-13 for the required test scores.

English language test results must be no more than two years old when you lodge your application.

See the following websites for more information, and to find out where you can take a test:

- IELTS: www.ielts.org
- OET: www.occupationalenglishtest.org
- FCE and FCE for Schools: www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams/first/
- PTE: Academic: www.pearsonpte.com
- TOEFL iBT: www.ets.org/toefl/ibt/about

If you, your partner, or your children do not provide an English language test result to show you meet the minimum standard, we may ask you to provide one.

Even if you meet the English language requirements for your category we strongly recommend that you take English lessons when you arrive in New Zealand if you sat an English language test but did not achieve one of the scores set out in Table 1 (see the 'Acceptable English language test results' section on pages 10-13).

Skilled Migrant Category

Principal applicants

The minimum standard of English is an English language test result, as set out in Table 2 (see the 'Acceptable English language test results' section on pages 10-13).

Other evidence that a principal applicant meets the minimum standard is:

- citizenship of Canada, the Republic of Ireland, the United Kingdom or the United States of America if they have spent at least five years in work or education in one or more of those countries or Australia or New Zealand; or
- a recognised qualification comparable to a New Zealand level 7 bachelor's degree and gained in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the Republic of Ireland, the United Kingdom or the United States of America as a result of study undertaken for at least two academic years in one or more of those countries; or
- a recognised qualification comparable to a New Zealand qualification at level 8 or above and gained in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the Republic of Ireland, the United Kingdom or the United States of America as a result of study undertaken for at least one academic year in one or more of those countries.

Partners and children of principal applicants

Your partner and each of your children aged 16 and over meet the minimum standard of English if they provide an acceptable English language test result, as set out in Table 3 (see the 'Acceptable English language test results' section on pages 10-13). Other evidence that your partner and children 16 years of age and over meet the minimum standard of English is:

- citizenship of Canada, the Republic of Ireland, the United Kingdom or the United States if they have spent at least five years in work or education in one or more of those countries or Australia or New Zealand; or
- a recognised qualification comparable to a New Zealand level 7 bachelor's degree and gained in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the Republic of Ireland, the United Kingdom or the United States of America as a result of study undertaken for at least two academic years in one or more of those countries; or
- a recognised qualification comparable to a New Zealand qualification at level 8 or above and gained in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the Republic of Ireland, the United Kingdom or the United States of America as a result of study undertaken for at least one academic year in one or more of those countries. If your partner and/or dependent children do not meet the minimum standard, they must pre-purchase ESOL classes (see 'Pre-purchasing ESOL tuition').

Residence from Work Category

The Residence from Work Category includes:

- Talent (Accredited Employers) Residence Instructions
- Talent (Arts, Culture and Sports) Residence Instructions
- Long Term Skill Shortage List Residence Instructions
- Religious Worker Instructions.

Principal applicant

Principal applicants applying under Religious Worker instructions must meet the minimum standard of English. The minimum standard of English is an English language test result, as set out in Table 3 (see the 'Acceptable English language test results' section on pages 10-13).

However, we can also consider that you meet the minimum standard of English if you can show us that you:

- have an English-speaking background (see 'Showing that you have an English-speaking background'), or
- are a competent user of English (see 'Showing that you are a competent user of English').

Principal applicants applying under any other Residence from Work category do not have to meet English language requirements.

Your partner and each of your children aged 16 and over must:

- show us they have an English-speaking background (see 'Showing that you have an English-speaking background'), or
- show us they are a competent user of English (see 'Showing that you are a competent user of English'), or
- have an acceptable English language test result, as set out in Table 3 (see the 'Acceptable English language test results' section on pages 10-13).

Your **partner** meets the minimum standard if they have been lawfully employed in New Zealand for at least one year.

- Self-employment does not qualify.
- English must be the language used in the job.

You will need to provide a letter from the employer(s) giving a contact phone number and address. The letter must:

- state your partner's occupation, and
- state your partner's dates of employment, and
- confirm that English is the main language used in the job.

If your partner does not meet the minimum standard, they must pre-purchase ESOL tuition (see 'Pre-purchasing ESOL tuition').

Your **dependent children** may meet the minimum standard if they have been attending primary or secondary school in New Zealand. You must provide a letter from the school confirming:

- their English ability, and
- how long they have been at the school, and
- which classes they take.

If your dependent children do not meet the minimum standard, they must pre-purchase ESOL tuition (see 'Pre-purchasing ESOL tuition').

Business categories

Principal applicant

To meet our minimum standard of English you must show us that:

- you have an English-speaking background (see 'Showing that you have an English – speaking background'), or
- you are a competent user of English (see 'Showing that you are a competent user of English'), or
- you have an acceptable English language test result.

If you provide an English language test result, the score you must have depends on which category you apply under.

- **Employee of a Relocating Business Category** – an English language test result, as set out in Table 4 (see the 'Acceptable English language test results' section on pages 10-13).
- **Entrepreneur Residence, or Entrepreneur Work Visa categories** – an English language test result, as set out in Table 4 (see the 'Acceptable English language test results' section on pages 10-13).
- **Investor (Investor 2 Category)** – an English language test result, as set out in Table 5 (see the 'Acceptable English language test results' section on pages 10-13).

Partner and children

Partners and children aged 16 or over included in the application must also meet a minimum standard of English. To meet this minimum standard of English, partners or children can show that they:

- have an English-speaking background, or
- are competent users of English, or
- have an English language test result, as set out in Table 4 (see the 'Acceptable English language test results' section on pages 10-13).

However, if they do not meet the minimum standard of English, they can pre-purchase ESOL tuition (see 'Pre-purchasing ESOL tuition').

If you are applying for an Entrepreneur Work Visa, your partner and children do not have to meet the minimum standard of English when you lodge your application. If they are later included in a residence application, they will need to show they can meet a minimum standard of English at that time, or pre-purchase ESOL classes (see 'Pre-purchasing ESOL tuition').

Parent Category

All applicants

To meet our minimum standard of English all applicants included in a Parent Category application need to provide an English language test result, as set out in Table 6 (see the 'Acceptable English language test results' section on pages 10-13).

However, we may also consider the following as evidence if you can show us that you:

- come from an English-speaking background (see 'Showing that you have an English-speaking background')
- are a competent user of English (see 'Showing that you are a competent user of English'), or
- have a recognised qualification that was taught entirely in English. If you gained the qualification in New Zealand, it must have taken at least two years to complete, unless it is a postgraduate qualification.

If you are a citizen of Samoa whose Parent Category application is processed at the Apia office of Immigration New Zealand, you may be able to meet the English language requirements by attending an interview and being assessed by an immigration officer.

If you are unable to meet these requirements, you must pre-purchase ESOL classes (see 'Pre-purchasing ESOL tuition').

Acceptable English language test results

Table 1: We recommend that you take English lessons when you arrive in New Zealand, if you sat an English language test but did not achieve one of the following scores:

Test	Score
International English Language Testing System (IELTS) – General or Academic Module	Overall score of 7.0 or more
Test of English as a Foreign Language Internet-based Test (TOEFL iBT)	Overall score of 94 or more
Pearson Test of English Academic (PTE Academic)	Overall score of 65 or more
Cambridge English: First (FCE); or Cambridge English: First (FCE) for Schools	Overall score of 185 or more
Occupational English Test (OET)	Grade B or higher in all four skills (Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking)*

* A score of Grade B or higher in all four skills is required for the OET as there is no overall grade for this test.

Table 2: Acceptable English language test results for principal applicants under the Skilled Migrant Category

Test	Minimum score required
IELTS – General or Academic Module	Overall score of 6.5 or more
TOEFL iBT	Overall score of 79 or more
PTE Academic	Overall score of 58 or more
FCE: or FCE for Schools	Overall score of 176 or more
OET	Grade B or higher in all four skills (Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking)*

* A score of Grade B or higher in all four skills is required for the OET as there is no overall grade for this test.

Table 3: Acceptable English language test results for:

- Partners and dependent children aged 16 and older under the Skilled Migrant Category
- Principal applicants under Religious Worker residence instructions
- Partners and dependent children aged 16 and older under all Residence from Work categories

Test	Minimum score required
IELTS – General or Academic Module	Overall score of 5.0 or more
TOEFL iBT	Overall score of 35 or more
PTE Academic	Overall score of 36 or more
FCE; or FCE for Schools	Overall score of 154 or more
OET	Grade C or higher in all four skills (Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking)*

* A score of Grade C or higher in all four skills is required for the OET as there is no overall grade for this test.

Table 4: Acceptable English language test results for:

- Principal applicants under the Employees of Relocating Businesses Category
- Principal applicants under the Entrepreneur Residence Visa Category
- Principal applicants under the Entrepreneur Work Visa Category

Test	Minimum score required
IELTS – General or Academic Module	Overall score of 4.0 or more
TOEFL iBT	Overall score of 31 or more
PTE Academic	Overall score of 29 or more
FCE; or FCE for Schools	Overall score of 142 or more
OET	Grade D or higher in all four skills (Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking)*

* A score of Grade D or higher in all four skills is required for the OET as there is no overall grade for this test

Table 5: Acceptable English language test results for Principal applicants under the Investor 2 Category

- Principal applicants under the Investor 2 Category must qualify for a minimum of 1 point for English language ability
- English language ability qualifies for points as follows:

Test	Required score	Points
IELTS – General or Academic Module	Overall score of 3.0 or more but less than 4.0	1
IELTS – General or Academic Module TOEFL iBT PTE Academic FCE; or FCE for Schools OET	Overall score of 4.0 or more but less than 5.0 Overall score of 31 to 34 Overall score of 29 to 35 Overall score of 142 to 153 Grade D or higher in all four skills (Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking)*	4
IELTS – General or Academic Module TOEFL iBT PTE Academic FCE or FCE for Schools OET	Overall score of 5.0 or more Overall score of 35 or more Overall score of 36 or more Overall score of 154 or more Grade C or higher in all four skills (Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking)*	10
IELTS – General or Academic Module TOEFL iBT PTE Academic FCE; or FCE for Schools	Overall score of 6.0 or more Overall score of 60 or more Overall score of 50 or more Overall score of 169 or more	13
IELTS – General or Academic Module TOEFL iBT PTE Academic FCE; or FCE for Schools	Overall score of 7.0 or more Overall score of 94 or more Overall score of 65 or more Overall score of 185 or more	17

Test	Required score	Points
OET	Grade B or higher in all four skills (Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking)*	17
IELTS – General or Academic Module	Overall score of 8.0 or more	20
TOEFL iBT	Overall score of 110 or more	
PTE Academic	Overall score of 79 or more	
FCE; or FCE for Schools	Overall score of 200 or more	
OET	Grade A or higher in all four skills (Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking)*	

* A score in all four skills is required for the OET as there is no overall grade in this test.

Table 6: Acceptable English language test results for all applicants under the Parent Category

Test	Minimum score required
IELTS – General or Academic Module	4.0 or more in at least two of the four skills (Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking) Or An overall score of 5.0 or more
TOEFL iBT	At least two of the following skill scores: Listening: 2 or more Reading: 2 or more Writing: 11 or more Speaking: 11 or more Or An overall score of 35 or more
PTE Academic	29 or more in at least two of the four skills (Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking) Or An overall score of 36 or more
FCE; or FCE for Schools	142 or more in at least two of the four skills (Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking) Or An overall score of 154 or more
OET	Grade D or higher in at least two of the four skills (Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking) Or Grade C or higher in all four skills (Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking)

Pre-purchasing ESOL tuition

ESOL tuition is English language classes for people who speak other languages.

Partners and dependent children aged 16 and over who do not meet the minimum standard of English can pay us for ESOL tuition before we grant residence. Then, when they arrive in New Zealand, they can take the English language classes that they have paid for.

If you pay us for English language tuition, we strongly encourage you to take up English language classes soon after you arrive. There are a lot of different courses and course providers all across New Zealand, with a lot of options. To find approved English language courses near you, go to www.newzealandnow.govt.nz/esol.

Who must pay for ESOL tuition?

You must pay for ESOL tuition before we will grant you residence if:

- you are included in a Skilled Migrant Category, Parent Category, Business Category (excluding the Investor Plus (Investor 1 Category)) or Residence from Work Category application (excluding principal applicants under Religious Worker instructions), and
- you are the partner or child of the principal applicant, and you are aged 16 years or over, and
- you do not meet the minimum standard of English.

How much does ESOL tuition cost?

For Skilled Migrant Category, Business Category, and Residence from Work Category applications, the amount you must pay depends on your English language test score. If you do not provide an English language test you must pay the maximum charge. The amount you must pay includes our administration charges, and the Tertiary Education Commission's (TEC) administration charges. The TEC is the government agency that purchases and arranges English language tuition for new migrants. In the table below, 'ESOL entitlement' shows the value of the tuition you will be entitled to.

Test	Overall score	Amount you must pay (NZ\$)	ESOL entitlement (NZ\$)
IELTS – General or Academic Module	4.5 or more but less than 5.0	NZ\$1,735	NZ\$1,531.82
TOEFL iBT	32 to 34		
PTE Academic	30 to 35		
FCE or FCE for Schools	147 to 153		
IELTS – General or Academic Module	4.0 or more, but less than 4.5	NZ\$3,420	NZ\$3,063.64
TOEFL iBT	31		
PTE Academic	29		
FCE or FCE for Schools	142 to 146		
OET	Failed to achieve Grade C or higher in all four skills (Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking), but achieved at least Grade D in all four skills*		
IELTS – General or Academic Module	3.5 or more, but less than 4.0	NZ\$5,110	NZ\$4,600.00
IELTS – General or Academic Module	Less than 3.5	NZ\$6,795	NZ\$6,131.82
TOEFL iBT	Less than 31		
PTE Academic	Less than 29		
FCE or FCE for Schools	Less than 142		
OET	Failed to achieve at least Grade D in all four skills (Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking)*		

* A score in all four skills is required for the OET as there is no overall grade for this test.

If you apply under the Parent Category, you will need to pay NZ\$1,735.00 (giving an ESOL entitlement of NZ\$1,533.33).

How do I pre-purchase ESOL tuition?

If we approve your residence application in principle, we will tell you the amount of ESOL tuition that you need to pay for before we give you a visa.

We will collect the ESOL tuition money for the TEC, and we will send you two copies of an Agreement and Schedule to complete for each person that has to take the ESOL tuition. The Agreement and Schedule explain the conditions of your ESOL tuition, and give information about the TEC.

After you complete the Agreement and Schedule, you must return one copy with the tuition payment to the Immigration New Zealand office that is processing your application. You can keep the other copy for your records. We will send you a receipt for the payment made by you. Please keep the receipt and the Agreement and Schedule in a safe place. You will need to take them with you when you enrol for your English classes.

What happens if I do not pay my ESOL tuition charge?

If you do not pay us the ESOL tuition charge within six months, we must decline your residence application.

Can I get a refund?

We will only refund ESOL tuition money if you and your family do not take up residence in New Zealand. In these circumstances, you need to write to your nearest INZ branch requesting a refund within six months after your residence class visa expires. If we approve your request we will refund the money to the person who made the original payment. Before we give a refund, we must be satisfied that you and your family have not entered New Zealand on your residence class visa.

Do I have to complete my tuition within a certain time?

If you purchase ESOL tuition, you have up to five years to complete the tuition.

For more information

If you have questions about any of the information in this guide:

- see our website www.immigration.govt.nz/contactus
- telephone our call centre on 0508 558 855 (within New Zealand).