

1. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to set out the University's requirements and standards for evaluating the English language ability of all applicants who are not native speakers of English. Within the University, we have a collective responsibility to ensure that all international students have the appropriate level of English and support where necessary to succeed on their academic programmes.

This policy applies to all programmes leading to a Newcastle University award (including Credit Accumulation and Transfer qualifications and those offered by INTO Newcastle University) wherever these are delivered.

2. Key Principles

1. The University wishes to recruit international students with the English Language capacity to succeed on their programme of study. All applications should be evaluated for evidence of English language ability. All applicants who are not from majority English speaking countries must provide evidence of English language ability. INTO Newcastle University and the International Office will provide advice on all matters relating to English language ability and proficiency.
2. The minimum level of English language ability that is acceptable for entry to a full undergraduate or postgraduate degree programme at Newcastle University shall normally be IELTS 6.5, with no component mark below IELTS 5.5.

Exceptions that are permitted are as follows:

- a) Entry into degree programmes in which credit-bearing English Language modules are part of the formal curriculum, or where there is a significantly reduced demand for some aspects of English Language proficiency because of the scientific/mathematical nature of the coursework and assessment. In these circumstances entry may be set at IELTS 6.0, with no component mark below IELTS 5.5. Students entering on this basis may be required to attend In-Sessional English at the University.
- b) Entry into 'Study Abroad' and non-Erasmus exchange programmes, where acquisition of English language proficiency may be part of the purpose of the programme.
- c) Entry into degree programmes that require particular linguistic competence, which justifies the setting of a higher level of minimum proficiency. (Examples include Speech and Language Therapy, Medicine, Law, English).

The degree programmes to which higher or lower entry scores will apply, and the scores in each case, shall be determined by the relevant Faculty Teaching, Learning and Student Experience Committee or Graduate School Committee as appropriate, with advice from

INTO Newcastle University and the International Office. The lists of exceptions and scores shall be reviewed by the relevant Faculty Teaching, Learning and Student Experience Committee or Graduate School Committee at the last full meeting of the academic year, before the beginning of each new admissions cycle. All scores must comply with the essential criteria as set out in paragraph 3 below.

3. The University has its own language requirements as set out in paragraph 2 above but, in line with UKBA regulations, all students seeking admission to Newcastle University must be competent in English Language:
 - a) For qualifications at NQF level 6 (undergraduate degree level) or above this must be at a minimum of level B2 on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in each of the four components of language learning (reading, writing, listening, speaking). IELTS* 5.5 is deemed to demonstrate B2 level competence.

Under no circumstances therefore will a student be given admission to a full degree programme at Newcastle University with a level of English Language below IELTS 5.5, or with a component mark lower than IELTS 5.5.
 - b) For qualifications below NQF level 6 (undergraduate degree level) this must be at a minimum of level B1 on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in each of the four components of language learning (reading, writing, listening, speaking). IELTS* 4.0 is deemed to demonstrate B1 level competence.

Under no circumstances therefore will a student be given admission to any University programme with a level of English Language below IELTS 4.0, or with a component mark lower than IELTS 4.0.

*Note: IELTS is the most widely used English Language assessment. IELTS is therefore referenced throughout this document - the University will however accept English Language qualifications equivalent to IELTS, provided the qualifications are formally recognised by the University (see paragraph 5 below).

4. Applicants for whom the University has deemed their academic qualifications acceptable but whose language proficiency is below that required for the particular academic programme should receive a conditional offer, but will be required to reach the necessary minimum level before the start of their programme. This can be done in the students' home country or by registering for a Pre-Sessional course in INTO Newcastle University for those with an IELTS higher than 5.5 overall. Faculty Teaching, Learning and Student Experience Committees and Graduate School Committees may set a higher threshold for entry to their individual Pre-Sessional programmes.

For those with an IELTS lower than 5.5 overall, a Pre-Sessional course is not appropriate; these students will require a longer English Language programme in INTO Newcastle

University or elsewhere. INTO Newcastle University publishes guidance on the length of language training required and can make specific recommendations where appropriate.

Students who successfully complete the Pre-Sessional programme will be eligible to register with the University, provided other conditions are met. For those students who enter the Pre-Sessional with a score lower than 5.5 in one or more sub-components, successful completion will be dependent upon achieving this minimum score in each component and a relevant test will be required prior to admission onto the degree programme.

5. Offers should clearly indicate a strong preference for IELTS as the measure of English language proficiency. A list of alternative English language tests and examinations considered as acceptable evidence of having achieved a certain level of English language proficiency is kept under continual review and is available in Appendix B. In all cases, the English language test must have been taken within the preceding two years of the date of offer. In addition, where a visa is required, the test must have been taken within two years of the Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies being issued.
6. Applicants from certain countries shall be exempted from the need to satisfy the usual English language conditions set out above. The list of exempt countries shall be reviewed annually by the University and is contained in Appendix A to this Policy. Applicants from the countries listed in Appendix B (Table 1) may also be exempted from the need to satisfy the usual English language conditions, and details are provided in Appendix B (Table 2) of relevant qualifications that are considered appropriate alternatives in these countries.
7. Applicants for a degree or higher qualification may also be exempt from the requirement to provide proof of their English language skills at the appropriate level if, within the last 12 months, they have successfully completed two full academic years of degree level study at a UK based University.
8. Applicants who are not automatically exempted on the basis of their nationality (see Appendix A) or recent and sustained study in the UK (see paragraph 7 above) shall be subject to the language conditions set out above. Deans may approve exemptions from the normal language criterion for a given programme, provided they have sufficient evidence that the applicant in question does not fall below the minimum criteria for component marks set out in paragraph 3.
9. All new students who are not from a majority English speaking country shall be tested at registration to assess their level of English language proficiency. INTO Newcastle University will administer this assessment on behalf of Newcastle University using its own University English Language Assessment (UELA). This test will identify students who need support in one or more language skills so that recommendations about attendance at classes are made at an early stage. Students may be exempted from this test on the following bases:

- a) Providing evidence of English language proficiency at the level of IELTS 7.0 in all four language skills (or one of the equivalents provided by INTO Newcastle University).
- b) Having been educated for a minimum of two years in an English-speaking country as defined in the list of exempted countries (see Appendix A).
- c) On the basis of other evidence provided on the Exemption Form and confirmed by INTO Newcastle University.

10. An analysis of the UELA results will be reported annually to University Teaching Learning and Student Experience Committee, Faculty Teaching, Learning and Student Experience Committees and Graduate School Committees.

11. On the basis of the UELA, students may be required to undertake free In-Sessional language training. This could be via credit-bearing modules or non credit-bearing courses. Achievement of the desired level of attendance and participation, or proficiency, can be made a condition of satisfactory student progress by the Degree Programme Director or, in the case of a research student, by the Postgraduate Dean. The Degree Programme Director or Postgraduate Dean will communicate the requirement to the student in writing.

12. The Admissions Teams will monitor and ensure the implementation of this policy throughout the application and offer processes. The relevant Degree Programme Director (or nominee), or the Supervisory Team in the case of PhD students, will monitor compliance with In-Sessional language training requirements in liaison with INTO Newcastle University. The policy will be reviewed annually by QuILT in collaboration with the International Office and the Admissions Teams.

Appendix A

Exemption by Country

Speakers of English from a majority English speaking country are exempted from both the language conditions set out in the policy and the University English Language Assessment (UELA). Decisions to exempt on these grounds are normally taken on a “country of origin” basis.

Exempted Countries

Applicants from the countries listed below will be exempted from both the language conditions set out in the policy and the UELA. The underlying assumption is that applicants from these countries who have the necessary academic qualifications for entry to a degree programme will also have a sufficiently high level of English to undertake a programme of academic study in the UK. No language holds will be placed on the records of applicants from these countries.

Appendix A: Exempted Countries	
Antigua and Barbuda	Ireland
Australia	Jamaica
Bahamas	New Zealand
Barbados	St Kitts and Nevis
Belize	St Lucia
Canada	St Vincent and the Grenadines
Dominica	Trinidad and Tobago
Grenada	United States of America
Guyana	United Kingdom

Appendix B

Exemption by Alternative Qualification

Applicants from the countries listed in Table 1 will be required to provide evidence of having attained the required IELTS scores unless they can provide other evidence of a high level of competence in English as detailed below. Table 2 details English Language qualifications that the University will deem to be equivalent to IELTS 5.5 across all sub-components and can be used for entry to programmes at degree level or higher. These students will be required to take the UELA on registration at the University.

Table
To be confirmed

Other Countries

Applicants from countries which are not listed in either of the tables above will be required to provide an IELTS score (or equivalent) and take the UELA for registration purposes. Exemptions from the UELA can only be granted by INTO Newcastle University on behalf of Newcastle University.

IMPORTANT: International students who have been exempted from the UELA will still be eligible to take the test and access English language support should they and/or their tutors/supervisors deem this necessary.

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