



National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities <sup>®</sup>  
Association nationale des organismes de réglementation de la pharmacie

# NAPRA Language Proficiency Requirement Policy



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*Approved by the National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities' (NAPRA) Board of Directors November 2023, published February 2024.*

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## Scope

The purpose of the *NAPRA Language Proficiency Requirement Policy* is to ensure that pharmacist and pharmacy technician applicants possess the necessary language proficiency to comprehend and communicate for safe, effective, and ethical practice in either English or French, depending on their practice location.

As with all NAPRA documents, the *NAPRA Language Proficiency Requirement Policy* is not applied by NAPRA; it is either adopted or adapted by NAPRA's members, the provincial/territorial pharmacy regulatory authorities, for use in their respective jurisdictions. Each province or territory has its own laws and regulations set by the provincial or territorial government regarding language requirements for professions. The pharmacy regulatory authority will set language requirements for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians based on the laws and regulations in its particular province or territory, as well as the NAPRA document. This document sets out the recommendations for a language proficiency requirement across the country, based on the results of a rigorous scientific process. However, the pharmacy regulatory authorities will also need to consider provincial/territorial legislation in determining the final language proficiency requirement in their jurisdiction. Pharmacy professional applicants should therefore contact the pharmacy regulatory authority in their jurisdiction to determine the applicable language proficiency requirement in that jurisdiction.



# Principles

- 1. The language proficiency requirement applies to all applicants. To become regulated, the applicant must demonstrate proficiency in the language (either English or French) that is required within the jurisdiction to which the applicant is applying for licensure.**
- 2. Evidence of language proficiency must be accepted by the pharmacy regulatory authority before the commencement of the pharmacy regulatory authority's required practical training or practical assessment program, when applicable, or at the designated point in the process as otherwise specified by the pharmacy regulatory authority.**



# Multiple Pathways to Demonstrate Language Proficiency

## 3. The applicant needs to meet the language proficiency requirement for licensure via one of the two following pathways:

- I. Education; or
- II. Language proficiency testing.

## Pathway I: Education as Evidence of Language Proficiency

### 4. It is recommended that the pharmacy regulatory authorities accept the following as education evidence of language proficiency. Applicants can demonstrate their language proficiency by meeting one of the education requirements outlined below. Evidence of meeting these criteria will still need to be accepted by the pharmacy regulatory authority.

- 4.1. Graduation from a Canadian Council for Accreditation of Pharmacy Programs (CCAPP) accredited pharmacist education program located in Canada that was provided in the language required for licensure; or
- 4.2. Graduation from an Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE) accredited pharmacist education program located in the United States that was provided in the language required for licensure; or
- 4.3. Graduation from a CCAPP-accredited pharmacy technician education program located in Canada that was provided in the language required for licensure and, if the program was less than three years' duration, whose language proficiency admission criteria match those outlined in this document; or
- 4.4. Graduation from a high school, CEGEP (general and professional teaching college in Quebec), community college, private career college or university program located in Canada, if the program was of at least three years' duration and was provided in the language required for licensure, with successful completion of three consecutive English or French language courses, depending on the required language. Second-language or additional language courses are not acceptable as evidence.

# Multiple Pathways to Demonstrate Language Proficiency

## Pathway II: Language Proficiency Tests as Evidence of Language Proficiency

### 5. It is recommended that the pharmacy regulatory authorities accept the following tests and scores as evidence of language proficiency.

- The Academic version of the **International English Language Testing System (IELTS)**
- The **Occupational English Test (OET)**
- The **Test d'évaluation de français (TEF) Canada**

5.1. Applicants must complete all four subtests in a single testing session of any approved test and achieve passing scores for each. While IELTS provides an overall score, which is the average score of the subtest scores, neither OET nor TEF Canada offer such a consolidated score. It is imperative for applicants to achieve the cut score in each subtest, as the overall score is not considered. The minimum passing scores are as follows.

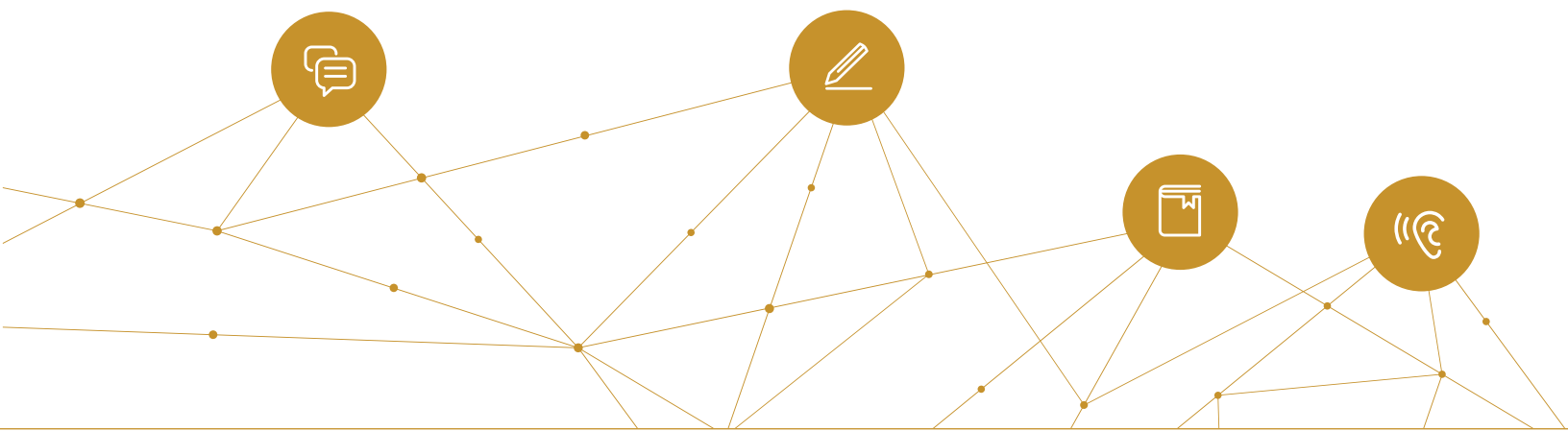
Test	Subtest	Pharmacist	Pharmacy Technician
IELTS Academic	Reading	7.0	7.0
	Listening	7.0	7.0
	Speaking	7.0	7.0
	Writing	6.5	6.5
OET	Reading	B	B
	Listening	B	B
	Speaking	B	B
	Writing	C+	C+
TEF Canada	Reading	B2	B2
	Listening	C1	C1
	Speaking	C1	C1
	Writing	B2	B2

Note: **Appendix A** shows the equivalence of these cut scores across the three approved tests according to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages/Cadre européen commun de référence pour les langues (CEFR/CECR)*.

# Multiple Pathways to Demonstrate Language Proficiency

## 5. It is recommended that the pharmacy regulatory authorities accept the following tests and scores as evidence of language proficiency. *(continued)*

- 5.2. The specified minimum cut scores reflect the required competency levels in both English and French for ensuring effective, safe, and ethical communication within pharmacy practice. These performance standards have been established through consultations with experts in the field.
- 5.3. Applicants must achieve the above noted cut scores at a minimum. These scores already take into account standard errors of measurement and represent the minimum score that is acceptable taking all aspects of the test into consideration. If applicants score below the minimum cut score in any subtest, it will not be considered as acceptable proof of language proficiency.
- 5.4. Applicants must submit test scores deemed valid according to the guidelines set by the respective testing agency. While test scores are typically valid for two years, this period may vary depending on the specific test. In the event that test score validity expires after submission to the pharmacy regulatory authority, but before the applicant completes the full licensure process, more specific guidelines will be provided by the pharmacy regulatory authority.
- 5.5. Remotely proctored tests will be accepted if they maintain the same levels of security, validity and reliability as their on-site counterparts. Testing agencies are responsible for reporting the validity and reliability of such remotely proctored tests, as well as any incidents involving security violations or compromises.





# Language Proficiency Trigger Policy

Pharmacy regulatory authorities review instances where an applicant or regulated pharmacy professional exhibits certain concerning characteristics (i.e., triggers) and determine whether the individual possesses the necessary language proficiency, and whether further language proficiency assessment is necessary, regardless of the initial evidence the individual provided to confirm proficiency. Language proficiency triggers, which may indicate compromised patient care, include (but are not limited to) the following concerns related to the individual's language proficiency:

- A member of the teaching staff at a CCAPP-accredited pharmacy technician or pharmacist program, or a bridging program accepted by the pharmacy regulatory authority, has reported a concern to the pharmacy regulatory authority.
- A regulated pharmacy professional assessing the individual during a practical training or practical assessment program has reported a concern to the pharmacy regulatory authority.
- Patients, customers/clients, family members, caregivers or other health professionals have expressed a concern as part of a complaint made to the pharmacy regulatory authority.
- A pharmacy regulatory authority has become aware of a concern through its interactions with the individual.



## Appendix A – Equivalence of Cut Scores Among the Three Tests Approved by NAPRA

	IELTS Academic (CEFR)	OET (CEFR)	TEF Canada (CECR)
Reading	C1	C1	B2
Listening	C1	C1	C1
Speaking	C1	C1	C1
Writing	B2	B2	B2

Note: The table displays the degree of equivalence among the cut scores on three accepted tests based on the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages/Cadre européen commun de référence pour les langues (CEFR/CECR)*.





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