

BRIEFING NOTE

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Registration Committee

DATE: October 2, 2023

SUBJECT: 7.2 Language Proficiency Requirements Policy

APPENDIX A: Draft Language Proficiency Requirements Policy

For Decision

For Information

Monitoring Report

Purpose:

To review and approve the proposed amendments to the Language Proficiency Requirements Policy.

Background:

On January 1, 2023, the new regulation, Registration Requirements made under the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991* (RHPA) came into effect. The new regulation sets out the requirements relating to:

- Time limits for registration decisions
- Language proficiency
- Canadian experience

The Registration Requirements Regulation requires that health regulatory Colleges accept proof of completion of a language test accepted by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) for immigration purposes with results satisfactory to the regulated profession as proof of English or French language proficiency. The regulation, however, does not limit the Colleges to accept other tests or demonstrations of language proficiency as deemed appropriate.

For Consideration:

The Registration Committee undertook a review of the current Language Requirements Policy to ensure it reflects the requirements set out in the Registration Requirements Regulation. To ensure that the tests and the score benchmarks align with the requirements for other health professions, the Registration Committee referred to the environmental scan of the language requirements of health regulators in Ontario.

The proposed changes to the Language Proficiency Requirements Policy are shown in the table below:

College-Approved Language Proficiency Test	Minimum Scores	Rationale for Changes
Canadian English Language Proficiency Index Program (CELPIP) - General	Speaking: 7.0 Listening: 7.0 Reading: 7.0 Writing: 7.0	Approved test under the <i>Immigration and Refugee Protection Act</i> (Canada) for use in assessing language proficiency. Benchmarks are consistent with the IRCC requirements and those set by other regulatory Colleges.
Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) Canadian Language Benchmark Assessment (CLBA) Canadian Language Benchmark Placement Test (CLBPT)	Speaking: 7 Listening: 8 Reading: 6 Writing: 7	Test names were added.
Canadian Academic English Language Test (CAEL)	Speaking: 60 Listening: 60 Reading: 60 Writing: 60	Approved test under the <i>Immigration and Refugee Protection Act</i> (Canada) for use in assessing language proficiency. Benchmarks are consistent with the IRCC requirements and those set by other regulatory Colleges.
Michigan English Language Assessment Battery (MELAB) and Test of Spoken English (TSE)	Overall minimum score of 85 and at least 50 on the TSE	Test name was added.
International English Language Testing System (IELTS) – general or academic	Minimum score of 7 Speaking: 7.0 Listening: 7.0 Reading: 6.0 Writing: 6.0	Test types and the score minimums for each testing category were added. Benchmarks are aligned with the CLB 7 benchmarks.
Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) Internet based Test (iBT)	Total Overall minimum score of 81 Individual minimum scores: Speaking: 24 Listening: 19 Reading: 19 Writing: 19	

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) paper based (PBT) and Test of Spoken English (TSE)	Overall minimum score of 550 on the paper-based test and at least 50 on the TSE	
Test pour étudiants et stagiaires au Canada (TestCan)	Minimum score of 4.5 on each section	Test is no longer offered
Test de connaissance du français pour le Canada (TCF Canada)	Speaking: 10-11 Listening: 458-502 Reading: 453-498 Writing: 10-11	Approved test under the <i>Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (Canada)</i> for use in assessing language proficiency. Benchmarks are consistent with the IRCC requirements and those set by other regulatory Colleges.
Test d'évaluation de français pour le Canada (TEF Canada)	Speaking: 310-348 Listening: 249-279 Reading: 207-232 Writing: 310-348	Approved test under the <i>Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (Canada)</i> for use in assessing language proficiency. Benchmarks are consistent with the IRCC requirements and those set by other regulatory Colleges.

Public Interest Considerations

Language proficiency assessment contributes to public protection by ensuring that registrants can communicate effectively with patients, other members of the health care team, and the College. The ability to understand and respond to registration, quality assurance, and complaints/discipline-related matters is an essential part of an optician's accountability to the College as a regulated health professional.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Considerations

Expanding the range of accepted language proficiency tests will provide flexibility for applicants to select from a wide array of tests with multiple modes of delivery and availability worldwide as well as will eliminate the necessity to retest for the purpose of applying for professional licensure.

Recommendation/Action Required:

The Registration Committee recommends that the Board approve the proposed amendments to the Language Proficiency Requirements Policy, as set out in Appendix A.

REGISTRATION POLICY

Language Proficiency

Language Proficiency Requirement

Effective communication with patients, their stakeholders, and interprofessional team members is an essential competency for the practice of opticianry.

As provided for in Section 4 (1)(3) of Ontario Regulation 896/93, it is a requirement for any class of certificate of registration that the applicant must be able to speak and write either English or French with reasonable fluency.

Language Proficiency Criteria

1. Applicants who have completed an educational program in opticianry in English or French are considered to have met the requirement for language proficiency.
2. If an applicant cannot meet the language proficiency requirement by virtue of their opticianry education, they must demonstrate language proficiency by obtaining the minimum scores in one of the ~~College's approved~~ language proficiency tests ~~approved by the College~~, as follows:

College-Approved Language Proficiency Test	Minimum Scores
Canadian English Language Proficiency Index Program (CELPIP) - General	Speaking: 7.0 Listening: 7.0 Reading: 7.0 Writing: 7.0
Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) Canadian Language Benchmark Assessment (CLBA) Canadian Language Benchmark Placement Test (CLBPT)	Speaking: 7 Listening: 8 Reading: 6 Writing: 7
Canadian Academic English Language Test (CAEL)	Speaking: 60 Listening: 60 Reading: 60 Writing: 60
Michigan English Language Assessment Battery (MELAB) and Test of Spoken English (TSE)	Overall minimum score of 85 and at least 50 on the TSE
International English Language Testing System (IELTS) – General or Academic	Minimum score of 7 Speaking: 7.0 Listening: 7.0

	Reading: 6.0 Writing: 6.0
Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) Internet based Test (iBT)	Total Overall minimum score of 81 Individual minimum scores: Speaking: 24 Listening: 19 Reading: 19 Writing: 19
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~~As a general guideline, the College expects that language proficiency results will not be older than two years.~~

Test results will be considered valid for two (2) years from the date the test was administered.