

Meeting the English Language Requirements

Effective: December 2025

INTRODUCTION

The College of Licensed Practical Nurses and Health Care Aides of Alberta (CLHA) has the authority under the *Health Professions Act* (HPA) to carry out its activities and govern Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs)* in a manner that protects and serves the public interest.

All CLHA applicants must be able to provide evidence of their English language skills as a requirement for registration. This is important to ensure safe and effective care delivery. LPNs need to be able to provide **professional services** to clients by communicating and documenting clearly in English, as required by section 28(1)(f) of the HPA.

Terms found in the definition section are **bolded** where they appear for the first time in this document.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline how applicants can demonstrate English language skills to the CLHA.

POLICY

English language skills involve four criteria: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. All applicants must demonstrate adequate English language skills before registration, which can be done in one of the following ways:

1. Provide satisfactory evidence that the nursing education was successfully completed in English in any country (only original transcripts are accepted directly from the educational institution or through MyCreds).
2. Provide satisfactory evidence of successfully completing two years of full-time equivalent post-secondary education in English, in a subject other than practical nursing (only original transcripts are accepted).
 - a. If the completed education is health-related but not equivalent to an LPN program, the education requirement can be less than two years.

* In this document, "LPN(s)" has the same meaning as "regulated member(s)" in the *Health Professions Act*

3. Provide satisfactory evidence that secondary school was successfully completed in English in any country (only original transcripts are accepted directly from the educational institution or through MyCreds).
4. Provide proof of current or recently expired (within the last two years) nursing registration from another Canadian province or territory, where English language skills were already assessed and met the required standards.
5. Obtain a passing score from one of the following tests:
 - Canadian English Language Benchmark Assessment for Nurses (CELBAN),
 - International English Language Testing System (IELTS—Academic Version only),
 - Occupational English Test (OET), or
 - PTE Academic administered by Pearson.

Details about the tests and satisfactory scores are presented in the Appendix. Results must be valid for up to two years, and originals should be sent directly to the CLHA from the testing facility. Combined scores from more than one test or from more than one attempt of the same test may not be accepted.

6. Submit satisfactory evidence of providing professional services to clients in English in Canada. This evidence would need to be verified by a regulated healthcare professional or employer who works directly with the applicant, confirming the last date when the applicant provided professional services in English. English language skills are considered valid for two years from the last date on which the applicant provided professional services.
7. Provide a letter, satisfactory to the Registrar, from an employer confirming English as the primary language used by the applicant in providing professional services; the letter should be from the current or most recent employer and is valid for two years from the date of issue.

If you cannot meet any of the above requirements, please contact the CLHA Registration Department to discuss your situation.

TEST SCORE REQUIREMENTS

English Test	Passing Score	Contact to Write Test	Notes
Canadian English Language Benchmark Assessment for Nurses (CELBAN)	Listening: 9 Reading: 8 Writing: 7 Speaking: 8	The CELBAN Centre The CELBAN Centre	It is recommended that applicants first complete a CELBAN readiness self-assessment test.
International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Academic Version only	Listening: 7.0 Reading: 6.5 Writing: 6.5 Speaking: 7.0	International English Language Testing System Alberta: 1-403-543-7300 IELTS Welcome to IELTS	It is recommended that applicants first complete a sample test.
Occupational English Test (OET)	Listening: B Reading: C+ Writing: C+ Speaking: B	Occupational English Test OET - The leading English test for healthcare professionals	
Pearson Test of English Academic (PTE Academic)	Listening: 73 Reading: 66 Writing: 68 Speaking: 75	PTE Academic PTE Academic English test Pearson PTE	

CONCLUSION

Confirming an applicant's English language skills in the registration process ensures that all LPNs can provide professional services in English as required by the HPA and that applicants can demonstrate that they have met the language requirements in one of the ways described in the policy.

Documents are updated frequently. For the most current version and access to related documents and resources, please visit the Knowledge Hub on clha.com.

If after reading this document you have questions, please contact the CLHA's Professional Practice Team via practice@clha.com or 780-484-8886 or 1-800-661-5877 (toll free in Alberta).

DEFINITIONS

Professional services: defined in the HPA as a service that falls within the practice of an LPN. This includes one or more of the following:

- apply nursing knowledge, skills, and judgment to assess clients' needs,
- provide nursing care for clients and families,
- teach, manage, and conduct research in the science, techniques and practice of nursing, and
- provide restricted activities authorized by the regulations.