English Language Proficiency Policy

Section 1 - Introduction

(1) The University of Newcastle (University) is committed to offering educational programs to students from a broad range of backgrounds, cultures, and languages. In doing so, it recognises a responsibility to ensure all students have the academic preparation and proficiency in English needed to participate in their intended study, without unexpected limitations that may impede their progression and completion.

Section 2 - Policy Intent

(2) This Policy sets the principles by which the English language proficiency requirements for entry to the University will be applied.

(3) This Policy should be read in conjunction with the English Language Proficiency Procedure.

Section 3 - Scope

(4) This Policy applies to applicants seeking admission to the University to study undergraduate or postgraduate programs of study, regardless of their citizenship or study location.

(5) This Policy does not apply to applicants seeking admission to enabling programs or approved preparatory English programs.

(6) It is noted that students also seeking accreditation or registration with professional bodies may be required to demonstrate English language proficiency requirements in addition to the University's requirements. Contact should be made with the relevant professional body in these circumstances.

Section 4 - Relevant Definitions

(7) In the context of this document the following definitions apply:

a. ‘Recognised Qualification’ means a formal qualification listed in the University's Register which has been assessed in English and where successful completion by the applicant may indicate they meet the English language proficiency requirements for admission to the University; and
b. ‘Register’ means the University's register of internally recognised qualifications from institutions that are approved as sufficient to demonstrate English language proficiency, and are in addition to those qualifications issued from institutions that are listed in formal qualification concordance publications (such as the World Higher Education Database, Ecctis Database or the Department of Education, Skills and Employment’s Country Education Profiles); and
c. ‘English Language Proficiency Standard’ means the minimum English language proficiency requirement of the University of Newcastle, expressed in terms of International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test equivalency, as approved by Academic Senate and outlined in this Policy.

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Section 5 - Policy Principles

(8) All applicants must meet the English Language Proficiency requirements of their relevant program prior to their admission. The English language proficiency requirement for a program will either be:

a. the University's English Language Proficiency Standard; or
b. a higher level of English proficiency than the English Language Proficiency Standard, where this level is approved by the Program and Course Approval Committee.

(9) The English language proficiency requirement for each program is outlined in the relevant Program Handbook.

(10) The English Language Proficiency Procedure sets out how an applicant may demonstrate they meet their program's English language proficiency requirement.

(11) The University reserves the right to request additional evidence of meeting the English language proficiency requirements if the University determines that the evidence provided is insufficient.

(12) The English Language Proficiency Standard is approved by Academic Senate.

(13) The inclusion of a recognised qualification to the Register is conditional on the recommendation of the Teaching and Learning English Language subcommittee for approval by Academic Senate, and is subject to annual review.

(14) The University reserves the right to remove a recognised qualification from the Register.

(15) The University's decision in determining an applicant's English language proficiency is final and is not able to be appealed internally. An applicant may seek to appeal such a decision via the NSW Ombudsman.

Section 6 - English Language Proficiency Standard

(16) The University's English Language Proficiency Standard for admission to any program at the University is outlined in Table 1.

Table 1 – English Language Proficiency Standard

Relevant College	Relevant Program	IELTS	
		Minimum Overall Score	Section Minimum ^
All	Undergraduate programs	6.0	6.0
All	Postgraduate coursework programs	6.5	6.0
All	Higher Degree by Research programs	6.5	6.0
Notes:			
^Section minimums are L – Listening, R – Reading, S – Speaking, W – Writing.			

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	2nd May 2023
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Approval Authority	Academic Senate
Approval Date	19th April 2023
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Belinda Yourn Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Global)
Enquiries Contact	John Radvan Senior Manager, Academic Governance & Compliance Student Central

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Enabling program" - A tertiary preparation program offered to domestic students.

"University" - The University of Newcastle, a body corporate established under sections 4 and 5 of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"Applicant" - Where referring to a student, an applicant is an individual seeking entry to a program or course offered by the University or its partner organisation/s. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Student" - A person formally enrolled in a course or active in a program offered by the University or affiliated entity.

"Postgraduate" - Any qualification being at the level of Graduate Certificate or above.

"Program" - When referring to learning, a program is a sequence of approved learning, usually leading to an Award. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Undergraduate" - Refers to any qualification up to and including the level of a Bachelor Honours degree.

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