

ADMISSIONS STANDARDS – ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

1 Definitions

- (1) Words and phrases used in these standards and not otherwise defined in this document have the meanings they have in the [Coursework Policy 2021](#).
- (2) In these standards and the English language concordance tables referenced in and linked to this document:

IB	means the International Baccalaureate
CAE	means Cambridge English: Advanced
CPE	means Cambridge English: Proficiency
Dean	means, as appropriate, an Executive Dean or Dean of a faculty, or a Head of School and Dean of a University school.
English speaking country	means any of the countries listed in clause 3.
GCE	means the General Certificate of Education
HKDSE	means the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education
IELTS	means the International English Language Testing System
standardised admissions test	means any form of test of generalised scholastic aptitude which: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• requires all test takers to answer the same questions, or a selection of questions from a common bank, in the same way; and• is scored in a standardised manner to facilitate comparison of the relative performance of individual test takers or groups of test takers. <p>Note: Examples include the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and American College Testing (ACT) and other approved equivalent tests.</p>
STPM	means the Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia
TOEFL	means the Test of English as a Foreign Language
TOEFL iBT	means internet based TOEFL
UK A Level English	means the GCE English subject that has been undertaken at full Advanced (A2) level



UK AS Level English	means the GCE English Language and Literature subject or English Language subject.
UK A Levels Humanities	means any of the following GCE A Level humanities subjects: History, Humanities, Philosophy – Critical Thinking, Politics, Law, Religion, Sociology and Psychology

PART 1 ENGLISH AS A FIRST LANGUAGE – ALL APPLICANTS

2 Application of this part

This part applies to applicants for:

- (a) undergraduate award courses;
- (b) postgraduate coursework award courses;
- (c) higher degree by research award courses; and
- (d) non-award students seeking to enrol in one or more units of study at the University, including:
 - (i) exchange students; and
 - (ii) study abroad students.

3 English speaking countries

The applicant must have citizenship or permanent long-term residency (minimum ten years) from one or more of the following countries and have completed secondary or tertiary study equivalent to required Australian qualifications, from one of the following countries:

- (a) American Samoa
- (b) Australia
- (c) Bahamas
- (d) Barbados
- (e) Belize
- (f) Botswana
- (g) Canada (excluding Quebec)
- (h) Fiji
- (i) Gambia
- (j) Ghana
- (k) Gibraltar
- (l) Guyana



- (m) Ireland
- (n) Jamaica
- (o) Kenya
- (p) Lesotho
- (q) Liberia
- (r) New Zealand
- (s) Nigeria
- (t) Papua New Guinea
- (u) Samoa
- (v) Singapore
- (w) Solomon Islands
- (x) South Africa
- (y) Tonga
- (z) Trinidad and Tobago
- (aa) United Kingdom (including Northern Ireland)
- (bb) United States of America
- (cc) Zambia
- (dd) Zimbabwe

Note: See clauses 21A and 23A of the [Coursework Policy 2021](#) and section 7.1 of the [University of Sydney \(Higher Degree by Research\) Rule 2011](#).

4 Faculty or University school requirements

An applicant for admission to an award course or non-award study in a faculty or University school that has set English language requirements separate to those set out in this part must meet the faculty or University school's requirements, as approved by the Academic Board.

Note: These requirements must be approved by the Academic Board in accordance with the [University of Sydney \(Delegations of Authority\) Rule 2020](#).

5 External registration or accreditation requirements

- (1) An applicant for an award course which has external accreditation or registration requirements may be required to meet these external requirements to be eligible for admission, in addition to the University's requirements.
- (2) A list of such courses is set out in Award Courses with External Accreditation and Registration Requirements Table.

PART 2 ENGLISH NOT FIRST LANGUAGE – ENTRY TO UNDERGRADUATE STUDY BASED ON PRIOR STUDY

6 Application of this part

- (1) This part applies to applicants for undergraduate coursework award and non-award study:
 - (a) whose first language is not English;
 - (b) who wish to demonstrate English proficiency through secondary, post-secondary or tertiary study; and
 - (c) who, if successful, will commence study after 1 January 2021.
- (2) This part does not apply to study abroad or exchange applicants.

Note: See Part 4.

7 Secondary study

- (1) Applicants seeking admission under this part to an undergraduate award course or non-award study on the basis of satisfactory achievement in secondary study must have completed senior secondary study:
 - (a) within five years of the date on which they will commence at the University:
 - (i) in an English speaking country;
 - (ii) in a qualification originating in an English speaking country but undertaken in a non-English speaking country, subject to the qualification meeting standards equivalent to the standards determined by the Academic Board; or
 - (iii) in a course in which the language of instruction, assessment and examination was English, subject to demonstrating English language proficiency to meet the standards determined by the Academic Board;

or

- (b) within two years of the date on which they will commence at the University, in a course (whether or not in English) which meets the subject and grade requirements for acceptable secondary qualifications approved by the Academic Board and published on the Academic Board Standards and Guidelines website: [Tables 2 and 3: University of Sydney English Language Concordance Tables](#).

Note: A standardised admissions test does not on its own constitute a recognised secondary qualification for the purposes of assessing English language proficiency.

- (2) The Academic Board will approve acceptable secondary qualifications and the subject and grade requirements for them for the purposes of subclause 7(1)(b).
- (3) The relevant Associate Dean may require further testing of an applicant's English language proficiency if they believe this to be necessary.

- (4) An applicant for admission to an award course or non-award study in a faculty or University school that has set English language requirements above the minimum requirements set out in this clause must meet the faculty or University school's requirements, as approved by the Academic Board.

Note: These requirements must be approved by the Academic Board in accordance with the [University of Sydney \(Delegation of Authority\) Rule 2020](#).

8 Post-secondary or tertiary study

- (1) Applicants seeking admission under this part to an undergraduate award course or non-award study on the basis of post-secondary or tertiary study must demonstrate satisfactory achievement in any of the following, completed within five years of the date on which they will commence at the University:

- (a) a completed recognised foundation program or tertiary education preparation program, in which they have achieved the required English language results;

Note: See the [Coursework Policy 2021](#).

- (b) a completed diploma or advanced diploma of at least one year full-time (or part-time equivalent) duration at, or equivalent to, Australian Qualifications Framework level 5 or level 6;

Note: See [Coursework Policy 2021 and Australian Qualifications Framework](#).

- (c) at least one year full-time (or part-time equivalent) in a degree course at, or equivalent to, Australian Qualifications Framework level 7 or higher.

- (2) The post-secondary or tertiary study must have been undertaken:

- (a) in an English speaking country; or
- (b) in a qualification originating in an English speaking country, but undertaken in a non-English speaking country, subject to the qualification meeting standards equivalent to the standards determined by the Academic Board; or
- (c) in a course in which the language of instruction, assessment and examination was English, subject to demonstrating English language proficiency to meet the standards determined by the Academic Board.

- (3) The relevant Associate Dean may require further testing of an applicant's English language proficiency if they believe this to be necessary.

9 Faculty or University school requirements

An applicant for admission to an award course or non-award study in a faculty or University school that has set English language study requirements separate to the requirements listed in this part must meet those requirements, as approved by the Academic Board.

Note These requirements must be approved by the Academic Board in accordance with the [University of Sydney \(Delegations of Authority\) Rule 2020](#).

10 External registration or accreditation requirements

- (1) An applicant for an award course which has external accreditation or registration requirements may be required to meet these external requirements to be eligible for admission, in addition to the University's requirements.
- (2) A list of such courses is set out in Award Courses with External Accreditation and Registration Requirements Table.

PART 3 ENGLISH NOT FIRST LANGUAGE – ENTRY TO POSTGRADUATE STUDY BASED ON PRIOR STUDY

11 Application of this part

- (1) This part applies to applicants for postgraduate coursework award courses or non-award study, or higher degree by research award courses or non-award study:
 - (a) whose first language is not English;
 - (b) who wish to demonstrate English proficiency through tertiary study; and
 - (c) who, if successful, will commence study after 1 January 2021.
- (2) This part does not apply to study abroad or exchange applicants.

Note: See Part 4.

12 Tertiary study

- (1) Applicants seeking admission under this part to a postgraduate award course or non-award study, or a higher degree by research award course or non-award study, must demonstrate satisfactory achievement in tertiary study at, or equivalent to, the bachelor degree level (Australian Qualification Framework Level 7):
 - (a) within five years of the date on which they will commence at the University;
 - (b) at a provider approved by the University; and
 - (c) in which the duration of study was:
 - (i) at least one year of full-time study (or part-time equivalent) undertaken in an English speaking country, and where the language of instruction, assessment and examination was English; or
 - (ii) a completed undergraduate degree of at least three years full-time (or part-time equivalent) undertaken in English in a non-English speaking country, and in which the language of instruction, assessment and examination was English, subject to demonstrating English language proficiency to meet the standards determined by the Academic Board; or
 - (iii) a completed postgraduate degree of at least one year full-time (or part-time equivalent) undertaken in English in a non-English speaking country, and in which the language of instruction, assessment and

examination English, subject to demonstrating English language proficiency to meet the standards determined by the Academic Board.

- (2) The relevant Associate Dean may require further testing of an applicant's English language proficiency if they believe this to be necessary.

13 Faculty or University school requirements

- (1) An applicant for admission to an award course or non-award study in a faculty or University school that has set English language study requirements separate to the requirements listed in this part must meet those requirements, as approved by the Academic Board.

Note These requirements must be approved by the Academic Board in accordance with the [University of Sydney \(Delegations of Authority\) Rule 2020](#).

- (2) The courses and separate requirements referenced in subclause 13(1) are listed below:
- (a) Admission to all postgraduate award courses offered by the School of Architecture, Design and Planning requires, in addition to the requirements of subclauses 12(1)(a) and 12(1)(b), satisfactory achievement in tertiary study at, or equivalent to, the bachelor degree level (Australian Qualification Framework Level 7) in which the duration of study was:
- (i) at least two years of full-time (or equivalent part-time) undertaken in an English speaking country and where the language of instruction, assessment, examination was English; or
 - (ii) a completed undergraduate degree of at least three years full-time (or equivalent part-time) undertaken in English in a non-English speaking country, and in which the language of instruction, assessment and examination was English, subject to demonstrating English language proficiency to meet the standards determined by the Academic Board; or
 - (iii) a completed postgraduate or higher degree by research award course of at least two years full-time (or equivalent part-time) undertaken in English, and in which the language of instruction, assessment and examination was English, subject to demonstrating English language proficiency to meet the standards determined by the Academic Board.
- (b) Admission to all post-registration postgraduate courses offered by the Susan Wakil School of Nursing requires, in addition to the requirements of subclauses 12(1)(a) and 12(1)(b), satisfactory achievement in tertiary studies at, or equivalent to, the bachelor degree level (Australian Qualification Framework Level 7) in which the duration of study was:
- (i) a three-year degree, completed no more than five years prior to the commencement of study at the University, in which the language of instruction, assessment and examination was English, subject to demonstrating English language proficiency to meet the standards determined by the Academic Board; or
 - (ii) a postgraduate degree of two years or more, completed no more than three years prior to the commencement of study at the University, in which the language of instruction, assessment and examination itself

was English, subject to demonstrating English language proficiency to meet the standards determined by the Academic Board.

14 External registration or accreditation requirements

- (1) An applicant for an award course which has external accreditation or registration requirements may be required to meet these external requirements to be eligible for admission, in addition to the University's requirements.
- (2) A list of such courses is set out in Award Courses with External Accreditation and Registration Requirements Table.

PART 4 ENGLISH NOT FIRST LANGUAGE – ENTRY TO STUDY ABROAD AND EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

15 Application of this part

- (1) This part applies to study abroad and exchange applicants for coursework or research study:
 - (a) whose first language is not English; and
 - (b) who, if successful, will commence study after 1 January 2021.
- (2) Inbound applicants seeking admission to a study abroad or exchange program may seek admission on the basis of any of:
 - (a) secondary study, as specified in this part;
 - (b) tertiary study, as specified in this part;
 - (c) English language test scores, as provided in Part 5; or
 - (d) relevant experience, as provided in Part 6.

16 Secondary study

- (1) An applicant under this part who wishes to rely on secondary study must have completed secondary study within ten years of the date on which they will commence at the University and have:
 - (a) a record of satisfactory achievement in secondary study:
 - (i) in an English speaking country;
 - (ii) in a qualification originating in an English speaking country, undertaken in a non-English speaking country, subject to the qualification meeting standards equivalent to the standards determined by the Academic Board; or
 - (iii) in a course in which the language of instruction, assessment and examination was English, subject to demonstrating English language proficiency to meet the standards determined by the Academic Board;

or



- (b) a record of satisfactory achievement in secondary studies:
 - (i) not undertaken in English; but
 - (ii) which meets the requirements specified on the Academic Board Standards and Guidelines website: [Tables 2 and 3 – University of Sydney English Language Concordance Tables](#).
- (2) The relevant Associate Dean may require further testing of an applicant's English language proficiency if they believe this to be necessary.

17 Tertiary study

- (1) An applicant under this part who wishes to rely on tertiary study must demonstrate satisfactory achievement in tertiary study within ten years of the date at which they will commence at the University, at or equivalent to the bachelor degree level (Australian Qualification Framework Level 7):
 - Note:** See [Australian Qualifications Framework](#)
 - (a) at a provider approved by the University;
 - (b) in which the duration of study was at least one year full time (or part time equivalent); and
 - (c) which was:
 - (i) undertaken in an English speaking country; or
 - (ii) in a qualification originating in an English speaking country but undertaken in a non-English speaking country, subject to the qualification meeting standards equivalent to the standards determined by the Academic Board; or
 - (iii) undertaken in English, and in which the language of instruction, assessment and examination was English, subject to demonstrating English language proficiency to meet the standards determined by the Academic Board.
- (2) The relevant Associate Dean may require further testing of an applicant's English language proficiency if they believe this to be necessary.

PART 5 ENGLISH NOT FIRST LANGUAGE - ENTRY BASED ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEST SCORES – ALL APPLICANTS

18 Application of this part

This part applies to applicants for all undergraduate, postgraduate coursework or higher degree by research award courses, or non-award study, including study abroad and exchange:

- (a) whose first language is not English;



- (b) who wish to demonstrate English language proficiency through an English language skills test score; and
- (c) who, if successful, will commence study after 1 January 2021.

19 Approved English language proficiency tests

- (1) The Academic Board is responsible for approving:
 - (a) English language proficiency tests to be used for the purposes of this standard;
 - (b) the required scores to be obtained in each specified test; and
 - (c) a table of equivalent scores enabling conversion of results between approved tests.
- (2) The Academic Board will publish and maintain on the [Academic Board Standards and Guidelines Website](#):
 - (a) a list of all English language proficiency tests approved by the Academic Board for the purposes of this standard;
 - (b) the required scores to be obtained in each specified test; and
 - (c) equivalent scores enabling conversion of results between approved tests.

Note: See Table 1 of the [University of Sydney English Language Concordance Tables](#).

- (3) Regardless of the provisions of any applicable external accreditation or registration requirements, the University will only accept English proficiency tests specified in these standards.

20 Test score requirements

- (1) An applicant whose first language is not English must have achieved within two years of the date on which the applicant will commence at the University an IELTS result of:
 - (a) the higher of:
 - (i) 6.0 in the case of admission as approved by the Academic Board and listed in Course or Faculty / University School-specific English Language Requirements – Undergraduate Table or Course or Faculty / University School-specific English Language Requirements – Postgraduate Table;
 - (ii) 6.5, with at least 6.0 in each band in the case of other courses not listed in Course or Faculty / University School-specific English Language Requirements – Undergraduate Table or Course or Faculty / University School-specific English Language Requirements – Postgraduate Table as having special requirements; or
 - (iii) the applicable specific course requirements listed in Course or Faculty / University School-specific English Language Requirements – Undergraduate Table or Course or Faculty / University School-specific English Language Requirements – Postgraduate Table;
 - (b) an equivalent score for other approved English language tests as listed in Table 1 of the [University of Sydney English Language Concordance Tables](#);
or

- (c) the required score in approved English language tests offered by the University's Centre for English Teaching.

21 Emergency variations to testing requirements

- (1) If the Chair of the Academic Board is satisfied that exceptional circumstances exist which render the English language proficiency tests specified in this standard unavailable or impractical, the Chair of the Academic Board may determine alternative tests, and test score requirements, as acceptable for the purposes of this standard.
 - (a) Any such determination must be:
 - (i) made in writing and published on the University's website;
 - (ii) notified to the next meeting of the Academic Board; and
 - (iii) limited to a specified period of time;and
 - (b) may also be limited to specified geographical areas.
- (2) The Admissions Team in Sydney Future Students will publish details of these determinations on the University [English language requirements](#) website..

22 Faculty or University school requirements

- (1) An applicant for admission to an award course or non-award study in a faculty or University school that has set English language requirements in addition to or above the minimum requirements set out in subclause 20 must meet the faculty or University school's requirements, as approved by the Academic Board and listed in Course or Faculty / University School-specific English Language Requirements – Undergraduate Table and Course or Faculty / University School-specific English Language Requirements – Postgraduate Table.

Note: These requirements must be approved by the Academic Board in accordance with the [University of Sydney \(Delegations of Authority\)Rule 2020](#).
- (2) The Head of School and Dean of the Sydney College of the Arts may, on application and at their discretion, admit to the Bachelor of Visual Arts an applicant who has achieved an IELTS overall band score of 6.0.
- (3) The Head of School and Dean of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music may, on application and at their discretion, admit to the Diploma of Music an applicant who has achieved an IELTS overall band score of 6.0.

PART 6 ENGLISH NOT FIRST LANGUAGE - ENTRY BASED ON EXPERIENCE – ALL APPLICANTS

23 Application of this part

This part applies to applicants for all undergraduate or postgraduate coursework award courses, higher degree by research award courses or non-award study, including Study Abroad and Exchange:

- (a) whose first language is not English;
- (a) who wish to demonstrate English language proficiency through work and residency experience; and
- (b) who, if successful, will commence study after 1 January 2020.

24 Relevant experience

- (1) Applicants seeking admission under this part must demonstrate that they have:
 - (a) lived and worked in an English speaking country continuously for at least five years prior to the date on which they will commence at the University;
 - (b) undertaken work there which is:
 - (i) relevant to their intended study at the University; and
 - (ii) at a standard sufficient to permit them to meet the University's applicable English language requirements; or
 - (c) a current registration with an accreditation body that has an English language requirement equivalent to, or higher than, the standards otherwise required by the University.
- (2) An applicant applying for admission to post-registration postgraduate courses offered by the Susan Wakil School of Nursing may provide proof of English Language Proficiency by a record of current registration with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) as a (Division 1) Registered Nurse and proof of current employment in this capacity at an appropriate health facility.
- (3) Other admissions standards or requirements may be set by a faculty or University school subject to approval by the Academic Board.

Note: These requirements must be approved by the Academic Board in accordance with the [University of Sydney \(Delegations of Authority\) Rule 2020](#).

25 External registration or accreditation requirements

- (1) An applicant for an award course which has external accreditation or registration requirements may be required to meet these external requirements to be eligible for admission, in addition to the University's requirements.
- (2) A list of such courses is set out in Award Courses with External Accreditation and Registration Requirements Table.

PART 7 EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES - ALL APPLICANTS

26 Dean's discretion

- (1) In exceptional circumstances, a Dean may determine that an applicant demonstrates English language proficiency requirements by means other than those prescribed in these standards, provided that:
 - (a) the applicant must have:
 - (i) an IELTS score or equivalent as specified in Table 1 of the [University of Sydney English Language Concordance Tables](#); or
 - (ii) an English score from the University's Centre for English Teaching equivalent to the applicable IELTS score; and
 - (iii) an overall or average band score no more than 0.5 below the overall or average band score otherwise required; and
 - (iv) no individual band score more than 1.0 below the individual band score otherwise required;
 - or:
 - (b) the Dean is satisfied that the applicant has demonstrated enough competence in written and spoken English to complete the course successfully.
- (2) In considering whether an applicant has demonstrated enough competence in written and spoken English to complete the course successfully, the Dean:
 - (a) must take into account any advice of the relevant Associate Dean; and
 - (b) may consider any other relevant matter, including:
 - (i) the applicant's ability to communicate in an academic environment;
 - (ii) whether the applicant has been known to the faculty or University school for at least two years;
 - (iii) any appropriate work experience that the applicant has had in an English language environment; and
 - (iv) any oral discussions between staff members and the applicant.
- (3) The Dean must record in writing on the student file any approval to waive English language requirements, including:
 - (a) the proof of proficiency in English provided by the applicant; and
 - (b) the Dean's reasons for granting the exemption.

27 Modifications by Academic Board committees

- (1) For undergraduate applicants, the Chair of the Undergraduate Studies Committee of the Academic Board may, in exceptional circumstances, modify the limits prescribed in subclause 26(1)(a), as they apply in a particular case.

- (2) For postgraduate coursework and higher degree by research applicants, the Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee of the Academic Board may, in exceptional circumstances, modify the limits prescribed in subclause 26(1)(a), as they apply in a particular case.