

## Guidance on English language skills for applicants

An important factor in being able to practise safely in the UK is the ability to communicate clearly and effectively with patients and colleagues, both orally and in writing. This can only occur if registrants have necessary knowledge of the English language.

A lack of ability to communicate in English represents a serious risk to both patients and the public.

The GCC has provisions within its rules and regulations to assure itself that applicants for registration have necessary English language skills before granting registration. This also applies to candidates taking the Test of Competence.

Good language and communication skills form an essential part of a chiropractor's practice, and this is reflected throughout The Code (2016), which sets the standards all registrants must maintain.

## Criteria for assessing whether evidence of English language skills are needed

We will check to see whether you have:

- evidence to show you are a native English speaker
- a qualification achieved within the past 2 years from an accredited course in the UK
- nationality from a country where English is the primary language. Although we may require evidence if you are a dual national or have changed nationality
- qualified in the past two years in a country where English is the first and native language; or
- recent experience of at least 2 years practising in a country where English is the first and native language.

If you provide evidence showing that you meet one of these criteria, we are unlikely to ask for further evidence of your English language skills.

If we do need additional evidence of your English language skills, we will request it on a case-by-case basis to ensure proportionality. Any evidence submitted must demonstrate competence in:

- reading
- writing
- listening to; and
- speaking in English.

## Graduates from approved chiropractic courses

All UK courses approved by the GCC are conducted in English and we do not normally need additional evidence of your English language skills.

Should any concerns become apparent during any pre-registration or registration process, the GCC may take steps to check language skills. This could include, for example, seeking assurance from your clinical supervisor, or requiring you to attend an interview.

However, if a chiropractic qualification was achieved more than two years before your application for registration or to take the Test of Competence, and have not practised in a country where English is the first and native language, we may ask for proof of your English language skills.

### International Applicants, except Swiss Nationals

If you hold a relevant unrecognised chiropractic qualification you must pass the Test of Competence before we can register you.

If the Chiropractic programme you attended was not conducted in English, and you have not practised within the past two years in a country where English is the first and native language, we will ask you to provide evidence showing that you meet our English Language requirements.

### Swiss Nationals

If you are a Swiss national applying for registration, or the non-UK national spouse of a Swiss national for whom English is not your native language, you must provide evidence of your English language skills and competence as set out below.

### Acceptable evidence types

There are three different evidence types that we will consider, although if you are not able to meet these fully we will consider whether any additional evidence may be acceptable on a case by case basis.

#### Evidence type 1

A pass of an English language test equivalent to C1 of the Common European Framework (CEFR) within the six months before your application is submitted, such as IELTS where we would accept a score of at least 7 in every component. Where there is a choice of tests, we require that an academic test or equivalent is passed. We reserve the right to disregard the results of any test that does not meet GCC requirements.

All tests must explicitly cover Reading, Listening, Speaking and Writing and applicants must pass all components at an equivalent score as the IELTS test, otherwise the test will be disregarded.

As evidence we need the original certificate showing your score.

If six months has elapsed since the test and registration has not been granted, we may consider additional evidence to ensure language skills have not deteriorated, such as having practised as a chiropractor in a country where English is the first and native language.

We will consider the results of **two** tests completed within six months of the point of submission to the GCC. This would include, for example, IELTS where you:

- scored between 6 and 7 in one component with a score of 7 or more in the remaining three components
- subsequently reach a score of 7 in that component; and
- your score for a component of the second test falls between 6-7.

The result of alternative tests must be equal to C1 of the Common European Framework, for example we would accept the following results of the TOEFL test, where the total score is no lower than 95 in total, and with a minimum score between the four test components as:

Reading – 24

Listening – 22

Speaking – 25

Writing – 24

### Evidence type 2

A chiropractic qualification recently obtained and that was taught and examined in its **entirety** in English from a country outside the UK, where English is the first and native language, for example, USA, Australia, South Africa. In addition, at least 75% of clinical interactions, which includes patients and other professionals, must have been conducted in English.

To ensure your language skills have not deteriorated this evidence type is only valid where your qualification was achieved in the two years before you apply for registration.

If it is more than two years since your qualification was achieved, we may still accept this as meeting the requirement if you have also practised in a country where English is the first and native language.

### Evidence type 3

A period of practise as a chiropractor, of at least two years, in a country where English is the first and native language less than two years before you apply.

By recent we mean that the period of practice must not have ended more than two years before an application for the Test of Competence or registration is submitted.

As evidence we may accept a reference from your employer/s confirming covering a two-year period and stating that you have demonstrated an ability to read, write, listen and speak English.

Alternatively, if an English language test was required before being able to register to practise as a chiropractor in a country where English is the first and native language, we would accept evidence from the regulator establishing this.

In some circumstances we are prepared to accept a combination of different evidence types, where the result is that the same standard is met for all four components.

## Restoring registration or transferring from non-practising to practising registration

If English is not your first or native language, or if you provided evidence of your English language skills on first registration and subsequently came off the Register or registered as non-practising for a period of two or more years, we may require evidence from you to show your English language skills have not deteriorated.

## Appealing a decision to refuse registration based on a lack of English language skills

Where the Registrar refuses registration based on English language skills, you have a right to appeal. Full details of our appeals process are available online [[here](#)].

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## Version control

<b>Version number</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Changes</b>
1.0	J Button	June 2019	
2.0	J Button	June 2021	Removal of reference to EU route to registration Addition of Test of Competence