

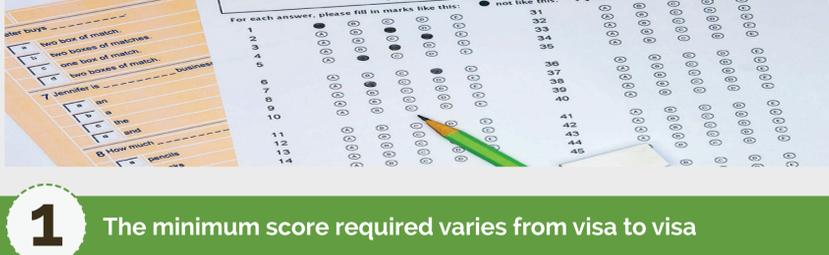


# A Guide to English Tests for Australian Visas

We wrote a guide to help you find out if you need to take an English test, which test is the best for an Australian visa application and to answer the most frequent questions about the tests.

Most visa applications require evidence of a certain minimum level of English.

In most cases, the only way of showing such evidence is by sitting for an English Language Test and getting the minimum scores specified in the regulations for each visa.



## 1 The minimum score required varies from visa to visa

Depending on the visa you are applying for, your minimum score requirements will change.

If you take the IELTS Test as an example, some visa applicants will have to get a minimum overall score of 5, whereas other visa applicants will be required to score 8 in each component of the test.

There is a big difference in having to score 5 and having to score 8, which shows how wide the range of proficiency levels required for a visa application can be.

Don't forget that the maximum score on the IELTS Exam is 9, so if your visa application requires you to score 8, it means that you must show evidence of a very advanced level of English.

## 2 What is the minimum score required for your visa application?

Here are the minimum scores required in some of the most popular visas for Australia:

- **Subclass 482 Temporary Skill Shortage Visa:** minimum overall score of 5, with no less than 5 in each component; unless your occupation is on the MLTSSL in which case you will need 5 in each component of the IELTS;

- **Subclass 485 Skilled Graduate Visa:** minimum overall score of 6, with no less than 5 in each component;

- **Skilled Temporary and Permanent Visas Subclasses 489, 189 or 190:** depending on your Points Test you will have to score 6, 7 or 8 in each component of the test;

- **Subclass 186 and 187 Permanent Employer Nomination Visas:** most applicants for this visa need to score at least 6 in every component of the IELTS Exam.

If you are not sure how much you should score in your case, please contact us for a personalised visa strategy consultation.

## 3 Now you can choose the best test for you

For years, the Department of Immigration only accepted the IELTS Exam and the OET (Occupational English Test). Luckily for everyone, this is not the case anymore, and you can now apply for a variety of English Language tests!

Here are the tests currently being accepted by the Australian Department of Immigration:

- TOEFL IBT
- PTE (Pearson Test of English) Academic
- Cambridge Advanced Certificate
- IELTS General
- OET (Occupational English Test)

## 4 How much do you need to score if you are not taking the IELTS?

Scroll down to number 13 at the end of this guide to see our **SCORE EQUIVALENCIES TABLE**.

You will see there all the scores comparisons, based on how much you would have to score on the IELTS Exam.

## 5 Your test results will have an expiry date

In most cases, your test results will expire after 3 years of being issued, but you need to be careful as this is not always the case. For example, if you are applying for some types of permanent visa as a Secondary Applicant, your test may only be valid for one year.

## 6 Skills Assessment Authorities may not accept all the exams above

**Be careful!** It's not because the Department of Immigration accepts all the tests above that your Skills Assessment Authority will accept them too.

If you are applying for a Skilled Visa, in almost all cases you will also have to apply for a Skills Assessment. Some Skills Assessments authorities require you to show evidence of a minimum English level established by them on the front-end of your application.

But even though the Department of Immigration started accepting other tests, some Skills Assessment authorities haven't, and they may never do it.

For example, Engineers Australia only accepts IELTS and TOEFL, and most authorities for health professions only accept the IELTS or the OET.

## 7 Is it true that the PTE is easier than the IELTS?

Generally speaking, we would say that yes, it is. We have seen a lot of our clients try the IELTS for the minimum score they needed over and over and over, and when they give up and try the PTE, they get the minimum score required very quickly. So based on the number of people we have seen succeed at the PTE and fail at the IELTS, our opinion is that the PTE is easier than the IELTS.

We also hear our clients say that the PTE test format is more comfortable as it is a computer based test. A lot of people feel intimidated while taking the IELTS Exam, especially during the Speaking component, and seem to be much more at ease when they take the PTE.

## 8 Is it true that taking the test outside of Australia is easier?

We have seen some clients get better results at their IELTS Exams when they take their tests in countries where English is not the official language. It could be just speculation, but it may be that it is indeed easier to take the test outside of Australia.

## 9 Some visas require you to sit for a test before lodging your application

Be very careful here and check with your Registered Migration Professional what applies to your case.

Some applications will require that you present results at the time of lodgement and if you don't, your visa will be refused. Some types of visa application allow you to present the results later, such as when you are applying for certain permanent visas as a Secondary Applicant.

## 10 Some 485 people are not required to sit for an English test at all

Applicants from English-speaking countries are not obliged to sit for an English test when applying for visas to Australia. They must hold passports from the countries below:

- The United Kingdom
- The United States
- Canada
- New Zealand
- Republic of Ireland

But even holders of the passports above may sometimes have to sit for an English test. they may have to claim points for English to score the minimum 65 on a Points Test for a Skilled Visa, and the only way of doing that, even if you are from an English-speaking country, is to sit for an English Test.

## 11 Some people can ask to be exempt from taking the test

Even if you don't hold a passport from the countries above, check with your Registered Migration professional if the visa subclass you are applying for offers avenues to claim exemptions.

Some examples of exemptions:

- some visas allow you to ask to be exempt from sitting for a test if you have studied at a tertiary level for a minimum period of 5 years;
- if you are applying for a visa to work in Australia and your salary package will be over a certain amount;
- if you are a Secondary Applicant in some Permanent visa applications. You may have alternative ways of showing the minimum English level required, other than taking a test, especially when you have studied in Australia before lodging a visa application. Check your options!

## 12 If you have family members aged over 18, they may have to sit for English tests too

If you are applying for a temporary visa and have family members aged over 18, in most cases, they will not have to show evidence of English skills, but if you are applying for a permanent visa, they may have to.

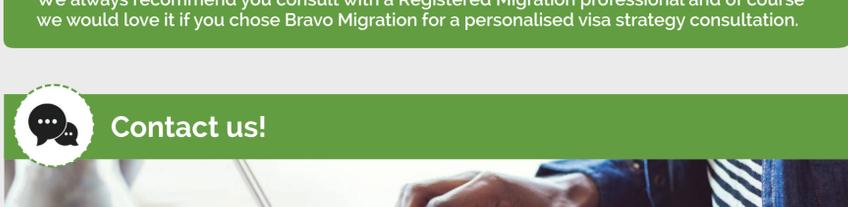
## 13 Score equivalencies table

English Language proficiency level	Test component	IELTS	TOEFL IBT	PTE Academic	Cambridge English: Advanced (CAE)*	OET
Functional	Average/total/overall across test components/only	4.5	32	30	147	n/a
Vocational	Listening	5.0	4	36	154	B
	Reading	5.0	4	36	154	B
	Writing	5.0	14	36	154	B
	Speaking	5.0	14	36	154	B
Competent	Listening	6.0	12	50	169	B
	Reading	6.0	13	50	169	B
	Writing	6.0	21	50	169	B
	Speaking	6.0	18	50	169	B
Proficient (for points tested Skilled visas)	Listening	7.0	24	65	185	B
	Reading	7.0	24	65	185	B
	Writing	7.0	27	65	185	B
	Speaking	7.0	23	65	185	B
Superior (for points tested Skilled visas)	Listening	8.0	28	79	200	A
	Reading	8.0	29	79	200	A
	Writing	8.0	30	79	200	A
	Speaking	8.0	26	79	200	A

\*From 1 January 2015 and only for a Cambridge English: Advanced (CAE) test taken on or after 1 January 2015.



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