

# OET Preparation Courses

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## What is OET and how is it different to IELTS?

The Occupational English Test is offered by Cambridge Boxhill and is accepted worldwide as proof of English level by Health Boards. In contrast to the IELTS, the OET is designed specifically to test the language proficiency of medical professionals. The speaking and writing components of the exam are specific to one of the 12 medical professions covered by the exam. The IELTS exam is focused on academic English and tests a candidate's suitability for university study. The examination tasks reflect this. The OET is more accessible to healthcare professionals as all parts of the exam are set in a medical context, with familiar tasks.

You receive a grade for each section and they map to the IELTS scores as follows. Each health board sets its own minimum requirements and you should check with them.

OET grade	Description of ability	IELTS equivalence
<b>A</b>	A high level of performance	8.0 – 9.0
<b>B</b>	High level of performance; i.e. able to use English with fluency and accuracy adequate for healthcare registration, appropriate visa categories, healthcare course and workplaces	7.0 – 7.5
<b>C+</b>	Very good level of performance; i.e. adequate for appropriate visa categories, healthcare course and workplaces	6.5
<b>C</b>	Good level of performance; i.e. adequate for appropriate visa categories, some healthcare course and some workplaces	5.5 – 6.0
<b>D</b>	Moderate level of performance; requires improvement	4.0 – 5.0
<b>E</b>	Low level of performance; requires considerable improvement	

## Where can I sit the OET exam and how do I register?

Live Language is a registered OET exam centre and you can sit the exam with us. To register for the exam, you should contact the OET directly. All links to registering for the exam are available on our website at <http://live-language.com/oet/>. Registration closes around 3 weeks before each exam date.

## How do I register for the OET preparation course at Live Language?

You can come to Live Language at 10 Somerset Place, G3 7JT or contact us by email at [info@live-language.com](mailto:info@live-language.com). You will need to complete a registration form and confirm that your level of English meets the minimum course requirements (IELTS 6.0). If you do not have proof of your English level, we can give you a placement test.

## Who accepts the OET exam?

The OET has been accepted in many countries such as Australia, New Zealand and in the Middle East for a number of years now. It is now accepted in the UK by the Nurses and Midwifery Council and the General Medical Council as an alternative to the IELTS. The guidelines stated on each council's website are:

### Nurses and Midwifery Council

If you have completed an OET examination, you must provide a certificate that confirms:

- at least a B grade in listening and reading,  
and
- at least a B grade in writing and speaking.

We will only accept results from OET tests taken from February 2016 onwards.

### Combining tests

You can achieve the required mark across two test sittings if:

- you sit the tests within six months of each other, and
- you are tested in all four skills at the same time, and
- all grades in both sittings are above Grade C+ and you achieve Grade B or higher in all four fields when the results of both sittings are viewed together.

Test scores are valid for two years.

### General Medical Council

For us to accept your OET certificate, it must show:

- that you took the medicine version of the test
- that you got a grade of at least 'B' in each testing area (speaking, listening, reading and writing)
- that you got those grades in the same test your candidate number
- that you obtained the grades in your most recent sitting of the test

OET certificates are valid for two years.

## What is the format of the test?

The test has 4 parts and you are awarded a grade for each section. You do not receive an overall grade.

Listening – Approximately 50 minutes

Reading – 1 hour

Writing – 45 minutes

Speaking – Approximately 20 minutes

Full details of the test format are available on the OET website at <https://www.occupationalenglishtest.org/test-information/>

## What is the minimum level of English to join the preparation course?

We recommend a minimum level of English equivalent to a minimum IELTS 6.0 – 6.5.

## What will I study on the preparation course?

The course is 30 hours in total and is available in intensive or part-time options. Course dates are available on our website. The course covers all parts of the exam and you will take a mock test to assess your progress. The tests will be specific to your speciality. You will learn about each section of the exam in detail and practise techniques and strategies to improve your performance. The courses dedicate a significant amount of time to the writing section. Feedback from candidates who have taken the exam indicates that this is the area that they need most input and support.

### *Intensive course (1 week)*

<b>Times:</b>	9.00am – 12.15pm, 1.00pm – 4.15pm
<b>Days:</b>	Monday to Friday for one week
<b>Cost:</b>	£300 plus £20 registration fee (includes materials)
<b>Numbers:</b>	Minimum 5 students, maximum 14 students
<b>Dates:</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> – 18 <sup>th</sup> May 18 <sup>th</sup> – 22 <sup>nd</sup> June 30 <sup>th</sup> July – 3 <sup>rd</sup> August 3 <sup>rd</sup> – 7 <sup>th</sup> September 1 <sup>st</sup> – 5 <sup>th</sup> October 29 <sup>th</sup> October – 2 <sup>nd</sup> November 10 <sup>th</sup> – 14 <sup>th</sup> December

### *Part-time option (6 weeks)*

<b>Times:</b>	2.45pm – 5.15pm
<b>Days:</b>	Either Monday and Wednesday <b>OR</b> Tuesday and Thursday
<b>Costs:</b>	£300 plus £20 registration fee (includes materials)
<b>Numbers:</b>	Minimum 5 students, maximum 14 students
<b>Dates:</b>	29 <sup>th</sup> May – 5 <sup>th</sup> July (Tuesday / Thursday) 25 <sup>th</sup> September – 1 <sup>st</sup> November (Tuesday / Thursday) 5 <sup>th</sup> November – 12 <sup>th</sup> December (Monday / Wednesday)

## OET FAQs

- **Will I study the material specific to my profession?**
  - You may be in a class with people studying different versions of the exam. At the present time, the GMC and NMC are the only two bodies accepting OET in the UK, so most classes will be a mix of those studying towards the Medicine and Nursing test formats.
  - The reading and listening components of the test are the same for all 12 professions. The speaking and writing are specific to doctors / nurses etc. As a whole class, you will study the techniques to improve your performance in those sections of the exam as the assessment criteria are the same for all professions. However, when you do practice activities, you will be given topics specific to your exam.
  
- **What if I can't study at the times available? Can I pay only for the classes I attend?**
  - We realise that it might be difficult to commit to the times. For the face-to-face courses the timings are fixed and we cannot offer a pro-rata rate. However, we are hoping to offer online courses in the near future which will offer more flexibility for those working shifts.
  
- **Are there any other course dates available?**
  - If we have a minimum of 5 students, we can offer a closed group at times which suit your schedules.
  
- **Do you provide course materials?**
  - Yes – these are included in the price of the course and you will receive your course pack on the first day.
  
- **When are the exam results available?**
  - You will be able to login to the OET website and access your results 16 working days after your exam.
  
- **Will a 30-hour course be enough to pass the OET?**
  - Your success in the OET depends on a number of factors, such as your initial level, time available to study, areas of weakness, familiarity with the exam, and performance under exam conditions.
  - In our experience, the candidates have strong language skills but need practice in exam tasks and to get to know how they are being assessed by the examiners. The course therefore focuses on exam tasks, and examining criteria. It may take more time to improve performance as you practise the techniques.
  - If you find that you have not met the minimum requirement in one of the parts of the exam, you may want to consider private lessons to focus on this one area rather than take a full course.