English Language Entry Requirements Policy

Section 1 - Key Information

Policy Type and Approval Body	Academic – Academic Board
Accountable Executive – Policy	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Future Growth)
Responsible Manager – Policy	Director, Admissions and Scholarships
Review Date	16 October 2028

Section 2 - Purpose

(1) This Policy establishes the framework for English language requirements for entry to La Trobe University courses and for assessing the English Language Proficiency (ELP) of applicants in accordance with:

a. the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000;
b. the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018;
c. the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011; and
d. the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021.

(2) This Policy should be read in conjunction with:

a. the Admissions Policy
b. the Graduate Research Admissions Policy

Section 3 - Scope

(3) This Policy applies to:

a. all award courses of the University, including those taught interstate, off-shore and by third-party teaching partners;
b. the following non-award courses and subjects:
    i. foundation programs and university preparatory programs that do not include English language training;
    ii. subjects taken on a non-award basis as a single subject, or through an exchange or Study Abroad program;
c. all prospective students of such courses and subjects, including domestic, international and non-resident applicants.

(4) All sections of this Policy should be read as applying to both domestic and international applicants, unless expressly stated otherwise.

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(5) This Policy does not apply to short courses – see Short Courses Policy.

Section 4 - Key Decisions

Key Decisions	Role
Approve English language entry requirements for all courses	Academic Board
Approve ELP equivalencies against minimum requirements	Director, Admissions and Scholarships
Approve ELP equivalencies for higher degree by research applicants against minimum requirements	Chair, Board of Graduate Research

Section 5 - Policy Statement

(6) English is the primary language of instruction at La Trobe University. Through this Policy and its admissions policies and processes, the University seeks to ensure that admitted students have the English Language Proficiency (ELP) that:

a. is required to participate successfully in their intended course; and
b. complies, where relevant, with Australian government requirements for holders of Student Visas.

(7) To be eligible for admission to a course, applicants must meet University and, where applicable, course-specific ELP entry requirements. All requirements are made clear in promotional material to future students.

(8) The University provides opportunities for admitted students to further develop their ELP. Students are responsible for the continued development of their own ELP and any discipline-specific language requirements.

Section 6 - Procedures

Part A - Approval and Review of Minimum ELP Requirements

(9) Academic Board is responsible for approving all ELP entry requirements for courses, both at a course level and for specific courses.

(10) Where schools seek to increase the ELP level for individual courses in order to meet accepted standards and/or external professional requirements, recommendations are made to Academic Board via Coursework Committee or through the Board of Graduate Research, as appropriate, in accordance with the Course and Subject Management Policy and the Graduate Research Course Management Policy.

(11) Minimum ELP requirements outlined in this Policy are reviewed annually and where changes are required these are submitted via a revision to this Policy in time for approval by the last Academic Board meeting of the year.

(12) Any changes to the University's minimum ELP requirements will apply to the next relevant admissions cycle (see also Application and Offers section in this Procedure).

Country Qualification Assessments and English Language Programs

(13) Admissions and Scholarships maintain detailed tables of assessments of equivalency for individual country qualifications and English language programs. Where a staff member seeks recognition for a new qualification or program a request must be made of the Director, Admissions and Scholarships. The Director, Admissions and Scholarships or nominee will assess the acceptability of the qualification or program and approve the levels at which

students can be considered to have achieved a standard comparable to the University's minimum requirements.

Part B - Accepted Measures of ELP

(14) The University's standard measures of ELP are outlined in Table One. In keeping with sector practice, the University also accepts a number of internationally recognised measures of ELP. The main measures used are:

a. the tests accepted by the Department of Home Affairs – (required minimum English language proficiency standards for international applicants). The University requires that a specified minimum score must be achieved in all parts of the test (i.e. speaking, listening, reading and writing);
b. for overseas qualifications in English, where countries are defined as English speaking or where English is the primary language of instruction, the guidelines provided by AEI-NOOSR (Australian Education International – National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition), UK ENIC and the International Association of Universities World Higher Education Database.

(15) Required levels of ELP by course level and the time limits applying to each measure in relation to the anticipated date of first enrolment at La Trobe University are outlined in the following parts of this Procedure. Course-specific requirements are published annually in course guides and on the International English Language Requirements webpage.

Part C - Minimum ELP requirements

(16) The minimum ELP requirements for entry to La Trobe courses are set out in Table One. All other measures of ELP are assessed against these requirements.

(17) Some courses have higher ELP requirements and specific test requirements, course or discipline-specific requirements are available under the specific course entries available through Course Finder.

Table One – Minimum ELP Requirements

Band	Course type and AQF Level	Minimum ELP Requirements
A	Diploma (AQF Level 5)	Secondary schooling in English (successful completion of Year 12). Units 3 and 4: a study score of at least 25 in English as an additional language or 20 in English other than EAL; Equivalent of 30 La Trobe credit points or tertiary education study in an English medium institution (minimum Certificate IV); or Minimum two years full time work and life experience as specified in Part E.
B	Associate Degree (AQF Level 6) Bachelor Degree (AQF Level 7)	Victorian Certificate of Education (or equivalent Australian secondary qualification) Units 3 and 4: a study score of at least 25 in English as an additional language or 20 in English other than EAL; Equivalent of 30 La Trobe credit points of tertiary education study in an English-medium institution (minimum Certificate IV); or Minimum two years full time work and life experience as specified in Part E.
C	Bachelor Honours Degree (AQF Level 8) Graduate Certificate (AQF Level 8) Graduate Diploma (AQF Level 8)	Minimum two years of equivalent full-time study in Australian Bachelor degree (or equivalent); Minimum one year of equivalent study in Australia Postgraduate studies (AQF level 8 or above)(or equivalent); Minimum five years full time work and life experience as specified in Part E.
	Master's degree (coursework and research)(AQF Level 9)	Minimum two years of equivalent full-time study in Australian Bachelor degree (or equivalent); Minimum one year of equivalent study in Australia Postgraduate studies (AQF level 8 or above)(or equivalent); Minimum five years full time work and life experience as specified in Part E.

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Band	Course type and AQF Level	Minimum ELP Requirements
	Doctoral degree (AQF Level 10)	Minimum two years of equivalent full-time study in Australian Bachelor degree (or equivalent); Minimum one year of equivalent study in Australia Postgraduate studies (AQF level 8 or above)(or equivalent); Minimum five years full time work and life experience as specified in Part E.

Table Two – Tests and Other Measures of ELP

(18) Formal English tests can be used to demonstrate ELP (see Part F for currency requirements).

Measures of ELP	Courses in Band A	Courses in Band B	Courses in Band C
International English Language Test Systems (IELTS) Academic, including One Skill Retake (OSR) OSR allows for the one retake in one of the four test components in either reading, writing, speaking or listening (once only)	Overall 5.5, no band less than 5.5	Overall 6.0, no band less than 6.0	Overall 6.5, no band less than 6.0
Pearson Test of English (PTE) Academic (old applications submitted before 9 May 2025)	Overall score of 50 with no communicative skill score less than 46	Overall score of 50 with no communicative skill score less than 50	Overall score of 58 with no communicative skill score less than 50
Pearson Test of English (PTE) Academic (new applications submitted after 9 May 2025)	Overall score of 39 with minimum 42 in Reading, 40 in Listening, 39 in Speaking and 41 in Writing	Overall score of 47 with minimum 48 in Reading, 47 in Listening, 54 in Speaking and 51 in Writing	Overall score of 55 with minimum 54 in Reading, 53 Listening, 66 in Speaking and 60 in Writing.
Occupational English Test (OET) Results from one sitting or maximum of two test sittings in a six-month period	Minimum score of C (200) in sub tests	Minimum score of C (250) in sub tests	Minimum score of C+ (300) in sub tests
2023 and May 4th 2024, are not valid. Tests taken before July 26th 2023, remain valid for two years	Minimum score of C (200) in sub tests	Minimum score of C (250) in sub tests	Minimum score of C+(300) in sub tests
1 Advanced/C2 Proficiency	169 with no less than 162 in any component	169 with no less than 169 in any component	176 with no less than 169 in any component
Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)	Independent User B2	Proficient User B2	Proficient User C1
Duolingo English Test (DET)	Overall 95	Overall 110	Overall 120

Part D - Specific Course and Subject Requirements

(19) Applicants for combined degrees, such as a double degree, must meet the minimum ELP requirements for both degrees. Where the combined degree comprises an individual degree with a higher ELP entry requirement, the higher requirement applies.

(20) Applicants for Single Subjects must meet the ELP requirements for the course from which the subject is drawn.

Exchange and Study Abroad

(21) Where incoming exchange or Study Abroad applicants choose a combination of both undergraduate and postgraduate subjects, the highest ELP requirement is applied.

(22) Applicants are assessed based on the formal English language tests or other measures in Table Two. Applicants can also meet the ELP requirements of their Study Abroad or exchange program by:

a. completing a full year (the equivalent of 60 points in the European Credit Transfer System [ECTS]) in an undergraduate or postgraduate course where English is the language of instruction in their home institution;
b. providing a certificate of English proficiency provided by their home institution on its official letterhead with a minimum overall grade of B2 (for undergraduate subjects) or C1 (for postgraduate subjects) according to the Common European Framework of Reference;
c. other ELP measures outlined in this Procedure.

Foundation Programs

(23) English language entry requirements for all foundation studies programs in Australia must meet the National Standards for Foundation Programs.

Postgraduate Qualifying Programs

(24) Applicants who successfully complete a recognised Postgraduate Qualifying Program (PQP) will satisfy the minimum ELP for entry to all AQF level postgraduate coursework courses.

Part E - Evidence

Currency

(25) Evidence of ELP must be current when the applicant commences their studies at La Trobe. The following time limits apply to evidence used to demonstrate ELP, unless otherwise specified in this Procedure:

a. international tests and other ELP measures (such as ELICOS and the Common European Framework of Reference) must have been completed no more than two years prior to commencement at La Trobe;
b. qualifications that meet ELP must have been completed no more than five years prior to commencement at La Trobe.

(26) Measures may be considered current outside these limits where the applicant supplies:

a. evidence of residency in countries where English is the official language; and/or
b. relevant employment and continuous use of English at the proficiency level specified for entry to the specific course.

Life and Work Experience

(27) Applicants can provide alternative evidence of ELP or extend the currency of other evidence (see above), where they have completed studies in English, or can meet specified employment and residency requirements in a country where English is an official language.

Secondary Schooling in English

(28) Applicants seeking to use secondary school enrolment to meet ELP must provide official evidence of secondary schooling successfully completed in English, and English study, equivalent to Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE)

English Units 3 and 4 (or an equivalent Australian secondary qualification). English competency will be measured against the English requirements allocated to the relevant course, as detailed in Table One.

Employment and Residency

(29) Applicants can demonstrate ELP based on residency, full-time work and/or life experience in an English-speaking country as per the minimum years stated in Table 1 of this policy. Applicants from a non-English speaking country with work experience in an English speaking environment may be considered on a case by case basis. This employment must have concluded no more than five years prior to the commencement of the course at La Trobe. Applicants seeking to demonstrate ELP based on residency and employment in an English-speaking country must provide:

a. evidence of ongoing residency (such as passport or visa documentation) and evidence of proficient written and verbal English;
b. a statement of service from the employer confirming the duration of employment and details of duties requiring proficient written and verbal English language competences;
c. any other evidence of sufficient proficiency.

(30) Applicants seeking to demonstrate English language proficiency based on residency and employment and/or life experience in a non-English speaking country may be considered, however, must provide a statement from the employer or equivalent confirming that work has been conducted in an English-speaking environment.

(31) Graduate research applicants who wish to be considered on these grounds must submit a written case, endorsed by their prospective supervisor, to the Chair of the Board of Graduate Research in accordance with the Graduate Research Admissions Policy.

Domestic Applicants

(32) Coursework applicants who wish to be considered based on employment and/or unscored Year 12 who do not meet the above criteria are referred to the Special Tertiary Admissions Test (STAT). The assessment of STAT results is based on equivalence to the VCE English Study Score 3 and 4 required for the specific course – based on the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) measure of equivalence.

Part F - Applications and Offers

(33) Applicants for all courses must submit evidence of the required level of ELP at the time of application for their chosen course at La Trobe.

(34) Where an individual applicant presents evidence of ELP for which there is no current recognition at La Trobe:

a. the applicant may be required to undertake an approved test or English language program; or
b. the Director, Admissions and Scholarships or nominee may assess and where appropriate approve the submitted evidence.

(35) Courses requiring progressional registration may require a student to sit an English test and achieve a higher level of English upon registration than is required for entry to the relevant course.

(36) Australian Government visa regulations may require an applicant to meet higher English scores or accept different English tests than the university requires to demonstrate English proficiency for entry.

(37) Conditional offers of admission may be made to:

a. applicants who cannot provide evidence of the required ELP at the time of application, subject to the provision of substantiating evidence that they have attained the advertised ELP entry standard for their course (eg,

specified English test score, successful completion of recognised English language intensive course, or previous study in English);

b. applicants who do not meet the required level of ELP at the time of application. In these circumstances applicants are required to satisfactorily complete an appropriate English language program with the required grade/mark for their course of study before being admitted to the University.

(38) Where the ELP requirements for a course change, the University will honour any unconditional offers already made.

(39) In accordance with the Admissions Procedure and the Graduate Research Admissions Policy the University reserves the right to withdraw or cancel an offer of enrolment where an offer is made based on incomplete or inaccurate information supplied by the applicant or certifying authority.

Part G - Reviews

(40) Students may seek a review of a decision made under this Policy where they believe they have grounds that this Policy or Procedure has not been correctly applied. Requests for review must be made under the review provisions in the Admissions Procedure or the Graduate Research Admissions Policy.

Part H - Reporting

(41) An analysis of cohort performance based on ELP at entry is included in the Admissions Report, which is tabled for review by Education Committee and approval by Academic Board each year.

Section 7 - Definitions

(42) For the purpose of this Policy and Procedure:

a. domestic student: a student who is an Australian citizen, New Zealand citizen, the holder of a permanent visa for Australia or holder of an Australian humanitarian visa.
b. IELTS: the International English Language Testing System as determined by the Department of Home Affairs.
c. international student: a student who is not a domestic student at the time of the relevant study, who will be studying in Australia on a temporary student visa.
d. Non-Resident: all applicants/students who are not classified as domestic or international as defined in this Policy in relation to their visa/citizenship and location status. Non-Residents include:
    i. non-domestic students who are studying in a domestic course that is delivered entirely online, where they do not need a student visa for their enrolment;
    ii. non-domestic students studying on campus within Australia while on any temporary visa other than the student visa;
    iii. any student enrolled in a non-domestic course (including Australian domestic students studying overseas in a course delivered by an offshore partner institution).

Section 8 - Authority and Associated Information

(43) This Policy is made under the La Trobe University Act 2009.

(44) Associated information includes:

a. National Standards for Foundation Programs

b. English Language Requirements Webpage
c. Department of Home Affairs (DHA)

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	16th October 2025
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Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Manager - Policy	Kylie Brown Director, Admissions and Scholarships
Enquiries Contact	Recruitment & International Operations

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