English Language Proficiency Requirements

The following is per HR Circular 063/2020 re English language requirements for NCHDs - in place of those in HSE HR Circular 022/2018

Heretofore, the extent to which NCHDs were required to provide evidence of English language competency was set out in HSE HR Circular 022/2018. This Circular outlines the current position and supersedes all previous communication in this regard.

Required English Language Competency
The ability to communicate clearly with patients and colleagues is a key requirement for all healthcare professionals.

Proficiency in the English language is therefore a core competency for NCHDs working in the Irish public health service.

Under Section 6 'Standard duties and responsibilities' of NCHD Contract 2010, NCHDs are required to be able to communicate effectively with patients and clients; and comply with statutory and regulatory requirements, corporate policies and procedures and human resource policies and procedures.

Requirement for all NCHDs
The English language requirements for NCHDs are universally applicable. There is no distinction between training, non- training, intern or any other category or grouping.

In this context, all NCHDs taking up employment with the HSE and section 38 organisations who were not registered with the Irish Medical Council in any of the divisions of the Register of Medical Practitioners prior to 1st January 2015, or who did not complete the entirety of their under-graduate medical training in the Republic of Ireland, are required to provide evidence under one of the following categories:

- Category 1. Doctors who completed their Medical degree in English from any of the following countries: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, The United States of America or The United Kingdom must provide:
- A copy of their Medical Degree Certificate

- Category 2. Doctors who completed: The Irish State Leaving Certificate examination or A Levels in the United Kingdom and a Medical Degree in English must provide all three of the following:
    - A copy of Irish Leaving Certificate/UK A-Level transcript results
    - A copy of their Medical Degree
    - Certificate/confirmation from their University confirming their Medical degree was taught and examined solely in English

- Category 3. Doctors who meet the English Language requirements by attaining certification via the recognized English Language Tests must submit a certificate of test results from either the International English Language Test System (IELTS) (Academic EXAM) or Occupational English Test (OET).

Please refer to the table below for the minimum levels in each of the tests that are accepted by the HSE/public health service employers:

IELTS	Minimum scores
Listening	6.5
Reading	6.5
Writing	6.5
Speaking	6.5
Overall	7.0
OET	**Minimum Grade**
Listening	B
Reading	B
Writing	B
Speaking	B
Overall	B

***IELTS or OET results from online tests that meet the minimum levels outlined above are accepted.**

Please note that:

- As outlined above doctors who have not previously been employed with the HSE/section 38 organisations who apply for an NCHD position or to a national Training Programmes must provide evidence of a valid IELTS/OET test dated within two years at application stage.

- NCHDs applying for national Training Programmes who have completed IELTS/OET and are currently in employment or were previously employed by the HSE must provide evidence at application stage that a valid IELTS/OET test was completed and submitted to the employer at the time of first employment with the HSE. Test results cannot be combined. The HSE will only accept one test result.

- In addition to providing evidence, as required, of the IELTS/OET the NCHDs communication skills must be independently assessed, by employer or training body, as part of the application and interview process, before the NCHD is recommended for appointment or contract of employment issued (excludes Interns).

- Potential applicants must be informed of these requirements as part of the recruitment process.

There are no exemptions to the above requirements.

Remedial Action:
Should the NCHD at any point not be able to demonstrate the required level of English language competency set out in Section 6 of the NCHD Contract 2010, the Employer may wish to consider remedial or other action under NCHD Contract 2010.

All applicants are required at the time of application to demonstrate to the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland their English Language competency either by means of submitting the required IELTS/OET Certificate documentation or by declaring themselves exempt under one of the above parameters and providing the required documentary evidence of same.