

Language Ability Test Requirements Changing

In 2016, the Council undertook an occupational benchmarking exercise to determine what the present-day language requirement is for those professionals representing clients in immigration/citizenship matters. This work was contracted to the Canadian Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (CCLB), which is the recognized expert and authority in this area. From their report *Benchmarking the Language Demands for the Immigration Consultant Profession (June 2016)*, it was noted that immigration consultants' function between Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) level 8 and level 9 for English and between Niveau de compétence linguistique Canadien (NCLC) level 8 and level 9 in French.

In response to the report, the Council set the first-time RCIC EPE exam-taker applicants' requirement at CLB/NCLC level 8 as of June 2016 for those being admitted to the profession. In response to repeated calls for change, noting that many practising consultants are performing at an unsatisfactory level of language competence, the Council has decided to raise the language requirement for first-time applicants to CLB/NCLC level 9 for those seeking admission to the profession on or after **1 July 2019**. A new Registration Guide is currently in translation that will include information about this pending change. Announcing this change almost one year out provides current and future IPP students with ample notice as to what licensing requirements will be in force as of July 2019. Please note that there will be **NO GRANDFATHERING** for past graduates. Exam-takers currently enrolled in the exam process will need to meet level 8 but those who voluntarily or involuntarily withdraw as an exam-taker due to time limit or achieving the maximum number of re-write attempts, will have to start again under the new provisions.

It is important to note that language ability test certificates remain valid for two years, **BUT** it is the scores on those certificates that will be essential for them to be accepted after 1 July 2019. Accordingly, the Council would appreciate all education providers to alert potential students of this post-graduating requirement and ensure that their pre-enrolment language requirements will fairly ensure that students enrolling in an IPP with the expectation of being licensed upon graduation have enough advanced language ability to earn an acceptable language test score certificate. The old notion that a student will improve their language skills during the 500-hour IPP no longer has merit.

Please also remind your students that writing to the Registrar asking for an exemption or waiver or grandfathering consideration from having to take a recognized language ability test has no value. There are no exceptions regardless of – but not limited to – a student's place of birth, how long they have lived in Canada or some other English/French speaking country, ancestry, mother tongue or instructional language in which they have completed any prior education or any exemption they may have received from another organization. An immigration/citizenship professional needs more than day-to-day conversational ability in at least one of Canada's two Official Languages. Every exam-taker must prove their superior language ability.

For a breakdown of the various language test equivalency scores, see below.

LANGUAGE ABILITY TEST MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS				
			BEFORE 1 JULY 2019	AFTER 1 JULY 2019
			LEVEL 8	LEVEL 9
ENGLISH	IELTS - Academic	listening	7.5	8
		speaking	6.5	7
		reading	6.5	7
		writing	6.5	7
ENGLISH	CanTest	listening	4.0	4.5
		speaking	4.5	5.0
		reading	4.0	4.5
		writing	4.0	4.5
ENGLISH	CELP - General	listening	8	9
		speaking	8	9
		reading	8	9
		writing	8	9
ENGLISH	CAEL	overall band score	70	70
FRENCH	TEF	Compréhension écrite	233+	248+
		Compréhension orale	280+	298+
		Expression écrite	349+	371+
		Lexique et Structure	141+	161+
		Expression orale	349+	371+
FRENCH	TEF Canada	Compréhension écrite	233+	248+
		Compréhension orale	280+	298+
		Expression écrite	349+	371+
		Expression orale	349+	371+
	SEL	Compétence écrite	«B» 70%+	«B+» 76%+
		Compétence orale	«B» 70%+	«B+» 75%+

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On a related note, it has been observed over the past year that a number of exam-takers have failed to achieve an acceptable language test score – even at level 8 – with just a single attempt. A concerning number have, even after graduating from their IPP, needed to make two or more attempts to achieve a sufficient level 8 score. All education providers are urged to check their pre-admission language requirement to ensure students enrolling on day 1 of class are adequately prepared before being accepted.

If your institution maintains an alumni list to past graduates, it would also be helpful to reach out to any IPP graduate from the past three years to advise them, if they have not already pursued registration and licensing with ICCRC, and are relying on the assumption that their diploma/certificate is valid for three years after the date of graduation, the higher language requirement WILL apply if they delay registration beyond 1 July 2019.

Good Character and Good Conduct

From time to time the Council receives requests from potential students who are seeking a pre-enrollment assessment of their likelihood of meeting the Council's good character and good conduct requirements due to past misdeeds and criminality.

Your admission counsellors are requested to make potential IPP students aware of the fact that immigration/citizenship consultancy is a licensed occupation with a regulatory body that conducts both a police background check as well as further good character and good conduct assessments. If a candidate should have a concern, without discussing the details of his/her background with the admissions counsellor (as only ICCRC can make a final determination about admissibility to licensure), the candidate can simply be directed to the ICCRC website and download the RCIC EPE *Registration Guide* which contains the current good character and good conduct declaration as well as details about the criminal record searches. After reading the information, if the candidate is concerned, before enrolling in the IPP and paying his/her tuition, he/she can send a request to ICCRC by e-mail asking for an initial assessment to determine eligibility for licensure after graduation. There is no cost for this non-binding pre-determination.

Two-Year Exam Schedule Published

The RCIC EPE and RISIA EPE are still currently being offered four times each year, which is subject to change at the Council's sole discretion if registrations should change upwards or downwards. The current exam cycle remains as the first Sunday of February, May and November, and the second Sunday of August to account for the Civic Holiday observed in many parts of Canada.

The Council is currently averaging approximately 500 expressions of interest online for each exam session, which is resulting in approximately 300-400 "complete, correct, and on time" applications. To allow for this sustained dramatic increase in application processing, the deadlines for some phases of the process have been adjusted by one week.