

# English Language Proficiency Policy

RSY-ADM-PY-001-v3.0-English Language Proficiency Policy

**Document History**

| <b>Version</b> | <b>Date of Review</b> | <b>Date of Implementation</b> | <b>Change(s)</b>   |
|----------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| 1.0            | Jul 2012              | Jul 2012                      |  |
| 1.1            | Feb 2013              | Feb 2013                      | Changes as previously tracked  |
| 1.3            | Jul 2014              | Jul 2014                      | Changes as previously tracked  |
| 1.4            | Nov 2014              | Nov 2014                      | Updated recognition of Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination Grade C or Level 3 of Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education.  |
| 1.5            | Mar 2015              | 10 July 2016                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reformatted to RCDC Standard Policy template</li> <li>• Section 4 Removed Fiji from list of countries and to replace reference to English Placement Test.</li> <li>• Section 4.1 Added Pearson as RCDC's preferred choice of English test.</li> <li>• Section 5 Updated the list of English Language providers.</li> <li>• Section 7 Removed reference to AEI NOOSR guides</li> </ul> |
| 2.0            | April 2016            | 7 April 2016                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 4.1 Amended requirements for OOPT English Test</li> <li>• Section 5 - removed entry into RCDC post-graduate courses</li> </ul>  |
| 2.1            | Aug 2016              | Term 1, 2017                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amended Table A to add Cambridge English (Advanced) and remove CULT and CPE tests.</li> <li>• Updated Section 10 for new Australian Student Visa requirements.</li> </ul>   |
| 3.0            | Jun 2017              | Term 3, 2017                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 4- removed Postgraduate.</li> <li>• Section 5- removed a closed education provider.</li> <li>• Updated other sections to change the position title from Head of Department to Dean, to add reference to Verification of Institution and to amend the information for Student Visa Requirements.</li> </ul>  |

**Approved by:**            **Academic Board on**    **13 June 2017**

**Distribution List**

To:    RCDC Admissions Staff  
        RCDC Academic staff  
        Associate Colleges, College Directors

Cc:    Chair, Council  
        Chair, Senior Management Committee

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## 1 Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to set the standard of English proficiency required of an applicant, whose first language is not English, for admission to Raffles College of Design and Commerce (RCDC)'s courses

As RCDC offers its educational courses to students from a broad range of backgrounds, cultures and languages, it recognises its responsibility to ensure that students, whose first language is not English, have sufficient proficiency to successfully undertake the course of their choice.

RCDC therefore requires applicants for admission to a vocational, undergraduate or postgraduate course, whose first language is not English, to meet established English proficiency requirements set out in this Policy.

## 2 Scope

This Policy applies to all prospective international and transnational students intending to enrol with RCDC.

## 3 Definitions of Terms

**Assessable qualification** means a formal qualification which can be assessed as a basis of admission for any RCDC program

**IELTS** means International English Language Testing System

**OET** means Occupational English Test

**OOPT** means Oxford Online Placement Test

**PTE** means Pearson Test of English

**TOEFL** means Test of English as a Foreign Language

**TWE** means Test of Written English

**Current IELTS or TOEFL score** means the latest available result on an IELTS or TOEFL test completed within two years of submission of an application to study at Raffles College

**ELICOS** means English Language intensive Courses for Overseas Students

**EAP** means English for Academic purposes course in ELICOS

## 4 Policy Requirements

An applicant for a place at RCDC, who does not speak English as a first language must demonstrate that they meet the College's English proficiency requirement. RCDC may assess the proficiency based on, but not limited to, on the following:

- IELTS or equivalent English qualifications
- Post-secondary qualifications / approved preparation courses
- Other overseas qualifications
- Recognised English courses

#### 4.1 IELTS or Equivalent English Test

- a) Applicants to RCDC courses who are not Australian Citizens or permanent residents of Australia are required to demonstrate they have satisfactory competency in the English language by providing results of an IELTS test or its equivalent, as listed in Table A.
- b) The attainment of English Test results must be less than two years old at the point of submission of the application to study at RCDC.

**Table A**

| Level of RCDC Courses | IELTS (Academic)                                   | PTE (Academic)<br>*                      | ELICOS Exam <sup>1</sup>  | TOEFL paper based test        | TOEFL internet                            | OOPT # | Cambridge English: Advanced |
|-----------------------|--|--|---|-------------------------------|---|--------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Vocational</b>     | 5.5 overall, with no individual band less than 5.0 | 47 overall, with no subtest less than 43 | 65% or more in 3 skill areas and 60% or more in the 4 <sup>th</sup> area of the Upper Intermediate exam | 500, with minimum of 4 in TWE | 71 overall, with minimum of 16 in writing |        | 162                         |
| <b>Undergraduate</b>  | 6.0 overall, with no individual band less than 5.5 | 57 overall, with no subtest less than 50 | Entry Level Pass (EP) in EAP exam   | 525, with minimum of 4 in TWE | 80 overall, with no subtest less than 20  | 66     | 169                         |

\* Pearson is RCDC's preferred choice of English test results due to the use of biometrics in authenticating candidates' identity ([pearsonpte.com](http://pearsonpte.com)).

# The OOPT English test must be taken at a Raffles campus under examination conditions.

- c) Documentation required:
  - i) Applicants with an IELTS test score should provide a certified or full colour copy of the IELTS test result to the application. Information regarding the IELTS test may be obtained from, and should be endorsed by one of the following authorities:
    - [IELTS](#)
    - [IDP Education Australia offices](#)
    - [British Council](#)
    - [Australian Diplomatic Missions](#)
  - ii) All English proficiency results submitted may be verified by an online verification service where there is any doubt as to the authenticity of the documented evidence provided as part of the application:

<sup>1</sup> New grades were introduced in November 2011 for the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) course in the Higher Pass (HP) category. The new grades equate to previous, as follows:

Higher Level Pass 1 – HP1 – minimum 75% x 3 subtests, 70% x 1 subtest  
 Higher Level Pass 2 – HP2 – minimum 70% x 4 subtests  
 Higher Level Pass 3 – HP3 – minimum 70% x 3 subtests, 65% x 1 subtest  
 Higher Level Pass 4 – HP4 – minimum 65% x 3 subtests, 60% x 1 subtest

[http://www.ielts.org/institutions/results\\_verification\\_service.aspx](http://www.ielts.org/institutions/results_verification_service.aspx)  
<http://pearsonpte.com/institutions/scores/srw-instructions/>  
[https://www.ets.org/Media/Tests/TOEFL/pdf/TOEFL\\_OnlineScoreVerificationService.pdf](https://www.ets.org/Media/Tests/TOEFL/pdf/TOEFL_OnlineScoreVerificationService.pdf)

## 4.2 Post-Secondary Qualifications / Approved Preparation Courses

- 4.2.1 Applicants for entry to vocational or undergraduate, **whose first language is not English**, will be deemed to have sufficient English language proficiency if they satisfy **one** of the following requirements.

The successful completion of one of the following Australian or overseas qualifications within the five (5) years preceding an application for study at RCDC.

### a) Australian Qualifications:

- i. a senior secondary qualification (i.e. Year 12 or equivalent); or
- ii. one or more full-time years of post-secondary study (or equivalent part-time) at an RCDC-recognised institution; or
- iii. a preparation course approved by RCDC as a basis for admission.

### b) Overseas Qualifications:

- i. a preparation course approved by RCDC as a basis for admission; or
- ii. a senior secondary qualification normally accepted by the College as an assessable qualification for admission; or
- iii. one or more full-time years of post-secondary study at an RCDC-recognised institution; provided the course is undertaken solely in the English language in one or more of the following countries:
  - American Samoa
  - Canada
  - Ireland
  - Kenya
  - New Zealand
  - Papua New Guinea
  - Singapore
  - Solomon Islands
  - South Africa
  - United Kingdom
  - United States of America
  - Zambia; or
- iv. A senior secondary qualification (i.e. Year 12 or equivalent), or a post-secondary Diploma qualification of at least two years undertaken in a non-English speaking country provided the study is confirmed by the institution as having been conducted and examined solely in the English language (i.e. medium of instruction is English).

## 4.3 Other Qualifications

- 4.3.1 RCDC accepts the following other qualifications as satisfying the English language requirements:

- a. Completion of **International Baccalaureate** Diploma with a minimum requirement of grade 4 for English A1 (literature) or A2 (language and literature) at the Standard Level or Higher Level, or English B at the Higher level; or grade 5 for English B at the Standard Level.
- b. **Cambridge**

- C Pass in Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE)
- c. **Great Britain** General Certificate of Education (Advanced Level) - GCE'A' - C pass in General Paper English, and other Humanities subjects (see [Note 1](#) for list). Minimum 2 C Pass subjects
- d. Grade C in Use of English in the **Hong Kong** Advanced Level Examination (HKALE); or Level 3 of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE).
- e. C Pass in English 920, 914 **STPM** (Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia-Malaysian Higher School Certificate).
- f. **Combined Universities Language Test (CULT)** - score of 70.
- g. Pass in "English" at university, for students from **Scandinavian countries** who do not meet the following standards:
  - Grade of "4" in English in the final year of the Norwegian Vitnemal: den Vidergaende Skole
  - Grade of "3" in English in the final year of the Swedish Avgangsbetyg < 1997 Upper Secondary Leaving Certificate;
  - A grade of "G" or "C" in English in the final year of the Swedish Slutbetyg fran Gymnasieskolan > 1997 Upper Secondary Leaving Certificate;
  - Grade of "9" in English in the final year of the Danish Studentereksamen (upper secondary leaving examination) or Hojere Forberedelseskamen (HF) / Higher Preparatory Examination Certificate
  - Finland - Lukionpaostotodistus (Upper secondary school Diploma): Grade 7 or better in English A
- h. Completion of **Netherlands-Dutch** Diploma of Pre-University education – VWO / HAVO with grade of 7 or higher.
- i. Completion of the **TAFE Tertiary Preparation Certificate** (i.e. Advanced Diploma or Diploma with minimum pass).
- j. Completion of the **University of NSW Foundation Studies Certificate** with a C grade in English;
- k. Completion of a one year full time equivalent Tertiary Preparation/Bridging Program as listed in the UAC Tertiary Preparation Schedules.
- l. **DAAD** test – (Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst) – pass with a B in all 4 sections.
- m. **PSB CEP** Level 5 (Advanced) English program: applicants must achieve the minimum requirements as set out below:
  - HP - Higher level pass for most postgraduate programs - Students must obtain 65% or more in three of the four examinations. Only one exam may be in the 60-64% range. Each of the four exams is of equal weighting.
  - EP - Undergraduate entry pass - Students must obtain 60% or more in each of the four examinations. Each of the four exams is of equal weighting.

Note 1: Specific list of A level subjects:

|                                       |                           |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| • Ancient History/Classical Studies   | • Drama and Theatre       |
| • Archaeology                         | • General Studies         |
| • Business Studies                    | • Geography               |
| • Communication Studies               | • Government and Politics |
| • Economics                           | • History                 |
| • English                             | • History of Art          |
| • English Language/English Literature | • Law                     |
| • Media Studies                       | • Social Policies         |
| • Philosophy                          | • Sociology               |
| • Religious Studies                   |                           |

- 4.3.2 Other qualifications may from time to time be deemed by the Dean to demonstrate satisfactory English language proficiency.

## 5 Recognised English Courses

RCDC accepts the English language courses from the following English language providers (ELICOS partners), as meeting its English Language proficiency for admission purposes.

### 5.1 For entry into RCDC Vocational Courses:

| Institution  | Course  |
|--|---|
| Australian International College of English (AICE) | EAP Level 2 Pass Grade or Higher  |
| Australian Pacific College (APC)                   | EAP (B- grade)  |
| Cass Training International College (CTIC)         | IELTS Preparation Course Level 3  |
| English Language School in Sydney (ELISIS )        | EAP 1 (B grade)   |
| International House Sydney                         | EAP 1   |
| Kaplan International College                       | EAP 1 (61% Pass) or EAP2 pass   |
| St George and Sutherland Community College (SGSCC) | EAP (Level 1 Pass)  |
| Sydney College of English (SCE)                    | EAP 2 (60%, mark of 5+)   |
| Sydney English Language Centre (SELC)              | 60% in EAP 2 or 3   |
| TAFE English Language Centre Northern Sydney       | Certificate 3 in English for Further Study  |
| Kingsway Institute                                 | EAP 1 Pass (50%)  |
| Lloyds College                                     | IELTS 5.5, with no band below 5.0   |
| North Sydney English College                       | English for Business Professional, English for Academic purposes, IELTS 5.5   |
| ILSC - Australia                                   | IELTS 5.5 with no band below 5.0, or 12 weeks of IELTS Mastery Program or Academic Prep program (I3 level), or English communication program (I3) |
| MEGA   | EAP 1 or EAP 2 (60%)  |

### 5.2 For entry into RCDC Undergraduate Courses:

| Institution  | Course                                     |
|--|--|
| Australian International College of English (AICE) | EAP with Credit Grade or Higher            |
| Australian Pacific College (APC)                   | EAP (B grade)                              |
| Apple Study Group                                  | EAP (TAT score 70)                         |
| Cass Training International College (CTIC)         | IELTS Preparation Course Level 4           |
| English Language School in Sydney (ELISIS )        | EAP 2                                      |
| Greenwich College                                  | Certificate IV in Academic English (Pass ) |
| International House Sydney                         | EAP 2                                      |
| Kaplan International College                       | EAP 2 (65% Pass Mark)                      |
| St George and Sutherland Community College (SGSCC) | EAP (Level 2 Pass)                         |
| Sydney College of English (SCE)                    | EAP 3 (60%, mark of 5+)                    |
| Sydney English Language Centre (SELC)              | EAP Lower Advanced or 70% in EAP 1         |



|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| TAFE English Language Centre | Certificate 3 in English for further study (Grade A)  |
| Kingsway Institute           | EAP 2 Pass (50%) or EAP 1 Credit (65%)  |
| Lloyds College               | IELTS 6.0, with no band below 5.5   |
| MEGA                         | EAP 2 or EAP 3 (60%)  |
| Step One College             | IELTS 6.0, with no band below 5.5   |
| Sydney English Academy (SEA) | Upper Intermediate Exit test score 66-75%, GE Advanced Exit Test score 40-49%, FCE Exit Test score 66-75%, CAE exit Test Score 40-49% |

### 5.3 Students who don't meet the English entry requirements

5.3.1 A Provisional Letter of Offer may be issued when, but not limited to, the following:

- Applicants cannot provide English proficiency documents at the time of application. Applicants are responsible for meeting RCDC's minimum English language proficiency standards, and are required to provide formal documentation/confirmation of English language proficiency prior to enrolment/commencement of studies.

Packaged English course enrolment with an ELICOS provider. The applicant will need to provide a Letter of Offer and/or CoE of the English study issued by the ELICOS provider at the time of application. The maximum number of weeks packaged with ELICOS is 52 weeks.

- Applicants who have the academic qualifications required for admission, but whose English proficiency results (e.g. IELTS) did not meet the English language requirements.

5.3.2 As a general rule, students should estimate that they will need 10 to 12 weeks of English study in an English-speaking country to raise their level by IELTS 0.5.

5.3.3 Students who do not meet the minimum English language proficiency requirements can apply for an English course at one of RCDC's recognised English language providers (see above).

## 6 Waivers

6.1 The Academic Board, or in the event of its unavailability, the Dean, may waive the English language requirement for an applicant, in certain circumstances, for example, if the applicant has at least two years documented professional work experience:

- carried out in the medium of English, and
- undertaken within two years of the submission of an application to study at RCDC;

when satisfied that the applicant has demonstrated language proficiency equivalent to that required under the *English Language Proficiency Policy*.

6.2. The Academic Board, or in the event of its unavailability, the Dean, may waive the time requirements set out in 6.1 on a case-by-case basis, on the basis of evidence that a candidate meets the English requirements at a level equivalent to those set out the *English Language Proficiency Policy*.

6.3 Where the English language requirements are waived by the Academic Board or Dean, under the English Language Proficiency Procedure, the following requirements may be imposed: applicants for undergraduate or postgraduate programs to provide, by the end of the first term of enrolment, evidence of having attained the stated proficiency level.

## 7 Verification of Institutions

- 7.1 In determining the English language proficiency of an applicant on the basis of study completed at an international institution, the College will require that study has been undertaken at an institution listed in: the *International Handbook of Universities*, *World Higher Education Database*, *UK Naric Database* and *AEI Country Education Profiles*.

## 8 Precedents

- 8.1 Any waiver granted by the Academic Board or the Dean; which is deemed to establish a precedent for graduates of the program in question, will be advised to the Student Services Manager for recording on the College's database of approvals/precedents.

## 9 Review of Process

- 9.1 A three-yearly review of the efficacy of the College's exemptions and waivers will be undertaken by the Student Services Manager and Marketing, and the findings reported to the Academic Board.

## 10 Student visa requirements

- 10.1 International applicants who meet the RCDC English language proficiency requirements should be aware that they may still need to satisfy the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) English language requirements for visa applications. Information can be found at [www.border.gov.au](http://www.border.gov.au) .

For the purpose of an international student applying to study in RCDC Sydney, the English requirements can be waived only if student has completed at least five years of study in the following countries: Australia, UK, USA, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, or the Republic of Ireland (please refer to the RCDC Admissions Policy).

- 10.2 Students are required to check the DIBP website for required documents for their visa application.

## 11 References and Related Documents

- DIBP [www.border.gov.au](http://www.border.gov.au)
- UAC International <http://www.uac.edu.au/international/admission/elp.shtml>
- AEI Country Education Profile <https://internationaleducation.gov.au/Services-And-Resources/services-for-organisations/Pages/Services-for-organisations.aspx>
- UK NARIC <https://www.naric.org.uk/naric/>
- RCDC Admissions Policy
- RCDC Admissions Procedure