

# VICTORIAN LEGAL ADMISSIONS BOARD

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY GUIDELINES

These Guidelines were established by the Law Admissions Consultative Committee (LACC) and have been amended and adopted by the Victorian Legal Admissions Board (VLAB).

The Board must be satisfied that any applicant for admission to the legal profession has sufficient knowledge of written and spoken English to engage in legal practice in the Australian jurisdiction. These Guidelines establish six new pathways illustrating how you can satisfy the Board of your English language proficiency.

There are two recognised tests for English language proficiency, IELTS and TOEFL iBT. All applicants for admission to the legal profession are required to have completed at least the last two years of their secondary and the entirety of their tertiary education in English, in a recognised country or otherwise undertaken one of the two recognised tests. Read the following pathways carefully and nominate **one** that best reflects your circumstances.

### i. Definitions

In this document unless the context otherwise requires –

**academic qualification** means the tertiary education on which you rely for admission

**the Board** means the Victorian Legal Admissions Board

**ELP** means English Language Proficiency

**IELTS** means the International English Language Testing System

**primary language** means the most fluent language which you primarily use for reading, writing, listening and speaking.

**recognised work** means working in a responsible capacity in a law-related occupation in a recognised country

**recognised country** means –

- Australia
- Canada (except for the province of Quebec)
- New Zealand
- Republic of Ireland
- South Africa
- United Kingdom (including Northern Ireland)
- United States

**TOEFL iBT** means the Test of English as a Foreign Language (internet-based test)

**1 First Pathway**

English is your primary language. You undertook and satisfactorily completed all your primary and secondary education as well as your academic qualification, in a recognised country. In each case, you were taught and assessed solely in English.

**2 Second Pathway**

English is not your primary language. You undertook and satisfactorily completed at least the final two years of your secondary education and your academic qualification, in a recognised country. In each case, you were taught and assessed solely in English.

**3 Third Pathway**

You have undertaken IELTS (academic module) within two years before making your application and obtained minimum scores for each component of 8.0 for writing, 7.5 for speaking, 7.0 for listening, and 7.0 for reading. You must ensure that the Board receives the original copy of your test results.

**4 Fourth Pathway**

You have undertaken TOEFL iBT within two years before making your application. You have obtained the minimum score of 30 for writing, 24 for speaking, 24 for listening, and 24 for reading. You must ensure that the Board receives the original copy of your test results.

**5 Fifth Pathway**

You have undertaken the IELTS (academic module) or the TOEFL iBT, but have failed to obtain the required minimum score for not more than one component of the test (usually by a margin no greater than 0.5 in the case of IELTS or no greater than 1 in the case of TOEFL iBT); and

have completed at least one of the following -

- a. Within six months before making your application, you have achieved the prescribed minimum scores for each component of either IELTS (academic module) or TOEFL iBT in not more than two different sittings, but not at the one sitting. You must ensure that the Board receives the original copy of your test results.
- b. You have undertaken and satisfactorily completed all your secondary education and your academic qualification in Hong Kong, Malaysia or Singapore. In each case, you were taught and assessed solely in English. You must ensure that the Board receives the original copy of your test results.
- c. You have been continuously employed on a full-time basis in recognised work in a recognised country (plus Hong Kong, Malaysia or Singapore) for a substantial period of at least 12 months. You must ensure that the Board

receives at least two original letters from your employers or supervisors. The letters should be written on official letterhead, setting out dates, roles, and responsibilities of your employment and how you demonstrated your knowledge of written and spoken English. You must ensure that the Board receives the original copy of your test results.

- d. You have undertaken and completed your academic qualification in a recognised country (plus Hong Kong, Malaysia or Singapore) that is a prerequisite for entry into a profession other than law. You were taught and assessed solely in English. You must ensure that the Board receives an original academic transcript relating to that academic qualification.

## 6. Sixth Pathway

If pathways 1 to 5 do not apply to you, pathway 6 is available as a 'general' category. You may raise any matter you consider relevant to your English language proficiency under pathway 6. That could include (but is not limited to), living in an English-speaking country, undertaking education and training where English was the language of instruction, work experience, volunteer and community engagement, and other. You must also produce evidence of matters you rely upon. For example, you may wish to include a copy of your CV, any certificates you have been awarded, references, letters of recommendation, and/or English language test results. That may include, but is not limited to, evidence of formal instruction or experience, periods of residence in an English-speaking country, references or resumes. These should be uploaded as part of the online application process. Every application made under pathway 6 will be individually assessed.