

IS YOUR ENGLISH GOOD ENOUGH FOR AUSTRALIA?

By Atty. Imelda Argel, LLB (UP), LLM (University of Sydney)

It is a fact that the English language practised in Australia is different to the American English which most Filipinos have been trained for. Some visa applications for permanent residence to Australia require the visa applicant to pass an English Test. If the visa applicant is not able to reach the required pass mark in an acceptable English test, the visa application may be refused.

It is therefore important that a visa applicant who is required to take the English Test adequately prepare in order to increase his or her chance of success and to avoid wasting hard earned money to meet the costs associated with the visa application.

There are two generally acceptable English Tests under the Australian Migration Regulations, namely: the Occupational English Test (OET) and the International English Language Testing System (IELTS).

The IELTS has two modules, Academic and General. Both modules consist of four (4) components: reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Generally, English Test is required under the following circumstances:

- Before their profession can be recognised in Australia, most health professionals (e.g. nurses, pharmacists physiotherapist, dentists, doctors and radiographers) are generally required to pass the Occupational English Test (OET) or the IELTS *academic* module (not just the general module).
- Tradespersons or skilled workers (carpenters, fitters, dressmakers, hairdressers, technicians, mechanics, electricians) who have *not* completed 2 years of college education where all the subjects were conducted in English are required to pass the IELTS *general* module in order to complete the points test.
- Points tested permanent resident visa applicants under independent or Australian Skilled Migration, subject to some exemptions, are required to take the IELTS general module in order to score 20 or 15 points in the points test.
- Applicants for Regional Skilled Migration must score 4.5 in each of the 4 components of the IELTS general module.
- The spouse or children over 18 years old of visa applicants under Skilled Migration must have Functional English, in order to obtain a waiver of the second instalment charge of about **A\$2,485.00** subject to yearly adjustment.

Where is the IELTS test conducted in the Philippines?

IELTS test is conducted at the IDP Education Australia, located at the Ground Floor of the Australian Embassy. Subject to adjustment, the test fee is normally about P5000.00 in Manila and P5,200.00 in Cebu for each of the academic or general modules. A photo ID and passports size photo are required with the fee prior to booking for the test.

An applicant is allowed to take the IELTS English test only once in three months and the OET is conducted only about two or three times a year.

Where can you attend review classes?

There is a high rate of failure of health professionals including nurses in obtaining the pass mark of 7 in the IELTS academic module. Our information is that IDP and the British Council in Makati City conduct review classes. Special IELTS REVIEW CLASSES have also opened in various locations in Metro Manila. It is principally aimed at preparing Filipino students to pass the required English Test.

What are the benefits of passing the required English Test?

Applicants under independent or Australian sponsored skilled migration will be entitled to *20 or 15 points* towards the points test, depending on what score he or she scores in the English Test. The additional 5 points could spell the difference between the visa being granted or refused.

Moreover, there are enormous opportunities for health professionals especially registered nurses to work in Australia. The demand for registered nurses in New South Wales is reported at 1,600. However, until they pass the English Test, Philippine educated nurses for example, who want to work or migrate to Australia cannot become registered nurses and until they become registered nurses, their visa application for permanent residence or for work cannot be approved.

Why go to Australia?

While it is a fact that there is a demand for nurses worldwide and that London and America may be more popular destinations for Filipino nurses because of the high foreign currency conversion rate, there are numerous advantages in targeting to work or migrate in Australia.

For example, Filipinos who are granted permanent residence or working visa to Australia are given the opportunity to bring their immediate family dependents with them, unlike overseas contract workers (OCW) who normally have to leave their families behind, in the Philippines.

Moreover, the cost of living in Australia is lower by far compared to London and therefore working family members can more easily afford to provide financial assistance to relatives in the Philippines.

IMELDA ARGEL

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This information is of a general nature and should not be taken as authoritative legal advice for specific cases. The writer, Atty. Imelda Argel is a practising Filipino lawyer and a registered migration agent in Sydney, Australia. She is a Solicitor of the Supreme Court of New South Wales, the High Court of Australia, and Attorney at law in the Philippines and in the State of New York, USA. Her Registered Migration Agent no. is 9682957.

*Seminars On Permanent Resident Visas for Professionals and Trade Workers to Australia will be personally conducted by Atty Imelda Argel in Manila and London in September 2002. The first ten readers of Philippine Star who shall register for the seminar in Manila shall be entitled to a discount upon presentation of the original of this article. Contact Celia on cellphone 0918 910 1040 or cpgoduco@iconn.com.ph for details. Friends and relatives in **London** interested in attending the seminar may register on London@iargel.com.au.*