



# Health Ministers' Meeting

ATTN: National Health Secretariat  
c/- NSW Ministry of Health  
Level 7, 1 Reserve Road  
St Leonards NSW 2065  
(02) 9461 7900  
[nationalhealthsecretariat@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:nationalhealthsecretariat@health.nsw.gov.au)

Ms Rachel Phillips, Chair, Psychology Board of Australia  
Adjunct Professor Danforn Lim, Chair, Chinese Medicine Board of Australia  
Dr Wayne Minter AM, Chair, Chiropractic Board of Australia  
Dr Murray Thomas, Chair, Dental Board of Australia  
Dr Anne Tonkin AO, Chair, Medical Board of Australia  
Ms Cara Miller, Chair, Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia  
Adjunct Professor Veronica Casey AM, Chair, Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia  
Ms Rebecca Singh, Chair, Occupational Therapy Board of Australia  
Mr Stuart Aamodt, Chair, Optometry Board of Australia  
Associate Professor Paul Orrock PhD, Chair, Osteopathy Board of Australia  
Professor Stephen Gough ASM, Chair, Paramedicine Board of Australia  
Ms Kim Gibson, Chair, Physiotherapy Board of Australia  
Professor Cylie Williams, Chair, Podiatry Board of Australia  
Mr Brett Simmonds, Chair, Pharmacy Board of Australia  
Email: [Ahpra.Secretariat@ahpra.gov.au](mailto:Ahpra.Secretariat@ahpra.gov.au)

Dear National Board Chairs

## **Approval of common English Language registration standard (ELS standard) for implementation by 13 National Boards**

Thank you for your correspondence of 31 October 2024 about a change to the approved common ELS registration standard.

At our meeting of 14 June 2024, Health Ministers approved the revised common ELS standard as recommended by the 13 National Boards. We noted that the Medical Board of Australia and the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia agreed to adopt the revised common standard, but the writing component of ELS test scores for these two professions did not align with the reduced written score of 6.5 (IELTS equivalent) agreed to by the other National Boards for their professions.

We note your advice that both National Boards have since had an opportunity to further consider the relevant evidence, stakeholder perspectives, and the experience of international regulators in relation to the accepted score for writing as we asked. We are pleased that the Medical Board and Occupational Therapy Board have agreed to reduce the accepted score for writing to 6.5 (IELTS or equivalent), while maintaining an overall score of 7 (IELTS or equivalent) for the medical and occupational therapy professions. As a result, there will be full alignment across the requirements set by the 13 National Boards adopting the approved common ELS for all of your professions.

I am therefore pleased to advise that the Ministerial Council approved the changed common ELS registration standard in accordance with section 12 of the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law* as in force in each state and territory as recommended by the 13 National Boards.

We support the National Boards' proposal for the approved common ELS registration standard and the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia's approved ELS registration standard to take effect in early 2025, and that an advance copy of the standards will be published three months before they are due to commence and that the changes will be communicated to all stakeholders. We also agree with your proposal that the removal of South Africa as a recognised country is to have a longer transition period of about 12 months after the revised standard takes effect.

Thank you for bringing the National Boards' advice to Health Ministers.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'G' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Chair  
Health Ministers' Meeting

14 / 11 / 2024