



GMC requests for evidence of English language competence

The House of Commons Library has released updated guidance on what documentation the GMC will accept as evidence that GPs, nurses and pharmacists have sufficient English language skills. These controls sought to “stop foreign healthcare professionals working in the NHS unless they have passed robust language and competence tests”.

Initially set out in 2010, these controls had a consultation period in 2013 and in 2014, amendments were made to the Medical Act 1983 to strengthen the law around language controls for doctors, which include:

The General Medical Council (GMC) has the power to refuse a licence to practice in circumstances where the medical practitioner is unable to demonstrate the necessary knowledge of English.

Created a new fitness to practise impairment, relating to having the necessary knowledge of English.

In 2016, similar changes were introduced for EEA nurses, midwives, dentists, dental care professionals, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians. The changes introduced allow the GMC to request evidence of English language competence, where concerns are raised during the registration process, and could allow the GMC to refuse to issue a licence to practice.

There is a range of accepted evidence the GMC will accept:

An International English Language Testing System score of at least 7.5, with at least a 7.0 in reading, writing, listening and speaking, within the last two years

An Occupational English Test (OET) grade of at least ‘B’ in reading, writing, listening and speaking, within the past two years

A primary medical qualification that has been taught and examined in English, awarded within the past two years

An offer of employment from a UK healthcare provider, alongside a reference from the appointing clinician.

You can find the full report [here](#).