

Updated Language Proficiency Cutscores/Benchmark Levels

Published: November 14, 2022

Background

Communicating effectively in English or French is a critical factor to provide safe nursing practice in Canada. The Canadian Nurse Regulators Collaborative (CNRC), of which the College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Manitoba, College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba, and College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Manitoba are members, reviewed the current language proficiency requirements for the regulated nursing professions. The objective of this review was to determine the current English and French language proficiency levels for listening, reading, writing, and speaking; and to recommend the best approach and method(s) to assess the language proficiency of internationally educated nurses.

A Steering Committee consisting of subject matter experts from regulatory authorities across Canada was tasked to direct and support the research and provide recommendations to the CNRC. Led by Dr. Eunice Eunhee Jang PhD, IntelliEval research group was retained to complete the research, and brings a wealth of expertise in language assessment and has completed numerous language benchmarking and competency analysis projects.

The recommended cutscores result from the panelists' dedicated work to ensure appropriate standards for English and French language proficiency. Based on the rigour of the research, the Canadian Nurse Regulators Collaborative (CNRC) unanimously approved the updated cutscores/benchmark levels for the currently accepted tests, Canadian English Language Benchmark Assessment for Nurses (CELBAN), International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Academic, and Test d'évaluation de français (TEF) Canada.

Updated Cutscores/Benchmarks

The updated cutscores take effect immediately, and include important revisions to the listening component of each test, as well as the writing component of the IELTS Academic test:

	IELTS ACADEMIC	CELBAN	TEF CANADA
Reading	6.5	8	4
Listening	7.5 to 7.0	10 to 9	5 to 4
Writing	7 to 6.5	7	4
Speaking	7.0	8	5
Overall	7.0		

The following new cutscores/benchmark levels better reflect the language demands expected of internationally educated candidates at the entry-level to practice in Canada and are effective immediately:

	IELTS ACADEMIC	CELBAN	TEF CANADA
Reading	6.5	8	4
Listening	7.0	9	4
Writing	6.5	7	4
Speaking	7.0	8	5
Overall	7.0		

Further information about the results of the current research exploring alternative approaches to assess language proficiency will be available in early spring 2023.

For further information about the accepted language tests and application/registration process for each College, please visit the applicable website below:

- College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Manitoba
<https://www.clpnm.ca/>
- College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba
<https://www.crnmb.ca/applicants/>
- College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Manitoba
<https://crpnm.mb.ca/>