



Why OET is a 'no brainer'*

OET - the obvious choice for overseas doctors wishing to practise in the UK, and here's why:

	OET	(Academic) IELTS
GMC requirement:	Overall grade – minimum B	Overall score – minimum 7.5
PLAB 1 requirement:	Yes – as above	Yes – as above
Validation:	2 years (check with regulatory board)	2 years
Original aim:	Test overseas doctors wishing to practice in Australia.	Test international candidates wishing to attend university in the UK.
Reading sub-test	<i>All healthcare professions</i>	
<i>Duration:</i>	60mins	60mins
<i>Content:</i>	Several texts, differing lengths – reference texts on general healthcare topics, e.g. ADHD, medical data, healthcare policy and procedure documents, hospital guidelines, email communication between colleagues.	3 lengthy texts - academic texts, reference extracts, press articles, e.g. 'Lessons from the Titanic'.
<i>Tests candidates ability to:</i>	Read for gist and detail, analyse and comprehend logical argument, recognise implied /explicit meaning in a variety of authentic healthcare-related sources.	Read for gist and detail, analyse and comprehend logical argument, recognise opinions in an academic and more general context.
Listening sub-test	<i>All healthcare professions</i>	
<i>Duration:</i>	45mins	30mins
<i>Content</i>	Several recordings, differing lengths – monologues, e.g. presentation on cardiac investigations, and dialogues, e.g. patient consultation, handover	4 recordings – monologues, e.g. academic lecture on the environment, and dialogues, e.g. student and university lecturer
<i>Tests candidates ability to:</i>	Understand main idea, specific information, speaker purpose in authentic healthcare and workplace related situations.	Understand main idea, logic of argument, opinions and attitudes of speakers in social and academic situations.
Writing sub-test	<i>Profession specific</i>	
<i>Duration:</i>	45mins	60 mins
<i>Format:</i>	Write a letter of referral, transfer or discharge based on case notes provided. 180-220 words approx	Summarise or explain data presented, write an academic essay on topic of common interest, e.g. accepting change in life, or describe a process. 250 words minimum
<i>Tests candidates ability to:</i>	Select, interpret and organise relevant case notes, write accurately, clearly and concisely, according to convention, employing appropriate register and tone. Use accurate grammar, spelling and punctuation.	Identify and extract relevant information, write a clear, accurate, and concise report that is well argued and written in a formal/academic style. Use accurate grammar, spelling and punctuation.
Speaking sub-test	<i>Profession specific</i>	
<i>Duration:</i>	20mins	14mins
<i>Format:</i>	Talk about yourself, professional aims, etc. (<i>not assessed</i>) 2 6-minute role plays - leading a consultation based on patient information provided (<i>recorded and assessed externally</i>).	Talk about yourself, family, studies, interests, discuss a topic of general interest e.g. eco-tourism, based on information provided, (<i>assessed immediately by interlocuter</i>).
<i>Tests candidates ability to:</i>	Communicate in a way that builds a relationship with the patient and understands their perspective. Gather information, describe explain and provide information to the patient sensitively and effectively. Understand variety of accents, patient terms and local expressions.	Discuss and give your opinion in a logical, well-organised manner, analyse and justify your opinions.



Occupational English Test (OET)

Professionally relevant

Essentially a test of English and communication skills, the OET was developed by linguists and healthcare experts to replicate critical tasks encountered in the workplace. These include communicating effectively during a consultation, understanding dialogues between colleagues, writing a referral letter or synthesizing information from a variety of medical-related texts.

The world of the healthcare provider is further replicated in the OET's industry-specific assessment criteria. In the writing sub-test, for example, you must demonstrate best practice in the handover of patient care. While in speaking, you need to structure your consultation clearly and build rapport, while also considering the patient perspective.

An increase in confidence and competency in the medical environment has been noticed by candidates and stakeholders alike. Compared to takers of other English tests, the enhanced and specific communication skills required of OET candidates mean they are better prepared for the workplace, which ultimately helps mitigate against the risk to patient care and patient safety.

Why prepare?

Getting ready for OET is not simply about looking at past papers. Aside from understanding the format, question types and assessment criteria, the difference between a 'C' and a 'B' is about mastering the more subtle aspects of communication. These include translating medical terms into lay language, successfully conveying empathy through appropriate intonation, interpreting culturally-dependent patient cues and ensuring clarity and precision in written communication, all of which pose problems for overseas doctors.

**If the only barrier to GMC registration is the OET,
then your short-term investment is sure to result in that long-term gain!**