

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 20 OCTOBER 2009

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(121) Program 1.1: Visa and Migration

Senator Back asked:

With respect to the changes to the minimum English language requirement for General Skilled Migration that came into effect from the 14 September for subclasses 457 (175 & 176):

- a. Which ASCO levels / trade occupations does this apply to?
- b. What is the cost of this test?
- c. Which countries does this apply to?
- d. How does the new IELTS competency level of 5 in all competency levels compare with IELTS requirements across all immigration / migration requirements please details across all visa classes?
- e. How does the new requirement of 5 across all levels compare with requirements for entry to prospective students?

Answer:

(a) (c) and (d) No new English language requirements for General Skilled Migration (GSM) visas (Subclass 175 and Subclass 176) or the Temporary Business (Long Stay) (Subclass 457) visas took effect in September 2009.

(b) The IELTS test has a set fee of \$310.

(d) The English language requirement for the Employer Nomination Scheme is an IELTS score of at least 5 for each of the four test components, except under certain occupations where there is higher level of English language required for registration or licensing or membership. Under the Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme, the requirement is an average of IELTS 4.5 across all four test components. Again, a higher level of English is necessary for certain occupations under licensing, registration or membership requirements.

(e) The English language requirements pertaining to the Student visa subclasses vary in accordance with the Assessment Level (AL) prescribed to the applicant and the sector of study in which the applicant is enrolled.

Each country and education sector is assigned an AL based on objective analysis of risk. The greater the immigration risk, the higher the AL and the more evidence an applicant needs to submit in support of their application. There are five ALs in all, AL1 represents the lowest immigration risk and AL5 represents the highest immigration risk. Currently, there are no cohorts at AL5.

AL1 or 2 applicants do not have to provide evidence of their English language proficiency for Student visa purposes.

Students subject to AL3 or 4 are considered to be higher risk applicants. As such they are required to provide evidence of their English language proficiency to be eligible for a Student visa. Unless AL3 or 4 applicants meet certain exemptions, they are generally required to have an IELTS score overall band score of between 4.5 and 6.0.

The IELTS test score requirement differs depending on the Student visa subclass, AL and whether a student is undertaking certain preliminary studies.