

Completing a Structured English Language Reference (SELR) form – Guidance and FAQs

Please read the guidance notes before completing this form.

Section 1: Background

European nationals

Before, 1 January 2020 EEA doctors' English language skills were linked to their licence to practise. This means that if they provided acceptable evidence, they were granted registration *with* a licence to practise. If their evidence was refused or if they were unable to provide any evidence, they were granted registration only. When their evidence was refused they were advised of their right to appeal or they can choose to apply for a licence at a later date.

Here is a link to our web guidance detailing the standard evidence we will accept: [English language web guidance for EEA applicants](#).

Section 2: Who can issue Structured English Language Reference Forms (SELRs)?

Introduction

The most common way for an applicant to demonstrate their English language skills, is by achieving our minimum scores in the academic version of the IELTS test or our minimum grade in the OET (medicine version).

However, another way that doctors can demonstrate their English language skills is by submitting a SELR that has been completed by a prospective UK employer which is a Designated Body, with a copy of their formal offer of employment.

Who completes the form?

The person who has assessed the doctor's English language skills as part of the selection process completes the form. This should be a senior supervisor/consultant with clinical oversight. This person will have ongoing responsibility for supervising the doctor in a clinical capacity.

The form must then be endorsed by the Responsible Officer, or their named delegate(s) listed on GMC Connect.

What is required for my organisation to be considered the 'employer'?

You have issued the doctor with a formal offer of full or part-time, permanent or fixed-term employment (subject to them gaining full registration with a licence to practise) and once employed, the doctor will have a prescribed connection to your organisation as their designated body.

If the role you are offering is not as described above, or it offers the doctor practising privileges only, please seek further guidance from us *before* issuing an SELR by contacting us on +44 161 923 6602.

Section 3: How to assess if a doctor has the necessary English language skills to practise in the UK

The doctor must have provided you with evidence that they have the required language capability in each of the following four components: speaking, reading, writing and listening.

The evidence that you require from the doctor needs to be robust¹ and should not be subjective. As a guide, acceptable evidence must be:

- a) It provides considerable assurance that the doctor's EL skills are at the same level as they would be to achieve our minimum scores/grade in IELTS OET, and they can practise safely in the UK – not just in your role, but in any role as a medical practitioner in the UK AND;
- b) It is 'recent' – this means it is no older than two years AND;
- c) It is entirely related to medical/clinical practice AND;
- d) It is supported with documentary evidence that can be verified (please note you must attach copies)

Examples of acceptable evidence will normally include one or more of the following:

Your assessment which includes a structured, documented face to face interview in person or by Skype plus one or more of the following:

- ✓ A copy of a clinically related written and oral test in English you administered
- ✓ References taken up with their current/previous employers about their English language skills
- ✓ Evidence that the applicant has passed a medical examination in English (leading to or working towards a medical qualification)
- ✓ Evidence that the applicant has previously² practised in a country where English is the first and native language
- ✓ Evidence that the applicant has passed another recognised English language test other than IELTS or OET (CEFR, GESE, NQF, EQF)
- ✓ A reference issued by a clinical supervisor who has observed the applicant in a clinical attachment for a period of more than 30 days

If the applicant is unable to satisfy you as described above, we recommend you advise them to take the academic version of IELTS or the OET (medicine version).

Section 4: What is the role of the Responsible Officer (RO)?

Responsible Officers have a duty to ensure that medical practitioners can practise in a safe and competent manner. The GMC expects a doctor to demonstrate knowledge of English through means such as achieving the required scores in the academic version of the IELTS test or the required grade in the OET (medicine version). Where this is not possible and your organisation has made an offer of employment, we will however consider an SELR supported by you, confirming that you are satisfied that the doctor's English is at the standard required to practise safely in the UK. The GMC would not generally accept a reference as the sole evidence of English language, however the Assistant Registrar has agreed that it is reasonable to consider these when supported and endorsed by the relevant RO for the employing organisation.

I am a Responsible Officer. Do I have to complete/endorse the form?

No. It is for each RO to decide whether they can provide assurance that the doctor meets the standard or whether they feel the doctors should be required to demonstrate by another means such as IELTS. If you have any concerns about endorsing a form, you are not obliged to do so and you should refer the doctor to our web guidance which outlines alternative ways they can demonstrate their English language skills to us.

¹ Relevant, documented, verifiable

² Within the most recent two years, for a period of at least six months

In cases where the RO is happy to support and endorse the offer of employment on this basis, we will usually be satisfied that the applicant has the necessary knowledge of English for the purposes of granting a licence to practise. However, please note that we have the right to not accept the reference if we assess the SELR as unsatisfactory or there is other information that does not support the assertion that the doctor has the necessary English language skills.

What are the current English language test requirements and how should I consider a failure to achieve our minimum required scores?

Our minimum scores are currently³:

- IELTS (academic version) 7.0 across all four domains (listening, speaking, reading and writing) with an overall score of 7.5.
- OET (medicine version) grade B across all four domains (listening, speaking, reading and writing). There is no overall score.

All scores must be achieved in the same test.

Where an applicant has taken either test within the last two years, but failed to reach our minimum score or grade in *any* of the four domains in IELTS or OET domains, the RO should give very careful consideration before endorsing an SELR. In this scenario, an SELR will need to show sufficiently robust assessment of the domain where they failed to meet our score, to satisfy us there has been an improvement. Otherwise, it is likely to be rejected.

Please note that if the applicant sat IELTS or OET in the last two years and failed to achieve our minimum scores/grade *in more than one* domain, it is very likely to be rejected and therefore we recommend that you should consider withholding your endorsement.

SECTION A – About the doctor you are employing

Name							
GMC reference number	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>						
The role that you have offered within your organisation							
Employment type	Substantive (permanent) <input type="checkbox"/>		Honorary (unpaid) <input type="checkbox"/>				
	Practising Privileges <input type="checkbox"/>		Locum (temporary) <input type="checkbox"/>				
Has the doctor previously taken the IELTS or OET?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	If Yes, on which date? dd/mm/yyyy	Did they achieve our minimum current scores? ⁴	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Please enter their scores (if applicable)	Reading <input type="text"/>	Writing <input type="text"/>	Speaking <input type="text"/>	Listening <input type="text"/>	Overall Score <input type="text"/>		

³ These are the scores at the time of publishing this guidance. You should check our website as they are subject to change

⁴ Please refer to the guidance at www.gmc-uk.org/IELTS

Section C: Assessment of the doctor's English by the doctor's senior clinical supervisor

Speaking skills

Please indicate how you have assessed and/or witnessed **and provide details of** how the applicant has demonstrated their proficiency in this area. You will be asked to provide evidence of this. If only the boxes are ticked the form will not be accepted.

- Face to face interview
- By taking up references with their current/previous employer
- Objective oral test
- Observation in a clinical attachment/setting
- Role play set in a clinical setting
- Telephone/skype interview
- Evidence of passing a medical examination in English that includes a speaking element
- Work experience in a country where English is the first and native language
- Evidence of passing an English language test other than IELTS or OET that includes a speaking element

Please provide details:

This form was last updated 3 December 2020

Please make sure that you are using the most up-to-date version of the form.
Telephone us on 0161 923 6602 (or +44 161 923 6602 if calling from outside the UK)

Listening skills

Please indicate how you have assessed and/or witnessed **and explain** how the applicant has demonstrated their proficiency in this area. You may be asked to provide evidence of this. Please provide details. If only the boxes are ticked the form will not be accepted.

- Face to face interview
- By taking up references with their current/previous employer
- Objective oral test
- Observation in a clinical attachment/setting
- Role play set in a clinical setting
- Telephone/skype interview
- Evidence of passing a medical examination in English that includes a listening element
- Work experience in a country where English is the first and native language
- Evidence of passing an English language test other than IELTS or OET that includes a listening element

Please provide details:

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Writing skills

Please indicate how you have assessed and/or witnessed **and explain** how the applicant has demonstrated their proficiency in this area. You may be asked to provide evidence of this. Please provide details. If only the boxes are ticked the form will not be accepted.

- By taking up references with their current/previous employer
- Objective written test
- Observation in a clinical attachment/setting
- Role play set in a clinical setting including a written element
- Evidence of passing a medical examination in English
- Work experience in a country where English is the first and native language
- Evidence of passing an English language test other than IELTS or OET

Please provide details:

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Reading skills

Please indicate how you have assessed and/or witnessed **and explain** how the applicant has demonstrated their proficiency in this area. You may be asked to provide evidence of this. Please provide details. If only the boxes are ticked the form will not be accepted.

- By taking up references with their current/previous employer
- Objective written test
- Objective oral test
- Observation in a clinical attachment/setting
- Role play set in a clinical setting
- Evidence of passing a medical examination in English
- Work experience in a country where English is the first and native language
- Evidence of passing an English language test other than IELTS or OET

Please provide details:

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SECTION D: Senior clinical supervisor's declaration

The information I have provided is correct and true. I confirm that the doctor has the knowledge of English necessary to practise in the UK. I agree to the GMC to carry out checks on its behalf, making any necessary checks to verify the information I have given and to the recipient of any enquiries providing the information requested.

Signature		Date	<table border="1"><tr><td>D</td><td>D</td><td>M</td><td>M</td><td>Y</td><td>Y</td><td>Y</td><td>Y</td></tr></table>	D	D	M	M	Y	Y	Y	Y
D	D	M	M	Y	Y	Y	Y				
Name											

Name and address of organisation	Official stamp

SECTION E: Responsible Officer endorsement

Declaration

I endorse the doctor's offer of employment on the basis it meets the criteria outlined in the guidance.

Signature									
Date	<table border="1"><tr><td>D</td><td>D</td><td>M</td><td>M</td><td>Y</td><td>Y</td><td>Y</td><td>Y</td></tr></table>	D	D	M	M	Y	Y	Y	Y
D	D	M	M	Y	Y	Y	Y		
Name									
Position									
Telephone (including dialling code)									
Email									
Name and address of your organisation									

Returning this form to us: Please send this form directly to us from your official/work email address to: verl@gmc-uk.org

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