

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT

The Manitoba Fairness Commissioner has acknowledged that to practise as an occupational therapist in Manitoba, you must be able to communicate daily with English-speakers who may have little or no knowledge of the French language. You must be able to listen, speak, read and write at an intermediate or advanced level of English at work.

Will I need to provide proof of my language proficiency?

You must provide proof of English language proficiency unless you hold an occupational therapy degree from a country found on the [University of Manitoba, Faculty of Graduate Studies, English Language Proficiency Test Exemption List](#) (See Table A on page 4.)

I'm learning English, but don't consider myself fluent. What can I do to improve my language scores?

If you are living in Manitoba, there are many free language training programs for immigrants. More information is available on the government of Manitoba website (<http://www.immigratemanitoba.com/arrive-and-settle/find-english-class/>)

The [Winnipeg English Language Assessment and Referral Centre \(WELARC\)](#) uses the Canadian Language Benchmarks Placement Test to determine your language abilities and to decide which language classes are right for you. This test is free for new immigrants living in Manitoba.

I must provide proof of my proficiency in English. What test scores are acceptable?

You can use any of these tests to demonstrate your English language proficiency:

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)

Minimum acceptable scores:

- Speaking - 26 for practising registration; 23 for provisional registration
- Listening - 22 for practising registration; 20 for provisional registration
- Reading - 22 for practising registration; 20 for provisional registration
- Writing - 22 for practising registration; 20 for provisional registration
- Overall - 92 for practising registration; 83 for provisional registration

See www.ets.org/toefl for test sites, dates, registration details, etc.

International English Language Testing Source (IELTS-AC™) – Academic Version

Minimum acceptable scores:

- Speaking - 7.5 for practising registration; 7.0 for provisional registration
- Listening - 7.0 for practising registration; 6.5 for provisional registration
- Reading - 7.0 for practising registration; 6.5 for provisional registration
- Writing - 6.5 for practising registration; 6.0 for provisional registration
- Overall - 7.0 for practising registration; 6.5 for provisional registration

See www.ielts.org for test sites, dates, registration details, etc.

CanTEST

Minimum acceptable scores:

- Speaking - 4.5 for practising registration; 4.0 for provisional registration
- Listening - 4.5 for practising registration; 4.0 for provisional registration
- Reading - 4.5 for practising registration; 4.0 for provisional registration
- Writing - 4.0 for practising registration; 3.5 for provisional registration

See www.cantest.uottawa.ca for test sites, dates, registration details, etc.

This test is administered in Manitoba at the [University of Manitoba](#) or at the [University of Winnipeg](#)

Please allow several months to complete the language testing requirement. This takes into account the time from the initial enquiry with the testing agency until the test scores are received by the COTM.

Can I begin occupational therapy practice before I have achieved the language proficiency requirements?

Yes. If you are able to score 7 in all areas of the Canadian Language Benchmark Placement Test, you may be eligible for provisional registration. You could also demonstrate your language proficiency with one of the formal language tests listed above (see minimum scores required for provisional registration). This will allow you to practise with supervision while you work towards improving your English language skills.

Provisional registration to acquire English proficiency may be granted for up to six months. You may apply for conversion to practicing registration when:

- your supervisor verifies satisfactory performance in all areas, and
- you are able to supply proof of English language proficiency with a formal language test score.

I have had my language skills tested recently. Can I submit those test results?

Test scores are valid for 3 years. If your test scores are less than 3 years old, they can be used.

If my English skills are not good enough after six months of supervised practice can I continue to work?

You can apply, in writing, for an extension of your provisional registration if:

- ongoing supervision is available in the practice setting
- there is evidence that you are making progress in gaining proficiency in English

Extensions may be granted in six month periods, for up to a total of two years.

Some of my documents are not in English. What should I do?

You can submit original documents that are written in English or French. Original documents that are not in English or French must be translated into English at your expense. Only an official notarized translation of your degree, transcripts and personal identification will be accepted.

COTM will arrange to have French documents translated, at no cost to the applicant.

Table A - English Language Test – Exemption List, University of Manitoba

Applicants holding secondary school diplomas and/or university degrees from the following countries are exempt from the English Language Proficiency Test requirement:

Anguilla	Guam	Singapore
Antigua and Barbuda	Guyana	South Africa
Ascension	Ireland (Republic of)	St. Kitts & Nevis
Australia	Isle of Man	St. Lucia
Bahamas	Jamaica	St. Vincent and the Grenadines
Barbados	Kenya	Trinidad & Tobago
Belize	Kiribati	Tristan da Cunha
Bermuda	Lesotho	Turks and Caicos Islands
Canada	Malawi	Tuvalu
Cayman Islands	Malta	U.S.A.
Channel Islands	Montserrat	Uganda
Dominica	Namibia	United Kingdom
Falkland Islands	New Zealand	Virgin Islands
Fiji	Nigeria	Wake Island
Ghana	Pitcairn Island	Zambia
Gibraltar	Puerto Rico	Zimbabwe
Grenada	Saint Helena	

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For more information, please contact COTM at (204) 957-1214 or by email at OTinfo@cotm.ca

This publication is provided for general information. For more specific information see
The Essential Competencies of Practice for Occupational Therapists in Canada,
The COTM *Code of Ethics* for Occupational Therapists and
The Occupational Therapists Act and Regulation.
COTM publications are available on our website at www.cotm.ca