



MEDIA RESPONSE to Crikey.com.au

Wednesday 28th March 2012

Just to clarify, who oversees the administration of the OET centre? I understand it operates independent of CAE.

Does AHPRA have any jurisdiction over the OET centre?

The OET is recognised under legislation under the migration Act:

a) General Skilled Migration Visa: OET is specified as a language test that satisfies the English language competency in relation to an application for a General Skilled Migration visa (Instrument IMMI 07/055 dated 28 August 2007)

b) Student Visa: OET is specified as an English Language proficiency test as an alternative to the IELTS (Instrument IMMI 11/070 dated 5 November 2011) and related Deed of Agreement between OET/CAE and the Commonwealth dated 16 December 2011.

The OET is additionally endorsed by the following AHPRA aligned and AHPRA non-aligned health Boards and Councils:

- (a) Endorsement by the Physiotherapy Board of Australia
- (b) Endorsement by the Dental Board of Australia;
- (c) Endorsement by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia;
- (d) Endorsed by the Optometry Board of Australia;
- (e) Endorsement by the Pharmacy Board of Australia;
- (f) Endorsement by the Chiropractic Board of Australia;
- (g) Endorsement by the Medical Board of Australia;
- (h) Endorsement by the Osteopathy Board of Australia
- (i) Endorsement by the Podiatry Board of Australia
- (j) Endorsement by the Chinese Medicine Board of Australia
- (k) Endorsement by the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia
- (l) Endorsement by the Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia
- (m) Endorsement by the Medical Board of Western Australia
- (n) Endorsement by the Australian Dental Council
- (o) Endorsement by the Dieticians Association of Australia
- (p) Endorsement by the Nurses & Midwives Board of Western Australia
- (q) Endorsement by the Council of Occupational Therapists Registration Boards (Aust & NZ) Inc
- (r) Endorsement by the Australian Institute of Radiography
- (s) Endorsement by the Speech Pathology Australia
- (t) Endorsement by the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council Inc
- (u) Endorsement by the Dental Council of New Zealand
- (v) Endorsement by the Nursing Council of New Zealand
- (w) Endorsement by the Pharmacy Council of New Zealand
- (x) Endorsement by the Physiotherapy Board of New Zealand
- (y) Endorsement by the Veterinary Council of New Zealand
- (z) Endorsement by the Singapore Medical Council

On the OET website, it claims that it is a business unit of CAE, a non-for-profit organisation. How can CAE claim to be a non-for-profit organisation when it costs around \$600 to sit the OET and \$85 to receive detailed feedback? Why is this cost to take the OET so high?

The OET Centre is an independently run business unit of the Centre for Adult Education (CAE).

The OET is a specific-purpose language test designed for overseas-trained health professionals. In designing and selecting tasks to measure the work-related language proficiency, considerable care is taken to capture the essential characteristics of the work situation, for all represented professions, which have been identified through initial job analysis.

There are considerable costs in producing test materials. For example, the speaking and writing component of the OET are produced collaboratively by language experts and subject specialists from each health profession (e.g. currently practising general practitioners who are also lecturers in community medicine; experienced practitioners and/or teachers of nursing; members of the Pharmacy Board of Victoria, also teachers and examiners responsible for professional registration etcetera).

In addition, the OET utilises a two 'rater' system to ensure all candidates test results are fairly assessed, while this adds to the integrity of the test results it also incurs additional costs. For health professionals, where the consequences of miscommunication with other colleagues or with patients can be dire, it essential to involve a second rater.

How does the OET centre handle complaints? What action has been taken in regards to the high number of complaints that the OET centre receives?

The OET has well-established complaints procedures in place. For candidates who feel an issue impacted their performance on test-day, a Special Consideration procedure is instigated. The purpose of the Special Consideration process is to compensate candidates when it is agreed that something happened on the test day that may have affected their performance. While the OET Centre makes every effort to ensure the administration of the OET is conducted in a consistent and fair manner, events could occur that may interfere with the administration of the test.

The OET receives a number of enquiries concerning test scores, assessment procedures, and test results. The OET Centre has a Client services Team and Assessment Services Team and these teams respond where possible to enquiries within 24 hours, where further investigation is required candidates are notified and as a result it may take longer than 24 hours.

Does any of the money that CAE receives from candidates taking the test go towards improving the administrative problems with the OET?

The OET is constantly upgrading all aspects of its operations. Resources are allocated to a range of areas, including validation research projects, test bank expansion and test day procedures.

Why doesn't the test employ trained professionals such as with the IELTS?

The OET does employ trained professionals.

The OET Speaking test involves interlocutors who interact with candidates at all test venues. Interlocutors are trained to elicit a sample of language to demonstrate a candidates' ability to perform a range of communicative functions appropriate to behaviour in the professional context (e.g. to elicit information, to offer advice, reassurance or sympathy, or to persuade a reluctant patient into compliance). The interlocutors do not assess candidates. Assessment is carried out by trained and experienced assessors after test day.

The Listening, Writing, and Reading components of the test are conducted by trained invigilation staff.