

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS SERVICES FOR THE NHS



PART OF **nocn** GROUP



The CPD Standards Office
CPD PROVIDER: 50028
2022 - 2023
www.cpdstandards.com



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“I had a fantastic experience and excellent working relationship with SLC. Excellent communication and timely feedback along with flexibility and accommodating to the needs of the whole programme means that delivery is second to none. The professionalism of the SLC team is exemplary.”

Jose Loreto Facultad MSC (ANP) BSN RN, Deputy Head of Nursing Workforce, Guys and St Thomas’ NHS Foundation Trust

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“

“ABUHB has been extremely pleased with the English language tuition service provided by SLC. It has, in its entirety, met the requirements of the contract procured in a cohesive way.”

Dr. Lyn Middleton MBE, Associate Director of Nursing,
Aneurin Bevan University Health Board

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“Really enjoy working with SLC – a super friendly and approachable team as well as being really knowledgeable and professional.”

Lisa Punter, Lead Nurse Workforce,
Ashford and St Peter’s NHS Foundation Trust

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“We were delighted with the results achieved through SLC for our candidates undertaking the OET... We would recommend this training programme to all our hospital partners.”

Michael Joyce, Divisional Manager, King’s Commercial,
part of King’s College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

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Contents

OET and IELTS	3
What language level do candidates need to achieve?	4
Tutored OET Preparation courses for groups	5
Tutored OET Foundation courses for groups	6
Tutored OET Relearn courses for groups	7
IELTS Preparation courses for groups	8
Clinical Communication Skills courses	9
Preparation for the Nursing OSCE	10
Living and Working in the UK – Welcome to the NHS	11
How does the training process work?	12
How can NHS employers support their candidates?	13
Appendix	14
About SLC	15



OET and IELTS

OET

OET is a test of Healthcare English recognised by healthcare regulators, including the NMC, GMC and GPhC.

There are 12 versions of the test, covering 12 different healthcare professions. The most commonly taken version is OET Nursing, followed by OET Medicine.

Candidates take 4 papers in one day, Listening, Reading and Writing in the morning and Speaking in the afternoon. Listening and Reading are the same for all professions. Writing and Speaking are profession-specific.

In the test, candidates listen to clinical consultations, workplace conversations and academic talks. They read articles, data, and extracts from workplace documents. They write a letter in response to case notes. They role play being a nurse in conversation with a patient, relative, or carer.

IELTS

Academic IELTS is accepted by professional regulators, including the NMC, GMC and HCPC. However, it is a test of academic English used primarily by universities to assess the English of overseas applicants. There is a General Training version of IELTS used by the UK Border Authority among others.

Like OET, candidates sit all papers in one day, taking Listening, Reading and Writing in the morning and Speaking in the afternoon.

In the test, candidates listen to conversations and talks set in everyday and academic contexts, read texts taken from books and journals, write a report on data and an academic essay, and present on and discuss a range of topics.

OET or IELTS?

In our experience, healthcare professionals prefer studying for OET. The language and scenarios are more familiar, and they have many opportunities to see, hear and use the target language in a professional context outside the classroom. Results are typically stronger with significantly higher first-time pass rates.

OET preparation courses also support candidates in passing clinical communication tests such as the Nursing OSCE and PLAB.

For some candidates, IELTS is preferable. There are many more test centres worldwide, a very wide range of preparation resources such as course books, practice tests and dedicated websites, and is cheaper to take.

What language level do candidates need to achieve?

As of 2023, the required scores for nurses and doctors are as follows:

Exam	Listening	Reading	Writing	Speaking
OET Nursing	B	B	C+	B
OET Medicine	B	B	B	B
IELTS (if a nurse)	7	7	6.5	7
IELTS (if a doctor)	7	7	7	7

Note: nurses can combine results from 2 tests taken over 12 months, as long as the score achieved in the papers not passed is only half a grade lower than required.

The language level is high. An OET B and IELTS 7 are equivalent to a C1 on the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference), the scale used worldwide to measure linguistic competence. See Appendix (link to page) for more detail.

C1 is an advanced level, the band below that of native speaker. It is the equivalent to what a 2nd year undergraduate studying Modern Languages at a UK university would be expected to demonstrate¹.

Where do most candidates start at?

In our experience, most candidates start with an intermediate level of English. This is a very wide band on the CEFR scale, consisting of B1 (lower-intermediate) and B2 (higher intermediate) levels – again, see Appendix for details.

How long do candidates need to get to C1 level?

To move from one band to another takes most motivated adults approximately 200 hours, depending on factors like teaching pedagogy, access to resources, and knowledge of other languages. So, to go from B1 to C1 involves around 400 hours, and from B2, 200 hours².

The hours of study include both tutoring and guided self-study. We recommend an equal number of both.

Exam techniques and strategies

200 hours per level is required for language improvement alone. Candidates also require extensive coaching on the techniques and strategies needed for their test.

The test day can be an intensive and stressful experience. It is essential for candidates to know what to expect, what the examiners are looking for, how to manage the unpredictable, and how to maximise the time available.

Language development and test preparation are central to all SLC’s OET and IELTS preparation courses.

¹ <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/clas/documents/language-achievement-levels.pdf>;
<https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/languagecentre/lifelonglearning/levels-guide/>
² <https://www.cambridge.org/elt/blog/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/How-long-does-it-take-to-learn-a-foreign-language.pdf>

Tutored OET Preparation courses for groups

SLC’s OET Preparation courses have been developed over 6 years of intensive teaching, syllabus and materials design.

- Over 25,000 hours of tuition given.
- OET courses provided to groups and individuals at over 55 NHS Trusts.
- Over 1,000 overseas-trained healthcare professionals have achieved the OET scores needed to join the NHS.

- All OET Preparation courses include:
- ✓ Pre-course level assessment and needs analysis
 - ✓ Course recommendations based on level, budget, timelines
 - ✓ Flexible lesson schedules based on student availability
 - ✓ Tuition from trained, qualified, experienced, expert OET teachers
 - ✓ One-to-one tutorials and personal study plans
 - ✓ All study materials
 - ✓ Timed mock tests
 - ✓ Access to 4 additional open OET lessons a week
 - ✓ Google Classroom integration
 - ✓ Attendance and progress reporting
 - ✓ Up to 10 students per group

Course options

Course	Hours’ tuition	Hours’ self-study	Entry level
150 hours	80	70+	C1
200 hours	120	80+	Mid-High B2
250 hours	150	100+	Low-Mid B2

Courses and study content are online, enabling students to work with specialist OET teachers and learning materials from wherever they are.

SLC’s team includes OET test writers, OET course book authors, and OET teacher trainers.

Teaching methodology is dynamic, engaging and adapted to the online classroom.

Results are excellent.

Tutored OET Foundation courses for groups

Not all learners are ready to start an OET Preparation course. Some candidates need to further develop their English language knowledge and skills first.

SLC’s OET Foundation courses have been designed specifically to improve the OET- relevant language of learners who are at an elementary and intermediate level of English.

The courses include a wide range of clinical English, functional English, grammar and vocabulary, while simultaneously developing the four skills, all within a healthcare context.

All OET Foundation courses include:

- ✓ Clinical English, functional language, grammar, vocabulary
- ✓ Language and study skills development
- ✓ OET familiarisation activities
- ✓ Lesson schedules based on student availability
- ✓ Tuition from trained, qualified, experienced, expert teachers
- ✓ All study materials
- ✓ Google Classroom integration
- ✓ Attendance and progress reporting
- ✓ Up to 10 students per group

Course options

Course	Hours’ tuition	Hours’ self-study	Entry level
A2 160 hours	60	100+	A2 Elementary
B1 160 hours	60	100+	B1 Intermediate

Learners completing B1 are ready to join an OET Preparation course. Those completing A2 are ready to move onto B1.

Courses and study content are online, enabling students to work with expert teachers and access learning materials from wherever they are.

Teaching methodology is dynamic, engaging and adapted to the online classroom.

Progress assessment is built in.

Tutored OET Relearn courses for groups

Do you have candidates who didn't achieve the required OET scores on first sitting?

SLC offers tailored Relearn courses for candidates who need to improve their scores in one or more papers so they can pass on their next sitting.

OET Relearn courses include:

- ✓ Course design to focus on the papers needed by candidates
- ✓ Choice of courses to reflect the amount of work needed
- ✓ Flexible lesson schedules based on student availability
- ✓ Tuition from trained, qualified, experienced, expert OET teachers
- ✓ All study materials
- ✓ Timed mock test papers
- ✓ Access to 4 additional open OET lessons a week
- ✓ Google Classroom integration
- ✓ Attendance and progress reporting
- ✓ Up to 10 students per group

Course options

Course	Hours' tuition	Hours' self-study	Entry level
40 hours	20	20+	1-2
60 hours	30	30+	3
80 hours	40	40+	4

Teachers analyse performance in previous OET preparation courses and mock tests, together with the results of their first sitting.

Lessons focus on what candidates need to do to achieve the required scores on second sitting.

Lessons, materials and practice target learner needs and, ensuring candidates are full prepared for their second test.

Results are excellent.

IELTS Preparation courses for groups

Some candidates prefer to take the IELTS test, also recognised by the NMC and GMC. They may have already studied for it, or the test centre may be closer to hand. Some regulatory bodies, including the HCPC and Social Work England, recognise IELTS but not OET.

SLC has delivered thousands of hours of IELTS preparation to healthcare students around the world, both before OET was recognised and ongoingly.

The SLC teaching team includes IELTS examiners, materials writers and specialist teachers.

All IELTS courses include:

- ✓ Pre-course level assessment and needs analysis
- ✓ Course recommendations based on level, budget, timelines
- ✓ Flexible lesson schedules based on student availability
- ✓ Tuition from trained, qualified, experienced, expert IELTS teachers
- ✓ One-to-one tutorials and personal study plans
- ✓ All study materials
- ✓ Timed mock tests
- ✓ Google Classroom integration
- ✓ Attendance and progress reporting
- ✓ Up to 10 students per group

Course options

Course	Hours' tuition	Hours' self-study	Entry level
150 hours	80	70+	C1
200 hours	120	80+	Mid-High B2
250 hours	150	100+	Low-Mid B2

Courses and study content are online, enabling students to work with specialist IELTS teachers and learning materials from wherever they are.

Teaching methodology is dynamic, engaging and adapted to the online classroom.

Results are excellent.

Clinical Communication Skills courses

Online clinical communication courses can be taken as standalone self-study or in combination with individual or small group tuition.

Courses are CPD-accredited and work seamlessly across all devices including on mobile phones via an app. Learner activity and progress is trackable with detailed reports available on demand.

1. Profession-specific English courses

SLC provides professional English language courses for a range of healthcare professionals. Learners study a wide range of clinical communication and profession-specific language set in a variety of common work scenarios.

2. Cross-sector English for Healthcare courses

Our cross-sector courses teach the language used by anyone working in or studying healthcare who wants to communicate accurately, understand colleagues and patients better, research new developments in their professional field, attend conferences and seminars, and produce their own research.

Course	Level of English (CEFR)	Hours of self-study	Standard duration
Profession-specific courses			
English for Doctors	B2-C1	100	4 months
English for Nurses	B1-B2	100	4 months
English for Care	A2-B1	60	3 months
English for Pharmacy	B1-B2	20	2 months
English for Radiography	B1-B2	30	3 months
Cross-sector courses			
Medical Terminology	B1-B2	30	3 months
Essential Grammar for Healthcare	A2-B1	30	3 months
Advanced Grammar for Healthcare	B2-C1	30	3 months
English for Medical Academic Purposes	B2-C1	50	3 months
Writing for Publication	B2-C1	30	3 months
English for Pandemics	B1-B2	10	2 months

All courses are highly engaging with a strong practical focus, enabling students to apply the language they learn to what they do from the first unit.

Preparation for the Nursing OSCE

Key features

- 60 hours self-study
- Available online and on app
- CPD-accredited
- Learner activity and progress is trackable with detailed reports available on demand.
- Can be combined with tuition for the OSCE Nursing test

This CPD-accredited self-study course is for overseas nurses preparing for the OSCE Nursing, whether pre-departure or in the UK.

It provides candidates with the knowledge, language and communication skills they need to successfully pass their OSCE so they can register with the NMC.

Fully up-to-date

The course is updated to include the new scenarios and skills introduced in November 2022.

It covers all OSCE topics and scenarios on APIE, Clinical Skills, Professional Values and Evidence of Best Practice.

Preparation for OSCE Nursing is highly visual and engaging. It includes lots of videos and useful reading, information from the NHS and NMC, language and comprehension tasks to check understanding, and links to a wide range of websites to explore and read further.

The course is available on PC and on an app, offering maximum convenience to nurses with busy lives.

Sponsors can log into the Learning Management System at any time to track candidate activity and pull progress reports.

bite-sized
learning
content

highly visual
and engaging

Living and Working in the UK – Welcome to the NHS

Key features

- 10 hours self-study
- Available online and on app
- Covers life in UK plus nursing in the UK
- CPD-accredited
- Learner activity and progress is trackable with detailed reports available on demand.

This CPD-accredited course is for nurses relocating to the UK. It provides them with the essential knowledge they need to successfully settle into the UK as a nurse.

Taking this course will help acclimatise a nurse to what to expect when they arrive in the UK – the weather, the customs, the culture; the accents and idioms; the NHS and the roles and responsibilities of nurses in the UK.

The course is highly visual and engaging. It includes lots of videos and useful reading, information from the NHS and NMC, language and comprehension tasks to check understanding, and links to a wide range of websites to explore and read further.



bite-sized
learning
content

highly visual
and engaging

Course content

- ✓ About the UK: life and culture
- ✓ About the UK: accents, dialects and idioms
- ✓ About the NHS
- ✓ Nursing staff in the NHS
- ✓ The NMC
- ✓ The Code
- ✓ Revalidation
- ✓ Trade Unions and the Equality Act 2010

The course is available on PC and on an app, offering maximum convenience to nurses who may be preparing to relocate to the UK.

Sponsors can log into the Learning Management System at any time to track candidate activity and pull progress reports.

How does the training process work?

Training follows a clear process with defined stages. Trusts are kept informed throughout and consulted where necessary to ensure successful course delivery.

- 1. Level assessment and needs analysis:** essential to understanding candidates' starting point, language skills profile, and objectives.
- 2. Recommendations for training and groupings:** up to 10 learners per class, streamed so they can study together at the most appropriate level.
- 3. Course setup**
 - a.** Schedules set around candidate availability
 - b.** Academic management tool to track attendance and progress
 - c.** Materials to power the curriculum
 - d.** Google Classroom integration for learners
- 4. Course delivery**
 - a.** Tuition in online classrooms
 - b.** Assignments and test practice outside lessons
 - c.** Access to additional open OET webinar lessons
- 5. Mock tests and individual tutorials integrated at strategic points.**
- 6. Academic reviews to ensure Trusts understand the progress their candidates are making.**
- 7. End of course progress and/or test readiness report for each candidate.**

Teaching

All tuition is delivered online by qualified English language and test preparation specialists with a minimum 3 years' teaching experience.

Teachers use a dynamic teaching methodology with a strong focus on building an engaged and focused classroom. Lessons are carefully planned with clear objectives which together form a coherent programme.

Course management

An integrated online course attendance and progress reporting tool is provided to all Trusts. There is one clear point of contact with whom to discuss logistics, any course issues such as non-attendance, and the ongoing delivery of courses.

Issues are raised quickly and dealt with effectively, in partnership with Trusts where appropriate.

Test booking


We support candidates and Trusts in booking OET and IELTS tests.



How can NHS employers support their candidates?

Working in partnership with Trusts to support candidates maximises the chances of candidates achieving the OET and IELTS scores they need.

As an NHS employer, you can take a number of measures to support your candidates.

1. Help set expectations, including on attendance and homework commitments. The courses are hard work so candidates need to be ready to commit to doing the study.
 2. Make it easy for candidates to attend lessons, for example by providing paid study and ensuring they don't work night shifts before lessons.
 3. Make sure candidates can get online and have access to a quiet space for lessons, either at work or from home.
 4. Give candidates a point of contact at the Trust who they can discuss the course with, for example if they cannot attend or if they're struggling with the work set.
 5. Ensure SLC has a consistent point of contact, ideally the same as above, to support scheduling, review progress together, deal with any issues, and to book tests.
 6. See what can be done at the Trust to support the course. Some Trusts help arrange on-site mock tests, others set up reading groups, or provide practice for the role plays in OET Speaking.
 7. Provide lots of ongoing encouragement!
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Appendix

Language levels as defined by the CEFR

The CEFR or Common European Framework of Reference is the scale developed by the Council of Europe and used by the global language education sector to measure linguistic competence.

There are six levels of proficiency moving from complete beginner to native speaker. Each level is defined by ‘can-do’ descriptors which apply as a learner completes the level. The test scores required by the NMC and GMC are C1.

PROFICIENT USER	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
INDEPENDENT USER	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
BASIC USER	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

3. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/table-1-cefr-3.3-common-reference-levels-global-scale>

About SLC

SLC specialises in providing test preparation and clinical English services to the global healthcare sector. It was the first OET-accredited Premium Preparation Provider in Europe and is one of the world's leading OET preparation providers, as well as having outstanding in-house IELTS expertise. We support thousands of healthcare professionals to achieve the scores they need every year.

SLC's Medical English and Test Preparation courses are used by healthcare employers, recruitment companies, medical universities, nursing colleges and individuals worldwide.

Clients include over 55 NHS Trusts, NHS England, Health Education England, international healthcare recruitment companies and partners around the world.

Based at Sussex University and operating globally, SLC's team includes test writers, course book authors, and teacher trainers.

Accreditations



PART OF nocn GROUP

NOCN Group

SLC is an approved NOCN international training centre. This means that SLC's organisational infrastructure, policies and processes have undergone rigorous inspection by NOCN Group to ensure we meet its high accreditation and quality assurance standards.

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CPD Standards Office (CPDSO)

All SLC's courses have been independently accredited by the CPD Standards Office in the UK. This means that they have all been inspected and have successfully met the quality criteria set by CPDSO for any training they accredit.



OET Premium Preparation Provider

SLC was the first OET-accredited Premium Preparation Provider in Europe. We successfully completed an OET teaching skills programme, demonstrating high levels of quality in material creation and curriculum planning. SLC works closely with OET to ensure our materials and training are up-to-date and meet OET's rigorous accreditation criteria.



EALTHY

All SLC's medical English courses are approved by EALTHY, the global association for language teachers for healthcare.

Who trusts SLC?

We are delighted to have worked with over 55 NHS employers on OET and IELTS Preparation programmes. Here are just a few of them.



Get in touch to talk through how we can work together



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