NHS
Health Education England

India English Language (EL) Programme 2020/21 Report

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Abbreviations

BC	British Council
BST	Baseline Screening Test
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
CEPT	Cambridge English Placement Test
DHSC	Department for Health and Social Care
EL	English Language
FMS	Fully Managed Service
GHP	Global Health Partnerships
GLP	Global Learners Programme
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
HEE	Health Education England
NHS	National Health Service
NMC	Nursing and Midwifery Council
ODEPC	Overseas Development and Employment Promotion Consultants
OET	Occupational English Test
RST	Rapid Screening Test
TNAI	Trained Nurses Association of India

Executive Summary

- The India English Language (EL) Programme aimed to contribute to Her Majesty's Government's target of recruiting 50,000 nurses by March 2024. This would be achieved through funding English language training and examinations for Indian nurses who have the professional expertise to work in the NHS, yet do not meet NMC English language requirements. Programme candidates came from the following Indian states and regions: Kerela, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, and Delhi NCR.
- A total of 249 Indian nurses were recruited onto the programme using several trusted in-country suppliers. Chosen suppliers passed an internal procurement framework and had a demonstrable track record of recruiting nurses internationally and/or working with Health Education England (HEE). All candidates must have attained a level of proficiency equivalent to CEFR C1 to be enrolled onto the programme. Candidates could enrol based on two routes. Where candidates provided evidence of their English language proficiency level (e.g., examination transcript), they were enrolled as 'route A' candidates'. Alternatively, where prior evidence of English language proficiency level was not provided, a rapid screening test (RST) identified each prospective candidates' level before which a baseline screening test (BST) was sat, with a CEFR B2 grade required for course enrolment.
- Candidates received English language training from providers delivering British Council (BC) or Occupational English Test (OET) tuition. The coronavirus pandemic caused all tuition and a majority of testing to be delivered online. English language training provision comprised training in listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills, utilised group-based and one-to-one teaching methods, and was supplemented by access to online learning resources. Once candidates had completed their English language course, they completed an English language examination.
- Of the 249 nurses enrolled onto the programme, 26 candidates withdrew leaving 223 candidates completing English language training and an examination. A total of 46 passed their English language examination at the required NMC level of proficiency. This represents a 21% pass rate for the programme.
- Relearn opportunities, where candidates not attaining the NMC English language proficiency requirement in their first examination can receive additional examination preparation, were planned to be made available for all candidates. However, only OET delivered this opportunity, which limits the achievement of expected programme targets, as most unsuccessful British Council candidates did not undertake the relearn course. A total of 80 candidates completed relearn provision, 54% of which attained the requisite NMC English language proficiency level (N=43).
- Overall, the English language India Programme provided English language learning opportunities to 223 Indian nurses, 89 of which successfully acquired the NMC English language proficiency requirements to work in the NHS. This represents a programme pass rate of 40% and an average cost per nurse totalling £4,139, 67 of which joined the GLP to enter the English NHS.

Introduction

The India English Language Programme aims to contribute to HM Government's target of increasing the number of nurses working in the NHS by 50,000 by March 2024. HEE was tasked by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care with expanding the pool of nurses that are eligible, and willing, to work in the NHS. The programme aimed to address this by providing English language training and examination preparation to Indian nurses who satisfy NMC occupational standards, yet currently do not possess the requisite English language skills.[1]

Initially, this programme was designed to be a long-term initiative to contribute to international recruitment of nurses into the NHS. However, a Department of Health & Social Care (DHSC) review altered HEE's role in recruiting international nurses. Consequently, the programme's approach and scope changed significantly. At this time, the British Council (BC) were running four cohorts of classes (commenced in October 2020) and Occupational English Test (OET) were running three cohorts (commenced in November 2020).

HEE and the DHSC jointly decided to continue this provision, in addition to a third set of classes due to commence in December 2020, which resulted in five further cohorts (one provided by British Council and four by OET). Thereafter, no further cohorts would be recruited onto this programme, with all remaining provision (excluding relearn courses) finishing by July 2021.

[1] Further information is available on the following link: **www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/registration/language-requirements-guidance.pdf**.

Project Overview[2]

Starting from October 2020, a total of 249 Indian nurses were enrolled onto English language provision across six Indian states and regions: Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, and Delhi NCR. Nurses were recruited via selected HEE partner organisations (suppliers) based in India to maximise recruitment, attendance, and success, in addition to minimising attrition and non-attendance. These partner organisations worked to recruit eligible candidates onto programmes operated by English language providers (further information is available in appendix item 3). Selection of suppliers was subject to an internal procurement framework, referred to in appendix item 4 as a 'due diligence process'.

Pre-enrolment Testing

Research suggests that, among English language learners at Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), on average it takes at least 100 hours of face-to-face teaching and independent study to move 0.5 in IELTS (or equivalent).[3] Required hours of English language training and study to reach the NMC English language proficiency requirement increases further as language proficiency decreases. It was therefore imperative that programme candidates could evidence a sufficient level of English language competence to participate (CEFR B2 level, IELTS grade of 6.5 or equivalent). English language level could be demonstrated in two ways: (a) by providing examination result documentation from a test taken in the prior two years (Route A candidates), or (b) by completing a rapid screening test (RST) followed by a baseline test before enrolment (Route B Candidates) (see appendix item 2 for further information).

The RST used was 'English Score', a rapid test comprised of 72 questions and operated by British Council which assesses candidates' grammar, vocabulary, reading and listening. A total of 1,639 candidates completed the RST during the recruitment period (July-November 2020), of which 78% (N=1,281) achieved the qualifying score[4] to be eligible to progress onto a baseline screening test (BST). Of these, 245 candidates completed a BST. In total, 56 candidates (23%) achieved a pass grade.[5] Further information on the RST and BST is available in appendix item 5.

Two different BSTs were used according to whether candidates were progressing onto a British Council or an OET course. For prospective British Council Candidates, the Aptis Advanced test was used. This is designed to assess English language candidates spanning proficiency ranges B1 to C2 in four skill components (listening, reading, speaking, and writing). In response to the coronavirus pandemic's impact in India during late 2020, and the subsequent closure of many examination centres in India, British Council were required to alter their BST approach. Specifically, Aptis Remote was used in conjunction with ProctorTrack to perform an identity check, a 360-degree scan of candidates' testing environments, record a video of candidates taking the test, and compile a detailed report of suspected infractions. Prospective OET candidates completed the Cambridge English Placement Test (CEPT). This is an online test, managed directly by OET, which assesses candidates' reading and listening skills.

Of all Route B candidates completing a BST and passing, 46 progressed onto English language training (19%) of all BST candidates.[6] In addition to 203 Route A candidates, this means a total of 249 candidates entered the programme. More than half (65%) received OET provision and approximately a

[2] A summary of the student programme journey is available in appendix item 2.

[3] Chris Veysey (2021), Options appraisal examining the potential for a rollout of English language testing to OTN HCSWs: Independent report produced for the Directorate of Global Health Partnerships, Health Education England.

[4] An EnglishScore grade of B1 or above.

[5] IELTS pass grade was 6.5 in reading, listening and speaking, and 6.0 in writing. OET pass grade was C+ in reading, listening, and speaking, and C in Writing.

[6] Further information on number of BST, passes and pass rates is available in appendix item 3. Demographic information for all BST and Route A Candidates is available in appendix item 6.

third (35%) were studying with British Council provision. Each course delivery model is outlined below, including re-learning provision available where candidates did not attain the required English language standard after completing their English language course.

English Language Course[7]

British Council English Language Provision

British Council provision lasted 12 weeks and consisted of a combination of the following taught and self-directed components delivered via an online, blended approach:

- One-hour orientation.
- IELTS Coach lessons & App, comprising 30 hours of both taught and self-directed reading and listening practice.
- Road to IELTS, where participants were able to access authentic test materials and test strategies (access provided for a year).
- Textual analysis/peer correction tasks, providing seven-and-a-half hours of weekly tasks focusing on the language and style necessary to achieve the required 6.5 IELTS examination score.
- Weekly writing tasks, enabling students to engage in 15-hours of self-directed writing activities with individual feedback provided by an English language trainer.
- One-to-one mid-course meetings with English language trainers.
- Tutor Group, consisting of five hours spent in collaborative learning groups.

OET English Language Provision

The OET English language provision had two packages:

1. **Fully Managed Service (FMS):** a full wrap-around support for candidates ensuring excellent communication and guidance is in place, dealing with any issues which are raised by candidates and ensuring that candidates have a smooth journey through the programme by working with suppliers and English language providers.
2. **Lite:** where HEE and suppliers work with English language providers to meet course delivery requirements (quantity of hours and class content) with additional OET support.

Both packages shared a number of core specifications. These included:

a) Minimum learning time of 200 hours, inclusive of self-study, homework, and mock examinations,

b) Performance of a needs analysis by the provider with assistance from OET,

c) Creation of individual candidate learning plans by the English language providers,

d) Classes to have a minimum 80% focus on skills and 20% mock examination time, and

e) Four teacher feedback sessions for candidates.

In addition to these agreed basis standards, the FMS is a broader partnership between HEE and OET that included the following in the programme scope:

- Work with suppliers to support marketing and recruitment to the courses.
- Manage all aspects of communication to the candidates.

[7] Further information on course timings and the quality assurance framework for English language training is available in appendix item 7 and 8.

- Development of a sense of network and collegial support between candidates.
- Provide wrap-around support for candidates ensuring excellent communication and guidance is in place, dealing with any issues which are raised by candidates and ensuring that candidates have a smooth journey through the programme.
- Work with the provider to manage candidates' journeys, track attendance and engagement with the provider and, where appropriate, communicate with candidates to encourage engagement in the course or identify issues that they may have.
- Report as per Schedule 6 of the Agreement Meeting Plan, escalating issues in accordance with the Escalation Procedure (appendix item 1).
- Work with candidates to ensure they know their exam date and encourage attendance.
- Directly inform HEE and suppliers of exam results as soon as they are available.
- Upload attrition and progression data to HEE on a monthly basis.
- Monitoring and evaluation of English language Courses in accordance with the Quality Assurance Framework.

Candidates not attaining the required examination score (CEFR C1) were offered a re-learn opportunity.[8] However, the re-learn varied based on whether the FMS or Lite English language offer was chosen. Candidates in receipt of the FMS were provided professional support, review and coaching to enable placement onto appropriate re-learn courses, in addition to being booked onto relearn options and informed of activity dates. This offer moreover provided ongoing support where any issues arose for candidates and reports were produced for HEE. Also, candidates were supported when rebooking examinations using their own funds. The Lite offer consisted of professional support in the allocation and delivery of relearn provision to candidates and ensuring candidates can book another OET examination upon commencing re-learning. Both OET packages placed responsibility on OET to report examination non-attendance to HEE, supplier and English language provider, in addition to recording and investigating non-attendance in accordance with the Escalation Procedure (appendix item 1).

[8] A similar relearn opportunity was planned to be available for British Council candidates. However, this did not take place due to a lack of interest among candidates.

Results

This section presents the results of the India English Language Programme. This firstly provides information on programme withdrawals, which is followed by a discussion of English language test results. Overall programme results are presented in the final section, with preceding sections presenting post-course and relearn course results, respectively.

Programme Withdrawals

Table 1 provides information on the number of withdrawals from the India English Language Programme. This shows that 26 candidates withdrew from the programme, constituting a 10% programme withdrawal rate. This means that, of the 249 candidates who enrolled onto the English language programme, 223 continued to complete their training.

Table 1: Enrolled candidates, withdrawals & withdrawal rate by route, partner, supplier & course code

		Enrolled Candidates (N)*	Withdrawals (N)	Withdrawal Rate (%)
Route	Route A	203	24	12
	Route B	46	2	4
Partner	OET	162	12	7
	BC	87	14	16
Supplier	ODEPC	110	5	5
	TNAI	57	10	18
	Apollo	31	3	10
	INSCOL	24	-	-
	R2H	22	8	36
	RGU	5	-	-
Course Code	LITE06/014	42	10	24
	FMS005/31	39	1	3
	BC15	23	2	9
	OETFMS13	21	-	-
	FMS009	20	-	-
	FMS17	20	1	<1
	OETFMS1	20	-	-
	BC12	19	2	11
	BC7	17	3	18
	BC3	14	4	29
	BC4	14	3	21
Overall		**249**	**26**	**10**

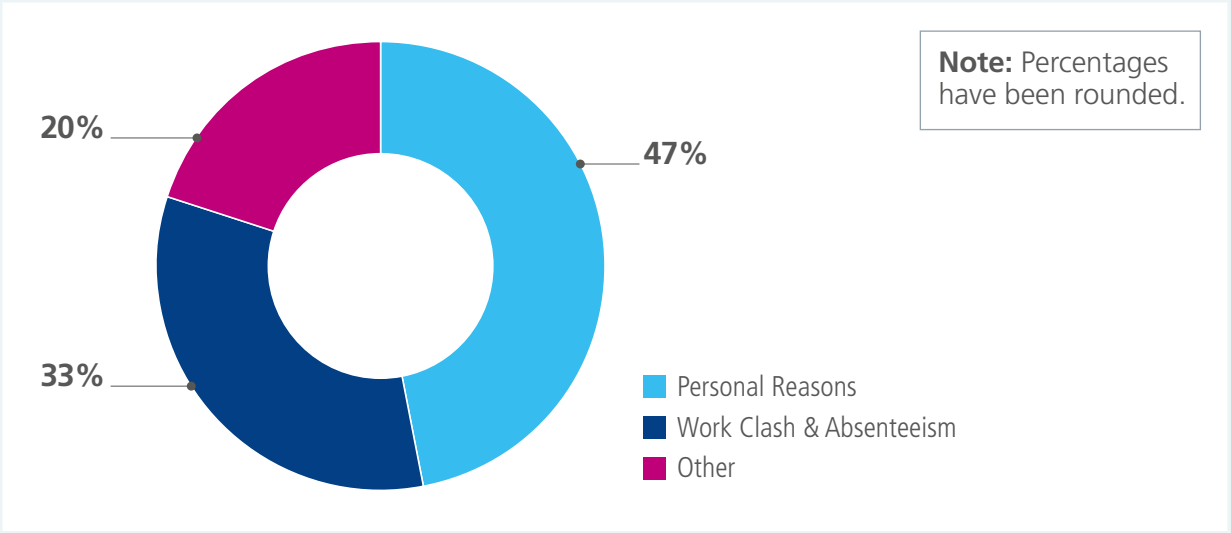
*This includes candidates who withdrew after enrolment.
Percentages have been rounded and may not equal 100.

Only two (4%) of Route B candidates withdrew from the programme following enrolment, compared to 24 (12%) of Route A candidates. Higher withdrawal rates were observed for British Council candidates, demonstrated by the overall British Council withdrawal rate of 16% and the general higher withdrawal rates among British Council course codes in the course code comparison section of Table 1. This compares to OET, which had a withdrawal rate of 7%.

Most suppliers reported at least one withdrawal, yet withdrawal rates varied. For example, R2H reported a significantly higher withdrawal rate than other suppliers (36%), 18 percentage points higher than the TNAI, which had the second highest withdrawal rate (18%). On the contrary, ODEPC had a relatively low withdrawal rate of 5% from a total of 110 candidates. No withdrawals were recorded from INSCOL or RGU.

Reasons for withdrawal were provided by 15 candidates. Figure 1 displays the reasons provided. 'Personal reasons' was the most common reason provided (47%), including personal and/or family health problems (e.g., COVID-19 diagnosis) and international migration. Five withdrawing candidates (33%) indicated their English language training conflicted with their clinical practice, causing absenteeism and subsequent withdrawal from the programme. 'Other' reasons were provided by three candidates (20%).

Figure 1: Reasons for Withdrawal (%)



English Language Post-course Results

Examination data is available for 223[9] candidates who remained on the India English language programme until examination completion (Table 2). A total of 46 passes were achieved for the English language course provided as part of this programme, representing a pass rate of 21%.

Table 2: English Language Programme Post-course test results by route, partner, supplier & course code

		Tests (N)	Passes (N)	Pass Rate (%)
Route	Route A	179	34	19
	Route B	44	11	25
Partner	OET	150	33	22
	BC	73	12	16
Supplier	ODEPC	105	25	24
	TNAI	47	7	15
	Apollo	28	5	18
	INSCOL	24	4	17
	R2H	14	4	29
	RGU	5	-	-
Course Code	FMS005/31	38	10	26
	LITE06/014	32	4	13
	OETFMS13	21	4	19
	BC15	21	2	10
	OETFMS1	20	7	35
	FMS009	20	5	25
	FMS17	19	4	21
	BC12	17	2	12
	BC7	14	1	7
	BC4	11	3	27
	BC3	10	4	40
Overall		**223***	**46**	**21**

Percentages have been rounded and may not equal 100.
*Only including candidates completing the course provided and post-course examinations. Based on prior agreement, all Bradford candidates have been excluded from results analysis.

Table 2 shows most candidates passing their English language examination were Route A candidates (N=33), yet the pass rate was higher among Route B candidates (25% compared to 19%).

Table 2 shows more than twice as many candidates completed English language training with OET providers compared to British Council providers (150 OET compared to 73 British Council candidates). The former achieving a pass rate 6 percentage points higher than British Council providers (22% compared to 16%). This shows that OET candidates were more successful than those receiving British Council provision and sitting an IELTS test. The average pass rate for the OET FMS was 25%, which is significantly higher than the OET Lite class (13%).

[9] Three candidates, recruited by Bradford University, completed the English language programme. However, these candidates were enrolled with prior knowledge of their lower English language proficiency level and a collective decision to not include their results in final reporting was made by the project steering group. This does not influence the rounded pass rate.

Furthermore, number of tests and pass rates varied across suppliers, with R2H achieving the highest pass rate (29%). However, with the highest number of enrolments, passes and the second higher pass rate, ODEPC performed relatively strongly. Slightly lower pass rates were achieved by Apollo (18%), INSCOL (17%) and TNAI (15%) candidates. RGU achieved no examination passes from a total of five enrolled candidates.

Re-learn Course Results[10]

Table 3 displays the number of passes and pass rates for the relearn course for those not attaining the requisite NMC English language proficiency level in the post-course examination. Results show that 43 candidates passed at the NMC English language proficiency level following relearn provision, representing slightly over half (54%) of all relearn course candidates.

Table 3: Relearn course test results by route, partner, supplier and course code

		Tests (N)	Passes (N)	Pass Rate (%)
Route	Route A	65	35	54
	Route B	15	8	53
Partner	OET	73	43	59
	BC*	7	0**	0
Supplier	ODEPC	34	18	53
	TNAI	24	12	50
	Apollo	13	6	46
	INSCOL	9	6	67
	R2H	-	-	-
	RGU	?	1	
Course Code	LITE06/014	17	13	76
	FMS005/31	17	10	59
	FMS17	14	7	50
	OETFMS13	9	6	67
	OETFMS1	8	2	25
	FMS009	8	5	63
	BC3	-	-	-
	BC4	-	-	-
	BC7	-	-	-
	BC12	-	-	-
	BC15	-	-	-
Overall		**80**	**43**	**54**

Percentages have been rounded.
*Relearn opportunities were only provided by OET. Any British Council candidates undertaking a relearn course had to switch to OET provision.
**Two British Council candidates self-funded post-course examinations and passed at the required English language Proficiency. However, these have not been included in this analysis.

[10] Further relearn examinations are planned to take place during Autumn 2021. Unfortunately, these results are not available at the time of writing this report.

Similar proportions of route A (54%) route B (53%) candidates successfully passed the English language examination following relearn provision. Most relearn candidates (N=73) were OET candidates and none of the relearn candidates who initially undertook British Council provision passed the post-relearn examination. Variation is observed between suppliers, with at least half of INSCOL (67%), ODEPC (53%) and TNAI (50%) candidates attaining the required English language proficiency level and slightly less than half of Apollo (46%) doing so.

Overall Programme Results

This section provides summary information by combining Tables 2 and 3 to show the overall results for the India English Language Programme, in addition to programme costings outlined in appendix item 9.

Table 4: Overall programme results, inclusive of post-course and relearn results

		Tests (N)	Passes (N)	Pass Rate (%)
Route	Route A	178	70	39
	Route B	45	19	42
Partner	OET	150	77	51
	BC	73	12	16
Supplier	ODEPC	105	43	41
	TNAI	47	19	40
	Apollo	28	11	39
	INSCOL	24	10	42
	R2H	14	4	29
	RGU	5	1	20
Course Code	FMS005/31	38	20	53
	LITE06/014	35	17	49
	BC15	21	2	10
	OETFMS13	21	10	48
	OETFMS1	20	9	45
	FMS009	20	10	50
	FMS17	19	11	58
	BC12	17	2	12
	BC7	14	1	7
	BC4	11	3	27
	BC3	10	4	40
Overall		**223**	**89***	**40**

Percentages have been rounded.
*This does not include two British Council candidates who failed the post-course examination and subsequently self-funded an examination which they passed.

A total of 89 passes at the requisite NMC English language proficiency level were achieved by candidates participating in this programme, representing a pass rate of 40% (Table 4). Overall, the cost per pass at the requisite NMC English language proficiency level was £4,139 (appendix item 9).

A higher pass rate was observed for Route B candidates (42%) compared to Route A candidates (39%). Likewise, OET candidates achieved a significantly higher pass rate than British Council counterparts (51% compared 16%, respectively). As presented in appendix item 9, OET represented greater value-for-money in achieving 77 passes at £3,521 per pass. This compares favourably to a per pass cost of £8,103 for British Council. On average, the OET FMS course codes attained a higher pass rate (60%) than the single OET Lite course (49%). Moreover, OET Lite offered the lowest cost per passing candidate (£2,340 compared to £3,856 for OET FMS).

Little variation was found in supplier pass rates. INSCOL (42%), ODEPC (41%), TNAI (40%) and Apollo (39%) achieved pass rates close to or above two-fifths, with R2H (29%) and RGU (20%) achieving a pass rates below one-third.

Discussion – Lessons Learnt

Reflecting on the India English Language Programme, a number of lessons and areas for development can be recognised as significantly relevant to programme delivery and outcomes. These include positive impacts of the programme, as well as areas where organisational learning can take place. These are outlined below:

- **OET provision & examination produces stronger outcomes.**
  Likewise, OET provision offered greater value-for-money compared to British Council training (£3,521 compared to £8,103). One important factor, however, was the provision of relearn training for mostly OET candidates.
- **Long-term educational impacts for candidates.**
  This programme offered strengths beyond passing the selected English language examination at the level required by the NMC. Relationships had been formed between teachers and students which provides long-term opportunities for English language proficiency development. Moreover, among candidates not passing their examination, participating in this programme may have served as a catalyst in pursuing the NMC English language proficiency level in the future and taking further examinations, in light of the commitment already invested by candidates during this programme. Indeed, two unsuccessful British Council candidates have, following completing the programme, successfully met NMC English language proficiency requirements through a self-funded examination. Appendix item 10 displays testimonial data from candidates completing the India English language Programme.
- **Local English language provider went above and beyond expectations.**
  Based on meetings with partners, English language providers delivered considerable levels of additional support to candidates, including both learning (e.g., extra sessions, on-call support) and pastoral (e.g., counselling) support (see appendix item 10 for evidence from testimonial data). This may reflect the prestige working with HEE carried for local English language providers. The high-level of support provided to candidates was important in enabling English language examination success.
- **Difficulty in recruiting original candidate target.**
  Exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic, there was a difficulty in recruiting a sufficient number of candidates for this programme. The high pre-enrolment English language proficiency requirement (CEFR C1) meant that the final number of candidates was limited to those with an English language proficiency level at CEFR C2. It would be advisable to organise foundation courses for those below this level to increase total enrolment in the future. All suppliers used during this programme significantly underdelivered on agreed recruitment targets. However, the non-commercial suppliers associated with the Indian Government (ODEPC) and Indian nursing association (TNAI) were able to source a higher number of candidates than private commercial suppliers. Evidence suggests that by endorsing the programme and through a successful marketing campaign, the government partners assured it was a trusted programme for interested Indian nurses. Furthermore, suppliers reported it was more challenging to recruit candidates for IELTS courses.

- **Screening Test issues**.
  Significant levels of resource were spent on baseline testing, despite most candidates being 'Route A' candidates. Also, issues of alignment between the RST and BST provided by British Council caused significant delay, resulting in damaged confidence, among candidates and suppliers, in the British Council English language course. Issues were moreover experienced due to the mode of delivery used for the British Council BST (e.g., duration, examination conditions requirements). Issues of alignment prompted an internal review at British Council to reassess candidates, considering the low pass rates relative to the OET BST. British Council Aptis testing was also expensive, so using an alternative BST supplier in future programmes would be advised.
- **Pandemic-induced transition to online delivery.**
  It became apparent that many candidates had limited IT literacy and needed further support to engage with online provision and/or testing. Nurses reported difficulties attending group sessions due to (a) poor Wi-Fi, (b) work commitments (e.g., shift times), and (c) travel requirements. Future work involving online provision should thus consider how to mitigate against this.
- **Evaluation and monitoring data collection issues.**
  Suppliers were unable to sufficiently meet HEE data reporting requirements. This hindered the scope of evaluation and monitoring available throughout the programme. Relatedly, suppliers based in India did not necessarily abide by data protection rules consistent with UK law, subsequently making data collection problematic. Thus, developing a more pragmatic and culturally sensitive approach would be advisable in future work. The coronavirus pandemic, alongside the decision by the DHSC to remove funding for this programme, negatively impacted monitoring and evaluation processes too.
- **Access to Test Data.**
  Difficulties were encountered in accessing candidates English language test results. This was caused by (a) candidates needing to consent for test results to be automatically shared with HEE, many of which chose not to do, and (b) partners operating cautiously in response to GDPR laws. Future programmes should reflect basic report requirements in contractual agreements and ensure a common understanding of GDPR laws.

Organisational Learning

- **Incentivisation strategy.**
  Future work should develop a more effective incentivisation strategy for partners and suppliers, ensuring that financial outputs correspond to project milestones. Relevant lessons for partners and suppliers are provided below:
  - **Partners:** Unlike within OET contractual arrangements, the British Council course payment per candidate did not include relearn opportunities. Therefore, sufficient incentives may not have been in place to ensure candidates successfully completed their course on their first try (further payment would be received from HEE for further relearn opportunities by British Council). Given the commercial orientation of British Council, this was a limitation of the supplier strategy adopted in this programme.
  - **Suppliers:** Suppliers received £150 for each nurse attending their first study day and a further £2,368 (excl. VAT) when each nurse starts work at an NHS hospital trust in England. Given the considerable administrative burden placed on suppliers to support nurses to complete their English language programme, it is questionable whether suppliers were adequately incentivised to support nurses through to successful course completion. Furthermore, suppliers were not adequately incentivised to recruit Route B candidates. This is because supporting prospective candidates to complete the RST and BST offered no guarantee of enrolment, and subsequent payment. Most suppliers therefore decided to focus their efforts on recruiting nurses who could enrol as Route A candidates, offering immediate enrolment, assurance that candidates were committed to the programme, and thus lowering risk of wasted efforts.

- **Procurement.**
  Procuring the programme from a single partner and supplier (e.g., OET and ODEPC) may be a more effective alternative delivery model in future work. This would ensure consistency across all course delivery and streamline programme delivery, using an effective incentivisation strategy to ensure the single partner delivered strong programme outcomes. This was the original intention of the programme before DHSC funding was removed.
- **Nurse recruitment pipeline.**
  As was began during this programme, future work should endeavour to create a robust pipeline of nurses, by working with in-country nursing colleges for example, to ensure sufficient enrolment to the programme and maximise outcomes. This could establish links with providers of nursing training where average levels of English language proficiency are high, so that suitable nurses are available for the implementation of a similar English language programme. This would likely create a more cost-effective programme, producing stronger outcomes for HEE, its stakeholders, and the participating nurses. However, demonstratable clinical experience, a key expectation of NHS trusts' Nursing Directors in shortlisting nurses for interview, needs to be integrated into any future proposed recruitment strategy. Lastly, recruitment pipelines could be designed targeting areas of practice where NHS trusts have reported recruitment difficulties, such as in the recruitment of Mental Health Nurses. This would contrast with how this programme operated, where Indian nurses were able to apply if they had six months post-qualification work experience, irrespective of area of practice.

Conclusion

The India English language Programme aimed to contribute to HM Government pledge to increase overall nurses working in the English NHS by 50,000 through funding English language provision to support Indian nurses to meet NMC English language proficiency requirements. Whilst initially designed as a larger programme aimed at the international recruitment of qualified nurses into the English NHS, the DHSC decided to remove long-term funding from the programme in late 2020, disrupting the scope and implementation of the programme.

HEE worked in partnership with a number of stakeholders, both in India, nationally and elsewhere, to recruit Indian nurses meeting NMC clinical standards, yet slightly below English language requirements (CEFR C2), onto high-quality English language provision. In light of the coronavirus pandemic the programme was significantly disrupted, prompting all provision and examinations to transition to online delivery and causing ongoing delays to key programme timeframes (e.g., examination dates).

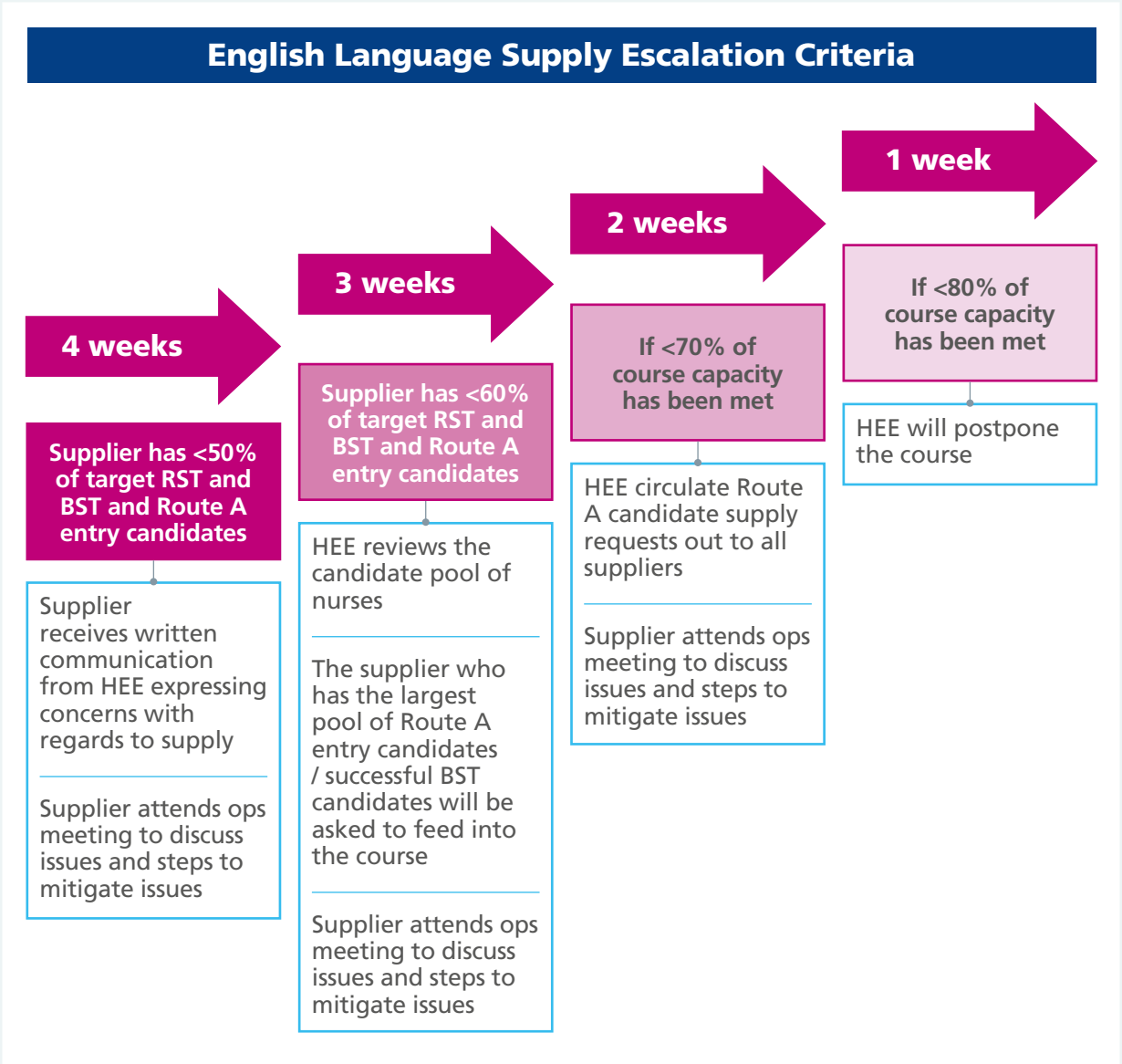
Nonetheless, 223 Indian nurses completed the English language course, enabling them to undertake an English language examination. A total of 46 candidates (21%) attained the necessary level of English language proficiency for NMC registration, enabling them to work as registered nurses in the English NHS. Of those who did not achieve the required level of English language proficiency at this stage, 81 enrolled onto OET relearn provision providing a second opportunity to attain NMC English language proficiency standards. A total of 43 candidates went on to attain an English language Proficiency level at CEFR C2 or above, representing a pass rate of 54% for relearn provision.

Thus, the India English language Programme delivered a total of 89 qualified Indian nurses to work in the English NHS, providing highly qualified nurses with unique skills and experience to improve local NHS health services, at a total cost of £4,139 per nurse. Of these, only 18 did not choose to enrol on the Global Learners Programme (GLP), meaning 71 Indian nurses are currently in the process of coming to the UK to work in the NHS (see appendix item 11 for more information).

Appendices

Appendix Item 1: English Language Supply Escalation Criteria

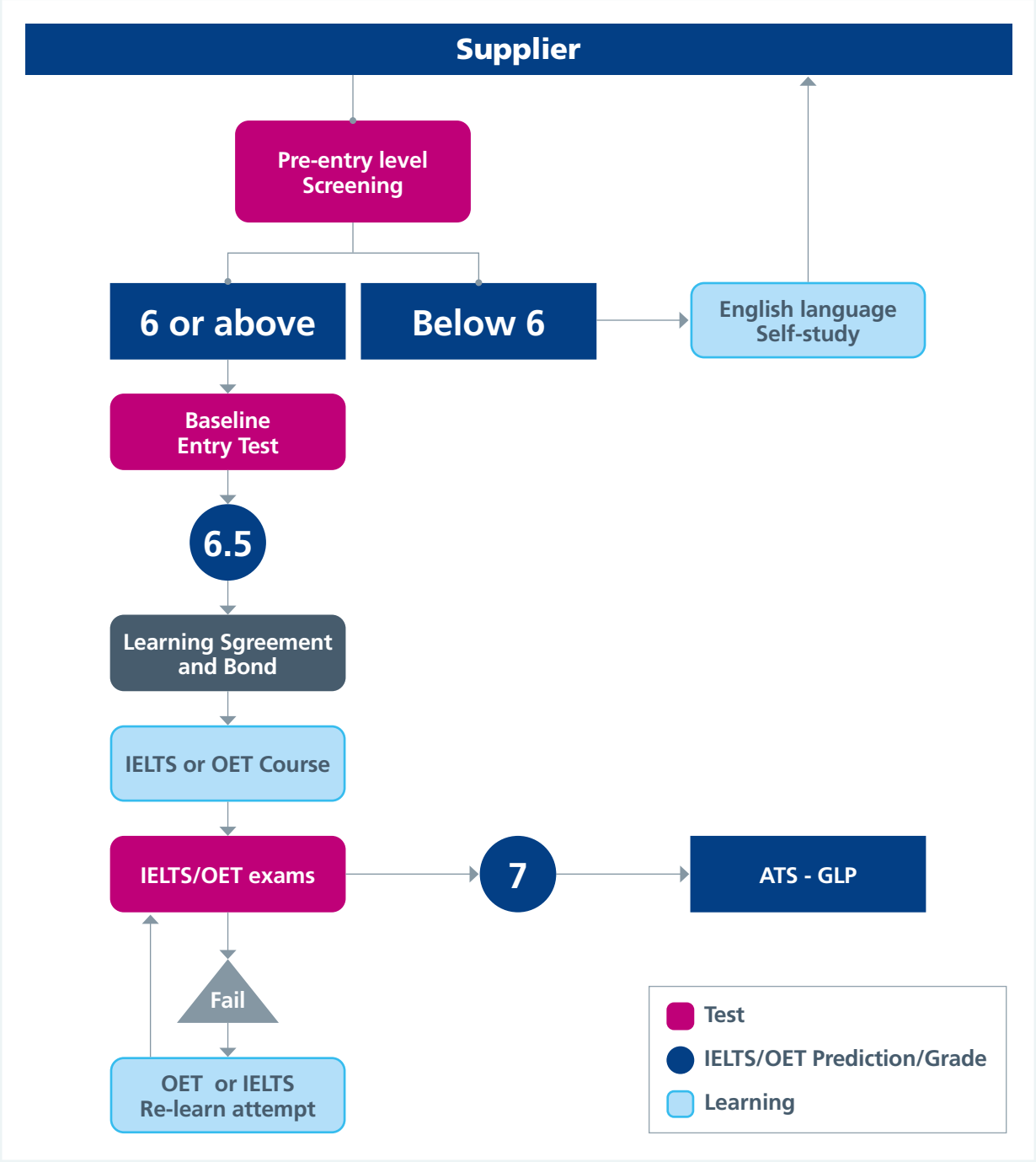
Figure 2: Escalation Criteria



Appendix Item 2: Student English Language Programme Journey

Figure 3 displays the programme journey for candidates who were unable to enter the programme via a prior examination transcript demonstrating eligibility (Route A). However, it is important to note that the stages following the 'Learning Agreement and Bond' were identical for both Route A and Route B candidates.

Figure 3: Student English Language Programme Journey



Appendix Item 3: Supplier Selection and Responsibilities

At project inception, an initial recruitment target of 1,600 places on the programme was set, meaning that an estimated 160,000 nurses were required to complete the RST over the 12-month pilot. Although the approach to programme delivery and overall timeframes changed in light of the DHSC funding review, the same suppliers and method of recruitment was used.

Trusted suppliers with a track record of working with the HEE GLP were used to recruit Indian nurses onto this programme. Partnerships with five suppliers were formed initially:

- Overseas Development & Employment Consultants (ODEPC)
- Apollo Medskills
- Recruit 2 Healthcare
- Trained Nurses Association of India (TNAI)
- INSCOL Healthcare

Each of the above were moreover chosen in recognition of either (a) their track record in effectively recruiting nurses onto the Global Learners Programme (GLP) or (b) working in partnership with the HEE team.[11] In addition, the following reasons informed the selection of the five suppliers, assessed via an internal procurement framework and due diligence framework:

- Positive GLP candidate feedback regarding their experiences and support received from each supplier.
- Collectively, the suppliers have a presence in difference Indian states, which aligns with HEE's goal to increase its presence across the country.
- Each supplier had demonstrated capacity to run English language programmes via their own in-house delivery models.
- All suppliers had demonstrated an ability to source adequate numbers of nurses onto English language programmes.
- Each supplier had demonstrated an understanding and engaged in the promotion of the values NHS and HEE values.
- All could meet the GDPR and data flow requirements for processing candidate applications and evaluations.
- Presence and links within the state they were recruiting from.
- Commitment to recruiting nurses directly and not subcontracting the recruitment of nurses to other suppliers.

[11] The one exception to this is Apollo which was chosen based on its prior reliable line of communication to HEE and its status as one of the largest hospital chains in India with an unparalleled infrastructure and a large pool of nurses to recruit from.

Suppliers were tasked with sifting of applications and subsequent rigorous screening of candidates' documentation to ensure all candidates enrolled were eligible for the English language programme. To achieve this, all suppliers implemented in-country recruitment programmes to source nurses, check identity documents and thereafter supported candidates with accessing baseline and rapid screening tests.

An addition supplier, Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences (RGU), Bengaluru working in partnership with an Education Facilitation Service, was contracted to recruit nurses who had completed their nursing degrees and, following six months of work experience, could be eligible for the GLP programme. Specifically, the RGU service would co-ordinate and work with the HEE team to perform the following duties:

- Liaise with RGU to source nurses using HEE marketing material.
- Facilitate RSTs and BSTs.
- Collect signed learning agreements from the nurses committing to join the NHS upon course completion.
- Record absences.

Table 5 details the number of candidates onboarded by each supplier during the programme.

Table 5: Number of RST, BST, & Enrolled Candidates by Route Type (%)

	RST Candidates**		Route A Candidates		Route B Candidates		Enrolled Candidates	
	N	% of Column Total	N	% of Column Total	N	% of Column Total	N	% of Column Total
Apollo Medskills	520	32	25	12	6	13	31	12
TNAI	383	23	37	18	20	43	57	23
ODEPC	375	23	108	53	2	4	110	43
INSCOL Healthcare	208	13	12	6	12	26	24	9
RGU	118	7	2	1	3	7	5	2
Recruit to Healthcare	35	2	19	9	3	7	22	9
Total	**1639**		**203**		**46***		**249**	

Percentages have been rounded and may not equal 100.
*10 individuals passing a BST did not progress onto English language training.
**Data applies to all tests taken between July 1st and December 8th 2020.

A second phase of onboarding, as part of the initial 12-month programme schedule, was planned to commence in late 2020, however this was not completed as a consequence of the DHSC funding review.

Appendix Item 4: Due Diligence Process for Programme Suppliers

Suppliers supporting the delivery of the India English language Programme were subjected to a rigorous internal due diligence process before final decisions on recruitment were made. A dedicated in-house team conducted an assessment of prospective suppliers consistent with broader NHS procurement processes (e.g., financial, reputational). Further information on the approach taken is provided below.

The approach was to have a phased procurement approach with suppliers selected in each phase based on their history, reputation, reliability, and experience of working with the Global Learners Programme (GLP). Initially 5 suppliers were selected, followed by a further 5 that were selected following an Inward Migration Board meeting in September, with suppliers required to submit an Expression of Interest to HEE GHP. This second stage in the phased procurement commenced but was never completed due to the change in approach of the programme (see page 5).

The key to the successful delivery of the English language programme and to support HEE to capture learning and respond both quickly and flexibly to issues was to work with suppliers that had already completed the approval process with the Global Learners Programme (GLP). This meant that HEE would work with suppliers who have a proven track record of working effectively either through the supply of nurses onto the GLP or through a proven track record of effective communication with the HEE team.

Suppliers were required to have the administrative capacity with infrastructure in India to support the pilot activity and would be able to support nurse recruitment throughout India. The initial suppliers were focused on the following States: Kerala, New Delhi, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Telangana, Assam and Maharashtra.

The scope of work that the suppliers were required to undertake included (a) sifting candidate applications to the English language programmes, (b) conduct rigorous screening of nurses' documentation to ensure they are eligible for a place on the programme, (c) and undertake candidates' screening tests. Moreover, the suppliers were required to run in-country recruitment programmes to source nurses, check identity documents, and support candidates with accessing the RST and BST.

For the second cohort of the programme, with English language courses planned to commence in March 2021, a further five suppliers were to be recruited in order to ensure that there was a consistent supply of nurses. From November 2020 an invitation to submit an expression of Interest was requested from a further five suppliers with the planning underway to begin the onboarding process. However, during December 2020 the invitation was withdrawn following a review of the programme by the DHSC, as at this stage all candidates had been recruited to the programme by the original five suppliers.

Appendix Item 5: RST & BST Information

This appendix item provides information the numbers of candidates passing the RST at each CEFR grade and figures on the number of RST taken, in addition to number of passes and pass rates by test and supplier.

Table 6: RST Results

Grade	N	%
C1	115	7
B2	528	32
B1	638	39
A2	302	18
A1	0	N/A
Pre-A1	56	3
Total	**1,639**	

Source: British Council. Data applies to all tests taken between July 1st and December 8th 2020. Percentages have been rounded and may not equal 100.

Table 7: BST Passes and Pass Rate by Programme Supplier

Test & Supplier	Tests (N)	Passes (N)	Pass Rate (%)
Aptis	**149**	**31**	**21**
TNAI	68	20	29
Apollo	49	3	6
RGU	11	2	18
ODEPC	8	2	25
INSCOL	7	3	43
R2H	6	1	17
CEPT	**97**	**23**	**24**
Apollo	33	3	9
INSCOL	27	10	37
TNAI	25	7	28
R2H	6	2	33
RGU	6	1	17
Total	**245**	**56**	**23**

Percentages have been rounded and may not equal 100.

Of note is the large reduction in the number of BST tests completed relative to RST. The programme team contacted all RST candidates who chose not to proceed to complete a BST to understand their reasoning. Only 14 responded to our request for information. The reasons given were personal reasons (e.g., family problems), no interest in pursuing the programme and a career in the UK, and desire to pursue a English language examination at one's own pace and cost. Additional factors the programme team have been made aware of which influenced whether to progress onto the BST included:

- The BST regarded as too difficult and acquired a bad reputation in light of the number of candidates failing, which causing many to withdraw.
- Administrative difficulties with the BSTs undermined confidence in the test and process.
- There were scheduling issues for the Aptis test because British Council held only one set of examinations per month. This compared to OET which offered more opportunities to sit the exam.

Appendix Item 6: Candidate Information

Table 8: Candidate Demographics

Demographic	Group	N	%
Sex	Male	72	18
	Female	323	82
State	Kerala	140	35
	Punjab	39	10
	Haryana	17	4
	Tamil Nadu	42	11
	Delhi	32	8
	New Delhi	18	5
	Maharashtra	22	6
	Karnataka	15	4
	Telangana	8	2
	Other Indian States	62	16
Education	Basic Nursing BSc	228	58
	General Nursing & Midwifery Diploma	72	18
	Post Basic Nursing BSc	54	14
	Masters	38	10
	Doctoral & Post-Doctoral	3	<1
Religion	Christianity	217	55
	Hinduism	135	34
	Sikhism	14	4
	Islam	11	3
	Other (incl. 9 did not disclose)	18	5
Employment Status During Course	F/T Employment	300	76
	Unemployed	49	12
	P/T Employment	38	10
	Other & Don't Know	8	2
Total		**395***	

*All BST and Route A candidates were invited to participate in this survey (N = 498). A total of 395 candidates responded, representing a response rate of 73%.
Percentages have been rounded and may not equal 100.

Appendix Item 7: Course Start Dates

Table 9: Course start dates by month

Course Start Date	N	%
October	43	17
November	60	24
December	145	58
Total	**248**	**100**

Percentages have been rounded and may not equal 100.

Table 10: Course dates by course code

Course Code	Start Date	Finish Date
BC3, BC4, BC7, BC12	26.10.2020	06.02.2021
FMS5/31 PT	30.11.2020	19.03.2021
FM1	21.12.2020	22.01.2021
FMS9	07.12.2020	16.03.2021
BC15	07.12.2020	05.04.2021
Lite 06/14	21.12.2020	09.04.2021
FMS17	21.12.2020	16.04.2021
BC15 Extra Sessions	10.02.2021	03.03.2021

Appendix Item 8: English Language Provision Quality Standards

Quality Assurance Framework

HEE in conjunction with language specialists at The University of Salford developed the English language Academic Assurance Quality Framework which established the minimum academic standards English language providers are expected to meet and maintain whilst providing HEE endorsed English language programmes. This framework supplemented partner and provider organisation internal Quality assurance processes which are undertaken systematically and consistently as part of the HEE QA process. The criteria are grouped under three themes: Quality of teaching and learning inside the classroom, Quality of teaching and learning outside the classroom and Quality Assurance and Enhancement.

In the initial plan HEE would apply the criteria of quality within each theme and to each institution on the annual QA visitation. In preparation of the visit each individual institution would be required to submit documentation evidencing that they meet each of these criteria.

Quality Assurance operationalisation changed from the original plan to the changed approach following the review by the Department of Health and Social Care and also in recognition that travel restrictions as a result of Covid made it traveling to perform QA visits impractical.

As a result, QA would be based on monitoring at the regular partner and provider boards and be interested in the following specific areas:

- Quality of Teaching and Learning Inside the Classroom
- Class sizes.
- Minimum teaching hours – with a teacher in classes, workshops or tutorials.
- Classroom activity – task based and feedback rich.
- Application of NHS core values.
- OET Specific – all courses begin with a needs assessment.
- Students have access to and are given instruction to use supplementary learning materials.

QA that was discussed extensively in the discussion around the scope of were:

- Quality of Teaching and Learning Outside the Classroom:
  - Classes are organised around a quality syllabus available to all students.
  - Classes are planned in accordance with the syllabus with a scheme of work kept for each class.
  - Demonstrable time for teachers to plan lessons, assessments and the provision of feedback for students.
  - For every 100 hours of classroom instruction, students receive a minimum of 30 minutes of individual tutorials in which they can discuss individual progress and feedback with a tutor.
- Quality Assurance and Enhancement:
  - For OET All teachers hold a minimum TEFL-I level qualification. An OET Expert will assist with syllabus development and evaluation.
  - There is a clear need to establish what is working best during the course and where, therefore the provider will be required monitor and report on the operational running of the course (e.g. the progression of learners and the number of cancelled or delayed courses) and lessons learnt. The provider is required to report on critical indicators on a weekly basis to HEE.
- OET Programme Evaluation:
  - Monitoring and evaluation of English language Courses in accordance with the Quality Assurance Framework.

Appendix Item 9: Programme Costings

Table 11 below provides summary information on programme costings, including all candidates who enrolled onto the programme. Financial performance data is broken down by partner, with programme costings available per enrolled candidate, examination taken, and passing candidate.

Table 11: Programme costings by partner

		Total Costs	Enrolled Candidates	Cost Per Candidate	Completed Exams	Cost Per Exam	Passing Candidates	Cost Per Pass
BC		97,239	87	1,118	73	1,332	12	8,103
OET	Total	271,145	162	1,674	150	1,808	77	3,521
	FMS	231,363	120	1,928	118	1,961	60	3,856
	LITE	39,782	42	947	32	1,243	17	2,340
Total		**368,384**	**249**	**1,485**	**223**	**1,652**	**89**	**4,139**

All costings are in Pounds Sterling (£) and have been rounded.

Appendix Item 10: Candidate Testimonial Data

This appendix item displays a number of testimonies of the India English language programme from IELTS and OET candidates to demonstrate the positive impact it has had on their development and careers.

> I would love to mention my tutor Mrs. Reshmi.VM, because she is also one reason I could keep up with the course. Not just she was really friendly yet professional but best in her field.
>
> I still can't forget her smiling face and polite nature. Even the corrections which she used to make were so polite and genuine in approach that I kind of adapted her behaviour when it came to talking, the body language and her way of speaking was so beautiful that I fell in love with the speaking part (I would say I used to mimic the way she would speak and even accent also I would copy).
>
> I used to practice even more because of her and later I got a score of whopping 8 bands in speaking. And now I believe that a good teacher really makes a big difference. Thank you so much for hiring best people in the domain."
>
> **IELTS Candidate, currently working in a North East & Yorkshire NHS Trust**

> I was guided by an excellent faculty who not only provided me free classes but also helped me to clear my IELTS.
>
> The classes were very beneficial as it covered the whole aspect in language field, predominantly stressing the writing and speaking part. We were assigned many tasks to complete as well as to practice with the co members which proved a great help in increasing our confidence in speaking.
>
> My teacher was very supportive and did routine correction and helped me to understand my weakness and strengths in the language.
>
> Now I'm closer to my dream of working in the United Kingdom."
>
> **IELTS Candidate, currently working in a North West NHS Trust**

> Your course was the right one for me where I was directed and motivated in the right direction by means of group discussions and during classes. It was a different and enjoyable experience altogether.
>
> Your training was also valuable when I gave the interview as I felt confident and at ease while answering.
>
> Thank you again for helping me in my nursing career."

IELTS Candidate, currently working in a South West NHS Trust

> Before joining the global learners programme, I was really out of hope since I lost two attempts of OET. The most important factor I noticed in the GLP is that HEE and OET premium providers were conducting the course. It was a different experience for me under CILA academy because the classes were extremely helpful. Moreover, trainers in the CILA were always approachable.
>
> Finally, I achieved [a] desirable score to [come to] the UK. Even after the result, interviews and processing to NHS were very fast and the assistance provided by ODEPC was excellent also. Thank you HEE, OET and ODEPC for given me a wonderful opportunity to participate in this program, which aid[ed] me to chase my dreams."

OET Candidate, currently working in a Midlands NHS Trust

"It was my long time ambition to work in the UK and explore my carrier over there. After three failed attempts of OET exam I totally disappointed and I had lost my confidence to write the exam again.

Unexpectedly, one day I had seen an advertisement in the social media regarding the OET course, which was arranged by HEE and OET through global learners programme. It was a new experience for me to learn English language from the basic level. Also the trainers from the CILA and support from the ODEPC throughout this course was fantastic.

By the grace of the God finally I cleared my OET exam with UK score. Even after the result, interviews and processing were very fast. ODEPC and HEE have provided all the guidance to complete the process as quickly as possible. I would like to thank you HEE and ODEPC for making my dreams come true."

OET Candidate, currently pursuing employment in a Midlands NHS Trust via GLP

"The experience with HEE was amazing. I chose the program without much knowledge about it. However, during my journey at OET, I understood the vital role of HEE. I was impressed with the teacher from Insync who distinctly taught us and surprisingly I cleared my OET in the first attempt after joining the programme, although I underwent a caesarean section. I am grateful to you and the team.

I have one suggestion,

Could you please guide the candidates until they reach their trust under GLP? Because I waited a month for my initial NMC registration just because I did not register with my second name and now, I have to wait again on the second stage just because of my DBS check. If I would have known about it I would have started the process at the same time as PCC.

I appreciate your guidance and support."

OET Candidate, has accepted an offer to work in a South East NHS Trust

Appendix Item 11: Successful Candidates Status

Table 12 below provides information on the candidates who completed the India English language Programme, attaining the requisite NMC English language proficiency level.

Table 12: India English Language Programme Status

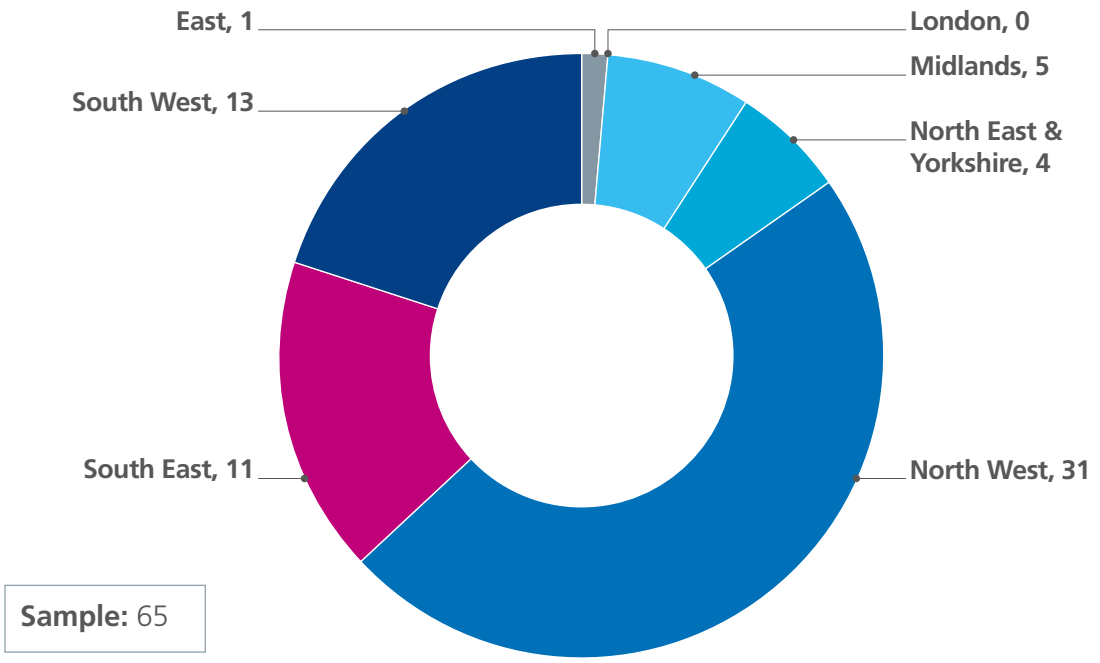
Status	Description	N
Pre-employment Checks	Waiting for the trust to issue COS	30
Passed but did not apply to GLP	Candidate did not progress onto GLP upon completion of the EL programme	18
NHS Job Offer Accepted	Candidate needs to submit compliance documents to the trust	14
Interview	Candidate hasn't yet attended interview	8
Appointed	Arrived in the UK	6
Unsuccessful at Interview	Candidate has been interviewed but was unsuccessful	6
Successful at Interview	Offer letter yet to be issued to candidate by the trust	4
Pre-employment Checks Completed	Certificate of Sponsorship has been issued, not yet arrived in the UK	3
Total		**89**

This shows that only 18 candidates chose not to progress onto the GLP and currently 6 candidates have been appointed to NHS roles, with the remaining 65 nurses at different stages of their journey into the NHS. Nurses that are unsuccessful in entering the NHS will be notified via their agents of alternative routes and pathways into the NHS. This aims to maximise outcomes for the programme in terms of entry into the NHS.

Figure 4 displays the distribution of candidates who progressed onto the GLP across the seven English NHS regions, excluding those that are known to have been unsuccessful at interview (N=6).

Further examinations for some candidates are planned for later in the year. However, at this time the GLP will no longer be in operation. Any successful candidates will similarly be provided advice and guidance from the programme team, via agents, of the options available to them to come to work in the NHS.

Figure 4: NHS region destination data for India English Language Programme GLP candidate



Health Education England, September 2022