

MEDIA RELEASE

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New collaboration set to improve English language skills of migrating nurses

Patient safety and quality of care is at the heart of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by healthcare educator, Health Careers International (HCI) and English testing organisation, the Occupational English Test (OET) to ensure nurses migrating to Australia to train, register and work are proficient in English.

Health Careers' vocational education division, the Institute of Health and Nursing Australia (IHNA), has provided training to more than seven thousand overseas nurses who have gained registration in Australia and helped to address a very significant skills shortage in the Australian healthcare system.

OET has been providing healthcare-specific English testing for the past 30 years, and the test is recognised by all major healthcare regulators in Australia as proof of English proficiency for registration in 12 healthcare professions.

It has been predicted¹ that by 2025 the nursing workforce gap will have opened to between 80,000 and 147,000 nurses. As the Australian healthcare system rushes to fill this gap with foreign trained nurses, a significant factor affecting patient safety and quality of care continues to be errors caused by language skills and miscommunication².

Together, the work of HCI in preparing overseas nurses for service and OET, benefits the Australian economy by helping to fill the nursing workforce gap with nurses who are proficient in English.

The MOU was signed by both parties on 11 May 2016, and sets out five key areas for collaboration, including the development of courses and embedded English language content to help students acquire healthcare-specific English language proficiency.

HCI founder and CEO, Bijo Kunnumpurath says: "HCI is committed to providing the highest standard of health education in Australia and OET is committed to ensuring healthcare professionals have work-ready language skills to provide safe and quality care."

"We are delighted to sign this MOU and integrate OET preparation throughout our courses so that our graduates can provide the best quality care to patients," he concludes.

Ma-annjit Singh qualified as a nurse in the Philippines and migrated to Australia on a student visa with the aim gaining registration as a nurse. She says that taking the OET test before starting HCI's Initial Registration for Overseas Nurses course made it much easier.

¹ In Health Workforce Australia, 2012, <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/australias-future-health-workforce-nurses>, which is cited in many news articles

² For example, <http://www.jointcommissioninternational.org/human-factors-analysis-in-patient-safety-systems/>

“I’m working as an agency nurse until I get permanent residency and I’m very confident that the way I’m communicating is correct. OET gave us scenarios that we really do use and it made the transition to working in Australia much easier.”

CBLA CEO, Sujata Stead says: “Signing this memorandum of understanding demonstrates our commitment to working with organisations who share the common vision of supporting healthcare professionals to successfully contribute within the Australian healthcare system.”

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About Health Careers International

Health Careers (HC) is a group of divisions and corporate entities owned by Health Careers International Pty Ltd. It specialises in providing quality, careers focused education for healthcare professionals around the world. HCI has trained over 7,000 overseas registered nurses for service in Australia through its Initial Registration of Overseas Nurses (IRON) program, has provided training and education to thousands of Enrolled Nurses through its Diploma of Nursing and a variety of other vocational and postgraduate education, training and continuing professional development programs from campuses in Melbourne, Sydney, Perth and through partnerships internationally in India, Philippines and GCC. Online and flexible learning, supported by simulation training in a nursing laboratory and Professional work placements at healthcare facilities allow our students to balance study and work commitments.

One of HC’s seven divisions is the Institute of Health and Nursing Australia, a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) that provides quality education and training in nursing and healthcare. IHNA’s courses are approved by the Australian Standards and Quality Agency (ASQA) and its Diploma of Nursing is accredited as a course leading to Enrolled Nurse registration by the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (ANMAC). IHNA is focused on promoting education that positively impacts patient and community health and welfare. IHNA is also the division through which HC provides the Initial Registration of Overseas Nurses (IRON), which has a 100% successful graduate employment rate.

<http://www.healthcareers.edu.au/about>

About OET

The Occupational English Test (OET) assesses the language proficiency of healthcare professionals seeking to register and work in an English-speaking environment. OET is accepted as proof of English proficiency by major health regulators in Australia, New Zealand and Singapore for registration, healthcare educators and the Australian Department of Immigration for all visa categories. Established 30 years ago, OET is validated by ongoing research, and regularly updated by Cambridge English assessment experts in consultation with healthcare specialists.

OET is owned by Cambridge Boxhill Language Assessment Trust (CBLA), a venture between Cambridge English and Box Hill Institute. Cambridge English Language Assessment is a not-for-profit department of the University of Cambridge with over 100 years of experience in assessing the English language. Box Hill Institute is a leading Australian vocational and higher education provider, active both in Australia and overseas.

<http://www.occupationalenglishtest.com.au/about>

OET and healthcare education

OET embedding is a bespoke service provided to healthcare educators. It has been developed to ensure students graduating from healthcare courses are proficient in workplace English and ready for both registration and a successful healthcare career.

OET is the English test specifically designed for the healthcare sector and test materials reflect real healthcare scenarios. Embedding OET creates a contextualised learning environment where students develop English skills directly relevant to the course content. For example, during a unit on asthma management, English skills can be taught using a scenario involving asthma.

Four language skills are tested by OET, writing, speaking, reading and listening. During a healthcare course, such as HCl's IRON program, English can be taught throughout the course to build language skills and confidence before clinical placement, culminating in students being able to take the OET test to become registration and work-ready on graduation.

Photograph



Photo: *Sujata Stead*, CEO, Cambridge Box Hill Language Assessment (owner of OET) and *Bijo Kunnumpurath*, CEO & Managing Director, Health Careers (Middle), sign Memorandum of Understanding with key areas of collaboration including embedded English language content to help students acquire healthcare-specific English language proficiency. Senior members of both organisations were present for the signing.