



OET

King's Commercial

Improving OET Pass Rates

A Structured Approach



Althea D'Oyley Bowen

Head of Nursing Recruitment
at King's Commercial



NHS

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King's College Hospital
NHS Foundation Trust

King's Commercial, the commercial arm of King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, provides expertise in international recruitment and is a great advocate for the Occupational English Test (OET).

'It's widely recognised and uses real healthcare scenarios, rather than general examples, so nurses feel more confident when they are preparing for and taking the test,' says Althea D'Oyley-Bowen, Head of Nursing Recruitment.

'It's still a challenging test but the language is more familiar to nurses, and test content comes from their day to day practice. OET also helps them develop the language skills they need for success in their career.'

King's Commercial actively supports their overseas recruits as they prepare for OET, to help them gain the required Grade B minimum as quickly as possible. Althea's team has developed a streamlined process which includes initial language assessment, self-study, regular reviews and mock tests: 'The process takes around three to six months, depending on starting language ability', says Althea, 'but we are reducing these timescales by introducing policies designed to help students pass the test, and currently the pass rate is around 80 per cent.' To help address the additional challenges of preparation times and costs, King's Commercial also works with in-country agents and tuition partners to support nurses before they leave for the UK (see case study), and also provides financial support for test

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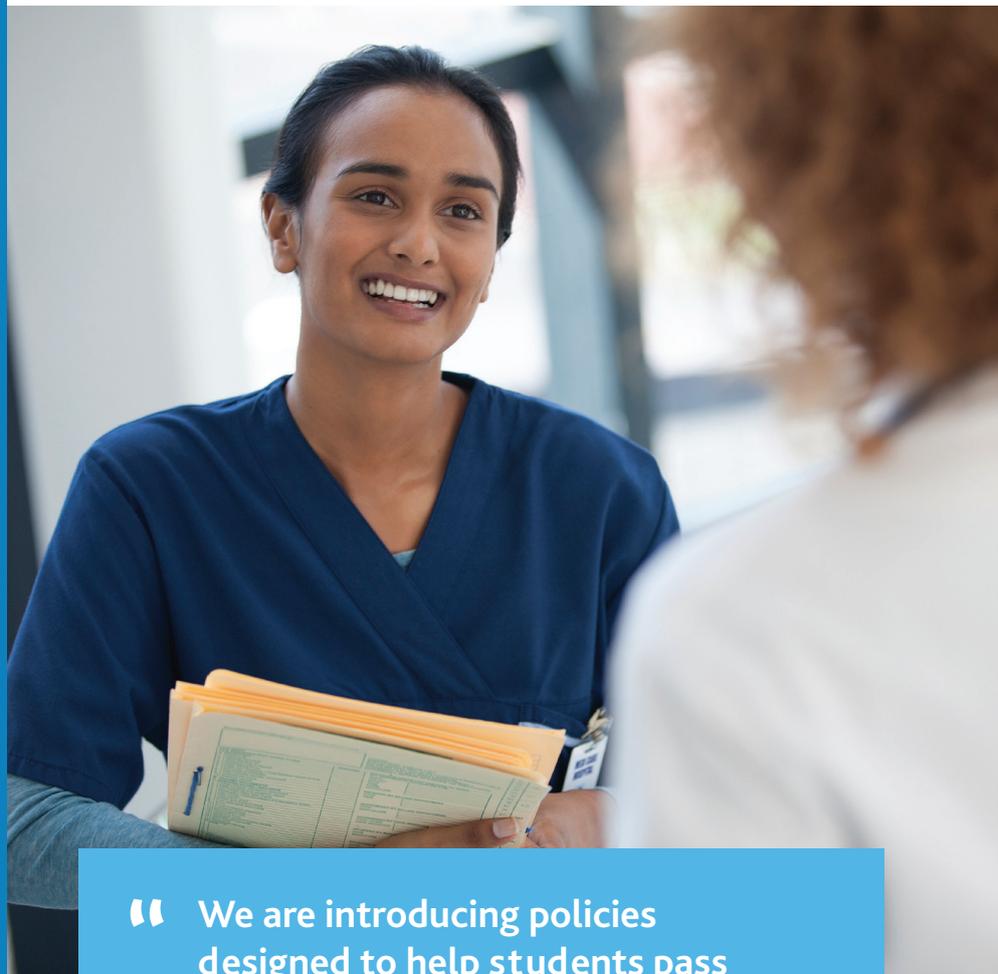
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preparation and sittings. 'As soon as OET was formally recognised we saw many more nurses opt to take the test, both first time students and those who had failed other tests multiple times,' comments Althea. 'We now have a lot of nurses in the OET pipeline - we're working with them to make sure they are as prepared as possible, and are looking forward to more positive conversions to OET and more positive results.'

Case study: trialling in-country OET preparation

King's Commercial has been working with approved OET-training provider Specialist Language Courses on the trial of an in-country, 10 week OET preparation course for Indian and Filipino nurses, to be completed prior to arriving in the UK. The trial programme comprised two hours study every day, together with online tutor support, interactive lessons and webinars, and access to preparation resources. Progress was tracked and any problems, such as work commitments, were immediately addressed. Of the eight nurses taking part in the trial, six passed first time with a Grade B and the remaining two were supported until they also passed. The trial gave King's Commercial a deeper understanding of how recruits respond to this type of in-country preparation, and also how to adapt a training course to meet different needs. 'Identifying where candidates need help, and collaborating with approved language specialists on tailored preparation courses can all help improve OET pass rates,' says Althea. 'Overseas nurses are very committed, so factoring this type of support into recruitment timelines will help nurses progress faster, and can really improve retention later on.'



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