

Health Care Assistant (HCA) Education Program

Minimum HCA Program Entry Requirements

These are the *minimum* program entry requirements that must be met by applicants before they are enrolled in a recognized BC HCA Program. Evidence of meeting these minimum requirements must be available in student files prior to their acceptance.

Post-secondary institutions (PSIs) may set admissions standards that exceed these requirements (e.g. setting higher program entry requirements). PSIs may also require applicants to submit prerequisites for HCA practice education prior to starting the program.

Program Entry Requirements

Evidence of both of the following must be provided prior to acceptance:

1. Proof of Grade 10 completion (or equivalent)¹ **OR** mature student status²
2. Proof of meeting **HCA Program Entry - English Language Competency Requirements**
 - For applicants with three years of full-time instruction in English*: English 10 completion or equivalent
 - For applicants with less than three years of full-time instruction in English*: Standardized English language proficiency test score.

*Defined as three (3) years of full-time secondary and/or post-secondary education at a recognized institution³ on the list of [Approved English Speaking Countries](#). Secondary education will be considered starting from grade 8. English as a Second Language (ESL) courses will not be considered.

Note: If the program is accepting international students, a clear police certificate from country of origin must also be included as a program entry requirement⁴.

¹ To determine equivalency, BC PSIs may consult [ICES Country Specific Information](#) or [ICAS International Education Guides](#)

² Where a post-secondary institution (PSI) allows entry based on mature student status, the institution must have a definition/policy in place.

³ Recognized institution: an institution that is in good standing with the Ministry of Education or equivalent in the country of origin.

⁴ HCA students provide care to vulnerable clients in the practice education portion of the program and a clear police certificate from the country of origin is required prior to acceptance into an HCA program (admission requirement). This applies to **all** international HCA program applicants, including those currently residing in Canada. International students must get a police certificate from their home country, regardless of how long they have been residing in Canada. To meet practice education pre-requisites, they are also required to provide an acceptable criminal record check (CRC) from B.C.'s Criminal Records Review Program (CRRP). Educational institutions that accept international students must have policies and procedures for international student admissions (including procedures for obtaining a police certificate). For further information regarding international police checks, go to: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/application/medical-police/police-certificates/how.html>

HCA Program Entry - English Language Competency Requirements

To be accepted into a recognized BC HCA program, applicants are required to demonstrate proficiency in English. Students must be able to communicate effectively in English to be successful in their studies and capable of providing safe and competent care to patients/clients/residents in the work environment during practice education components.

To ensure consistency and quality assurance, institution-created tests are not acceptable for the assessment of HCA program applicants.

English Language Competency Requirements

1. Applicants who provide evidence of three years of full-time instruction in English⁵ must also provide proof of one of the following:
 - a) Completion of Grade 10 English⁶ (or higher). A minimum of a C grade is acceptable.
 - b) Completion of college courses determined to be equivalent to Grade 10 English (or higher) by post-secondary institutions. A minimum of a C grade is acceptable.
 - c) ACCUPLACER Next Generation Test Results: Reading 230, Writing 230 and Writeplacer 4
2. Applicants who cannot provide evidence of three years of full-time instruction in English are required to provide proof of one of the following standardized proficiency tests from an authorized assessment agency.
 - a) [Canadian Language Benchmarks test \(in person or remote\)](#).⁷ Test in the last year. Listening 7, Speaking 7, Reading 6 and Writing 6.
 - b) [Canadian English Language Proficiency Index Program](#) (CELP/IP General). Test in the last two years. Listening 7, Speaking 7, Reading 6 and Writing 6.
 - c) [International English Language Testing System](#) (IELTS Academic, IELTS General or IELTS Academic Online). Test in the last two years. Overall score of 6 with a minimum of 6 in Speaking and Listening and no score lower than 5.5 in Reading and Writing.
 - d) [Canadian Academic English Language Assessment](#) (CAEL or CAEL Online). Test in the last two years. Overall Score of 60, with no section less than 50.
 - e) [The Test of English as a Foreign Language](#) (TOEFL iBT or TOEFL iBT Home Edition). Test in the last two years. Overall score of 76 with no score lower than 20 in Speaking and Listening and no score lower than 18 in Reading and Writing.
 - f) [Pearson Test of English](#) (PTE). Test in the last two years. PTE Academic - Overall score of 50 with no score lower than 50 in Speaking and Listening and no score lower than 45 in Reading and Writing. PTE Core - No score lower than 68 in Speaking, 60 in Listening, 51 in Reading and 60 Writing.

⁵ Applicants must provide a transcript and/or a BC personal education record as evidence of completion of a minimum of **three years** of full-time secondary (inclusive of grade 8) or post-secondary instruction in English. It is expected that the student has taken full time studies with a minimum of 18 credits per academic year (60% courseload). Documentation should indicate completion of a minimum of six semesters with a minimum of 54 credits in total.

⁶ Includes any English Language Arts 10 course or GED indicating completion of the English requirement.

⁷ HCA Educators must ensure that the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) test is conducted at a recognized Language Assessment Centre/Location by a certified CLB language assessor (e.g., CLB Placement Test (CLBPT) completed at a [Centre for Language Benchmarks \(CCLB\) Assessment Centre](#)). Self-assessment tests, e.g., CLB-Online Self-Assessment (OSA) cannot be accepted for HCA program entry.

Please note: In addition to the listed tests, recognized BC HCA Programs have the discretion to admit applicants with one of the following: 1) A CLB Report Card from a LINC Program indicating “Completing” CLB Speaking 7, Listening 7, Reading 7 and Writing 7 AND “Recommended Class Placement” as Speaking 8, Listening 8, Reading 8 and Writing 8; 2) Canadian English Language Benchmark Assessment for Nurses (CELBAN) results (test in the last two years) with the following minimum scores: Speaking 7, Listening 7, Reading 6, Writing 6; 3) Occupational English Test (OET): computer only (test in the last two years) with no score lower than C/280 in Speaking and Listening and no score lower than C/250 in Reading and Writing.

BC HCA English as a Second Language (ESL) Programs (or equivalent)

For PSIs offering a combined ESL HCA program (a minimum of 12 weeks/300 hours of additional program time for English language skills instruction), applicants will require evidence of one of the following test scores when applying for program entry:

- a) [Canadian Language Benchmarks test \(in person or remote\)](#).⁸ Test in the last year. Listening 6, Speaking 6, Reading 5 and Writing 5.
- b) [Canadian English Language Proficiency Index Program](#) (CELPPIP – General). Test in the last two years. Listening 6, Speaking 6, Reading 5 and Writing 5.
- c) [International English Language Testing System](#) (IELTS Academic, IELTS General or IELTS Academic Online). Test in the last two years. Overall score of 5.5 with a minimum of 5.5 in Speaking and Listening and no score lower than 5.0 in Reading and Writing.
- d) [Canadian Academic English Language Assessment](#) (CAEL or CAEL Online). Test in the last two years. Overall Score of 50, with no section less than 40.
- e) [The Test of English as a Foreign Language](#) (TOEFL iBT or TOEFL iBT Home Edition). Test in the last two years. Overall score of 56 with no score lower than 15 in Speaking and Listening and no score lower than 13 in Reading and Writing.
- f) [Pearson Test of English](#) (PTE). Test in the last two years. PTE Academic - Overall score of 40 with no score lower than 40 in Speaking and Listening and no score lower than 35 in Reading and Writing. PTE Core – No score lower than 59 in Speaking, 50 in Listening, 42 in Reading and 51 Writing.

Please note: In addition to the listed tests, BC HCA ESL (or equivalent) Programs have the discretion to admit applicants with one of the following:

- 1) A CLB Report Card from a LINC Program indicating “Completing” CLB Speaking 6, Listening 6, Reading 6 and Writing 6 AND “Recommended Class Placement” as Speaking 7, Listening 7, Reading 7 and Writing 7.
- 2) Canadian English Language Benchmark Assessment for Nurses (CELBAN) results (test in the last two years) with the following minimum scores: Speaking 6, Listening 6, Reading 5, Writing 5.
- 3) Occupational English Test (OET): computer only (test in the last two years) with no score lower than C/250 in Speaking and Listening and no score lower than C/200 in Reading and Writing.

⁸ HCA Educators must ensure that the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) test is conducted at a recognized Language Assessment Centre/Location by a certified CLB language assessor (e.g., CLB Placement Test (CLBPT) completed at a [Centre for Language Benchmarks \(CCLB\) Assessment Centre](#)). Self-assessment tests, e.g., CLB-Online Self-Assessment (OSA) cannot be accepted for HCA program entry.

Approved English-Speaking Countries⁹

The following countries are considered as those with English language systems / institutions, where English is a primary and official language, and the language used for education.

American Samoa	Ghana	Saint Lucia
Anguilla	Gibraltar	Saint Kitts and Nevis
Antigua and Barbuda	Grenada	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
Australia	Guam	Seychelles
Bahamas	Guyana	Sierra Leone
Barbados	Ireland	Singapore
Belize	Jamaica	South Africa
Bermuda	Kenya	Tanzania
Botswana	Lesotho	Trinidad and Tobago
British Virgin Islands	Liberia	Turks and Caicos Islands
Canada	Malta	Uganda
Cayman Islands	Mauritius	United Kingdom
Dominica	Montserrat	United States
Falkland Islands	New Zealand	United States Virgin Islands
Fiji	Nigeria	Zambia
Gambia	Saint Helena	Zimbabwe

⁹ This list has been updated as per [countries that satisfy the English language admission standard](#) for the University of British Columbia