

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, 23 December 2013 12:04 PM  
**To:** Standard Consultation  
**Subject:** CONSULTATION – REGISTRATION STANDARDS: REVIEWS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILL REGISTRATION  
**Attachments:** MOE\_corporate\_brochure.pdf

Dear sir/mdm

## **CONSULTATION – REGISTRATION STANDARDS: REVIEWS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILL REGISTRATION – EXPANDING THE LIST OF RECOGNISED COUNTRIES**

I refer to the board notice dated 25/10/13 on the subject matter mentioned above.

I propose that Singapore should be included in the list of recognised countries.

The recognition of English language skills developed by the native speakers in Singapore generally reflects similar approaches by state and territory health practitioner boards in Australia before National Scheme commenced.

Singapore ranked among the top in Literacy – Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2006.

Bilingualism is a key feature of Singapore education system. The **main medium of instruction in school is ENGLISH**, but all students learn an official Mother Tongue Language.

*“. . .if we were monolingual in our mother tongues, we would not make a living. Becoming monolingual in English would have been a setback. We would have lost our cultural identity, that quiet confidence about ourselves and our place in the world.”* (Mr Lee Kuan Yew – Singapore first Prime Minister, 2000).

Singapore’s bilingual education policy was borne out of a pragmatic need to operate in the global economy using the English language while maintaining the Asian languages and values of our respective cultures.

With English as the main language of instruction in all the subjects except the mother tongue, every Singaporean student -- by the time he or she leaves school -- would be able to communicate in at least two languages. They would be competent and confident enough to use Standard English wherever they are in the world without feeling their own cultural values and language crowded out. The aim of the bilingual education policy is to ensure

that while Singapore remained viable economically all over the world, Singaporeans need not lose their cultural values or identity.

English has been the main medium of instruction in schools since 1987. Singapore's education system promotes and stipulates bilingualism as its core policy so that children pick up at least two languages in schools -- English and their mother tongue. English is the language of commerce, technology and administration while Chinese, Malay or Tamil, enables the children from the different main races to keep in touch with their heritage and cultural values.

English would also be the language that would serve as the *lingua franca* for Singaporeans of different races to bond with one another. Chinese, Malays, Indian and Eurasians can use English as the common vehicle for communication and enter each other's worlds to understand and appreciate one another.

When Singapore became independent from Britain in 1959, we could have easily gone the way of some former colonies and consigned the language of the former rulers to disuse or mangled it into pidgin. The founding fathers of modern Singapore refused to jettison what would serve us well.

In 1966 when the bilingual education policy was adopted, Singapore's First Cabinet foresaw that the future of science and technology would be mostly written in English. Singapore's first Prime Minister, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew knew that competency in the English language from a young age was vital: "If a student is unable to understand a language, then he is unable to receive information or knowledge in that language. It is therefore crucial that a breakthrough must be made in the English Language as early in life as possible." (Lee Kuan Yew, 1982).

That foresight has been paying dividends for Singaporeans. When they go abroad to study in English-speaking countries they have no difficulties following lectures or writing their essays. Singapore's students also excel in international Maths and Science tests conducted in English, faring comparably with their counterparts from many of the English-speaking countries.

In 1979, Mr. Lee launched the Speak Mandarin Campaign to steer Chinese Singaporeans to using a common Chinese language to interact with one another. This would unite the different Chinese dialect groups instead of keeping them compartmentalised and separate. The other racial communities do not have this problem of a common script sounding unfamiliar due to regional or dialectal differences.

The Government has continued to place the priority on all the races being able to get along with one another and there could be no trade-off on that. In the 1991 opening of the Speak Mandarin Campaign, then Prime Minister Mr. Goh Chok Tong stressed this as the cornerstone for nationhood. He said that while the Chinese community should be "tightly knit", it must also be "tolerant and appreciative of other communities' heritage, able to communicate with them in English, and work with them for a common future..."

In the years since the bilingual policy was introduced, generations of Singaporeans have felt confident to engage the world and their fellow Singaporeans of different races using English, while being firmly grounded in their own cultural values through their mother tongues.

In Singapore, English is the official language used in all government bodies, commercial organisations as well as non-profit organisations. All the official websites, documents,

correspondence, legal documents are communicated in English. All signs, which include road signs, directions signs, name of train stations and places, airport signs, clinics signs, hospital signs etc are all written in English.

In view of all the above, I strongly propose those practitioners from Singapore in their submission for registration, if they are able to show documents evidence that they have been receiving primary school and Secondary school education in Singapore (example: school leaving certificates or letter from the schools or confirmation letter from the Ministry Of Education) they should be considered as having met the English Language skill requirement.

Singapore should be included in the list of recognised countries for its English language skill.

I have attached a copy of the information on Singapore Education Sysyem for your easy reference.

Thank You.

Yours sincerely

Ms Ong