

# **Curriculum Design: IELTS Test Prep SEC for IELP Levels 2-3**

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## ***Environmental Analysis***

### **The system**

PSU's Intensive English Language Program (IELP) is an intensive English for academic purposes (EAP) type intensive English program (IEP). IEPs are seen by U.S. universities as important income streams and PSU is no exception. This factor influences decisions at the curriculum design level as well as when deciding what courses are offered. For instance the reason for bringing back the lower level IELTS prep course is because its existence is a great marketing and recruitment tool for potential students who often have deep financial resources, as well as the parents and governments of those students, who often provide those resources. PSU describes the IELP thusly: "Students in the Academic English Program develop their communication ability in four skills areas: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Courses emphasize active, participatory learning that encourages students to use their growing English skills both during class and through assignments that require students to practice their English outside of class hours." (PSU IELP website)

The IELP conducts classes in regular PSU classrooms. The rooms are typically set up with long tables, or desks lined up and pointed towards the front of the room. Almost all PSU classrooms have large whiteboards, sometimes on more than one wall in the room. The classrooms are equipped with technology such as a computer and an overhead projector which is connected to the computer which can be used to display images from the computer. As well some classrooms also have a digital capture device with which paper forms or other physical items and images can be displayed on the screen in the front of the classroom.

### **The IELP has 6 levels (0-5):**

***Pre-Entry:*** Level 0; beginning level courses in reading, writing, grammar, speaking, and listening. These courses help students develop basic oral and written fluency so they can participate in everyday conversations and writing tasks.

***Intermediate:*** Levels 1-3; advance beginner through upper intermediate level courses focus on building fluency and accuracy in speaking, listening, reading, grammar, and writing.

***Advanced:*** Level 4-5; advanced courses in understanding academic lectures, discussion skills, public speaking, English grammar, grammar and editing for academic writing, academic reading & vocabulary, guided research writing, and independent research writing.

Levels 1-5 are scheduled for 18 hrs./week. There are 4 core classes and 1 skills enhancement course (SEC).

The following is an example schedule for a typical IELP student:

Monday/Wednesday/Friday students attend a 2 hour and 20 minute grammar/writing class, as well as a 1 hour reading class. Tuesday/Thursday students attend a 2 hour speaking/listening class, and once a week they are offered an optional 2 hour SEC focused on preparing them for the IELTS.

### Comparison of IELP levels to CEFR and ACTFL proficiency guidelines

IELP Courses*	IELP~CEFR*	IELP~ACTFL*
<b>Grad</b>	C1-	S/AH
<b>level 5</b>	B2+	AH
<b>level 4</b>	B2	AM
<b>level 3</b>	B2-	AL
<b>level 2</b>	B1-	IH
<b>level 1</b>	A2	IL
<b>PEP</b>	A1	Novice

\*Based on IELP descriptors and interpretation of CEFR and ACTFL by Program Review Committee-preliminary findings

### The teachers:

The teachers are all professionally-trained ESL instructors, many of which have entered the IELP via the MA TESOL program at PSU. “All faculty members hold a Master’s of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of other Languages (MA TESOL) or a closely related field. Most IELP faculty are bilingual, and many of them have traveled, lived, worked, or taught English abroad.” (<https://www.pdx.edu/esl/our-faculty-0>)

### The learners:

The learners in the IELP come from over 100 countries. They come to the IELP for multiple reasons. Students can study English for academic purposes, a cultural immersion experience, or simply for a study abroad experience. However, the students that take the IELTS prep course are mostly aiming to continue their study in the U.S., either by pursuing an undergraduate or Master’s degree from PSU, or from another U.S. university. They are largely in their low to mid-twenties. Upwards of 90% of the IELP come from Middle Eastern countries due to their home governments scholarship programs for study in the U.S. Because of this many IELP students have Arabic as their first language.

Chart of environmental constraints and their effects

<i>General constraints design</i>	<i>Particular constraints</i>	<i>Effects on curriculum</i>
<p><b>The learners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The learners' ages are generally in the low to mid - twenties.</li> <li>- All the students are interested in being successful on the IELTS test.</li> <li>- The students come from over 100 different countries.</li> <li>- Many of the students are preparing to continue their study at PSU.</li> <li>-Most of the students have experience in formal education settings.</li> </ul>	<p>The learners' interests are varied.</p> <p>In the past, learners have ignored their regular course work in favor of trying to pass the IELTS</p> <p>The students have many different L1s</p> <p>Cultural issues play into their daily lives, and therefore their entire educational experience.</p> <p>The students already know more or less how to behave in a formal education setting.</p>	<p>Identifying and shaping activities and materials around student's interests could prove very difficult. Although one might assume they are in a similar life stage, building a set of topics of interest based on this assumption would undoubtedly alienate at least some portion of the student body in the program</p> <p>The curriculum must incorporate an element of illustrating how their regular coursework is helping them build the skills necessary for success on the IELTS</p> <p>The curriculum cannot fall back on the students having the same L1.</p> <p>The curriculum must address cultural challenges, or at least incorporate cultural elements, such as hedging and politeness strategies in the U.S.</p> <p>It can be assumed when designing the scope and sequence of the course that there need not be an explicit component that addresses how to behave in formal education settings.</p>

<p><b>The Teachers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Many of the Teachers have come through PSU's MA TESOL program.</li> <li>- Many of the teachers have English as their L1.</li> <li>- Many of the teachers have experience living and teaching abroad.</li> <li>- Many of the teachers know a language other than English.</li> </ul>	<p>They are able to create communicative classrooms.</p> <p>The teachers are able to provide native performance of English to the students.</p> <p>The teachers have an understanding of being an outsider in a foreign environment. Sometimes meta explanations can be offered in the Ss L1 if and only if all the Ss present have the same L1.</p>	<p>Teachers can build their own materials in a communicative way focusing on a specific skill like reading, or writing.</p> <p>The curriculum can be built around using more inductive methodology.</p> <p>Teachers can identify and include challenging cultural facets due to their ability to see their own culture from an outside perspective. While there might be opportunities to use the Ss shared L1 it cannot be built into the curriculum.</p>
<p><b>The Situation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The IELP is an IEP with a focus on EAP.</li> <li>- Classrooms are technologically adequate for a variety of teaching methods, approaches, and techniques.</li> <li>- IEPs are seen as valuable potential income streams for universities and skills enhancement courses focused on performance on standardized tests are a powerful marketing and recruitment tool to entice students with substantial financial resources to attend those universities.</li> </ul>	<p>The course must deliver skills deemed useful in an academic context.</p> <p>Teaching methodologies are not limited by not having adequate technology.</p> <p>The university cannot ignore the financial ramifications of providing or not providing a SEC aimed at improving performance on standardized language tests.</p>	<p>The curriculum must focus on academic skills, and largely ignore any other language skills that are not helpful in an academic context.</p> <p>A variety of methods, approaches, and techniques can be built into the curriculum.</p> <p>The curriculum must both help students to improve their performance on said tests, as well as illustrate to them that their core skills based coursework is integral to their performance on those tests.</p>

## **Theoretical Perspective and Guiding Principles**

### *Theoretical Perspective*

There are two theoretical components that affect the design of the IELTS Test Prep Curriculum. The first factor is that this course is designed to help prepare students to take the IELTS test. However, the level of the students who are taking this curriculum is expected to vary greatly. Because of the expected difference in ability for each student's English level, the course will be designed to cater to the individual needs of each student and will avoid having a standardized approach through the term. As a result, students will be encouraged to think autonomously, pushed to identify their own strengths/weaknesses, and encouraged to work together with other students to help find new ways to improve their IELTS test score. As an example, students will be expected to do research on different test-taking strategies and will be expected to inform other students (through guided activities) about these particular activities.

The second component to redesigning this program is that this course will be designed in parallel with the IELP level 2 course. The IELTS SEC Course will be tailored such that the lessons will review aspects of ESL that the IELP Level 2 course introduces during that same time period. This component was explicitly requested by the IELP coordinator for the revision of this curriculum because the teachers felt that the test prep course was encouraging students to focus less on IELP and more on passing the IELTS. The coordinator made it clear that a top priority is to ensure that the IELTS SEC course compliments the IELP Level 2 course instead of taking away time and energy from the main course. This provides both a challenge and an opportunity to link the SEC course to the IELP course in as many ways as possible when possible.

Because the second component is more difficult to implement, learners will be encouraged to reflect on topics learned in both courses but will not have to discuss the SEC course in the regular IELP course. Topics in the IELP Level 2 course will not necessarily be related to the IELTS but both courses will focus on language learning strategies that can be utilized for both test taking strategies and for general English language use. As another example, repetition of vocabulary will also be central to this SEC course and lessons will try and utilize similar vocabulary from the IELP Level 2 course where possible. Lessons will be consistent with these two guiding principles.

## *Guiding Principles*

There are two core components that guide the development of this curriculum. As such, the guiding principles are also divided into two sections. There are a total of seven guiding principles that influence the development of the curriculum, lesson plans, and materials. These principles are the result of a comprehensive needs analysis of the program.

### *A. Test-Taking Component*

1. **Test System:** The curriculum will introduce test-taking strategies, practice tests, and test goal setting tasks to the lesson plans.
2. **Test Validity:** Adapted materials for this course are assessed as to whether or not they address the focus of the test-taking topic. Lessons will incorporate a variety of different assessments adapted from the IELTS that focus on the relevant test-taking goals (Brandl, 2008).
3. **Language System:** Lessons will focus on “generalizable” features of English language acquisition that can be applied to the IELTS test and general language use in the U.S.
4. **Strategies and Autonomy:** The class environment will focus on developing learner autonomy skills by focusing on tasks that teach students how to set goals, self-evaluate, and identify strengths/weaknesses. Students will be encouraged to think about the processes behind learning English and taking tests.
5. **Ongoing Assessment:** Teachers will assess the test-taking abilities of all of the students in the class and will follow a curriculum that promotes individual learning in the course. Tasks are designed so that students can work on their individual test-taking weaknesses while still working in groups. Students will be encouraged to develop their own goals and may be able to negotiate their work/grades criteria.

### *B. Parallel Curriculum Component*

6. **Frequency:** The curriculum will focus on vocabulary that is frequently used in the IELTS and in IELP. Lexical items used the IELP level 2 course will be repeated in this course. Strategies for learning that are introduced in the IELP course will be reviewed in the SEC course.
7. **Content Synergy:** Lesson plans will adapt from material and tasks that are used in the IELP Level course. The adapted material will still focus on test-taking strategies but might also include other elements of English language learning. Students will be asked to reflect on content discussed in their other classes in the same term.
8. **Relevancy:** Materials will remain relevant to either the IELP core classes or to IELTS. Teachers will focus on ESL topics that are relevant to students in both classes.

## **Needs Assessment**

The initial part of the needs assessment for the IELTS 2-3 curriculum was conducted by way of an informal interview with the academic coordinator of the IELP. The primary focus of this interview was to gain an understanding of why the lower-level IELTS prep course had been discontinued and how instructors and administrators in the IELP envision a new course that will better meet the needs of students and the department as a whole. The curriculum designers developed a list of questions that guided the interview (Appendix A).

One of the main reasons for discontinuing the IELTS 2-3 course, and therefore a main reason for implementing a new curriculum, was that students' motivation became fixated on preparing for the IELTS test and obtaining a satisfactory score while their interest and performance waned and suffered in their core language classes. In the IELP, a score of 5 will allow students to "graduate" from the program and pursue their academic goals at PSU or elsewhere. However, this objective is not realistic for students at levels 2 and 3, as they still lack many of the skills and knowledge required to acquire a high enough score on the IELTS to gain admission to most university programs. Furthermore, this minimum score is not an indicator of actual academic success outside of intensive English programs. It should be noted that the IELP also offers IELTS test prep for levels 4-5. It is feasible that these students would be thinking about taking the IELTS at those higher levels and would be well-prepared to do so after being exposed to academic materials and topics and given opportunities for practice and skills development in those areas.

According to the results of the interview with the IELP academic coordinator, the primary purpose of the revamped IELTS 2-3 course is to scaffold learning of the IELTS tasks and test structure while reinforcing students' core communicative skills and encouraging students to notice that what is being learned in core classes can be applied to their test prep efforts. The course should remain salient and accessible, taking students' level into consideration when selecting materials; it should scaffold where needed, but authentic test examples should be used thoughtfully and not as the exclusive source of material. Another desired feature of the new curriculum was that the course be "fun and meaningful" in order to maximize student engagement and motivate them to come to class. Many of these findings formed the basis for the goals and objectives of the course.

A secondary purpose revealed by the interview for reintroducing the IELTS 2-3 course is that it may aid recruitment efforts in the IELP. The incentive to do so involves a variety of stakeholders. Students whose academic goals are contingent on their eventual success on the IELTS seek out IEP programs that offer test prep opportunities within their course offerings.



Likewise, the practicality of test prep appeals to parents who participate in the process of selecting the IEP program their student will attend and will often pay for it. Offering test prep opportunities at multiple levels would cater to the needs and expectations of more individual students that are looking to attend PSU and enroll in the IELP. It would also make the IELP more competitive for establishing partnerships with universities abroad, thus increasing enrollment.

After the general principles behind the course had been established through the interview with the IELP coordinator, the next step in the needs assessment was to identify how the language skills taught in the IELP core courses could be integrated into a test prep course - specifically an IELTS prep course. This part of the needs assessment focused primarily on identifying information about the test format and tasks so that the curriculum designers could seek ways for IELP core skills to be integrated strategically into the curriculum.

The *IELTS Resource Booklet for Teachers* (IELTS, 2012) and the IELP Proficiency Chart (Appendix B) were used to infer which areas of the IELP core skills the curriculum designers would need to be addressed in order to support student progress on their test prep efforts. The resource booklet was used to acquire descriptive information about the task function and task format for each part of the test. This data was charted (Appendix C) in the left and middle columns; the left column referring to the general function of the content presented or elicited in each test section and the middle column referring to the explicit task format that test-takers are expected to respond to or produce on the IELTS test.

Due to the concrete nature and general unchangeability of the IELTS tasks, the curriculum designers determined that scaffolding the test content to level 2 and 3 students would be guided by principles borrowed from the overall IELP curriculum. The rightmost column of the table was added to reflect the level-appropriate ways that students' core course learning can be focused toward the IELTS - as determined by the curriculum designers with help from the IELP Proficiency Chart. The level-specific proficiencies helped the curriculum designers determine that moving students in levels 2 and 3 toward increasingly academic content is a general trend in the IELP core courses that would also help them prepare for the IELTS. The curriculum designers also determined that establishing familiarity with the format of the test was important, but observed on the proficiency chart that pushing students toward longer speaking turns and more extended writing may be a unique feature of the IELTS prep course as they are still producing relatively short written and spoken discourse. The skills represented in the third column represent the basis for forthcoming goals, objectives, and the curriculum scope and sequence.

## Curriculum Goals

The key failure behind the previous curriculum, as identified by the IELP coordinator, was that this SEC course clashed with the regular IELP core classes. The primary goal for the new curriculum is to focus on finding ways to integrate the SEC course with the core IELP classes. Goals for the new curriculum reflect this principle:

- *Familiarize students with the IELTS test structure and types of tasks* - The test prep course will introduce students to the general structure of the test and the types of tasks that appear on the IELTS.
- *Scaffold learning of language forms and functions that are presented in IELP core courses* - Through methodical curriculum design, teachers will be able to introduce materials in a logical and linear fashion.
- *Demonstrate how the skills learned in the core courses build the skills necessary to be successful on the IELTS* - Through the use of sample tests, students will be able to observe personal growth in the IELTS.
- *Provide hands on experience interacting with activities that prepare the students for the IELTS* - By implementing group activities and utilizing academic/cultural resources around PSU, students should be able to tangibly interact with other students on campus and with test preparation.
- *Develop Test Taking skills* - Relying on research and topics in the IELTS Test-Taking guide, the course will hopefully find innovative ways to prepare the students for the test.
- *Develop study habits* - Repetition of tasks and an emphasis on self-automation will hopefully guide these learners towards automation and effective studying habits.

## **Curriculum Objectives**

By the end of this class, students should be able to:

1. Set their own IELTS test goals.
2. Be familiar with the structure of the IELTS.
3. Identify types of test tasks and perform them in a test-like situation.
4. Demonstrate a range of test-taking strategies for the IELTS.
5. Effectively utilize the Learning Center resources to practice IELTS tasks.
6. Relate their language skills and learning from IELP classes to the IELTS.
7. Self-assess whether they have met their IELTS goals.
8. Formulate strategies with which to continue to develop their language learning skills.

## Scope and Sequence

	Week 1 - Intro	Week 2 - Reading	Week 3 - Reading	Week 4 - Writing	Week 5 - Writing
<b>Content</b>	Discussion of IELTS Discussion of IELP connection to IELTS Discussion of scope and sequence of the course	Reading skills activities  Mock IELTS reading test scenario	Mock IELTS reading test scenario  Reading skills activities, debrief, discussion.	Introduction to IELTS Writing  Presentation and practice of writing task 1 format and strategies	Review Writing Task 1  Presentation and practice of Writing Task 2 genre and strategies
<b>Tasks</b>	Introduce test structure  Introduce the different parts of the test.  Discussion about how Ss are going to isolate and work on micro-skills necessary to be successful on the IELTS	Skills based activities  Debrief, discussion of strategies  Complete a scaled down mock version of IELTS reading test	Strengths and weaknesses identification  Skills based activity  Mock IELTS reading test.  Discussion of strengths, weaknesses, strategies, techniques.	Guided outline of an IELTS writing task 1 answer.  Identify passive voice and connectors in process writing  Group outline for a Task 1 answer.	Group presentation of Task 1 strategies  Debrief and reflection  Matching and analyzing test prompts and answers  Write original task 2 essay questions
<b>Objectives</b>	Ss will be familiar with the IELTS structure, parts, and sequence.  Ss will understand how their regular IELP coursework contributes directly to their success on the IELTS.	SWBAT complete a mock IELTS reading test using The practiced skills with 70% accuracy.  SWBAT use context clues and other strategies to answer comprehension questions with 70% accuracy.	SWBAT complete a mock IELTS reading test using The practiced skills with 80% accuracy.  SWBAT use context clues and other strategies to answer comprehension questions with 80% accuracy.	SWBAT distinguish topic sentences from supporting sentences.  SWBAT demonstrate their understanding and use of writing test strategies.	SWBAT demonstrate their understanding of IELTS Writing Task 1 in class presentation.  SWBAT relate text genres practiced in core IELP courses to the IELTS Writing Task 2
<b>Assessment</b>	Ss will complete an exit ticket questionnaire.	Each micro-skill activity includes assessment and debrief, followed by a T assessment of completed reading test.	Each micro-skill activity includes assessment and debrief, followed by a T assessment of completed reading test. In addition there is a final look at the combined assessments from skill activities, teacher assessment, and group assessment.	<b>Informal:</b> Group work on essay outlines will assess Ss explicit understanding of test questions and answer strategies.  <b>Homework:</b> Ss write 2 sample essays for Task 1 and complete a reflection.	<b>Informal:</b> Student presentations assess understanding and ability to apply Task 1 strategies  <b>Homework:</b> Ss assigned a pre-writing activity and 1 sample essay for Task 2 to be turned in with a reflection for T feedback.

<b>Connection to IELP core courses</b>	T discusses this connection in first class. T talks about skills they will review in this class and how it will connect to other classes	<b>Reading level 2:</b> Reading rate, vocabulary development, reading strategies and skills, comprehension.  <b>Reading level 3:</b> Further development of same skills and techniques covered in reading 2.	<b>Reading level 2:</b> Reading rate, vocabulary development, reading strategies and skills, comprehension.  <b>Reading level 3:</b> Further development of same skills and techniques covered in reading 2.	<b>Writing/Grammar Level 2:</b> passive voice to describe processes, connectors for sequencing  <b>Writing/Grammar Level 3:</b> Genre: compare/contrast, writing about processes	Students use authentic examples of their own IELP writing in order to identify genre and come up with original IELTS task questions.
<b>Student Autonomy</b>	T talks about long term projects of attending IELP Tutor Center.	Class focuses on Ss identifying their own strengths and weaknesses and seeking resources outside of class to improve on their weaknesses and strengthen their strengths, such as visiting a tutor in the IELP learning center.	Class focuses on Ss identifying their own strengths and weaknesses and seeking resources outside of class to improve on their weaknesses and strengthen their strengths, such as visiting a tutor in the IELP learning center.	Ss exposed to general strategies for wide variety of writing prompts to practice at home.  Reflective work encourages self-evaluation of strengths and weaknesses and general affective reaction to the test.	.Ss exposed to general strategies for wide variety of writing prompts to practice at home.  Reflective work encourages self-evaluation of strengths and weaknesses and general affective reaction to the test.
	<b>Week 6 - Listening</b>	<b>Week 7 - Listening</b>	<b>Week 8 - Speaking</b>	<b>Week 9 - Speaking</b>	<b>Week 10 - Review</b>
<b>Content</b>	Introduction to IELTS Listening Tasks  Practice identifying task type  Take a Practice Test	Introduction to Listening Test strategies  Practice an example listening test	Introduction to IELTS Speaking Tasks  Practice IELTS Speaking Preparation Tasks	IELTS Speaking Practice (in groups)	Final Discussion of the test Discussion of students goals Course Feedback Final Presentation
<b>Tasks</b>	Listening Test Presentation Task Identification Activity Practice Test (#1)	Guided Listening Test Listening Test Skill Discussion Listening Test Group Discussion Debrief Homework	Show videos of example practice speakers	Speech Evaluations in Groups (Task 1)	Course feedback completed by all students
<b>Objectives</b>	SWBAT write about each Listening Task on IELTS  SWBAT identify each task on the IELTS listening test	SWBAT create multiple questions for example Listening Audio.	SWBAT identify the three different speaking tasks	SWBAT complete a two-way discussion in a group format  SWBAT complete an Individual Long Turn speaking task	SWBAT set long term goals for

<b>Assessment</b>	<p><b>Informal:</b> Ss will follow practice listening-test instructions</p> <p><b>Homework:</b> Ss will seek out online audio files and think of how it could be made into an IELTS listening test</p>	<b>Homework:</b> Ss go to the IELP tutor center and take a practice IELP listening test	<b>Homework:</b> Ss are assigned speaking categories to discuss in the next class	<p><b>Homework:</b> Speaking Reflection</p> <p>Ss go to the IELP Tutor</p>	<b>Formal:</b> Ss are graded on their final presentation about the test. Graded on the number of skills they discuss and/or discover
<b>Connection to IELP core courses</b>	<p><b>Speaking Listening 2:</b> Note-taking skills</p> <p><b>Speaking Listening 3:</b> Advanced note-taking skills (abbreviations and symbols)</p>	<p><b>Speaking Listening 2:</b> Practice scanning and skimming skills to understand general meaning and to find keywords</p> <p><b>Speaking Listening 3:</b> Recognize intonation patterns, stress, reduced forms</p>	<p><b>Speaking/Listening Level 2:</b> Plan a two minute presentation</p> <p><b>Speaking Level 3:</b> Demonstrate problem solving</p>	<p><b>Speaking Listening 2:</b> Participate in structured conversations (introduction, conclusions, etc)</p> <p><b>Speaking Listening 3:</b> Practice Impromptu speaking. Conduct interviews.</p>	<p>Ss have general discussion on how this course related to IELP, PSU and/or life in Portland.</p> <p>Ss set goals for IELP and IELTS.</p>
<b>Student autonomy</b>	<p>Ss do independent research to find audio recordings that are similar to the listening test</p> <p>Ss expected to attend IELP Tutoring Center independent of class</p>	Ss learn to take the test outside of class at IELP tutor	Ss learn to take notes from IELP class to prepare for IELTS	Ss learn to take the test outside of class at IELP tutor	Student set long term goals for IELTS

## **Overview of the Scope and Sequence**

The scope and sequence for the IELTS 2-3 SEC course for the IELP was organized on the principle that the IELTS skill sections are best presented and practiced through 2-week units that focus on each of the four skills tested by the IELTS exam. Each unit will scaffold test-taking strategies and practice opportunities for a more cohesive class experience, week-to-week. For a ten-week curriculum, this allows for eight weeks to be occupied by the four skills units, as well as an introduction class during week one and a wrap-up class during week 10.

## **Course Assessment**

Each skills unit implements assessment in a slightly different way, but the course as a whole assesses students on the following:

*Students' ability to be an autonomous test-taker* --- informal reflective activities and activities that encourage students to seek resources outside of class are assigned so that students are self-directed in their studying for the IELTS and using the IELP Learning Center as a site-specific resource. Students will receive individual feedback from their instructor, but IELP tutors will be able to help students focus on their individual strengths and weaknesses more effectively than the limited class time provided, and present student-specific strategies to studying more efficiently for the test. These assessment formats are meant to be both diagnostic and formative to encourage student growth and improvement on a continual basis.

*Students' in-class participation* --- in-class practice opportunities, brief reports of information and test strategies, and group presentation of class and test material are some of the tasks that students are informally graded on during class. Students are expected to participate and contribute their knowledge and opinions to their classmates and demonstrate their involvement to the instructor, regardless of level. These are meant to be formative means of assessing students and are generally not graded for accuracy unless for feedback purposes. Units with authentic IELTS practice may be used as a diagnostic assessment, but is not used to grade students on the IELTS band achieved.

## **Scope and Sequence Relevant Dimensions**

The scope and sequence addresses two dimensions that are central to the principles and goals behind the course, and topics that we wanted to address explicitly in the scope and sequence of curriculum: Connection to IELP Core Courses and Student Autonomy.

*Connection to IELP Core Courses* - after the initial needs assessment, it became clear that IELP core courses should play an integral role in the IELTS prep course in hopes of generating student interest and appreciation for what they learn in those classes. Due to the limited class time, we also found it to be advantageous to link activities to forms, features, and tasks that students are familiar with through the IELP classes.

*Student Autonomy* - relevant to the course goals of developing student test-taking skills and individual study habits, we tried to build in as much student autonomy as possible into the lesson plans, homework assignments, and student assessments. Since performance among students will fluctuate greatly, it made sense to put some of the responsibility on students to link the material in the SEC course to their core courses and pursue resources throughout the IELP to help them achieve success on the IELTS. Some of this is done through direct practice opportunities, while other connections are made through self-evaluation and reflection. Heightening student awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses in order to craft their own technique for studying is at the forefront of our priorities for student outcomes.



## References

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## **Appendix A. Guided Interview Questions**

1. How do the IELTS standards drive and shape the curriculum?
2. What are the pedagogical principles? Methods? Theoretical application?
3. Why do they feel the need to change the curriculum? What shortcomings or challenges are driving that change?
4. What kind of homework is assigned?
5. Which IELTS test? Academic or General?
6. How does the IELTS course levels correlate to the test and to the IELP levels?
7. Student demographics - age, language, country of origin, student goals?
8. What are the panel activities in the current curriculum?
9. How many students in the IELP are also doing IELTS test prep? How many are doing TOEFL?
10. What are some test prep or practice test resources that students have access to on campus?

## Appendix B. IELP Proficiency Chart

IELP Proficiency Chart (Draft): At the end of a level, student will be able to demonstrate recognition of and use of the following language:

\* frequent → some → few → almost none

Level	Vocabulary	Topics/ Content	Communicative Function	Receptive Content Form (reading and listening)	Productive Content Form (written and spoken)	Productive Sentence Structure;	*Error Frequency
<b>PEP</b>	survival, classroom, emotions	classroom, personal, life skills, concrete	polite requests, clarification, interpersonal, personal	visually-supported materials of concrete, everyday ideas; word-level, simple VT	discrete simple sentences, active voice; word-level recognition, simple present and past VT	simple sentences, utterances	frequent
<b>1</b>	high frequency	personal, common social and cultural, concrete	requests, reporting, negotiating clarification, interpersonal, personal	visually-supported materials of concrete, simple-sentences, word-level; 2 – 6 paragraph length, simple & continuous VT	short paragraphs both narrative and descriptive; simple sentences, active voice; simple VTs and present progressive	simple and compound sentences; basic adverb clauses, simple cohesive devices	some
<b>2</b>	high frequency; recognition of some academic	social, cultural, academic, professional, concrete	requests, clarification, interpersonal, personal, negotiating,	material weighted with simple, and compound sentences but containing complex sentences; 2 to 3- page length; all VT; passive and active voice; conversations; adapted lectures	paragraphs of compare/contrast, process; short essay; note completion; variety of sentence structure with focus on simple and compound; simple and progressive VTs	simple and compound sentences; some time clauses; cohesive devices	few
<b>3</b>	developing academic	academic, cultural, professional, concrete, emerging abstract	personal, reporting, negotiating, argumentative, emerging analysis	variety of academic language and simple, compound, complex sentence structures; 2 to 3-page length; novels, all VT; lectures	essays using argumentative language (cause/effect, argumentative); note completion; sentence variety; active & passive voice; all VTs	simple, compound, complex sentences; dependent clauses; cohesive devices	some
<b>4</b>	academic	academic, social issues, cultural issues, concrete, abstract	directive, reporting, argumentative, analysis, synthesis	variety of academic language and simple, compound, complex sentence structures; 2 to 5-page length; novels, non-fiction, all VT; lectures	multiple-paragraph and pages length academic topics, argumentative, research-based, synthesis; note outlining; sentence variety; active & passive voice; All VTs	simple, compound, complex sentences; dependent clauses; reduced phrases; cohesive devices	few
<b>5 and Grad</b>	academic, ESP low- frequency	academic, social issues, cultural issues, concrete, abstract	directive, argumentative, reporting, analysis, synthesis, evaluative	academic language and simple, compound, complex sentence structures; 2 to 5- page length; book-length non- fiction, all VT; multi-media	multi-paragraph and pages length academic topics, argumentative, research-based, synthesis; note outlining; sentence variety; active & passive voice; all VTs	simple, compound, complex sentences; dependent clauses, reduced phrases; cohesive devices	almost none

Shier/2/22/2017

### Appendix C. IELTS Format and Domains

<b>IELTS task content</b> <i>[What general result or skills is the task eliciting?]</i>	<b>IELTS task format</b> <i>[What kind of format is the test taker producing or encountering?]</i>	<b>Level-appropriate topics for scaffolding IELTS content</b> <i>[What needs to be taught in order to prepare students?]</i>
	<b>LISTENING</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Social needs - transactional "Listening for and noting specific factual information"</li> <li>2. Social needs - monologue (information giving) "Listening for and noting specific factual information"</li> <li>3. Education and training (Discussion) "Listening for specific information, attitudes, and speakers' opinions."</li> <li>4. Education and training (monologue) "Listening for main ideas, specific information, attitude and speakers' opinion."</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forms/notes/table/flowchart/summary completion</li> <li>• Short-answer questions</li> <li>• Multiple choice</li> <li>• Sentence completion</li> <li>• Labelling a diagram/plan/map</li> <li>• Classification</li> <li>• Matching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note-taking strategies</li> <li>• Listening strategies</li> <li>• Extended listening practice</li> <li>• Exposing students to different genres and functions of listening texts</li> <li>• Oral academic lecture transitions and listening strategies</li> </ul>
	<b>READING</b>	

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reading authentic texts taken from sources such as magazines, journals, books, and newspapers - materials similar to those read in a university course.</li> <li>2. Reading and interpreting non-verbal material such as diagrams, graphs, illustrations, etc.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 passages; total word count between 2,000-2,750 words</li> <li>• Notes/table/diagram/flow chart completion</li> <li>• Classification</li> <li>• Matching</li> <li>• Summary completion</li> <li>• Locating information</li> <li>• Identifying writer's views, claims or information in the text</li> <li>• Short-answer questions</li> <li>• Sentence completion</li> <li>• Choosing headings for sections or paragraphs of a text</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying genre; familiarizing students with text structure; identifying main ideas and supporting details in a text</li> <li>• Reading visual texts - identifying information and function</li> </ul>
	<b>WRITING</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Describing visual information from a chart, table, graph, or</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Original written text of 150-250 words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing under time constraints</li> </ul>

<p>diagram in the test taker's own words.</p> <p>2. Present and justify an opinion, compare and contrast evidence or opinions, or evaluate and challenge an argument or idea</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note taking and outlines</li> <li>• Introductory statement and summarizing conclusion.</li> <li>• Supporting sentences</li> <li>• Writing longer texts</li> <li>• Genres: argumentative, compare and contrast</li> </ul>
	<b>SPEAKING</b>	
<p>1. Answer questions about familiar topics</p> <p>2. The test taker receives a task card with a topic and speaks about it for 1-2 minutes</p> <p>3. Discuss more abstract aspects of the same topic as #2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two-way discussion - personal content</li> <li>• Verbal monologue</li> <li>• Two-way discussion - abstract content</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transactional speaking practice</li> <li>• Planning and organizing short speeches</li> <li>• Giving short speeches</li> <li>• Introduction of abstract topics and vocabulary</li> </ul>