

The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Test

IELTS is jointly managed by the British Council, Cambridge ESOL Examinations and IDP Education, Australia.

There are two versions of the test:

- Academic
- General Training

Academic is for students wishing to study at undergraduate or postgraduate levels in an English-medium environment.

General Training is for people who wish to migrate to an English-speaking country.

The Test

There are four modules:

Listening 30 minutes, plus 10 minutes for transferring answers to the answer sheet

NB: the audio is heard *only once*.

Approx. 10 questions per section

Section 1: two speakers discuss a social situation

Section 2: one speaker talks about a non-academic topic

Section 3: up to four speakers discuss an educational project

Section 4: one speaker gives a talk of general academic interest

Reading 60 minutes

3 texts, taken from authentic sources, on general, academic topics. They may contain diagrams; charts, etc.

40 questions: may include multiple choice, sentence completion, completing a diagram, graph or chart, choosing headings, yes/no, true/false questions, classification and matching exercises.

Writing Task 1: 20 minutes: description of a table, chart, graph or diagram (150 words minimum)

Task 2: 40 minutes: an essay in response to an argument or problem (250 words minimum)

Speaking 11–14 minutes

A three-part face-to-face oral interview with an examiner.

The interview is recorded.

Part 1: introductions and general questions (4–5 mins)

Part 2: individual long turn (3–4 mins) – the candidate is given a task, has one minute to prepare, then talks for 1–2 minutes, with some questions from the examiner.

Part 3: two-way discussion (4–5 mins): the examiner asks further questions on the topic from Part 2, and gives the candidate the opportunity to discuss more abstract issues or ideas.

Timetabling Listening, Reading and Writing must be taken on the same day, and in the order listed above.

Speaking can be taken up to 7 days before or after the other modules.

Scoring Each section is given a band score. The average of the four scores produces the Overall Band Score. You do not pass or fail IELTS; you receive a score.

IELTS and the Common European Framework of Reference

The CEFR shows the level of the learner and is used for many English as a Foreign Language examinations.

The table below shows the approximate CEFR level and the equivalent IELTS Overall Band Score:

CEFR description	CEFR code	IELTS Band Score
Proficient user	C2	9
(Advanced)	C1	7–8
Independent user	B2	5–6.5
(Intermediate – Upper Intermediate)	B1	4–5