

The IELTS exam

IELTS, the International English Language Testing System, is designed to assess the language ability of candidates who need to study or work where English is used as the language of communication. IELTS is required for entry to university in the UK and other countries.

Who is it for?

IELTS is recognised by universities and employers in many countries, including Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, the UK and the USA. It is also recognised by professional bodies, immigration authorities and other government agencies. More than 700,000 people a year take the test.

What is the IELTS test like?

You can choose between the Academic or General Training versions of the test. All candidates do the same Listening and Speaking sections.

The test has four sections:

1. **Listening** - 4 sections, 40 questions, 30 minutes
2. **Speaking** - interview, 15 minutes
3. **Reading** - different for Academic or General Training - 3 sections, 40 questions, 60 minutes
4. **Writing** - different for Academic or General Training - 2 pieces of writing, 60 minutes

Score

Out of 9 for each section and an overall score out of 9.

Level

Multi-level. You get a score between 1 and 9. Half scores such as 6.5 are possible. Universities often demand an IELTS score of 6 or 7. They may also demand a minimum score in each of the 4 sections. IELTS scores compare with TOEFL and the Cambridge exams approximately as follows:

[Click here to see a comparison of IELTS scores with other exams.](#)

Where do I take the test?

IELTS tests are administered at accredited Test Centres throughout the world - there are currently more than 300 Centres, in over 120 countries. Click [here to find a test centre](#).

What is the computer-based test?

At some centres you can take the computer-based version of IELTS. This is only available for academic modules at some centres only. [Click here to review \(or buy\) the CB IELTS software.](#)

When can I take the test?

Arrange with your closest test centre. There are frequent dates, usually on Thursdays or Saturdays.

How much does it cost to take IELTS?

Fees are set by test centres. Expect to pay around £90 GBP or \$140 USD.

What materials do I need?

[Click here to see the exam books recommended by Exam English.](#)