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Introduction

This Handbook gives an overview of IELTS for teachers, administrators and other users, including staff in receiving organisations such as universities, professional registration boards and employers. It outlines the key features and administrative procedures for IELTS.

The Handbook does not include complete samples of the tests components; these are given in the IELTS Specimen Materials pack, which can be bought from IELTS Test Centres, or from Cambridge ESOL or IDP:IELTS Australia (see page 20).

Additional information is given in the IELTS Annual Review and on the IELTS website, www.ielts.org.

What is IELTS?

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 the language of communication.

IELTS is jointly managed by the University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations (Cambridge ESOL), British Council and IDP:IELTS Australia. IELTS conforms to the highest international standards of language assessment. It covers the four language skills – listening, reading, writing and speaking.

IELTS is recognised by universities and employers in many countries, including Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK and the USA. It is also recognised by professional bodies, immigration authorities and other government agencies.

IELTS is not recommended for candidates under the age of 16.

Test Administration

IELTS tests are administered at centres throughout the world – there are currently nearly 300 centres, in over 100 countries. Centres supervise the local administration of the test and ensure the provision of qualified and trained examiners.

A full list of centres is available on the IELTS website.

Test centres run regular test administrations, according to local need and results are available within two weeks. Candidates receive only one copy of their results but additional copies may be sent by the test centre directly to receiving organisations at the request of the candidate.

Candidates are not allowed to repeat the test (Academic or General Training) within 90 days at any centre.

Academic and General Training

IELTS is available in two formats – Academic and General Training.

The Academic Reading and Writing Modules assess whether a candidate is ready to study or train in the medium of English at an undergraduate or postgraduate level. Admission to undergraduate and postgraduate courses is based on the results of these Modules.

The General Training Reading and Writing Modules are not designed to test the full range of formal language skills required for academic purposes, but emphasise basic survival skills in a broad social and educational context. General Training is suitable for candidates who are going to English speaking countries to complete their secondary education, to undertake work experience or training programmes not at degree level, or for immigration purposes to Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

It is the responsibility of the candidate to inform the test centre whether they wish to take the Academic or General Training Modules. Centres are not responsible for providing this information. The General Training module is not offered at all test administrations.

Test Format

Candidates are tested in listening, reading, writing and speaking. All candidates take the same Listening and Speaking Modules. There is a choice between Academic and General Training in the Reading and Writing Modules.

The tests are designed to cover the full range of ability from non-user to expert user.

The first three modules – Listening, Reading and Writing – must be completed in one day. There is no break between the modules. The Speaking Module may be taken, at the discretion of the test centre, in the period seven days before or after the other modules.

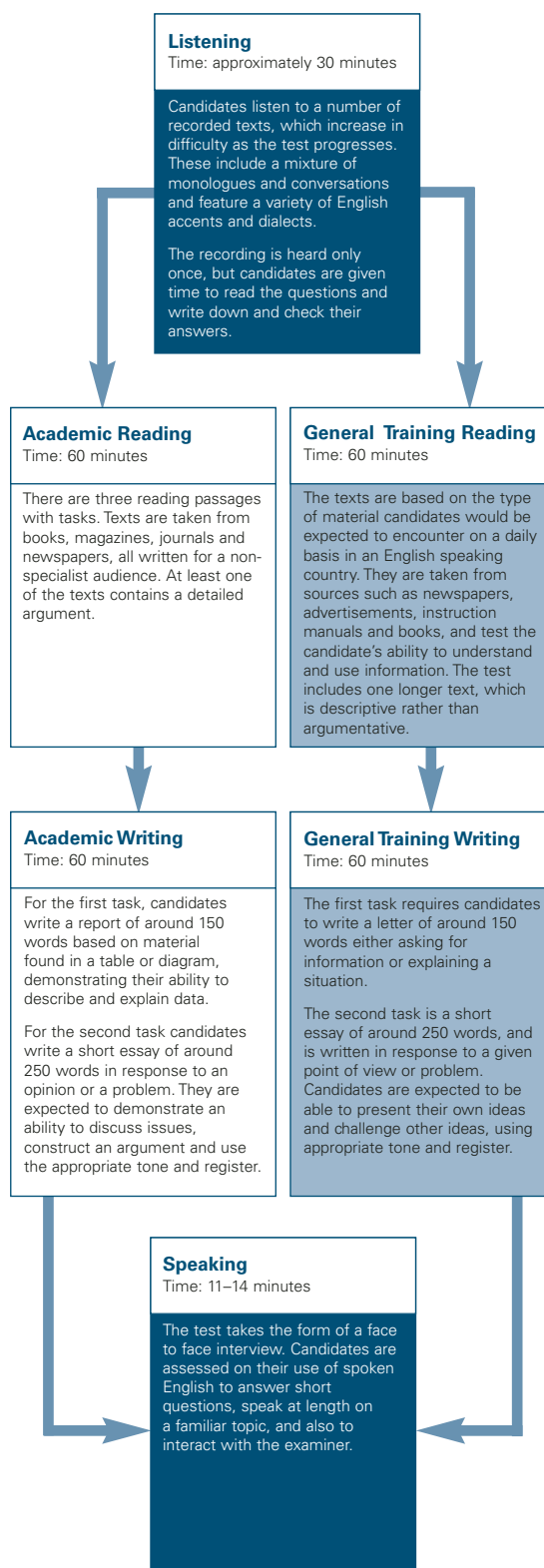
A computerised version of IELTS Listening, Reading and Writing Modules (CBIELTS) is available at selected centres, but all centres will continue to offer paper-based IELTS and candidates will be given the choice of the medium in which they wish to take the test.

Preparing for the test

It is not necessary to attend an IELTS preparation course though it is, of course, a good idea to prepare thoroughly for the test.

An order form is given at the end of this Handbook for a Specimen Materials Pack. This includes a full practice test with an answer key and a CD of the listening test, so that candidates can get some idea of their level and familiarise themselves with the format of the test.

There is also a wide range of published preparation materials.



IELTS Test Results

Marking is carried out at the test centre by trained examiners whose work is closely monitored. This ensures that test results are available without any administrative delay.

Results are standardised and usually available within two weeks of the test, and Test Report Forms are sent to the candidates and to the sponsor(s)/receiving institution(s). Test centres are not permitted to give results out over the phone, nor by fax or e-mail.

Test Scores

IELTS provides a profile of a candidate's ability to use English.

Candidates receive scores on a Band Scale from 1 to 9.

A score is reported for each module of the test. The individual module scores are then averaged and rounded to produce an Overall Band Score according to a confidential band score conversion table. Overall Band Scores and Listening and Reading scores are reported in whole and half Bands; Writing and Speaking Band Scores are reported in whole Bands only.

Test Report Form

An example of the Test Report Form is shown on the right. Each module is reported separately as a Band Score, together with an Overall Band Score reported as a whole band or a half band. A descriptive statement giving a summary of the English of a candidate classified at each band level is provided below and is included on the reverse of the Test Report Form.

The completed Test Report Form bears a centre stamp, a validation stamp, the candidate's photograph and the authorised centre representative's signature, and the authenticity of any Test Report Form can be verified by means of the Test Report Form Verification Service located at <https://ielts.uctes.org.uk>.

British Council, IDP:IELTS Australia and Cambridge ESOL reserve the right to cancel any Test Report Form in the event of any attempt to tamper with or misuse the information contained in it.

INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE TESTING SYSTEM
Test Report Form ACADEMIC

NOTE: Admission to undergraduate and postgraduate courses should be based on the ACADEMIC Reading and Writing Modules. CEFR levels: B2 (Writing) and B1 (Reading) are not designed to test the full range of language skills required for academic purposes. It is recommended that the candidate's language ability as indicated in this Test Report Form be re-assessed after two years from the date of the test.

Centre Number: GE559 Date: 30/OCT/2004 Candidate Number: 000051

Candidate Details

Family Name: BOOMES First Name: MARTIN Candidate ID: 90060720122624

Date of Birth: 24/10/1958 Sex (MF): M Scheme Code: British Council

Country of Origin: France First Language: French

Repeating IELTS (Y/N): N Previous Test Date: Previous Test Centre:

Test Results

Listening: 7.0 Reading: 6.5 Writing: 6.0 Speaking: 6.0 Overall Band Score: 6.5

Administrator Comments Centre stamp Validation stamp

Writing Examiner Number: 040199 Administrator's Signature: Date: 12/11/2004 Test Report Form Number: 042800005150040559A

Speaking Examiner Number: 040199

BRITISH COUNCIL **IELTS AUSTRALIA** **UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE ESOL Examinations**

The validity of this IELTS Test Report Form can be verified online by recognising organisations at <https://ielts.uctes.org.uk>

IELTS band scores

9 Expert user	Has fully operational command of the language: appropriate, accurate and fluent with complete understanding.
8 Very good user	Has fully operational command of the language with only occasional unsystematic inaccuracies and inappropriacies. Misunderstandings may occur in unfamiliar situations. Handles complex detailed argumentation well.
7 Good user	Has operational command of the language, though with occasional inaccuracies, inappropriacies and misunderstandings in some situations. Generally handles complex language well and understands detailed reasoning.
6 Competent user	Has generally effective command of the language despite some inaccuracies, inappropriacies and misunderstandings. Can use and understand fairly complex language, particularly in familiar situations.
5 Modest user	Has partial command of the language, coping with overall meaning in most situations, though is likely to make many mistakes. Should be able to handle basic communication in own field.
4 Limited user	Basic competence is limited to familiar situations. Has frequent problems in understanding and expression. Is not able to use complex language.
3 Extremely limited user	Conveys and understands only general meaning in very familiar situations. Frequent breakdowns in communication occur.
2 Intermittent user	No real communication is possible except for the most basic information using isolated words or short formulae in familiar situations and to meet immediate needs. Has great difficulty understanding spoken and written English.
1 Non user	Essentially has no ability to use the language beyond possibly a few isolated words.
0 Did not attempt the test	No assessable information provided.

Interpretation of Results

Assessment of performance in IELTS depends on how the candidate's ability in English relates to the language demands of courses of study or training, not on reaching a fixed pass mark. The appropriate level required for a given course of study or training is ultimately something which institutions/departments/colleges must decide in the light of knowledge of their own courses and their experience of overseas students taking them.

The table below gives guidance on acceptable levels of performance for different courses. It should be noted, however, that many diverse variables can affect performance on courses, of which language ability is but one.

Receiving organisations are advised to consider both the Overall Band Score and the Bands recorded for each individual module, which indicate the candidate's particular strengths or weaknesses. Language skills can be matched to particular courses. For example, if a course has a lot of reading and writing, but no lectures, listening comprehension might not be quite as important and a score of, perhaps, 5.5/6 in Listening might be acceptable if the Overall Band Score was 7. However, for a course where there are lots of lectures and spoken instructions a score of 5.5/6 in Listening might be unacceptable even though the Overall Band Score was 7. Receiving organisations should also consider a candidate's IELTS results in the context of a number of factors, including age and motivation, educational and cultural background, first language and language learning history.

For how long is a test score valid?

There are a number of variables affecting the length of time over which an IELTS score remains valid. As a general rule it is recommended that a Test Report Form that is more than two years old should only be accepted as evidence of present level of ability if accompanied by proof that a candidate has actively maintained or tried to improve their English language proficiency. The IELTS test partners cannot verify results older than two years.

What happens if a candidate loses their Test Report Form or requires further copies?

Candidates are given one copy of their Test Report Form and this cannot be replaced. Candidates may request for up to five additional copies to be sent to receiving organisations. Additional copies sent to receiving organisations may incur an administrative fee. Test Report Forms for tests taken more than two years ago cannot be re-issued.

What can a candidate do if they are unhappy with their results?

Candidates may apply for an enquiry on results procedure at the centre at which they took their test within four weeks of issue of results. The candidate's test material is re-marked. There is a fee for this which is refunded should the band score be increased.

Band	Linguistically demanding academic courses e.g. Medicine, Law, Linguistics, Journalism, Library Studies	Linguistically less demanding academic courses e.g. Agriculture, Pure Mathematics, Technology, Computer-based work, Telecommunications	Linguistically demanding training courses e.g. Air Traffic Control, Engineering, Pure Applied Sciences, Industrial Safety	Linguistically less demanding training courses e.g. Animal Husbandry, Catering, Fire Services
9.0–7.5	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
7.0	Probably Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
6.5	English study needed	Probably Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
6.0	English study needed	English study needed	Probably Acceptable	Acceptable
5.5	English study needed	English study needed	English study needed	Probably Acceptable

Test Modules

Each candidate takes four IELTS test modules, one in each of the four skills, Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking.

>>> Listening

Duration and format

The Listening Module takes around 30 minutes. There are 40 questions. There are four sections.

The Listening Module is recorded on a CD and is played ONCE only.

During the test, time is given for candidates to read the questions and write down and check their answers. Answers are written on the Question Paper as candidates listen. When the recording ends ten minutes are allowed for candidates to transfer their answers to an Answer Sheet.

Task types

The first two sections are concerned with social needs. There is a conversation between two speakers and then a monologue. For example – a conversation about travel arrangements or decisions on a night out, and a speech about student services on a University campus or arrangements for meals during a conference.

The final two sections are concerned with situations related more closely to educational or training contexts. There is a conversation between up to four people and then a further monologue. For example – a conversation between a tutor and a student about an assignment or between three students planning a research project, and a lecture or talk of general academic interest.

A range of English accents and dialects are used in the recordings which reflects the international usage of IELTS.

A variety of questions are used, chosen from the following types:

- multiple choice
- short-answer questions
- sentence completion
- notes/summary/diagram/flow-chart/table completion
- labelling a diagram which has numbered parts
- classification
- matching

Marking and Assessment

One mark is awarded for each correct answer in the 40 item test.

A confidential band score conversion table is produced for each version of the Listening Module, which translates scores out of 40 into the IELTS 9-band scale. Scores are reported as a whole band or a half band. Care should be taken when writing answers on the Answer Sheet as poor spelling and grammar are penalised.

SECTION 2 Questions 11–20

Questions 11–15

Choose the correct letters **A**, **B** or **C**.

- 11 The most important reason for a settlement at the Rocks was
- A fresh water.
 - B flat rock.
 - C a sea wall.
- 12 The plague was brought to Sydney by
- A rat-catchers.
 - B convicts.
 - C sailors.
- 13 The Harbour Bridge was built
- A in 10 years with 7 deaths.
 - B in 10 years with 17 deaths.
 - C in 17 years with 10 deaths.
- 14 The Chinese community arrived in the Rocks in
- A 1825.
 - B 1844.
 - C 1870.
- 15 The Chinese shops were mainly
- A restaurants and laundries.
 - B soap shops and general stores.
 - C general stores and laundries.

Questions 16–20

Complete the table below.

Write **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** for each answer.

Number of convicts brought to New South Wales	16
Date of last convict ship	17
Age of youngest convict	nine
Crime of youngest convict	18
Age of oldest convict	19
Crime of oldest convict	telling lies
Most serious crime	murder
Reason for most crimes	20

>>> Reading

Duration and format

The Reading Module takes 60 minutes. There are 40 questions, based on three reading passages with a total of 2,000 to 2,750 words.

Texts and questions appear on a Question Paper which candidates can write on but not remove from the test room.

All answers must be entered on an Answer Sheet during the 60-minute test. No extra time is allowed to transfer answers.

Task Types

A variety of questions are used, chosen from the following types:

- multiple choice
- short-answer questions
- sentence completion
- notes/summary/diagram/flow-chart/table completion
- choosing from a 'heading bank' for identified paragraphs/sections of the text
- identification of writer's views/claims – yes, no or not given
- identification of information in the text – yes, no or not given/true, false or not given
- classification
- matching lists/phrases

Academic Reading

Texts are taken from magazines, journals, books, and newspapers. Texts have been written for a non-specialist audience. All the topics are of general interest. They deal with issues which are interesting, recognisably appropriate and accessible to candidates entering undergraduate or postgraduate courses or seeking professional registration.

At least one text contains detailed logical argument. One text may contain non-verbal materials such as diagrams, graphs or illustrations. If texts contain technical terms then a simple glossary is provided.

General Training Reading

Texts are taken from notices, advertisements, official documents, booklets, newspapers, instruction manuals, leaflets, timetables, books and magazines.

The first section, 'social survival', contains texts relevant to basic linguistic survival in English with tasks mainly about retrieving and providing general factual information.

'Training survival', the second section, focuses on the training context, for example on the training programme itself or on welfare needs. This section involves a text or texts of more complex language with some precise or elaborated expression.

The third section, 'general reading', involves reading more extended prose with a more complex structure but with the emphasis on descriptive and instructive rather than argumentative texts, in a general context relevant to the wide range of candidates involved.

Marking and assessment

One mark is awarded for each correct answer in the 40 item test.

A Band Score conversion table is produced for each version of the Reading Module which translates scores out of 40 into the IELTS 9-band scale. Scores are reported as a whole band or a half band. Care should be taken when writing answers on the Answer Sheet as poor spelling and grammar are penalised.

Questions 1–5

Complete the summary below using words from the box.

Write the correct answers in boxes 1–5 on your answer sheet.

Example

The **failure** during the late 1970s and early 1980s of an attempt to establish a widespread wind power industry in the United States resulted largely from the **1**..... in oil prices during this period. The industry is now experiencing a steady **2**..... due to improvements in technology and an increased awareness of the potential in the power of wind. The wind turbines that are now being made, based in part on the **3**..... of wide-ranging research in Europe, are easier to manufacture and maintain than their predecessors. This has led wind-turbine makers to be able to standardise and thus minimise **4**..... . There has been growing **5**..... of the importance of wind power as an energy source.

criticism	success
design costs	production costs
failure	stability
operating costs	fall
growth	recognition
scepticism	decisions
effects	decline
	results

>>> Writing

Duration and format

The Writing Module takes 60 minutes. There are two tasks to complete. It is suggested that about 20 minutes is spent on Task 1 which requires candidates to write at least 150 words. Task 2 requires at least 250 words and should take about 40 minutes.

Candidates may write on the Question Paper but this cannot be taken from the test room and will not be seen by the examiner.

Answers must be given on the Answer Sheet and must be written in full. Notes are not acceptable as answers.

Task Types

Academic Writing

In Task 1 candidates are asked to describe some information (graph/table/chart/diagram), and to present the description in their own words. Depending on the type of input and the task suggested, candidates are assessed on their ability to:

- organise, present and possibly compare data
- describe the stages of a process or procedure
- describe an object or event or sequence of events
- explain how something works

In Task 2 candidates are presented with a point of view or argument or problem. Candidates are assessed on their ability to:

- present the solution to a problem
- present and justify an opinion
- compare and contrast evidence, opinions and implications
- evaluate and challenge ideas, evidence or an argument

The issues raised are of general interest to, suitable for and easily understood by candidates entering undergraduate or postgraduate studies or seeking professional registration.

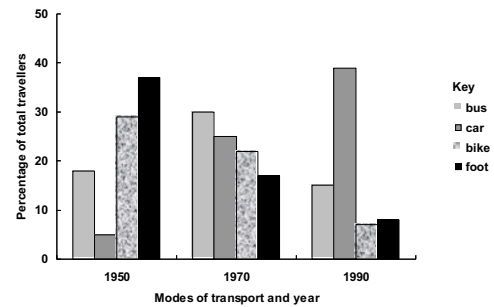
WRITING TASK 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

The chart below shows the different modes of transportation used to travel to and from work in one European city, in 1950, 1970 and 1990.

Write a report for a university lecturer describing the information below.

Write at least 150 words.



Academic Writing Task 1 (example)

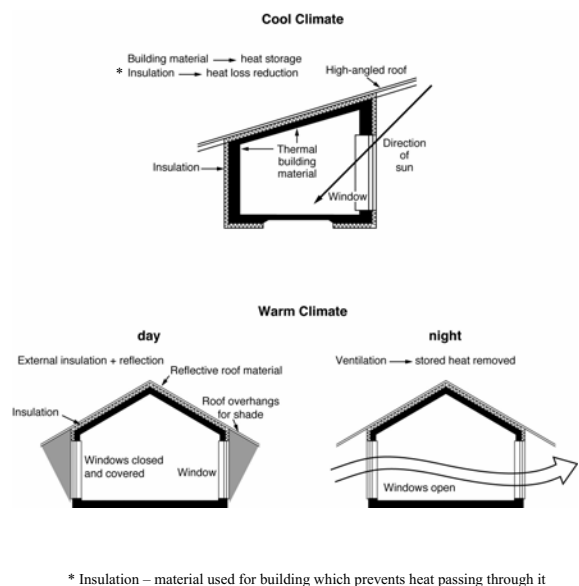
WRITING TASK 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

The diagrams below show some principles of house design for cool and for warm climates.

Write a report for a university lecturer describing the information below.

Write at least 150 words.



Academic Writing Task 1 (example)

WRITING TASK 2

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Present a written argument or case to an educated reader with no specialist knowledge of the following topic.

As computers are being used more and more in education, there will soon be no role for the teacher in the classroom.

To what extent do you agree or disagree?

You should use your own ideas, knowledge and experience and support your arguments with examples and relevant evidence.

Write at least 250 words.

General Training Writing

In Task 1 candidates are asked to respond to a given problem with a letter requesting information or explaining a situation.

Depending on the task suggested, candidates are assessed on their ability to:

- engage in personal correspondence
- elicit and provide general factual information
- express needs, wants, likes and dislikes
- express opinions (views, complaints etc.)

In Task 2 candidates are presented with a point of view or argument or problem.

Candidates are assessed on their ability to:

- provide general factual information
- outline a problem and present a solution
- present and possibly justify an opinion, assessment or hypothesis
- present and possibly evaluate and challenge ideas, evidence and argument

The topics are of general interest and it makes no difference what subjects candidates study.

Academic Writing Task 2 (example)

WRITING TASK 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

You rent a house through an agency. The heating system has stopped working. You phoned the agency a week ago but it has still not been repaired.

Write a letter to the agency. In your letter

- *introduce yourself*
- *explain the situation*
- *say what action you would like the agency to take*

Write at least 150 words.

You do **NOT** need to write your own address.

Begin your letter as follows:

Dear Sir or Madam,

WRITING TASK 2

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Write about the following topic:

Some people think that children get a better education if they study away from home at a boarding school. Others believe it is better for them to stay with their families and attend day school.

Discuss both these points of view and give your own opinion.

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your experience.

Write at least 250 words.

General Training Writing Task 1 (example)

General Training Writing Task 2 (example)

Marking and Assessment

Each task is assessed independently. The assessment of Task 2 carries more weight in marking than Task 1.

Writing scripts are marked by trained and certificated IELTS examiners. IELTS examiners all hold relevant teaching qualifications and are recruited as examiners by the test centres and approved by British Council or IDP:IELTS Australia. Scores are currently reported as whole bands.

Detailed performance descriptors have been developed which describe written performance at the 9 IELTS bands. These descriptors are confidential and apply to both the Academic and General Training Modules.

Task 1 scripts are assessed on the following criteria:

- Task Achievement
- Coherence and Cohesion
- Lexical Resource
- Grammatical Range and Accuracy

Task 2 scripts are assessed on the following criteria:

- Task Response
- Coherence and Cohesion
- Lexical Resource
- Grammatical Range and Accuracy

Scripts under the required minimum word limit will be penalised.

Task 1

Task Achievement

This criterion assesses how appropriately, accurately and relevantly the response fulfils the requirements set out in the task, using the minimum of 150 words.

Academic Writing Task 1 is a writing task which has a defined input and a largely predictable output. It is basically an information-transfer task which relates narrowly to the factual content of an input diagram and not to speculated explanations that lie outside the given data.

General Training Writing Task 1 is also a writing task with a largely predictable output in that each task sets out the context and purpose of the letter and the functions the candidate should cover in order to achieve this purpose.

Coherence and Cohesion

This criterion is concerned with the overall clarity and fluency of the message: how the response organises and links information, ideas and language. Coherence refers to the linking of ideas through logical sequencing. Cohesion refers to the varied and appropriate use of cohesive devices (for example, logical connectors, pronouns and conjunctions) to assist in making the conceptual and referential relationships between and within sentences clear.

Lexical Resource

This criterion refers to the range of vocabulary the candidate has used and the accuracy and appropriacy of that use in terms of the specific task.

Grammatical Range and Accuracy

This criterion refers to the range and accurate use of the candidate's grammatical resource as manifested in the candidate's writing at the sentence level.

Task 2

Task Response

In both Academic and General Training Modules Task 2 requires the candidates to formulate and develop a position in relation to a given prompt in the form of a question or statement. Ideas should be supported by evidence, and examples may be drawn from the candidates' own experience. Responses must be at least 250 words in length.

>>> Speaking

Duration and format

The Speaking Module takes between 11 and 14 minutes and consists of an oral interview between the candidate and an examiner.

All interviews are recorded.

The overall structure of the test is summarised below.

Part	Nature of interaction	Timing
Part 1 Introduction and interview	Examiner introduces him/herself and confirms candidate's identity. Examiner interviews candidate using verbal questions selected from familiar topic frames.	4–5 minutes
Part 2 Individual long turn	Examiner asks candidate to speak for 1–2 minutes on a particular topic based on written input in the form of a candidate task card and content-focused prompts. Examiner asks one or two questions to round-off the long turn.	3–4 minutes (incl. 1 minute preparation time)
Part 3 Two-way discussion	Examiner invites candidate to participate in discussion of a more abstract nature, based on verbal questions thematically linked to Part 2 topic.	4–5 minutes

Task Types

There are three main parts. Each part fulfils a specific function in terms of interaction pattern, task input and candidate output.

In Part 1 candidates answer general questions about themselves, their homes/families, their jobs/studies, their interests, and a range of familiar topic areas. This part lasts between four and five minutes.

In Part 2 the candidate is given a verbal prompt on a card and is asked to talk on a particular topic. The candidate has one minute to prepare before speaking at length, for between one and two minutes. The examiner then asks one or two rounding-off questions.

In Part 3 the examiner and candidate engage in a discussion of more abstract issues and concepts which are thematically linked to the topic prompt in Part 2. The discussion lasts between four and five minutes.

The Speaking Module assesses how effectively candidates can communicate in English.

Research has shown that the speech functions which occur regularly in a candidate's output during the Speaking Test are:

Providing personal information	Expressing a preference
Providing non-personal information	Comparing
Expressing opinions	Summarising
Explaining	Conversation repair
Suggesting	Contrasting
Justifying opinions	Narrating and paraphrasing
Speculating	Analysing

Other speech functions may emerge during the test, but they are not forced by the test structure.

Marking and assessment

IELTS examiners all hold relevant teaching qualifications and are recruited as examiners by the test centres and approved by British Council or IDP:IELTS Australia.

Detailed performance descriptors have been developed which describe spoken performance at the nine IELTS bands, based on the following criteria. Scores are reported as whole bands only.

Fluency and Coherence refers to the ability to talk with normal levels of continuity, rate and effort and to link ideas and language together to form coherent, connected speech.

The key indicators of fluency are speech rate and speech continuity.

The key indicators of coherence are logical sequencing of sentences, clear marking of stages in a discussion, narration or argument, and the use of cohesive devices (e.g. connectors, pronouns and conjunctions) within and between sentences.

Lexical Resource refers to the range of vocabulary the candidate can use and the precision with which meanings and attitudes can be expressed.

The key indicators are the variety of words used, the adequacy and appropriacy of the words used and the ability to circumlocute (get round a vocabulary gap by using other words) with or without noticeable hesitation.

Grammatical Range and Accuracy refers to the range and the accurate and appropriate use of the candidate's grammatical resource.

The key indicators of grammatical range are the length and complexity of the spoken sentences, the appropriate use of subordinate clauses, and the range of sentence structures, especially to move elements around for information focus.

The key indicators of grammatical accuracy are the number of grammatical errors in a given amount of speech and the communicative effect of error.

Pronunciation refers to the ability to produce comprehensible speech to fulfil the speaking test requirements.

The key indicators will be the amount of strain caused to the listener, the amount of the speech which is unintelligible and the noticeability of L1 influence.

Example Part 2

Describe a teacher who has greatly influenced you in your education.

You should say:

**where you met them
what subject they taught
what was special about them**

and explain why this person influenced you so much.

You will have to talk about the topic for 1 to 2 minutes.
You have one minute to think about what you are going to say.
You can make some notes to help you if you wish.

Example Part 2

Describe a letter you received which was very important to you.

You should say:

**when you received it
who sent it
what it was about**

and explain why it was important to you.

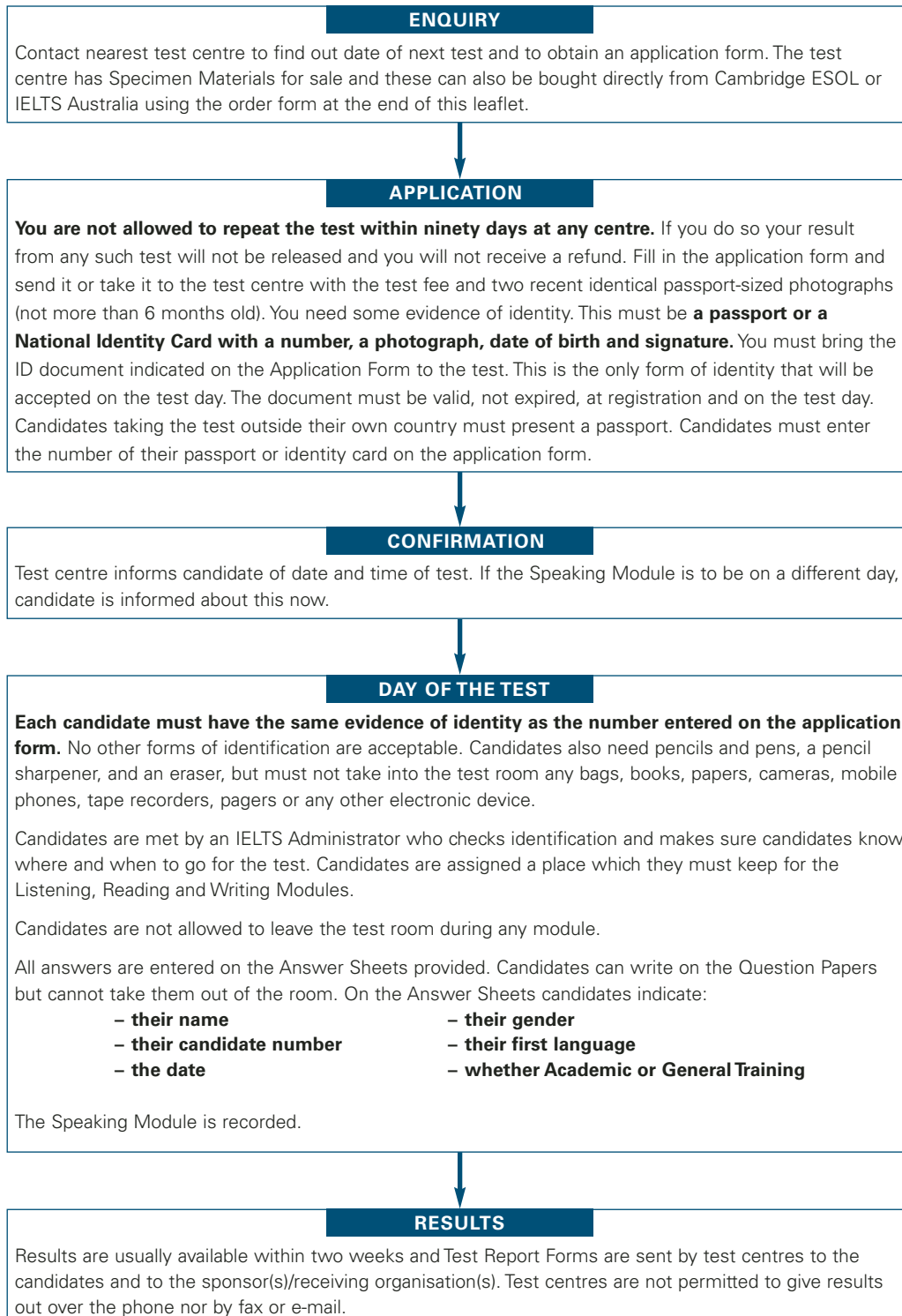
You will have to talk about the topic for 1 to 2 minutes.
You have one minute to think about what you are going to say.
You can make some notes to help you if you wish.

Test Registration and Administration

IELTS management is centrally controlled but the administration of the test takes place in local test centres. This guarantees flexibility and adaptability, and ensures a very rapid turn around from registration to results.

Most centres conduct a testing session at least once a month and more often at peak times. Special test sessions can be arranged for particular sponsors or organisations

according to the global IELTS test date schedule. Information on the availability of test sessions at centres can be found on the IELTS website at www.ielts.org. The chart below shows the test procedure for candidates.



Candidates with Special Needs

What help is available?

Test centres make every effort to cater for candidates with special needs, to enable them to best understand questions and tasks and give their answers. It is our aim for the language level of all candidates to be assessed fairly and objectively.

Requests concerning candidates special needs should be addressed to the local centre as much in advance of the test administration as possible and should be supported by appropriate medical certificates. The test centre needs time to discuss any special arrangements with Cambridge ESOL. Each case is considered individually.

Please note that at least 6 weeks notice is required if a modified version of IELTS is required (eg: Braille or Hearing-impaired versions), and preferred for all other applications made for candidates with special needs.

Candidates with visual difficulties:

Candidates with visual difficulties may apply for a range of provisions, including enlarged print, and brailled question papers.

Answers may be recorded in a variety of ways, eg. via an amanuensis, or using a braille machine or word-processor, and extra time may be allowed.

A version of the Listening Module is also available for candidates with visual difficulties.

Candidates with hearing difficulties

If candidates suffer from partial hearing loss and can hear with the help of headphones or special amplification equipment they may ask for permission to use this type of equipment when taking the Listening module.

A lip-reading version of the Listening Module is also available in which the supervisor reads the listening texts to the candidate.

If candidates have severe hearing difficulties and the special arrangements described above are not sufficient, for example if they are unable to lip-read, they then can apply for exemption from the Speaking and/or Listening Modules.

In this case, their Test Report Form will have the following statement printed on it:

'Due to extreme speaking and/or hearing difficulties this candidate was exempt from taking the Speaking and/or Listening Modules and the overall band score reflects this.'

The overall band score will not include any credit for skills that the candidate has not been able to demonstrate through being granted an exemption.

NB: Candidates must apply for exemption before taking the IELTS test.

Candidates with Specific Learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexia)

If candidates have dyslexia or another specific learning difficulty, they may need extra time to complete a paper. This might be necessary if, for example, it takes candidates a long time to read the questions or write their answers.

They may normally apply for up to 30 minutes extra time for completion of the Reading and Writing Modules.

Candidates with Specific Learning Difficulties may also apply to write their answers using a typewriter or word-processor, if they normally write this way.

If permission is given for them to use a word-processor, it must not have an active spellcheck or thesaurus facility.

Please note that the IELTS Administrator may not be able to provide facilities for word-processing (including the use of computers or software). Candidates should discuss their needs with their IELTS Administrator.

What if a candidate becomes ill during the test?

If a candidate is genuinely ill during the test it should be brought to the attention of the test supervisor. It is not possible to give special consideration to candidates who do not report their illness on the day of the test.

Other difficulties

What happens if a candidate wants to postpone or cancel their entry?

Candidates who request a postponement or cancellation of their test within 5 weeks of the test date will normally be charged the full fee unless they are able to provide appropriate medical evidence to support their request. Medical evidence must be provided within 5 days of the test date.

What happens if a candidate is absent on the day of the test without giving prior notice?

The candidate will normally lose their full test fee unless they are able to provide appropriate medical evidence to the centre to explain their absence. Medical evidence must be provided within 5 days of the test date.

Security of IELTS

The security of IELTS material and test results is of paramount importance, and numerous procedures are in place to safeguard this. The following is a general outline of these procedures, but for obvious reasons, the IELTS partners do not make public details of this aspect of their work.

- All IELTS centres are required to follow a detailed Code of Practice, specifying how tests are to be conducted, how results are to be recorded and forwarded to Cambridge ESOL, etc.
- Candidates must provide photographic evidence of identity when they apply for the test, when they register at the start of the test day, at various times during the written papers and at the start of the interview.
- The Test Report Form is printed on security-enhanced paper. It is authenticated by a centre stamp, an IELTS validation stamp and a photograph of the candidate. British Council, IDP:IELTS Australia, Cambridge ESOL, are able to verify results on request or results may be verified by using the Test Report Form Verification Service located at <https://ielts.ucles.org.uk>

Question Paper Development and Research

IELTS is backed by an extensive programme of research, validation and test development which underpins the quality of the test.

IELTS test material is developed by Cambridge ESOL using the following stages:

- Commissioning
- Editing
- Pretesting
- Analysis and banking of material
- Standards Fixing
- Question paper construction

Throughout the writing and editing process, carried out simultaneously in Australia, New Zealand and the UK, strict guidelines are followed in order to ensure that the materials conform to the test specifications. Topics or contexts of language use which might introduce a bias against any group of candidates of a particular background (e.g. on the basis of sex, ethnic origin etc.) are avoided.

After selection and editing, the items are compiled into pretest papers. Pretesting plays a central role as it allows for texts and questions with known measurement characteristics to be banked, so that new versions of question papers can be produced on a regular basis. The pretesting process helps to ensure that all versions conform to the test requirements in terms of content and level of difficulty.

Pretesting is carried out on IELTS candidates world-wide. The pretests are marked and analysed and those which are found to be suitable are banked. Before the final question papers are selected, the banked material is compiled into Trial Papers. These are either a 30 minute Listening test or a 60 minute Reading test.

A procedure known as Standards Fixing is then applied in which the Trial Papers are administered to representative IELTS candidates and the results analysed in order to allow accurate Band Score conversion tables to be constructed. Standards Fixing is necessary to ensure the equivalence of Listening and Reading versions and the reliability of the measurement of each paper.

In addition to this routine of test development and validation, the IELTS partners carry out academic research to support the tests and sponsor external researchers. Details of this research are given in the IELTS Annual Review.

Test Centres

A full list of IELTS test centres and contact details is available at www.ielts.org

There are currently IELTS test centres in the following locations:

Albania

- Tirana, British Council (AL001)

Argentina

- Buenos Aires, Cultura Inglesa (AR609)

Armenia

- Yerevan, British Council (AM001)

Australia

- Adelaide, University of South Australia (AU100)
- Armidale, University of New England (AU109)
- Brisbane, University of Queensland (AU105)
- Cairns, International House Queensland (AU055)
- Canberra, IELTS Australia (AU110)
- Canberra, University of Canberra (AU115)
- Darwin, Charles Darwin University (AU120)
- Launceston, University of Tasmania (AU125)
- Melbourne, RMIT English Worldwide (AU056)
- Melbourne, Hawthorn English Language Centre, Melbourne University Private Ltd (AU130)
- Newcastle, University of Newcastle (AU106)
- Perth, Curtin University of Technology (AU054)
- Rockhampton, Central Queensland University (AU135)
- Sippy Downs, University of the Sunshine Coast (AU156)
- Southport, Gold Coast Institute of TAFE (AU111)
- Sydney, Macquarie University (AU108)
- Sydney, University of Sydney, Centre for English Teaching (AU091)
- Sydney, University of Technology (AU140)
- Townsville, James Cook University (AU145)
- Wagga Wagga, Charles Sturt University (AU061)
- Wollongong, University of Wollongong (AU107)

Austria

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Bahrain

- Manama, British Council (BH001)

Bangladesh

- Dhaka, British Council Teaching Centre (BD001)
- Dhaka, VUI IELTS Test Centre, Dhanmondi R/A (BD005)

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- Brussels, British Council (BE003)

Bolivia

- Casilla, British Council (BO003)
- La Paz, The Language Works (BO007)

Bosnia & Herzegovina

- Sarajevo, British Council (BA001)

Brazil

- Belo Horizonte, Cultura Inglesa (BR001)
- Brasilia, British Council (BR112)
- Curitiba, Cultura Inglesa (BR003)
- Florianopolis, Cultura Inglesa (BR014)
- Porto Alegre, Cultura Inglesa (BR124)
- Recife, British Council (BR029)
- Rio de Janeiro, British Council (BR060)
- São Carlos, Cultura Inglesa (BR128)
- São Paulo, British Council (BR051)
- São Paulo, IDP Education Australia (BR010)
- Salvador, Cultura Inglesa de Bahia (BR016)

Brunei Darussalam

- Bandar Seri Begawan, British Council (BN003)
- Bandar Seri Begawan, IDP Education Australia (BN090)

Bulgaria

- Sofia, British Council (BG001)

Cambodia

- Phnom Penh, Australian Centre for Education (KH001)

Cameroon

- Yaounde, British Council (CM001)

Canada

- Nova Scotia, International Language Institute (CA030)
- Ontario, Conestoga College of Applied Art & Technology (CA021)
- Vancouver, Simon Fraser University, (CA025)

Chile

- Santiago, British Council (CL010)

China

- Beijing, British Embassy (CN001)
- Guangzhou, British Consulate-General (CN002)
- Shanghai, British Consulate-General (CN004)
- Yu Hong District, British Consulate-General (CN172)

IELTS Registration Offices:

- Beijing, Overseas Test Centre, Beijing Language Cultural University
- Chengdu, Foreign Language Test Centre Sichuan Union University (West Campus)

- Fuzhou, Fujian Education International Exchange Association
- Guangzhou, Zhong Kai Agrotechnical College
- Hangzhou, Shinyway Overseas Studies Service Centre
- Hefei, Anhui China–Australia Technology and Further Education College
- Jinan, Learning Interchange Centre of Shan Dong University
- Nanjing, Foreign Languages Dept, Southeast University
- Shanghai, International Test Centre
- Shenyang, Liaoning Educational Centre for International Exchange
- Shenzhen, SEG Personnel Training Centre
- Tianjin, Jin Gu Training Department Mel Tong Foreign Language Training Centre
- Wuhan, Hubei Provincial Education Association of International Exchange
- Xi'an, Training Department, Xi'an Foreign Languages University
- Xiamen, International Tests Centre, Foreign Language College, Xiamen University

Colombia

- Bogota, British Council (CO001)
- Bogota, IDP Education Australia (CO007)

Costa Rica

- San Jose, Instituto Britanico (CR001)

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- Suva, The University of the South Pacific (FJ026)

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- Essen, IDP Education Australia (DE208)

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- Hamilton, University of Waikato (NZ022)
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