

Your guide to IELTS



IELTS[™]

Who accepts IELTS?

IELTS is recognised by over 9,000 organisations worldwide, including educational institutions, employers, governments, immigration authorities and professional bodies.

Almost all British universities and colleges accept IELTS results. This means you can apply with an IELTS result from any of the 1,000 IELTS test locations worldwide unless your institution has additional requirements*.

*To find out more, visit www.takeielts.org/ielts-uk-immigration-visa

You can find the IELTS score you need to access the education, emigration, employment, professional registration or training opportunity of your choice by visiting www.takeielts.org/choose-ielts/who-accepts-ielts

The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is the world's most popular English language proficiency test for higher education and global migration, with over 2.5 million tests taken in 2014.

IELTS assesses all of your English skills – Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking and is designed to reflect how you will use English at study, at work, and at play, in your new life abroad.

This guide should answer any questions you may have regarding your IELTS test.

Want to learn more? Find the answers at www.takeielts.org/choose-ielts/why-british-council



IELTS

What is IELTS?

The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is the world's most popular English language proficiency test for higher education and global migration, with over 2.5 million tests taken in 2014.

Which organisations accept IELTS?

IELTS is accepted by more than 9,000 organisations worldwide. These include universities, immigration departments, government agencies, professional bodies and multinational companies.

Who owns IELTS and who writes the test?

IELTS is jointly owned by British Council, IDP: IELTS Australia and Cambridge English Language Assessment. International teams of writers contribute to IELTS test materials. Ongoing research ensures that IELTS remains fair and unbiased. Test writers from different English-speaking countries develop IELTS content so it reflects real-life situations.

Why are there two versions of the test?

IELTS has two versions – Academic and General Training. The Academic test is for those who want to study at a tertiary level in an English-speaking country. The General Training test is for those who want to complete work experience or training programmes, attend secondary school or migrate to an English-speaking country. All test takers take the same Listening and Speaking tests but different Reading and Writing tests.

What is the test format and how long will it take?

IELTS has four parts – Listening (30 minutes), Reading (60 minutes), Writing (60 minutes) and Speaking (11–14 minutes). The total test time is 2 hours and 45 minutes. The Listening, Reading and Writing tests are done in one sitting. The Speaking test may be on the same day or up to seven days before or after the other tests.

When can I take IELTS?

IELTS is available on 48 fixed dates a year – up to four times a month, depending on local demand.

Where can I take IELTS?

You can take IELTS with the British Council in over 140 countries worldwide. Visit www.takeielts.org/book-your-test/book-now to find your nearest location.

How much does it cost?

IELTS has a set fee for its test. The Academic and General Training tests are the same cost. When you apply online, you will be told the fee.

How are the tests marked?

IELTS uses a 9-band scoring system to measure and report test scores in a consistent manner. You receive individual band scores for Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking and an Overall Band Score on a band scale from 1-9.

When will I receive my test results?

Your Test Report Form will be posted to you 13 days after your test date. Some test centres also provide SMS alerts and an Online Results Service. Keep your Test Report Form in a secure place as you only receive one copy.

How soon can I re-sit the test?

There is no limit on sitting the test. However, IELTS recommends you do additional study before taking the test again. Some test centres offer preparatory courses and language classes. You can also improve your skills by using the IELTS Official Practice Materials – visit www.takeielts.org.

**“IELTS makes
for a confident
student.”**

*Senior Teacher,
Turning Point, India*





IELTS for UK Visas & Immigration

UK Visas & Immigration (UKVI) has announced important changes to Secure English Language Tests (SELT) for visa purposes. If you are applying for a UK visa, you need to be aware of changes made by the UKVI. The following sections should help you decide which test is right for you.

Which IELTS test do I need if I am applying for a UK visa?

For visa applications to the UK, you may need proof of your English language level. In particular, for many categories of visa, you must submit your score from an English test that is included on the UK Home Office's list of Secure English Language Tests (often referred to as SELT tests). IELTS for UKVI and IELTS Life Skills are on this list.

To find out whether you need to take an approved test, what level you need to achieve, and which test you can use, you should contact UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) at www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa.

Tier 4 Student Visa (without a pre-sessional)

If you are applying for a Tier 4 Student Visa to a university that is a Tier 4 Sponsor to study for a bachelor or postgraduate degree you are required to meet the English language level set by the institution. Almost all British universities and colleges accept IELTS results. Tier 4 Student Visa applicants can apply to the UK universities listed at www.gov.uk/government/publications/register-of-licensed-sponsors-students with an IELTS result from any of the 1,000 IELTS test locations worldwide unless the institution has additional requirements.

Please note

If you are studying at degree level or higher at a Higher Education Institution (HEI), these changes will not affect you. UKVI has confirmed that HEIs currently choose their own method of testing students' English language ability and this will not change.

As a guide, you can use the following table:

Visa description	Minimum CEFR level required	Skills	IELTS test and minimum score required overall and in each skill ¹
Tier 1 General visa	C1	Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening	IELTS – 7.0 overall, and in each of the four skills
Tier 1 Exceptional Talent visa	B1	Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening	IELTS – 4.0 overall, and in each of the four skills
Tier 1 Entrepreneur visa	B1	Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening	IELTS – 4.0 overall, and in each of the four skills
Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur visa	B1	Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening	IELTS – 4.0 overall, and in each of the four skills
Tier 2 General visa – in most cases	B1	Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening	IELTS – 4.0 overall, and in each of the four skills
Tier 2 Sportsperson visa ²	A1	Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening	IELTS – 4.0 overall, and in each of the four skills
Tier 2 Minister of Religion visa	B2	Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening	IELTS – 5.5 overall, and in each of the four skills
Tier 4 General student visa – below degree level and pre-sessional courses	B1	Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening	IELTS – 4.0 overall, and in each of the four skills
Tier 4 General student visa – degree level and above ³	B2	Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening	IELTS – 5.5 overall, and in each of the four skills
Family of a settled person visa	A1	Speaking and Listening	IELTS Life Skills at A1 – Pass ⁴ , IELTS – 4.0 in Speaking and Listening
Indefinite leave to remain (to settle) or citizenship ⁵	B1	Speaking and Listening	IELTS Life Skills at A1 – Pass ⁴ , IELTS – 4.0 in Speaking and Listening

¹ IELTS is accepted by UKVI at band scores 4.0 and above, equivalent to CEFR level B1.

² Higher Education Institutions on UKVI's list of Tier 4 Sponsors decide which exams to accept when a SELT is not required, and these may include IELTS taken at any of the 1000+ IELTS test locations.

³ IELTS can be used where IELTS Life Skills is used; test takers would need to get 4.0 or above in Speaking and Listening (scores for Reading and Writing will be ignored).

Please note that these changes do not affect the use of IELTS by people from the European Union, European Economic Area, Switzerland and 'majority English speaking countries' as defined by the UK Home Office www.gov.uk/english-language.

Can I use any IELTS test result for UK visa application?

These changes are effective from 6 April 2015.

To assist with the transition, the UK government has announced they will accept results from all IELTS tests taken on or before 22 April. This means that you can submit your past IELTS results to UKVI if:

- your visa application requires you to supply results from a Secure English Language Test, and
- your IELTS test date was on or before 22 April 2015, and
- your IELTS test was taken at any of the 1,000 IELTS test locations around the world, and
- you submit your application to UKVI before 5 November 2015.

From 23 April, you will require results from an 'IELTS for UKVI' test from one of the locations listed at www.takeielts.org/ielts-ukvi/book-ielts-ukvi.

If you require an 'IELTS for UKVI' test to meet UKVI's requirements, then you can register at www.takeielts.org/ielts-ukvi/book-ielts-ukvi for upcoming 'IELTS for UKVI' tests.

Where can I take an IELTS for UKVI or IELTS Life Skills test for a UK visa application?

The tests are available throughout the world, in locations specified by UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI). See the list of dates and locations at www.takeielts.org/ielts-ukvi/book-ielts-ukvi.

You must confirm at the time of **registration** that you wish to use your test result for a UK visa application. You must sit the test in an 'IELTS for UKVI' test session, as UKVI will not accept results from all IELTS tests offered at these locations.

How often is an IELTS for UKVI or IELTS Life Skills test available?

For IELTS for UKVI and IELTS Life Skills, test dates will be available within 28 days at permanent locations and quarterly at pop-up locations.

How often can I re-take IELTS for UKVI or IELTS Life Skills?

For IELTS for UKVI tests, there are no restrictions on retaking the test. For IELTS Life Skills, if you pass the test you cannot retake it at the same level for a period of two years. If you do not pass it, there are no restrictions on retaking the test.

How is my IELTS test different if I take it for UK visa purposes?

Separate sessions will be held for UKVI applicants. You must ensure you register for an 'IELTS for UKVI' test date at the locations listed at www.takeielts.org/ielts-ukvi/book-ielts-ukvi.

The IELTS test for UK visa purposes is designed to meet certain administrative requirements that are specific to UK Visas and Immigration. Test Report Forms will be slightly different, to show that test takers have taken the test at an IELTS UK visa session.

There are no differences in the test format or questions. The actual test taken is the same – same content, examiners, format, level of difficulty, scoring and so on.

If I take an IELTS test for UK visa purposes, can I use my result in other countries / for other purposes?

Yes. IELTS test results are accepted by more than 9,000 organisations worldwide, including universities, colleges, governments and employers.

I've already taken IELTS. Can I still use my result to apply to UK Visas and Immigration?

If your IELTS test date was on or before 22 April 2015, UKVI will accept your results until 5 November 2015. From 23 April, UKVI will require you to submit results from an 'IELTS for UKVI' test that was completed at an IELTS test centre authorised by UKVI to run IELTS tests for UK visa and immigration purposes. You must confirm at the time of registration that you wish to use your test result for these purposes.

This FAQ was updated on 9 June 2015, following an announcement from UKVI that it would accept results from all IELTS tests taken on or before 22 April, regardless of the test location.



“IELTS for UKVI got me back to really focusing on the essential skills; Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking.”



IELTS Life Skills

What is IELTS Life Skills? What is it for?

IELTS Life Skills is a new English Language test offered by the three IELTS Test Partners – British Council, IDP: IELTS Australia and Cambridge English Language Assessment.

IELTS Life Skills is a test of Speaking and Listening, available at CEFR Level A1 and CEFR Level B1. It is designed to meet the requirements of UK Visas and Immigration for certain visa categories and other immigration purposes.

Which IELTS Life Skills test do I need?

Are you applying to UK Visas and Immigration for a 'family of a settled person' visa? **IELTS Life Skills A1** is the test for you.

Are you applying to UK Visas and Immigration for indefinite leave to remain or citizenship? **IELTS Life Skills B1** is the test for you.

Life Skills decision matrix

IELTS Life Skills A1

Prove your English Speaking and Listening skills as part of your application to UK Visas and Immigration for 'family of a settled person' visas.

IELTS Life Skills B1

Prove your English Speaking and Listening skills as part of your application to UK Visas and Immigration for Indefinite Leave to Remain or citizenship.

When and where can I take an IELTS Life Skills test?

The tests are available throughout the world, in locations specified by UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI). See the list of dates and locations at www.takeielts.org/ielts-ukvi/book-ielts-ukvi. You must confirm at the time of **registration** that you wish to use your test result for a UK visa application. You must sit the test in an 'IELTS for UKVI' test session, as UKVI will not accept results from all IELTS tests offered at these locations.

To find out whether you need to take an approved test, what level you need to achieve, and which test you can use, you should contact UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) at www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa.

What is the format of the IELTS Life Skills test?

You take the test with another test taker and one Examiner. Your own performance on both Speaking and Listening will be assessed during this one session.

Why does IELTS Life Skills only cover Speaking and Listening?

The new test has been designed to meet specific immigration requirements for which applicants only need to demonstrate Speaking and Listening skills.

How long does the IELTS Life Skills test take?

IELTS Life Skills at CEFR Level A1 takes 16-18 minutes and Level B1 is 22 minutes.

Is there any break between Speaking and Listening?

No, you will be assessed on your Speaking and Listening skills at the same time.

How is IELTS Life Skills assessed?

A certified IELTS Examiner will assess your performance throughout the Speaking and Listening test based on the following criteria:

- obtaining information
- conveying information
- speaking to communicate
- engaging in discussion

The performance of the other test taker paired with you in IELTS Life Skills test does not affect the assessment of your own performance.

How can I prepare for the IELTS Life Skills test?

Prepare for the test with free test samples at www.takeielts.org/ielts-ukvi/prepare-ielts-life-skills.

How many copies of IELTS Life Skills Test Report Form will I get?

You will receive one copy of the IELTS Life Skills Test Report Form.

How soon will I get my IELTS Life Skills results?

Test results are normally available within 7 days of your test.

How often is an IELTS or IELTS Life Skills test available?

For IELTS and IELTS Life Skills, test dates will be available within 28 days at permanent locations and quarterly at pop-up locations.

How often can I re-take IELTS or IELTS Life Skills?

For IELTS tests, there are no restrictions on retaking the test. For IELTS Life Skills, if you pass the test, you cannot retake it at the same level for a period of two years. If you do not pass it, there are no restrictions on retaking the test.

Want to learn more?
Find the answers at
www.takeielts.org

Official list of British universities and
colleges with Higher Education Institution (HEI)/
Tier 4 Register of Sponsors:
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/
register-of-licensed-sponsors-students](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/register-of-licensed-sponsors-students)