

Course name: IELTS Preparation Course

Proficiency level: IELTS Band 5.0 – 6.0

Duration: 9 months

1. CURRICULUM STRUCTURE

1.1. Rationale

To provide learners with the English language skills to succeed in achieving the relevant band required for intended study destinations. IELTS is used to test learners' ability to follow a course of study in English-speaking institutions of higher learning and is recognized worldwide. It tests their ability to read, write, speak and listen in academic contexts.

1.2 Articulation

Successful completion of the course enables achievement of the required IELTS band score.

2. THE LEARNERS

2.1. Entry level

This course is designed for learners who have successfully completed Intermediate English Course, and above, or IELTS 4.5 or equivalent.

2.2 Target learner profile

Learners will be recruited from most parts of the world, especially from Asia. Most learners should have acquired at least an Intermediate level of English in their previous studies. The majority of the learners would have experienced a teacher-centred classroom, where the teacher is the main participant. In the IELTS preparation course, learners may need to adjust to a different and a learner-centred classroom environment where different teaching strategies and methodologies are used. Some of the learners might also need to adapt themselves to self-directed learning and research.

2.3 Addressing the learner profile

The approach to language teaching methodology is communicative, with emphasis placed both on the presentation and practice of target language and on the consolidation and extension of language skills through the use of task-based learning activities. Teaching focuses on developing the language skills learners require for educational contexts.

To address the strategies of self-directed needs, learners will be encouraged to do regular homework, participate in class activities actively, and/or carry out research tasks and assignments.

3. COURSE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Listening, Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Grammar

Learners will learn the essential elements of extended written pieces.

Teaching will focus on:

- (1) introducing new concepts & skills
- (2) following up new concepts and skills
- (3) reinforcing concepts & skills
- (4) revising concepts & skills

3.1.1 Goals

1. Add additional syntactical focus—clauses (e.g., noun, adjective, adverb)
2. Expand on idea formation between paragraphs
3. Develop confidence in all verb tenses
4. Develop paraphrasing and summarizing skills
5. Learning and using of grammar in authentic situations
6. Familiarize learners with writing different kinds of developmental paragraphs based on diagrams and
7. Familiarise learners with understanding (and responding to) various expressions and expressing opinions on a range of familiar topics, pronunciation, fluency and appropriacy
8. Familiarisation with the IELTS exam
9. Learning the techniques in answer exam questions

3.1.2 Learner outcomes

Listening:

1. Able to listen for main and supporting ideas
2. Listen for specific information
3. Predict information
4. Recognize formal and informal language features

Reading:

1. Read for general idea through skimming and scanning
2. Demonstrate understanding of parallel expressions/synonyms
3. Scan texts for specific information based on a range of descriptive and factual to the discursive and analytical texts

Writing:

Task 1 –

1. Describe, summarise or explain the information on diagrams given (a graph, a table, a chart, a map, a process, or a flow chart)
2. Describe and explain data, the stages of a process, or changes in maps
3. Edit and correct own written texts.

Task 2 –

1. Write an essay in response to/justify a point of view, argument or problem
2. Use appropriate paragraph plans
3. Differentiate formal and informal writing
4. Use of appropriate vocabulary, parallel expressions, and relevant grammatical and logical connectors
5. Edit and correct own written texts

Speaking:

1. Make predictions
2. Express hypotheses
3. Express opinion
4. Respond to others appropriately
5. Use appropriate signposts
6. Demonstrate complex numeracy skills
7. Describe given topics appropriately based on given prompts
8. Use and recognize various expressions and discourse markers

Grammar:

1. Begin to use perfect progressive tenses
2. Continue use of infinitives and gerunds
3. Give full coverage to all of the tenses, with emphasis on past and present, continuous and perfect
4. Identify (in this order) simple adjective, adverb, and noun clauses
5. Use coordinating and subordinating conjunctions
6. Develop use of quantity expressions (e.g., [a] few, [a] little, much, many, a lot, some)
7. Learn additional phrasal verbs

Composition:

1. Identify the elements of introductory paragraphs
2. Identify topics for developmental paragraphs and write appropriate topic sentences
3. Understand the purpose for and characteristics of various types of conclusions
4. Practice writing outlines to plan and organize longer pieces of writing (focus on contemporary topics)

3.2 Reading and Vocabulary

Learners will expand upon existing reading skills and strategies.

Teaching will focus on:

- (1) introducing IELTS concepts, skimming and scanning skills
- (2) following up IELTS concepts, skimming and scanning skills
- (3) reinforcing concepts and skills of all levels
- (4) revising concepts and skills of all levels

3.2.1 Goals

1. Emphasize vocabulary acquisition; focus on nuance, subtly in vocabulary development, parallel expressions and synonyms
2. Reinforce reading skills using short stories, newspapers and internet articles
3. Increase general knowledge on common and popular topics/issues
4. Increase reading rate and further develop oral reading fluency
5. Be able to comprehend passages of 900-1000 words
6. Learn to enjoy reading in English

3.2.2 Learner outcomes

Reading

1. Review all reading skills in texts (articles, stories, etc.) of increased complexity
2. Expand knowledge of prefixes, roots, and suffixes
3. Increase individual reading rate and oral reading fluency; use drills and activities to increase rate and fluency
4. Distinguish fact from opinion/persuasive from informative
5. Approach works from writer's perspective
6. Outline passages and identify point of view, audience and purpose
7. Extend dictionary skills (e.g., multiple meanings, parts of speech) using a monolingual English-English dictionary

Vocabulary

1. Expand L2 vocabulary by 30-40 words/parallel expressions per week: 450-600 total for semester. Track in notebook or other devices
2. Revise common verb and noun collocations
3. Revise grouping verbs, adjectives and adverbs into synonyms and antonyms
4. Revise identifying stems and roots

3.3 Listening and Speaking

Learners will focus on developing consistent competency in listening, speaking and pronunciation.

Teaching will focus on:

- (1) introducing IELTS concepts, content words, formality, prediction, and appropriacy skills
- (2) following up IELTS concepts, content words, formality, prediction, and appropriacy skills
- (3) reinforcing IELTS concepts, content words, formality, prediction, and appropriacy skills of all levels
- (4) revising IELTS concepts, content words, formality, prediction, and appropriacy skills of all levels

3.3.1 Goals

1. Speak confidently and effectively using idiomatic and complex speech
2. Communicate using non-verbal language
3. Understand intermediate-level conversational exchanges from TV and other media
4. Consistently use correct rhythms and intonation of Standard English
5. Identify and work on individual pronunciation problems
6. Develop speaking confidence and knowledge of pop culture through oral presentations

3.3.2 Learner outcomes

Listening and Speaking

1. Use a variety of registers to communicate: giving and replying to compliments, getting people's attention and interrupting
2. Ask for and respond to requests for favours
3. Use situation-specific idioms to communicate ideas, attitudes and feelings
4. Give detailed instructions and explanations
5. Make plans and arrange appointments with friends, doctors and other professionals
6. Use gestures and body language to communicate feelings, attitudes and ideas
7. Discuss current events; debate Asian and global perspectives on these events

3.4 Pronunciation

Learners will focus on developing consistent competency in using Standard English pronunciation.

Teaching will focus on introducing and drilling to insure that learners can:

1. Consistently articulate vowel/consonant sounds of Standard English through the International Phonetic Alphabets (IPA)
2. Learn to use contrastive stress and stress patterns; formulate thought group units (pausing)
3. Practice fluency in vowel and consonant sounds
4. Practice fluency in stressed syllables

3.4.1 Goals

1. Understand and use rising and falling English intonation in the context of different social situations
2. Understand and use English rhythm, with a focus on highlighting important words in various situations
3. Understand and use common English word stress patterns in relation to prefixes and suffixes
4. Understand and use English consonants, with a focus on consonant clusters and unreleased consonants
5. Understand and use English vowels, with a focus on muted and schwa vowel patterns

3.4.2 Learner Outcomes

1. Use question-forming skills using *'WH'-*, *yes/no* and *and/or*
2. Produce and identify meaning change through intonation
3. Understand and use English rhythm by distinguishing between function and content words
4. Exchange polite greetings and draw contrasting opinions with proper pronunciation
5. Use reductions, linking and contractions
6. Understand and use different prefixes and suffixes with accurate pronunciation
7. Use all phonemes of Standard English with a high degree of accuracy in both formal and informal situations

Exit level

Learners who successfully complete this course will have achieved a level of General English language proficiency equivalent to an IELTS score of 5.0 – 6.0..

4. CURRICULUM DESIGN

Course content

The course comprises the following components

- English Language Skills (15 hours per week)
(Including, where appropriate, the use of computer-assisted language learning)
- Pre-teaching and follow-up teaching will complement and support the program of English language study.

4.1 Rationale of course content

The syllabus content is based on the core texts of:

- PEARSON-LONGMAN Focus on IELTS Foundation and Focus on Skills for IELTS Foundation, or MACMILLAN IELTS Foundation for EAP/IELTS Preparation level;
- CAMBRIDGE – Complete IELTS Learner's Book (Bands 4 – 5) and (Bands 5 – 6.5) for IELTS Preparation Advanced 1 level;
- PEARSON-LONGMAN Focus on IELTS and Focus on Skills for IELTS or MACMILLAN IELTS Graduation for IELTS Preparation Advanced 2 level;

4.2 Organisation of the course content

The texts present a topic-based approach in a logical and coherent structure over a 9-month duration. The macro skills of Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking are practised in a balanced and integrated approach throughout each weekly module. The supplementary texts and audio CDs are integrated to support the macro skills and to focus on specific areas. All of the activities throughout the core texts and supplementary texts are framed in a task-based approach.

4.3 Topics

Topics follow the chapters of the Pearson-Longman, Cambridge and Macmillan course books and workbooks supplemented with the associated audio CDs and i-Tools.

The main content areas

The course content is determined by teachers' selections of relevant topics and the core textbooks. In some cases the choice of topics is also subject to the appropriateness of content of resource material.

The focus for course content is provided by weekly themes and topics, which are used to contextualise the teaching of target language and skills. These themes/topics are determined with reference to learners' vocational and study goals and interests. These provide a framework around which language work, particularly vocabulary building and the development of the macro skills, is structured.

4.4 The macro skills balance

Activities and tasks have been composed with all macro skills. The sequencing of modes of language engagement has been determined by learner needs and task type. All macro skills have been balanced in all activity designs.

4.5 Guidance or assistance the curriculum gives teachers

The sequencing of the course content is guided by the outcomes and timetables outline for each course, which are based on learners' needs, as well as on each unit and topics from the core textbooks. The principal content of the course is structured from the Focus on IELTS/Focus on Skills for IELTS, (Pearson-Longman), IELTS Foundation/Graduation (Macmillan) and Complete IELTS Learners (Cambridge).

4.6 List of teaching/learning materials

Core Course Materials

AM Courses

Pearson-Longman Focus on IELTS Foundation
Pearson-Longman Focus on IELTS Foundation Audio CDs
Pearson-Longman Focus on Skills for IELTS Foundation
Pearson-Longman Focus on Skills for IELTS Foundation Audio CDs
Pearson-Longman Focus on IELTS Foundation Teacher's Book

PM Courses

Pearson-Longman Focus on IELTS
Pearson-Longman Focus on IELTS Audio CDs

Pearson-Longman Focus on Skills for IELTS
Pearson-Longman Focus on Skills for IELTS Audio CDs
Pearson-Longman Focus on IELTS Foundation Teacher's Book

Alternative Core Course Materials

AM Courses

Macmillan IELTS Foundation
Macmillan IELTS Foundation Audio CDs
Macmillan IELTS Foundation Study Skills
Macmillan IELTS Foundation Study Skills Audio CDs
Macmillan IELTS Foundation Teacher's Book

Cambridge English – Compete IELTS Learner's Book (Bands 4 – 5)

PM Courses

Macmillan IELTS Graduation
Macmillan IELTS Graduation Audio CDs
Macmillan IELTS Graduation Study Skills
Macmillan IELTS Graduation Study Skills Audio CDs
Macmillan IELTS Graduation Teacher's Book

Cambridge English – Compete IELTS Learner's Book (Bands 5 – 6.5)

Supplementary Course Materials

Cambridge Practice test for IELTS Books 1- 9
Cambridge Grammar for IELTS
Cambridge Vocabulary for IELTS
Cambridge IELTS Trainer with Six Practice Tests
Cambridge English – Step Up to IELTS
Cambridge Objective IELTS
Cambridge New Insight into IELTS
Peter Collin Publishing Check Your English Vocabulary for IELTS
Macmillan Improve your IELTS – Listening and Speaking Skills
Macmillan Improve your IELTS – Reading Skills
Macmillan Improve your IELTS – Writing Skills
Macmillan Tips for IELTS
Macmillan IELTS Testbuilder
Macmillan IELTS Testbuilder 2
Oxford On-Course for IELTS Learner's Book
Oxford On-Course for IELTS Teacher's Book
Oxford IELTS Practice Tests
Longman IELTS Practice Test Plus
Longman IELTS Practice Test Plus 2
Longman IELTS Practice Test Plus 3
Marshall-Cavendish Achieve IELTS Learner's Book (Intermediate- Upper Intermediate)
Thomson Exam – Exam Essentials IELTS Practice Tests
Thomson Exam – Exam Essentials IELTS Express (Intermediate)
Thomson Exam – Exam Essentials IELTS Express (Upper Intermediate)
Barron's IELTS
Barron's 1100 Words You Need to Know
McGraw-Hill's IELTS 5 Practice tests
Collins Listening for IELTS

Collins Speaking for IELTS
Kaplan IELTS
New Age Science - A book for IELTS (Academic Module)

4.7 Weekly Lesson Plans

Please refer to Lesson Plan files in the IELTS folder.

5. TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS

5.1 Role of the teacher and role of the learner

A teacher has a range of roles to fulfil inside and outside the classroom. According to Karavas-Dukas (1995), the most important roles fall within 4 categories:

1. A source of expertise (Input provider, source of knowledge)
2. Management roles (Manager, organiser)
3. Source of Advice (Counsellor, listener)
4. Facilitator of learning (Helper, guide)

Teachers must also be seen by learners to be competent, confident and motivating.

The teacher is the facilitator of learning and is responsible for the quality of course delivery. The teacher's responsibility is to prepare for the class, assess the suitability of resources for learner types and their objectives and make necessary modifications or supplement the syllabus materials as necessary. The role of the teacher is to create an atmosphere where effective learning can take place. The role of the learner is to participate in class activities, contribute their ideas and questions, which would assist the teacher in customizing classes to the needs and learning styles of class participants.

5.2 Strategies to address different learning styles

The IELTS Preparation Course employs many forms of learner engagement of tasks, such as, group work and presentations, problem solving, pair work, etc. These sorts of learning styles may be quite different to those of their home country, so this cultural difference may cause problems with some learners. This area of learning is closely related to learner strategies. Teachers also have to encourage good learner strategies, that is, how to learn strategies beyond the classroom towards a more autonomous position.

6. ASSESSMENT

There are three types of assessment: placement tests, mid-term and final examinations. The results of all assessments are recorded in learner's academic record file which reflects learner's progress.

6.1 Placement Tests

Placement tests are given to all incoming English learners to insure proper class level assignment. The test evaluates the learner's proficiency in Reading Comprehension, Listening, Grammar, Vocabulary and Writing.

6.2 Continuous Assessment

6.2.1 Introduction

From October 2008, all learners in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Foundation programmes will be assessed on a continuous basis. From January 2009, continuous assessment will be extended to English as a Second Language (ESL). However, IELTS will continue to hold mid-term and final examinations. The rationale behind continue assessment for EFL is:

- a. Some learners struggle with exams and prefer an open-book form of assessment. Therefore our methods of assessment should not only be based on formal examinations.
- b. For developing language skills, a system of continuous assessment is more suited for monitoring language acquisition.

6.2.2 The Format of Assessment

Each term, learners must complete two assessments consisting of assessing four skills: listening, reading, writing and speaking. These assessments are held on the 6th and 12th week of each term.

6.2.2.1 Listening

The test has four sections, each consisting of ten questions which are in the same order as the information in the recording, so the answer to the first question will be before the answer to the second question, and so on.

Sections 1 and 2:

These two sections deal with everyday, social situations. There is a conversation between two speakers in Section 1 (for example, a conversation about travel arrangements), and a monologue in Section 2 (for example, a speech about local facilities).

Sections 3 and 4:

The two sections deal with educational and training situations. In Section 3 there is a conversation between two main speakers (for example, two university learners in discussion, perhaps guided by a tutor). In Section 4 only one person speaks on an academic subject.

Recordings are played once only in different accents, particularly, British, North American, Australian and New Zealand.

Learners are given 10 minutes at the end of the test to transfer the answers to the answer sheets. Note: 1 mark is given for each correct answer but no marks will be given for incorrect spelling and grammar.

Time allowed: 30 minutes (plus 10 minutes to transfer answers to an answer sheet)

Number of sections: 4

Number of questions: 40

Marking: Each correct answer receives 1 mark; Final score is given as a band score from 1-9 in whole or half bands.

6.2.2.1.1 Types of questions:

- a. Multiple choice – to test detailed understanding of specific points, or general understanding of the main points of the recording.
- b. Matching – to test ability to listen for detailed information, follow a conversation between two people and recognise how facts are connected to each other
- c. Plan/map/diagram labelling - tests ability to understand, for example, a description of a place, and how this description relates to the visual. It may also test your ability to understand explanations of where things are and follow directions (e.g. straight on/through the far door).
- d. Form/note/table/flow chart/summary completion - to test ability to listen to main points and write down what they hear
- e. Sentence completion - focuses on the ability to identify the important information in a recording and to understand relationships between ideas/facts/events, such as cause and effect.
- f. Short-answer questions - focuses on your ability to listen for facts, such as places, prices or times, heard in the recording.

6.2.2.2 Reading

There are three reading passages with a variety of question types. These texts come from books, journals, magazines, newspapers and online resources, written for a non-specialist audience. All the topics are of general interest to learners at undergraduate or postgraduate level. The texts may be written in different styles, for example, narrative, descriptive or discursive/argumentative. At least one text contains detailed logical argument. Texts may also contain diagrams, graphs or illustrations. If texts use technical vocabulary, then a simple dictionary definition is provided.

Upon completion of the test, answers are to be transferred on answer sheet. You must transfer your answers during the hour you are given for the Reading test. Unlike the Listening test, no extra transfer time is given. You should be careful when writing your answers on the answer sheet because you will lose marks for incorrect spelling and grammar.

Time allowed: 60 minutes (including transfer time)

Number of sections: Three; Total length of passages, 2,150- 2,750 words

Number of questions: 40

Marking: Each correct answer receives 1 mark; Final score is given as a band score from 1-9 in whole or half bands.

6.2.2.2.1 Types of questions:

- a. **Multiple choice** - tests many different reading skills including: detailed understanding of specific points or general understanding of the main points of the text.
- b. **Identifying information (True/False/Not given)** - tests the ability to recognise specific information given in the text.
- c. **Identifying writer's views/claims (Yes/No/Not given)** - tests the ability to recognise opinions or ideas.
- d. **Matching information** - assesses the ability to scan a text in order to find specific information. Unlike task on Matching Headings, it focuses on specific information rather than the main idea. And to find specific details, an example, reason, description, comparison, summary or explanation.
- e. **Matching headings** - tests your ability to identify the general topic of a paragraph (or section) and to recognise the difference between the main idea and a supporting idea.
- f. **Matching features** - tests your ability to recognise relationships and connections between facts in the text and your ability to recognise opinions and theories. And to be able to skim and scan the text to find the information quickly so that one then read that part more carefully for detail.
- g. **Matching sentence endings** - tests the ability to understand the main ideas in the text
- h. **Sentence completion** - tests the ability to find detail/specific information in a text
- i. **Summary/note/table/flow chart completion** - tests the ability to understand details and/or the main ideas of a part of the text. When completing this type of question, one needs to think about the type of word(s) that will fit into a gap (for example, whether a noun is needed, or a verb, etc.).
- j. **Diagram label completion** - tests your ability to understand a detailed description in the text, and then relate that description to information given in a diagram.
- k. **Short-answer questions** - tests your ability to find and understand specific information in the text.

6.2.2.3 Writing

There are two writing tasks and BOTH must be completed.

In Task 1: some visual information presented in a line graph, table, bar chart, or a mixed diagrams, flow chart, map or process must be described in learners' own words with at least 150 words in about 20 minutes. This task tests learners' ability to give a well-organised overview of the visual

information using language that is appropriate in its register and style. Depending on the task type, answers are assessed on one's ability to: organise, present and possibly compare data; describe stages of a process or procedure; and, describe an object, event or sequence of events; or explain how something works.

In Task 2: discuss on a given point of view, argument or problem with at least 250 words in about 40 minutes. This task tests learners' ability to write a clear, relevant, well-organized argument, giving evidence or examples to support their ideas and use language accurately. Depending on the task type, they will be assessed on their ability to present a solution to a problem; present and justify an opinion; compare and contrast evidence, opinions and implications; and evaluate and challenge ideas, evidence or an argument.

All answers must be written in full sentences, and not as notes or bullet points, on the answer sheet.

Time allowed: 60 minutes

Number of tasks: 2

Marking: Task 2 contributes twice as much as Task 1 to the Writing score.

6.2.2.3.1 Marking scheme

Performance on each writing task is based on four assessment criteria:

- a. Task achievement/response - assesses how accurately, appropriately and relevantly learners' response covers the task requirements. In Task 1, all the information you require is given in the diagram, and in Task 2, how well an argument is developed in response to the task, giving evidence and examples which may be from one's own experience.
- b. Coherence and cohesion - assesses how clear and fluent your writing is, and how you organise ideas and information. It includes giving your ideas in a logical order, and using a range of cohesive devices (for example, linking words, pronouns and conjunctions, etc.) appropriately
- c. Lexical resource - assesses the range of vocabulary you have used, and how accurately and appropriately you use it.
- d. Grammatical range and accuracy - assesses the range of grammar you have used and how accurately and appropriately you have used it.

Refer to 6.4 Marking Scheme and Band Descriptor for Written Assessments for full Writing band descriptor.

6.2.2.4 Speaking

The Speaking test is a face-to-face interview between the candidate and an examiner and it consists of three parts with each part following a specific pattern of tasks in order to test learners' ability in different ways. The Speaking test is recorded.

There are four assessment criteria:

- a. Fluency and coherence - assesses how well learners can speak at a normal speed without too much hesitation. It also includes putting sentences and ideas in a logical order and using cohesive devices (including linking words, pronouns and conjunctions, etc.) appropriately so that what is said is not difficult to follow.
- b. Lexical resource - assesses the range of vocabulary learners use and how accurately and appropriately they use vocabulary to express meaning. It also includes the ability to express themselves using alternative vocabulary when they don't know a particular word
- c. Grammatical range and accuracy - assesses the range of grammar learners use and how accurately and appropriately they use it
- d. Pronunciation - assesses learners' ability to speak in a way which can be understood without too much effort

There are three parts to this test:

Part 1 – Introduction and interview (time allowed: 4 – 5 minutes): This part tests your ability to give opinions and information on everyday topics and common experiences or situations by answering a range of questions.

Part 2 – Individual long-turn (time allowed: 3 – 4 minutes): This part tests your ability to speak at length on a given topic, using appropriate language and organising your ideas logically. Learners will need to think about their own experiences to complete the long turn. They are given a task card which asks them to talk about a particular topic. The card tells what points should be included in the talk and give instruction to explain one aspect of the topic. One minute preparation is allowed and a pencil and paper are given for making notes. Examiner will then ask them to begin talking and will stop them when the time is up. They may then ask one or two questions on the same topic. By using the points on the task card and making notes during the preparation time, they should be able to think of appropriate things to say, and have time to structure the talk so that they can keep talking for 2 minutes.

Part 3 – Two-way discussion (time allowed: 4 – 5 minutes): This part tests your ability to explain your opinions and to analyse, discuss and speculate about issues.

Time allowed: 11 - 14 minutes

Number of parts: 3

Marking: Part 1 is not graded; Parts 2 and 3 are based on the criteria mentioned.

6.2.3. Frequency of Testing

Specific dates for all assessments are shown on the Learner's Term Schedule. Basically, there will be two assessments: mid-term (6th week) and final examinations (12th week).

6.2.4. Mid-Term and Final Examinations (IELTS)

Mid-term and Final Examinations in all four skills (listening, reading, writing and speaking) continue to be held IELTS learners.

6.2.5. Prompting and Pre-teaching

The topics of assessment are based on skills and topics presented in the standard IELTS text and skills books, and other supporting materials.

6.2.6. Administering Mid-term and Final Examination

Written assessment will be conducted on the first school day of the 6th and 12th week of the term, and Speaking assessments will be conducted on the following school day. On the first day, lasting 3 hours, tests on listening, reading and writing will be conducted, and the following day, the speaking test will be conducted with each learner given a 15-minute timeslot.

6.3. Examinations

The mid-term examination will take place on the first day of week 6 whereas the final examination will take place on the first and second day of week 12. Each exam will include a listening, a reading, a writing, and a speaking component.

Learners will not be allowed to have bags, books, papers, dictionaries or hand phones at their tables during the examinations. Learners who come to class after an exam has begun will be disbarred. Learners who are absent from an exam and do not have a valid excuse will receive a score of zero (0). Learners who are absent with a valid excuse will be allowed to resit the exam the following week.

6.3 Marking Scheme and Band Descriptor

6.3.1 Band descriptor for Listening Test

Score	IELTS Band
Absent / 0	0.0
1	1.0
2	2.0
3	2.5
4 – 5	3.0
6 – 9	3.5
10 – 12	4.0
13 – 15	4.5
16 – 17	5.0
18 – 22	5.5
23 – 25	6.0
26 – 29	6.5
30 – 31	7.0
32 – 34	7.5
35 – 36	8.0
37 – 38	8.5
39 – 40	9.0

6.3.2 Band descriptor for Reading Test

Score	IELTS Band
Absent / 0	0.0
1	1.0
2 - 3	2.0
4 - 5	2.5
6 - 7	3.0
8 - 9	3.5
10 - 12	4.0
13 - 14	4.5
15 - 18	5.0
19 - 22	5.5
23 - 26	6.0
27 - 29	6.5
30 - 32	7.0
33 - 34	7.5
35 - 36	8.0
37 - 38	8.5
39 - 40	9.0

6.3.3 Marking scheme for Written Assessment

6.3.3.1 Marking Scheme for Writing Task 1



IELTS TASK 1 Writing band descriptors (public version)

Band	Task Achievement	Coherence and Cohesion	Lexical Resource	Grammatical Range and Accuracy
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fully satisfies all the requirements of the task clearly presents a fully developed response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses cohesion in such a way that it attracts no attention skilfully manages paragraphing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of vocabulary with very natural and sophisticated control of lexical features; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of structures with full flexibility and accuracy; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips'
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> covers all requirements of the task sufficiently presents, highlights and illustrates key features/bullet points clearly and appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sequences information and ideas logically manages all aspects of cohesion well uses paragraphing sufficiently and appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of vocabulary fluently and flexibly to convey precise meanings skilfully uses uncommon lexical items but there may be occasional inaccuracies in word choice and collocation produces rare errors in spelling and/or word formation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of structures the majority of sentences are error-free makes only very occasional errors or inappropriacies
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> covers the requirements of the task (Academic) presents a clear overview of main trends, differences or stages (General Training) presents a clear purpose, with the tone consistent and appropriate clearly presents and highlights key features/bullet points but could be more fully extended 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> logically organises information and ideas; there is clear progression throughout uses a range of cohesive devices appropriately although there may be some under-/over-use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a sufficient range of vocabulary to allow some flexibility and precision uses less common lexical items with some awareness of style and collocation may produce occasional errors in word choice, spelling and/or word formation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a variety of complex structures produces frequent error-free sentences has good control of grammar and punctuation but may make a few errors
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> addresses the requirements of the task (Academic) presents an overview with information appropriately selected (General Training) presents a purpose that is generally clear; there may be inconsistencies in tone presents and adequately highlights key features/bullet points but details may be irrelevant, inappropriate or inaccurate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> arranges information and ideas coherently and there is a clear overall progression uses cohesive devices effectively, but cohesion within and/or between sentences may be faulty or mechanical may not always use referencing clearly or appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses an adequate range of vocabulary for the task attempts to use less common vocabulary but with some inaccuracy makes some errors in spelling and/or word formation, but they do not impede communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a mix of simple and complex sentence forms makes some errors in grammar and punctuation but they rarely reduce communication
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> generally addresses the task; the format may be inappropriate in places (Academic) recounts detail mechanically with no clear overview; there may be no data to support the description (General Training) may present a purpose for the letter that is unclear at times; the tone may be variable and sometimes inappropriate presents, but inadequately covers, key features/bullet points; there may be a tendency to focus on detail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> presents information with some organisation but there may be a lack of overall progression makes inadequate, inaccurate or over-use of cohesive devices may be repetitive because of lack of referencing and substitution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a limited range of vocabulary, but this is minimally adequate for the task may make noticeable errors in spelling and/or word formation that may cause some difficulty for the reader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses only a limited range of structures attempts complex sentences but these tend to be less accurate than simple sentences may make frequent grammatical errors and punctuation may be faulty; errors can cause some difficulty for the reader
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attempts to address the task but does not cover all key features/bullet points; the format may be inappropriate (General Training) fails to clearly explain the purpose of the letter; the tone may be inappropriate may confuse key features/bullet points with detail; parts may be unclear, irrelevant, repetitive or inaccurate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> presents information and ideas but these are not arranged coherently and there is no clear progression in the response uses some basic cohesive devices but these may be inaccurate or repetitive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses only basic vocabulary which may be used repetitively or which may be inappropriate for the task has limited control of word formation and/or spelling; errors may cause strain for the reader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses only a very limited range of structures with only rare use of subordinate clauses some structures are accurate but errors predominate, and punctuation is often faulty
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fails to address the task, which may have been completely misunderstood presents limited ideas which may be largely irrelevant/repetitive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not organise ideas logically may use a very limited range of cohesive devices, and those used may not indicate a logical relationship between ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses only a very limited range of words and expressions with very limited control of word formation and/or spelling errors may severely distort the message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attempts sentence forms but errors in grammar and punctuation predominate and distort the meaning
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> answer is barely related to the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> has very little control of organisational features 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses an extremely limited range of vocabulary; essentially no control of word formation and/or spelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cannot use sentence forms except in memorised phrases
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> answer is completely unrelated to the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fails to communicate any message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> can only use a few isolated words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cannot use sentence forms at all
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not attend does not attempt the task in any way writes a totally memorised response 			

6.3.3.2 Marking Scheme for Writing Task 2

IELTS Task 2 Writing band descriptors (public version)

Band	Task Response	Coherence and Cohesion	Lexical Resource	Grammatical Range and Accuracy
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fully addresses all parts of the task presents a fully developed position in answer to the question with relevant, fully extended and well supported ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses cohesion in such a way that it attracts no attention skilfully manages paragraphing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of vocabulary with very natural and sophisticated control of lexical features; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of structures with full flexibility and accuracy; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips'
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sufficiently addresses all parts of the task presents a well-developed response to the question with relevant, extended and supported ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sequences information and ideas logically manages all aspects of cohesion well uses paragraphing sufficiently and appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of vocabulary fluently and flexibly to convey precise meanings skilfully uses uncommon lexical items but there may be occasional inaccuracies in word choice and collocation produces rare errors in spelling and/or word formation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of structures the majority of sentences are error-free makes only very occasional errors or inappropriacies
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> addresses all parts of the task presents a clear position throughout the response presents, extends and supports main ideas, but there may be a tendency to over-generalise and/or supporting ideas may lack focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> logically organises information and ideas; there is clear progression throughout uses a range of cohesive devices appropriately although there may be some under-/over-use presents a clear central topic within each paragraph 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a sufficient range of vocabulary to allow some flexibility and precision uses less common lexical items with some awareness of style and collocation may produce occasional errors in word choice, spelling and/or word formation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a variety of complex structures produces frequent error-free sentences has good control of grammar and punctuation but may make a few errors
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> addresses all parts of the task although some parts may be more fully covered than others presents a relevant position although the conclusions may become unclear or repetitive presents relevant main ideas but some may be inadequately developed/unclear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> arranges information and ideas coherently and there is a clear overall progression uses cohesive devices effectively, but cohesion within and/or between sentences may be faulty or mechanical may not always use referencing clearly or appropriately uses paragraphing, but not always logically 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses an adequate range of vocabulary for the task attempts to use less common vocabulary but with some inaccuracy makes some errors in spelling and/or word formation, but they do not impede communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a mix of simple and complex sentence forms makes some errors in grammar and punctuation but they rarely reduce communication
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> addresses the task only partially; the format may be inappropriate in places expresses a position but the development is not always clear and there may be no conclusions drawn presents some main ideas but these are limited and not sufficiently developed; there may be irrelevant detail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> presents information with some organisation but there may be a lack of overall progression makes inadequate, inaccurate or over-use of cohesive devices may be repetitive because of lack of referencing and substitution may not write in paragraphs, or paragraphing may be inadequate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a limited range of vocabulary, but this is minimally adequate for the task may make noticeable errors in spelling and/or word formation that may cause some difficulty for the reader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses only a limited range of structures attempts complex sentences but these tend to be less accurate than simple sentences may make frequent grammatical errors and punctuation may be faulty; errors can cause some difficulty for the reader
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> responds to the task only in a minimal way or the answer is tangential; the format may be inappropriate presents a position but this is unclear presents some main ideas but these are difficult to identify and may be repetitive, irrelevant or not well supported 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> presents information and ideas but these are not arranged coherently and there is no clear progression in the response uses some basic cohesive devices but these may be inaccurate or repetitive may not write in paragraphs or their use may be confusing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses only basic vocabulary which may be used repetitively or which may be inappropriate for the task has limited control of word formation and/or spelling; errors may cause strain for the reader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses only a very limited range of structures with only rare use of subordinate clauses some structures are accurate but errors predominate, and punctuation is often faulty
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not adequately address any part of the task does not express a clear position presents few ideas, which are largely undeveloped or irrelevant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not organise ideas logically may use a very limited range of cohesive devices, and those used may not indicate a logical relationship between ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses only a very limited range of words and expressions with very limited control of word formation and/or spelling errors may severely distort the message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attempts sentence forms but errors in grammar and punctuation predominate and distort the meaning
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> barely responds to the task does not express a position may attempt to present one or two ideas but there is no development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> has very little control of organisational features 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses an extremely limited range of vocabulary; essentially no control of word formation and/or spelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cannot use sentence forms except in memorised phrases
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> answer is completely unrelated to the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fails to communicate any message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> can only use a few isolated words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cannot use sentence forms at all
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not attend does not attempt the task in any way writes a totally memorised response 			

6.3.4 Marking Scheme for Oral Assessment

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IELTS Speaking Band Descriptors (public version)

Band	Fluency and coherence	Lexical resource	Grammatical range and accuracy	Pronunciation
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> speaks fluently with only rare repetition or self-correction; any hesitation is content-related rather than to find words or grammar speaks coherently with fully appropriate cohesive features develops topics fully and appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses vocabulary with full flexibility and precision in all topics uses idiomatic language naturally and accurately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a full range of structures naturally and appropriately produces consistently accurate structures apart from 'slips' characteristic of native speaker speech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a full range of pronunciation features with precision and subtlety sustains flexible use of features throughout is effortless to understand
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> speaks fluently with only occasional repetition or self-correction; hesitation is usually content-related and only rarely to search for language develops topics coherently and appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide vocabulary resource readily and flexibly to convey precise meaning uses less common and idiomatic vocabulary skilfully, with occasional inaccuracies uses paraphrase effectively as required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of structures flexibly produces a majority of error-free sentences with only very occasional inappropriacies or basic/non-systematic errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of pronunciation features sustains flexible use of features, with only occasional lapses is easy to understand throughout; L1 accent has minimal effect on intelligibility
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> speaks at length without noticeable effort or loss of coherence may demonstrate language-related hesitation at times, or some repetition and/or self-correction uses a range of connectives and discourse markers with some flexibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses vocabulary resource flexibly to discuss a variety of topics uses some less common and idiomatic vocabulary and shows some awareness of style and collocation, with some inappropriate choices uses paraphrase effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a range of complex structures with some flexibility frequently produces error-free sentences, though some grammatical mistakes persist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> shows all the positive features of Band 6 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 8
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is willing to speak at length, though may lose coherence at times due to occasional repetition, self-correction or hesitation uses a range of connectives and discourse markers but not always appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> has a wide enough vocabulary to discuss topics at length and make meaning clear in spite of inappropriacies generally paraphrases successfully 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a mix of simple and complex structures, but with limited flexibility may make frequent mistakes with complex structures, though these rarely cause comprehension problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a range of pronunciation features with mixed control shows some effective use of features but this is not sustained can generally be understood throughout, though mispronunciation of individual words or sounds reduces clarity at times
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> usually maintains flow of speech but uses repetition, self-correction and/or slow speech to keep going may over-use certain connectives and discourse markers produces simple speech fluently, but more complex communication causes fluency problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> manages to talk about familiar and unfamiliar topics but uses vocabulary with limited flexibility attempts to use paraphrase but with mixed success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> produces basic sentence forms with reasonable accuracy uses a limited range of more complex structures, but these usually contain errors and may cause some comprehension problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> shows all the positive features of Band 4 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 6
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cannot respond without noticeable pauses and may speak slowly, with frequent repetition and self-correction links basic sentences but with repetitious use of simple connectives and some breakdowns in coherence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is able to talk about familiar topics but can only convey basic meaning on unfamiliar topics and makes frequent errors in word choice rarely attempts paraphrase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> produces basic sentence forms and some correct simple sentences but subordinate structures are rare errors are frequent and may lead to misunderstanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a limited range of pronunciation features attempts to control features but lapses are frequent mispronunciations are frequent and cause some difficulty for the listener
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> speaks with long pauses has limited ability to link simple sentences gives only simple responses and is frequently unable to convey basic message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses simple vocabulary to convey personal information has insufficient vocabulary for less familiar topics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attempts basic sentence forms but with limited success, or relies on apparently memorised utterances makes numerous errors except in memorised expressions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> shows some of the features of Band 2 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 4
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pauses lengthily before most words little communication possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> only produces isolated words or memorised utterances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cannot produce basic sentence forms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> speech is often unintelligible
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no communication possible no rateable language 			
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not attend 			

7. COURSE REVIEW AND EVALUATION

7.1 Learner Evaluation

Each term, learners will complete a Learner's Department Evaluation form on which they will rate their teacher, course material and exams and assessments. The process will be administered by a member of the staff and will not be attended by the teacher. This evaluation will be anonymous and confidential. The results will be compiled and given to the Department Head who will review them individually with each teacher. (Please see the Learner's Department Evaluation form in the IELTS folder).

7.2 Teacher Evaluation

Each term, teachers will complete a Teacher's Department Evaluation form on which they will rate the curriculum and course materials for their class, facilities and equipment, learner performance and administrative and department support. The results will be compiled and given to the Executive Director who will review discrepancies with the appropriate personnel. (Please see the Teacher's Department Evaluation form in the IELTS folder).

7.3 Observation

Each term, the Department Head will observe teachers as they conduct their classes. He/she will fill out an Observation worksheet which includes sections on methodology, lesson delivery, follow up and learner participation. The results will be reviewed with the teacher and opportunities for improvement will be discussed.

7.4 Review

Courses are reviewed every 6 months on the basis of learner's and teachers' evaluations. DOS or Deputy DOS summarises the feedback from learners and teachers and reviews the course to reflect the feedback.

8. PROMOTION

Course information is available on-line:

<http://www.aca.edu.sg>