

Guiding Tools

5 Language Requirements



Erasmus+

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Guiding tool 5

Language requirements

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1. Introduction

Introduction to the Mastermind Europe Toolkit

Mastermind Europe is an initiative to help Master's programmes improve their admission decisions. To that end the Mastermind Europe Consortium developed and tested a Toolkit and Expert pool in a project that was supported by the European Commission. The Toolkit and Expert pool were tested, first in eight broad Focus Groups and then in seven pilots at individual Master's level; the ERASMUS+ project ended in September 2017, but the (slightly revised) Consortium decided to continue the work – on a not-for-profit basis.

This Guiding Tool No 5 “Language Requirements” is part of a set of six Guiding Tools in the Mastermind Europe Toolkit. These Guiding Tools are:

1. Coherent Admission Framework
2. Subject-related Knowledge & Skills
3. General Academic Competencies
4. Personal Competencies & Traits
5. Language requirements, and
6. Managing Graduate Admission.

In addition, the Mastermind Europe Toolkit contains the Mastermind Europe Manual, the Mastermind Europe Approach and three reports which strengthen the evidence base for Mastermind Europe:

Report 1. Introduction to the Paradigm Shift: Changing paradigms in admission to Master's programmes in Europe

Report 2. Admission to English-Taught Programs (ETPs) at Master's level in Europe: Procedures, regulations, success rates and challenges for diverse applicants

Report 3. Restrictions; real or perceived? Legal obstacles to Master's admission in Europe

The set of Guiding Tools actually builds on the Paradigm Shift report, which shows how Master's programmes in Europe operate in an increasingly diverse environment. Because of this increasing diversity, many Master's programmes experience the need to improve their admission process, as well as the need for more transparent information to prospective students, and feedback loops between admission and curriculum implementation.

Guiding Tool 1 offers a coherent admission framework which identifies distinct categories of admission criteria, connected to *) subject-related, *) academic, *) personal and *) linguistic competencies. In addition, the Guiding Tool clarifies the distinction between criteria, norms and testing mechanisms.

Guiding Tool 2, 3, 4 and 5 zoom in on each of these categories of admission criteria. Each offers information on existing practices and research findings, and offers a conceptual framework or 'language' to articulate the (often implicit) knowledge of core teachers about what qualities students need to bring.

Guiding Tool 6 focuses on the crucial elements impacting the university's system and procedures in pre-admission communication, application, selection, and enrolment.

All parts of the Mastermind Europe Toolkit are freely accessible on the website www.mastermindeurope.eu, which also contains a repository of relevant literature and an explanation of the Mastermind Europe advisory service. Publications, documents, and other material produced as part of the Mastermind Europe approach and toolkit remain the exclusive property of the Consortium.

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Introduction to this Guiding Tool 5: Language Competencies

In most non-English speaking countries in Europe, there has been a significant growth in courses and programmes taught in non-domestic languages, predominantly in English. This started first as a response to the intra-European rise of credit mobility – since the start of the ERASMUS programme in 1987. It then leapfrogged since the 1990'ies with rising numbers of internationally mobile degree students, both within Europe and from other continents. As a result, students applied to programmes taught in a language that was foreign for them as well as for the domestic students and teachers.

Through this development, “language” (predominantly “English as a foreign language”) became the very first issue on which additional requirements for admission were imposed on top of the bachelor's diploma. It helped to create the mind-set to think about criteria for admission – additional or alternative to the bachelor's degree.

This Guiding Tool 5 on Language Competencies supports Master coordinators in analysing how they can improve the use of language requirements in admission – making it more valid and more transparent. It provides a step-by-step description of this process, and adds more detailed background information for those interested. For language proficiency, the key admission question is the same as for subject knowledge, general academic competencies and – if required – personal competencies.

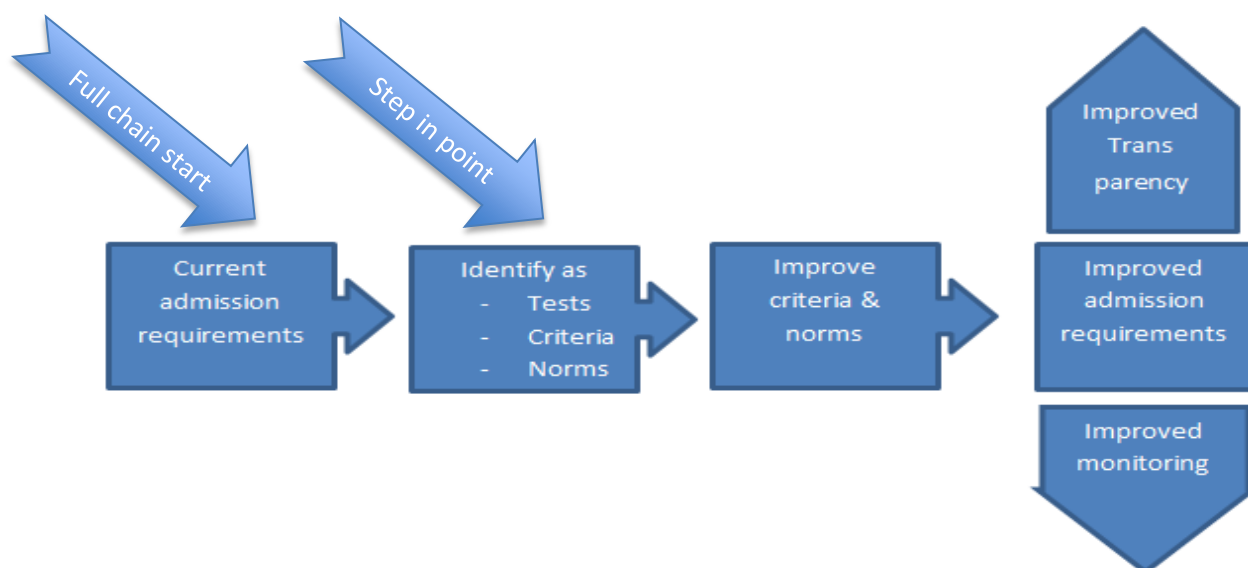
Key question:

- how can students demonstrate
- that they are good enough
- in the things they need to be good at?

Most English taught Master's programmes already ask for specific scores in specific language tests. But most Master's programmes rely on testing scores, without explaining what specific language competencies are required at which level. This guiding tool may serve as a means find the language proficiency requirements underneath test scores. Based on the better articulation of the required language proficiency, Master's coordinators can check if their choice for some tests and scores – not accepting others – is still valid and functional. It helps to clarify which categories of students (e.g. native speakers) are not required to submit to tests and why.

The Tool is based on “full chain / step in” model and on the Coherent Admission Framework developed in Guiding Tool 1. It starts from the left of the visual with current admission requirements. The “step in” works for Master's programmes that still fully rely on diploma-recognition. For language requirements, it seems particularly suited where a university is new to the offering of Master's programmes in non-domestic languages. It starts one step to the right, because no admission requirements other than the Bachelor's degree have as yet been defined.

Figure 1 Full chain / step-in approach



The Coherent Admission Framework allows Master's programmes to analyse the current elements in their admission process in terms of the criteria and norms that are being used (often implicitly). Here, only the subsection for Language proficiency is presented – the full matrix can be found in Guiding Tool 1.

Table 1 Coherent Admission Matrix

How do you a) know (= assessment mechanisms) if b) students are good enough (= norms-levels) in c) the things they need to be good at. Or, in logical order: 1) criteria, 2) norms/levels, 3) assessment mechanisms ¹ with 4) testing scores				
	1 Criteria	2 Norms/ levels	3 Assessment mechanisms	4 Assessment scores
	What you are looking for		What you are looking at	
Language requirements (Guiding tool 5)				

As many Master's programmes will have limited time and resources, the Guiding Tool offers a Step-by-step approach to quickly identify where improvements in admission are possible. We offer this quick approach in two alternative ways: through "tacit knowledge" and by using an established

¹ "Assessment mechanisms" or "Testing mechanism" are used in all Mastermind Europe documents in a very broad and non-judgemental way. It includes all and any mechanisms that master's programmes actually use in the admission process – even mechanisms that many observers and researchers would disqualify as unreliable or biased. One of the objectives of Mastermind Europe is precisely to stimulate a careful reassessment of these mechanisms.

framework for language proficiency. The most relevant one for European Master's programmes is the Common European Framework of Languages (CEFR).

As there is also increasing interest in the Mastermind Europe approach in North America, we also use the framework developed by American Council of Teaching Foreign Languages (ACTFL).

For both frameworks, this Guiding Tool offer references to more in-depth analysis and practical examples.

2. Step-by-step implementation

Even for Master's programmes looking for a quick-and-dirty approach, it is inevitable to start with some explanation of what is meant by "Language requirements" or "Language competencies" or "Language proficiency". Most Master's programmes do not go beyond the simple statement of a required overall score in one or more standardised tests. But as most testing organisations point out, it is important to distinguish between the major components of language proficiency and look at the sub-scores in connection with the needs of a specific Master's programme.

In the European context, there is broad consensus about the usefulness of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The CEFR organises language proficiency in six levels, A1 to C2, which can be regrouped into three broad levels: Basic User, Independent User and Proficient User. These can be further subdivided according to the needs of the local context. The levels are defined through 'can-do' descriptors in five broad categories: Listening, Reading, Spoken Interaction, Spoken Production, and Writing. Listening and reading are grouped as "understanding"; the system sees "speaking to" and "speaking with" as different things.

More detailed information on the CEFR is found further below.

In the American context, a similar framework is offered by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). The ACTFL identifies only three levels (novice, intermediate, and advanced), but looks at three functions of language usage: interpersonal, interpretative (reading & listening), and presentational (speaking and writing). The ACTFL sees social media interaction as a form of written interpersonal language usage.

More detailed information on the ACTFL is found below.

Quick approach, two alternative ways

We offer this quick approach in two alternative ways (see table below outlining both):

- One which starts with the tacit knowledge of the academics about what they see as required English Language proficiency – and then relates those to either the European CEFR or the American ACTFL framework.
- The other which starts with a blank sheet of paper and constructs the language requirements either from the European CEFR or from the American ACTFL framework.

Below the table, we elaborate on the various steps in the table, which should help you to decide which role Personal Competencies & Traits should have in your admission process and how to achieve that. In the table, we have elaborated the framework approach only for the CEFR. For the ACTFL framework, the steps are largely similar.

In addition, we offer references to more in-depth analytical or practical expertise for those readers who want to delve deeper: in parentheses and footnotes, and even more in the Annexes.

Table 2 Step by step approach

Step-by-step approach in two alternative ways	
Tacit knowledge 1. Sit down with senior academics of your programme and identify the specific Language Proficiencies (LP) that – in your experience – have been recurrent reasons why students (and alumni) have succeeded or failed. 2. Decide which of these LP need to be considered as part of your admission process. Choose no more than maybe 3 or 4 you deem most important. 3. Decide which level of competence is required at the start of your programme for the chosen competencies. 4. Relate your conclusion to either the CEFR or the ACTFL ² .	CEFR or ACTFL framework 1. Sit down with senior academics of your programme. Choose the performance descriptor in Listening, Reading, Spoken Interaction, Spoken Production, and Writing which adequately reflects the proficiency students <u>need</u> to have when they start your Master's programme. 2. Decide on the relative importance of Listening, Reading, Spoken Interaction, Spoken Production, and Writing as crucial English languages competencies. 3. Decide which of these LP need to be considered as part of your admission process. Choose no more than maybe 3 or 4 you deem most important. 4. Decide which level of competence is required at the start of your programme for the chosen competencies.
5. Chose one or more testing mechanisms to assess if students meet the required level in the chosen general academic competencies. 6. Decide which categories of students automatically qualify in terms of language (native speakers, ...). 7. Decide the required rating of these testing mechanisms in your admission process. 8. Decide which other mechanisms (interview, letter, ...) you want to use in addition to tests to double check – and under what circumstances. 9. Decide if and how prospective students can use alternative ways to prove their Language Proficiency. 10. Communicate all of this in a clear, transparent way to prospective students.	

Further explanations and details to the alternative step-by-step approaches

For both approaches (tacit knowledge and Language frameworks), what we basically suggest is that you critically confront current admission practice ("what you are looking at") with an improved understanding on the underlying required levels of language proficiency ("what you are looking for").

This goes two ways:

- We recommend that you identify your implicit assumptions about the levels of English language proficiency in reading, writing, speaking and listening required at the start of your Master's programme.
- And we recommend that you look at your current language (test) requirements, see what these imply in actual language proficiency, and how that matches with your programme.

In addition, we recommend that consider if your information to potential applicants adequately reflects what language proficiency you are looking for – and which ones will be part of the selection process.

Required English language proficiency to enrol

² This will help you compare your approach to that of other Master's programmes elsewhere.

What specific English language competencies are required at the start of the Master's? Are some competencies (reading, speaking) more important than others? And which of these are so important that they need to be assessed in the admission process? Are there specific language requirements related to the subject area, or to contexts in which your students (or graduates) will need to apply their language skills? Laboratory workers need different language skills than teachers or social psychologists.

The answer to these questions should logically be derived from the intended learning outcomes of your Master's programme. In their turn, these learning outcomes should logically have been determined while taking the demands of the labour market for graduates into account.

A fairly generic description of learning outcomes at Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral level has been given in the Dublin descriptors. For language proficiency, the Common European Framework of Reference and the similar framework of the American Council for Teaching Foreign Languages serve a similar purpose. Both are treated in some detail further below.

To determine the required level of language competency, input is needed from key academics within the Master's programme. They are, after all, the experts on what is needed to succeed in their programme.

For programmes choosing the 'tacit knowledge' approach, the following set of questions can be used:

Making tacit knowledge explicit

Table 3 Examining tacit knowledge

Deducting required language competencies from previous experiences	
Question	Room for answers
1. How would you describe the level of English of the students currently enrolled in the Master?	
2. Could you distinguish between the skills reading, writing, speaking, listening when answering the previous question?	
3. Can you think of one student in the past (name is irrelevant) whose lack of language skills caused him/her to fail?	
4. Is it possible to determine which of the language skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening) caused him/her to fail?	
5. Can you describe how this caused him/her to fail?	
6. Was there any support available to improve this student's language skills?	

Low hanging fruit

Having analysed your previous experiences in class and formulated some answers about the link with graduation level, you can analyse current admission process to find some 'low hanging fruit': things you can do to improve this part of admissions without completely overhauling the process.

Table 4 Finding low hanging fruit

IELTS	What could you say about it?
Question	Possible answer
1. We require an IELTS score of 72 or higher	This is a mixture of a testing mechanism (IELTS) and a norm > 72
2. What criterion is involved	Language proficiency (<i>does IELTS look at all 4 language proficiencies? Reading writing speaking listening</i>)
3. What norm is applied	IELTS internal norm, no reference to the CEF?
4. How satisfactory is this practice	Possible answers: We are satisfied, no change. We want to change in some ways; see next rows.
5. Possible conclusions in terms of articulation of criteria/norms	We need to be more precise about what we want in terms of <i>Reading writing speaking listening</i> . We need to also articulate in CEF terms
6. Possible conclusions in terms of choice of testing mechanisms	We need consider if there are other tests we can also except and why/why not. We need to identify groups to whom the language test requirement doesn't apply (native speakers,...).
7. Possible conclusions in terms of transparency	We need to list <u>all</u> language tests that we accept. We need to explain why we <u>don't</u> accept some other tests.
8. Possible conclusions in terms of monitoring	We need to include Language test scores in our student success monitoring: see if the test score predicts success better; see if some language tests predict success better than other language tests.

Finding words to define competency levels

A more systematic approach to language requirements in Master's admission prompts you to go back to the basic question: "What do students have to be good at – and how good?"

As indicated above, the Mastermind Europe approach offers information about both the European and the American framework for language competencies. We do this to help academics to find the words to express their tacit knowledge and experiences and thus to create a bridge between their experience with language proficiency of students and the world of linguistic theory and practice.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)

The CEFR was designed to provide a transparent, coherent and comprehensive basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses and curriculum guidelines, the design of teaching and learning materials, and the assessment of foreign language proficiency. It works with 6 progressive levels of language competency.

It is used in Europe but also in other continents and is available in 40 languages. It is intended as a tool to help practitioners in language teaching and testing – and language users themselves – to reflect critically on what language proficiency is and to communicate about how languages are learnt.

The official CEFR publication of 273 pages deals in-depth with language-related competencies, the impact of context, the actual activities and processes, as well as with strategies and tasks involved with language activities in specific themes and domains – far too detailed for Master's programmes looking to improve their admission.

The CEFR does also offer a [concise overview](#) of its systematic approach, involving five different forms of language activities and the six levels of proficiency that are the core of the CEFR approach.

Table 5 CEFR overview

		Understanding		Speaking		Writing
		Listening	Reading	Spoken interaction	Spoken production	Writing
Basic user	A1					
	A2					
Independent user	B1					
	B2					
Proficient user	C1					
	C2					

The most widely used CEFR-overview gives one comprehensive descriptor per level without a clear distinction between performance in each of the five language activities.

Table 6 C1 C2 Proficient user

PROFICIENT USER	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.

The more extensive version does describe performance at each level for each of the activities.

Table 7 CERF performance descriptors

		A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
UNDESCRIPT	Listening	I can recognise familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.	I can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local area, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements.	I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.	I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.	I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly. I can understand television programmes and films without too much effort.	I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, even when delivered at fast native speed, provided I have some time to get familiar with the accent.
	Reading	I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.	I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables and I can understand short simple personal letters.	I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters.	I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular attitudes or viewpoints. I can understand contemporary literary prose.	I can understand long and complex factual and literary texts, appreciating distinctions of style. I can understand specialised articles and longer technical instructions, even when they do not relate to my field.	I can read with ease virtually all forms of the written language, including abstract, structurally or linguistically complex texts such as manuals, specialised articles and literary works.

For the most relevant levels for Master's admission: B1, B2, and C1, these have been reproduced here in full. (Maybe not here but in Annex?)

Table 8 Extensive CEFR overview

		Understanding		Speaking		Writing
		Listening	Reading	Spoken interaction	Spoken production	Writing
Independent user	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can understand the main points of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear	Can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job/related language. Can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters	Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).	Can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes and ambitions. Can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. Can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe reactions.	Can write simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions.
	B2	Can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. Can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. Can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.	Can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular attitudes or viewpoints. Can understand contemporary literary prose.	Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. Can take an active viewpoint in discussions in familiar contexts, accounting for and sustaining views.	Can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to fields of interest. Can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.	Can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to ones interests. Can write an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support for or against a particular point of view. Can write letters highlighting the personal significance of events or experiences.
Proficient user	C1	Can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly. Can understand TV programmes and films without too much effort.	Can understand long and complex factual and literary text, appreciating distinctions of style. Can understand specialised articles and longer technical instructions, even when they are in an unfamiliar field.	Can express oneself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious search for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social and professional purposes. Can formulate ideas and opinions with precision and relate ones contribution skilfully to those of other speakers.	Can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.	Can express oneself in clear, well-structured text, expressing points of view at some length. Can write about complex subjects in a letter, an essay or a report, underlining what one considers to be salient issues. Can select style appropriate to the reader in mind.

Master's coordinators could select from the this overview page (2 or 3) performance descriptors which to express best the English language performance that they deem necessary for their incoming Master's class. These expressions are then the 'language part' of the 'learning incomes' for their Master's programme.

The framework of the American Council on the Teaching Foreign Languages (ACTFL)

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages has, similar to the CEFR, developed an extensive system and body of knowledge about how language is used and acquired.

It makes the distinction between 'proficiency' as the ability to handle language anywhere, anytime and 'performance' as what language learners demonstrably can after a learning process.

Like the CEFR, it has a highly sophisticated subcategorization, but for practical purposes, it has three broad functional categories and 5 levels of proficiency. Of these, only the first three levels have accompanying 'performance indicators'. Interestingly, it identifies 'interpretative' proficiency not only as spoken communication, but also as written: in Social Media.

Table 9 ACTFL overview

	Interpersonal	Interpretative	Presentation
Novice range			
Intermediate range			
Advanced range			
Superior			
Distinguished			

Like the CEFR, the ACTFL gives comprehensive descriptions of proficiency levels. One example is given here:

INTERMEDIATE

Speakers at the Intermediate level are distinguished primarily by their ability to create with the language when talking about familiar topics related to their daily life. They are able to recombine learned material in order to express personal meaning. Intermediate-level speakers can ask simple questions and can handle a straightforward survival situation. They produce sentence-level language, ranging from discrete sentences to strings of sentences, typically in present time. Intermediate-level speakers are understood by interlocutors who are accustomed to dealing with non-native learners of the language.

Intermediate High

Intermediate High speakers are able to converse with ease and confidence when dealing with the routine tasks and social situations of the Intermediate level. They are able to handle successfully uncomplicated tasks and social situations requiring an exchange of basic information related to their work, school, recreation, particular interests, and areas of competence.

Intermediate High speakers can handle a substantial number of tasks associated with the Advanced level, but they are unable to sustain performance of all of these tasks all of the time. Intermediate High speakers can narrate and describe in all major time frames using connected discourse of paragraph length, but not all the time. Typically, when Intermediate High speakers attempt to perform Advanced-level tasks, their speech exhibits one or more features of breakdown, such as the failure to carry out fully the narration or description in the appropriate major time frame, an inability to maintain paragraph-length discourse, or a reduction in breadth and appropriateness of vocabulary.

Intermediate High speakers can generally be understood by native speakers unaccustomed to dealing with non-natives, although interference from another language may be evident (e.g., use of code-switching, false cognates, literal translations), and a pattern of gaps in communication may occur.

Figure 2 ACTFL Proficiency description

But again like CEFR, the ACTFL also gives more elaborate information on each level. There are separate documents per level. As an example, we use here “Advanced” document, as this seems to contain the level required by most Master’s programmes.

In the benchmark descriptors for the three categories (interpersonal, interpretive, presentational), the document gives also the benchmark descriptors for adjacent levels of competence.

NCSSFL-ACTFL CAN-DO STATEMENTS		
PROFICIENCY BENCHMARKS		
ADVANCED PROFICIENCY BENCHMARK	SUPERIOR PROFICIENCY BENCHMARK	DISTINGUISHED PROFICIENCY BENCHMARK
COMMUNICATION		
<i>I can</i> understand the main message and supporting details on a wide variety of familiar and general interest topics across various time frames from complex, organized texts that are spoken, written, or signed.	<i>I can</i> interpret and infer meaning from complex, academic and professional texts on a range of unfamiliar, abstract, and specialized issues that are spoken, written, or signed.	<i>I can</i> interpret and infer meaning from dense, structurally sophisticated texts on a wide range of global issues and highly abstract concepts, with deeply embedded cultural references and colloquialisms and dialects that are spoken, written, or signed.
		INTERPRETIVE

Figure 3 ACTFL Proficiency Benchmarks

The “Advanced” itself is subdivided in “low”, “mid” and “high”.

The document gives performance descriptors for these three subdivisions in answer to a number of can-do questions:


NCSSFL-ACTFL CAN-DO STATEMENTS		
 INTERPRETIVE COMMUNICATION PROFICIENCY BENCHMARKS + PERFORMANCE INDICATORS		
ADVANCED		
PROFICIENCY BENCHMARK		
<i>I can</i> understand the main message and supporting details on a wide variety of familiar and general interest topics across various time frames from complex, organized texts that are spoken, written, or signed.		
What can I understand, interpret or analyze in authentic informational texts?		
PERFORMANCE INDICATORS		
ADVANCED LOW	ADVANCED MID	ADVANCED HIGH
<i>I can</i> identify the underlying message and some supporting details across major time frames in descriptive informational texts.	<i>I can</i> understand the underlying message and most supporting details across major time frames in descriptive informational texts.	<i>I can</i> follow the flow of ideas and infer meaning from complex language on unfamiliar, abstract topics within informational texts.

Figure 4 Advanced subdivisions

In addition to these three categories of language proficiency, the ACTFL also gives a proficiency benchmark and a number of performance indicators for two dimensions of intercultural communication skills: “investigate” and “interact”. These seem to be overlapping with General Academic Competencies (“investigate”) and Personal Competencies & Traits (“interact”). For this reason, these two are not discussed in this Guiding Tool.




ACTFL has downloadable overviews for separate levels, but also one comprehensive overview of all levels, with proficiency benchmark and performance indicators. All documents are downloadable from their [Can-Do](#) page³; with also direct access to the [comprehensive overview](#)⁴.

Master’s coordinators could select from the first overview page which (2 or 3) proficiency benchmarks seem most relevant for their Master’s programme and on the following pages identify which “answer” (“low”, “mid”, or “high”) expresses best the English language performance that they deem necessary for their incoming Master’s class.

These expressions are then the ‘language part’ of the ‘learning incomes’ for their Master’s programme.

Programme

NCSSFL-ACTFL CAN-DO STATEMENTS PROFICIENCY BENCHMARKS

NOVICE PROFICIENCY BENCHMARK		INTERMEDIATE PROFICIENCY BENCHMARK	
COMMUNICATION			
 INTERPRETIVE	<i>I can identify the general topic and some basic information in both very familiar and everyday contexts by recognizing practiced or memorized words, phrases, and simple sentences in texts that are spoken, written, or signed.</i>	<i>I can understand the main idea and some pieces of information on familiar topics from sentences and series of connected sentences within texts that are spoken, written, or signed.</i>	
	<i>I can communicate in spontaneous spoken, written, or signed conversations on both very familiar and everyday topics, using a variety of practiced or memorized words, phrases, simple sentences, and questions.</i>	<i>I can participate in spontaneous spoken, written, or signed conversations on familiar topics, creating sentences and series of sentences to ask and answer a variety of questions.</i>	
	<i>I can present information on both very familiar and everyday topics using a variety of practiced or memorized words, phrases, and simple sentences through spoken, written, or signed language.</i>	<i>I can communicate information, make presentations, and express my thoughts about familiar topics, using sentences and series of connected sentences through spoken, written, or signed language.</i>	
 INTERPERSONAL			
 PRESENTATIONAL			

NCSSFL-ACTFL CAN-DO STATEMENTS PROFICIENCY BENCHMARKS







ADVANCED PROFICIENCY BENCHMARK		SUPERIOR PROFICIENCY BENCHMARK		DISTINGUISHED PROFICIENCY BENCHMARK	
COMMUNICATION					
 INTERPRETIVE	<i>I can understand the main message and supporting details on a wide variety of familiar and general interest topics across various time frames from complex, organized texts that are spoken, written, or signed.</i>	<i>I can interpret and infer meaning from complex, academic and professional texts on a range of unfamiliar, abstract, and specialized issues that are spoken, written, or signed.</i>	<i>I can interpret and infer meaning from dense, structurally sophisticated texts on a wide range of global issues and highly abstract concepts, with deeply embedded cultural references and colloquialisms and dialects that are spoken, written, or signed.</i>	 INTERPRETIVE	
	<i>I can maintain spontaneous spoken, written, or signed conversations and discussions across various time frames on familiar, as well as unfamiliar, concrete topics, using series of connected sentences and probing questions.</i>	<i>I can participate fully and effectively in spontaneous spoken, written, or signed discussions and debates on issues and ideas ranging from broad general interests to my areas of specialized expertise, including supporting arguments and exploring hypotheses.</i>	<i>I can interact, negotiate, and debate on a wide range of global issues and highly abstract concepts, fully adapting to the cultural context of the conversation, using spoken, written, or signed language.</i>		
	<i>I can deliver detailed and organized presentations on familiar as well as unfamiliar concrete topics, in paragraphs and using various time frames through spoken, written, or signed language.</i>	<i>I can deliver extended presentations on abstract or hypothetical issues and ideas ranging from broad general interests to my areas of specialized expertise, with precision of expression and to a wide variety of audiences, using spoken, written, or signed language.</i>	<i>I can deliver sophisticated and articulate presentations on a wide range of global issues and highly abstract concepts, fully adapting to the cultural context of the audience, using spoken, written, or signed language.</i>		
 INTERPERSONAL				 INTERPERSONAL	
 PRESENTATIONAL				 PRESENTATIONAL	

Figure 5 ACTFL Overview summary

Assessing/testing language competencies

The key question is “How do you determine that students are good enough in the things you want them to be good in?”

For linguistic competencies: “How do you determine that they have the language skills at the required competency levels?”

In the preceding paragraphs, we have given information on how to distinguish between different facets of linguistic competencies and different levels of proficiency. Once you have determined the required level of language proficiency, the question arises how you know if students meet those requirements.

The insult of waiving a language test

Before you turn to tests of English as a Second Language, we advise you to first define the groups for whom a test is not necessary – because there are other, better ways to know their English is adequate: Because they are native speakers of English, because they have gone through a completely English-language secondary school system, or because they come from a trusted partner university which safeguards their level of English.

³ <https://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/ncssfl-actfl-can-do-statements>

⁴ https://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/CanDos/Can-Do_Benchmarks_Indicators-wide.pdf

All too often, we find websites stating a) that all students must submit a language test score, but b) native English speakers are graciously given the exceptional favour of getting a waiver for that test. The wording is never like that, of course, but this may well be how native English speakers perceive this.

Making the distinction between a) how good proficient students have to be in the language of instruction and b) what proof you demand depending on the circumstances, helps to avoid such unpleasant and unwanted perceptions: First you state how proficient all students must be, that you may well start the list of acceptable proofs with “native English speakers” and/or “students who spent their secondary or undergraduate education in a fully English environment.

Now we turn to available testing mechanisms. There are quite a few tests of English as a Second Language; you will find more information below and in the Annexes.

The admissions office of your university may be able to provide you with the general language requirements used for other Master programmes at your university. These may have little or no reference to the different facets or levels of language proficiency, but simply state which tests are accepted and which scores are required. Most language test providers underline that you should not only look at the overall test score, but also at the test scores for the various components of the test. These generally relate to reading, writing, speaking and listening, without the more sophisticated facets of oral and written interpersonal linguistic proficiency.

For most Master's programmes, there is no pressing need to go beyond the level of sophistication that the tests have. We do advice you to define the linguistic ‘learning incomes’ using the CEFR or ACTFL frameworks and on that basis rate the relative importance of the Test sub-scores. And we advise you to use these linguistic ‘learning incomes’ when you look at parts of the application file that have been written by the applicant. It may help to confirm or throw doubts on the testing scores.

Existing language tests

The most commonly used tests are TOEFL and IELTS, but there are numerous alternatives available. On the website of EFSET: English First Standard English Test, you can find a comprehensive overview of no less than 16 different language tests, including TOEFL and IELTS as well as the Cambridge tests (see annex).

The overview uses the CEFR as its frame of reference, but also includes the ACTFL categories. The most relevant levels of the most often used tests are given in the table below.

Table 10 Comparing frameworks and test scores

Common European Framework of Reference	B2	C1
American Council for Teaching of Foreign Languages	Advanced - Mid	Advanced high
TOEFL	72 – 94	95 – 120 Covers also CEFR C2 and ACTFL Superior
IELTS	5.5 – 6	6.5 – 7
Cambridge Advanced English	160-179	Grade B or C
Pearson Test of English Academic	59 – 75	76 – 84

Linking entrance level to the required graduation level in a General Academic Competency

Although it is beyond the scope of the Mastermind Europe project, Master's programmes may want to relate their admission requirements to the desired end result: the language competencies that are most important for successful completion of the Master's programme and/or entrance into the job market.

Higher level language competence needed upon graduation:

- a. does the programme already cater for that? yes/no
 If not:
- b. does the programme offer support for students to develop a higher level of competence?
- c. does the programme offer room to get support elsewhere?
- d. is it left up to the student to arrange for this?

Figure 6 Language at graduation

For Subject related knowledge & Skills and for General Academic Competencies, it is self-evident that the learning outcomes of your Master's programme should be at a higher level than the starting level – the learning incomes. For English language proficiency – similar to Personal Competencies & Traits – this difference between learning outcomes and learning incomes is often assumed, but much less well articulated. Also, it is much less clear if the Master's programme is designed to bring the students to the higher level, or that it is rather the responsibility of the student to get from A to B.

Information prospective students

The purpose of the Mastermind Europe approach is to help Master's coordinators in three ways: to improve their actual admission process, to enhance transparent information to students, and to help create better feed-back loops between admission and ensuing student success.

Based on the 'learning incomes' for language proficiency, you can redesign the information on your Master's programme for students by adding a 'desired student profile' to the information on your Master's programme and on the admission process. What linguistic proficiencies students need to possess when they start your Master's, is part of the 'desired student profile'. Accepted tests and required test scores are part of the information on the admission process.

Many Master's programmes still don't make this distinction between required proficiencies ("what you are looking for") and tests/scores ("what you are looking at"); one example – from one of the member universities of the Mastermind Europe consortium – is given in Annex A, with some other examples where this distinction is made better.

Institutional research

No matter how carefully designed an adapted admission process is, the only way to determine whether the right choices have been made in selecting admission criteria and norms will be to monitor how accepted students perform in the course of the programme – as well as after graduation!

The full chain / step-in analysis of the admission process in search for potential improvement mentioned in the introductory paragraph is, of course, an exercise that should be repeated.

Concluding remarks

In this Guiding Tool 5 on Language Requirement, we have offered the reader a step by step way to either a 'quick-and-dirty' or a more elaborate approach for one key aspect of an improved admission process to enhance Master's admission for a diverse international classroom.

The other Guiding Tools give similar guidance to the other key aspects (GT2 Subject, GT3 Academic, GT 4 Personal) and to the coherence and manageability of the admission process as a whole (GT 1 Coherence, GT 6 Manageability). A quick summary to the process is found in the Mastermind Europe Manual and the Mastermind Europe Approach description.

In practice, Master's programmes wanting to use the Mastermind Europe toolkit may find it useful to invite one of the Mastermind Europe experts to assist in the process.

Whichever way you proceed, the Mastermind Europe team hopes that our toolkit and its components help Master's programmes in Europe and beyond to reflect on their admission and how to improve it to achieve a diverse and international classroom.

Annex A: Samples of linguistic admission requirements

Language Requirements

VU University Amsterdam requires you to take an English test and to submit your score as a part of the application. You can begin your application, however, before you have completed the test and then submit your passing score once you have been conditionally admitted. Exceptions to the English Language Proficiency requirement are made if you have completed your education in Canada, USA, UK, Ireland, New Zealand or Australia.

The minimum English language proficiency requirements for admission to a Master's programme at VU University Amsterdam are:

IELTS: 6.5 - please note that candidates must take the Academic test and not the General one!

TOEFL paper-based test: 580

TOEFL Internet-based test: 92-93

Cambridge Certificate in Advanced English (CAE): A, B, C

Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE): A, B, C

Vu-test English-language proficiency: TOEFL ITP

Some programmes have higher language proficiency requirements. Please see the webpage of your programme for exact language proficiency requirements.

For TOEFL and IELTS, the test must have been completed no more than two years before 1 September of the year in which your course starts.

For TOEFL and IELTS, the Test Institute can forward the results directly to our office. The institutional TOEFL code of VU is 7947.

Please note that students who need visa must submit their English test results before June 1. Students who don't need visa must submit their test results before August 30 but preferably sooner. Be aware of the fact that it can take a long time before you get the results of the English tests, so plan your test in time!

There is no specific place to upload your English language test in VUnet. After finishing uploading the other documents in the VUnet you can send a copy of the test score card per email to one of the following contacts:

- For students with a non-Dutch degree: Your International Student Advisor
- For students with a Dutch degree: Please refer to your programme's Admissions Website

VU University reserves the right to request an original copy of the test result.


Students living in the Netherlands can register for a TOEFL-ITP exam offered by the VU Taalloket. You can find more information and register for this test at www.taalloket.nl.

Useful links: www.ielts.org; www.toefl.org; www.cambridgeenglish.org

This is a clear example of a university that doesn't make the distinction (yet) between the required proficiency in English – or the various dimensions of language proficiency – and the tests which they accept (or rather require).

Below is another example that does start with those applicants who don't need to submit to a test because their language proficiency is obvious.

In addition, they make a clear distinction between the various dimensions of language proficiency.



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Study at LSE > Graduate > Prospective students > Entry requirements > English language requirements


English language requirements

Our requirements have been updated for entry in 2018/9

You can meet our language requirements in the following ways:


- You are a national of Canada or one of the UKVI list of majority English-speaking countries below (whose first language is English) *or*
- You have successfully completed an undergraduate degree (of at least three years duration), a postgraduate taught degree (of at least one year) or a PhD in one of those countries listed below *or*
- You have passed a recognised English language test at an appropriate level.

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English language test requirements

Requirement	Overall	Reading	Listening	Writing	Speaking
A. Standard					
<u>IELTS</u> 	7.0	6.5	6.5	6.0	6.0
<u>LSE Language Centre Preessional programme (5 or 10 week)</u>	70	65	65	60	60

To the left is another example, copied from a university's website; the University of Edinburgh is satisfied with the level of English guaranteed by the Bachelor's degree. The list also contained the University of Malta and quite a few Dutch universities.

List of approved universities from non-majority English speaking countries, whose degrees that are taught and assessed in English, are accepted by The University of Edinburgh as meeting English language entry requirements for 2018/19.

Singapore

Nanyang Technological University
National University of Singapore

Hong Kong

The University of Hong Kong
City University of Hong Kong
Hong Kong Baptist University
Lingnan University
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

South Africa

University of Cape Town (UCT)
University of Johannesburg (UJ)
University of Witwatersrand (Wits)
University of the Western Cape
University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN)
Rhodes University

Annex B: Conversion table language proficiency levels and tests

From: Education First Standard English Test: <https://www.efset.org/english-score/>.

	A1 - BEGINNER	A2 - ELEMENTARY	B1 - INTERMEDIATE	B2 - UPPER INTERMEDIATE	C1 - ADVANCED	C2 - PROFICIENT
EF SET	1-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71-100
ACTFL	Novice	Intermediate	Advanced Low	Advanced Mild	Advanced High	Superior
CLB	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11-12
ILR	0	1	1+	2	3	4
ILR	0	1	1+	2	3	4
KET	45-69	Pass or pass with merit	Pass with distinction			
PET		45-69	Pass or pass with merit	Pass with distinction		
FCE			140-159	Grade B or C	Grade A	
CAE				160-179	Grade B or C	Grade A
CPE					180-199	200-230
IELTS			4.0-5.0	5.5-6.0	6.5-7.5	8.0-9.0
TOEFL			iBT 42-71	iBT 72-94	iBT 95-120	
TOEIC Listening	60-105	110-270	275-395	400-485	490-495	
TOEIC Reading	60-110	115-270	275-380	385-450	455-495	
PTE General level	A1	1	2	3	4	5
PTE Academic		30-42	43-58	59-75	76-84	85+
BEC			Prelim	Vantage	Higher	
City and Guilds	Preliminary	Access	Achiever	Communicator	Expert	Mastery
NQF	Entry Level	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4-6	Level 7-8
iTEP	1-2	2.5-3	3.5	4-4.5	5-5.5	6

Maybe bring back [Appendix A GT 5.docx](#)

Probably not really [IELTS VS TOEFL.docx](#)

Appendix C: Detailed description TOEFL and IELTS

1. TOEFL formats and content

Internet-based test

Since its introduction in late 2005, the TOEFL Internet-based Test (iBT) format has progressively replaced the computer-based tests (CBT) and paper-based tests (PBT), although paper-based testing is still used in select areas. The TOEFL iBT test has been introduced in phases, with the United States, Canada, France, Germany, and Italy in 2005 and the rest of the world in 2006, with test centers added regularly. The CBT was discontinued in September 2006 and these scores are no longer valid.

Initially, the demand for test seats was higher than availability, and candidates had to wait for months. It is now possible to take the test within one to four weeks in most countries. The four-hour test consists of four sections, each measuring one of the basic language skills (while some tasks require integrating multiple skills), and all tasks focus on language used in an academic, higher-education environment. Note-taking is allowed during the TOEFL iBT test. The test cannot be taken more than once every 12 days.

Reading

The Reading section consists of questions on 4–6 passages, each approximately 700 words in length. The passages are on academic topics; they are the kind of material that might be found in an undergraduate university textbook. Passages require understanding of rhetorical functions such as cause-effect, compare-contrast and argumentation. Students answer questions about main ideas, details, inferences, essential information, sentence insertion, vocabulary, rhetorical purpose and overall ideas. New types of questions in the TOEFL iBT test require filling out tables or completing summaries. Prior knowledge of the subject under discussion is not necessary to come to the correct answer.

Listening

The Listening section consists of questions on six passages, each 3–5 minutes in length. These passages include two student conversations and four academic lectures or discussions. The conversations involve a student and either a professor or a campus service provider. The lectures are a self-contained portion of an academic lecture, which may involve student participation and does not assume specialized background knowledge in the subject area. Each conversation and lecture passage is heard only once. Test-takers may take notes while they listen and they may refer to their notes when they answer the questions. Each conversation is associated with five questions and each lecture with six. The questions are meant to measure the ability to understand main ideas, important details, implications, relationships between ideas, organization of information, speaker purpose and speaker attitude.

Speaking

The Speaking section consists of six tasks: two independent and four integrated. In the two independent tasks, test-takers answer opinion questions on familiar topics. They are evaluated on their ability to speak spontaneously and convey their ideas clearly and coherently. In two of the integrated tasks, test-takers read a short passage, listen to an academic course lecture or a conversation about campus life and answer a question by combining appropriate information from the text and the talk. In the two remaining integrated tasks, test-takers listen to an academic course lecture or a conversation about campus life and then respond to a question about what they heard. In the integrated tasks, test-takers are evaluated on their ability to appropriately synthesize and

effectively convey information from the reading and listening material. Test-takers may take notes as they read and listen and may use their notes to help prepare their responses. Test-takers are given a short preparation time before they have to begin speaking. The responses are digitally recorded, sent to ETS's Online Scoring Network (OSN), and evaluated by three to six raters.

Writing

The Writing section measures a test taker's ability to write in an academic setting and consists of two tasks: one integrated and one independent. In the integrated task, test-takers read a passage on an academic topic and then listen to a speaker discuss it. The test-taker then writes a summary about the important points in the listening passage and explains how these relate to the key points of the reading passage. In the independent task, the test-taker must write an essay that states their opinion or choice, and then explain it, rather than simply listing personal preferences or choices. Responses are sent to the ETS OSN and evaluated by at least 3 different raters.

Duration

Task	Description	Approx. time
Reading	3–5 passages, 12–14 questions each	60–100 minutes
Listening	6–9 passages, 5–6 questions each	60–90 minutes
Break	Mandatory break	10 minutes
Speaking	6 tasks	20 minutes
Writing	2 tasks	50 minutes

One of the sections of the test will include extra, uncounted material.

Educational Testing Service includes extra material to pilot test questions for future test forms. When test-takers are given a longer section, they should give equal effort to all of the questions because they do not know which question will count and which will be considered extra. For example, if there are four reading passages instead of three, then one of the passages will not be counted. Any of the four could be the uncounted one.

Paper-based Test

The TOEFL paper-based Test (PBT) is available in limited areas. Scores are valid for two years after the test date, and test takers can have their scores sent to institutions or agencies during that time.

Listening (30 – 40 minutes)

The Listening section consists of 3 parts. The first one contains 30 questions about short conversations. The second part has 8 questions about longer conversations. The last part asks 12 questions about lectures or talks.

Structure and Written Expression (25 minutes)

The Structure and Written Expression section has 15 exercises of completing sentences correctly and 25 exercises of identifying errors.

Reading Comprehension (55 minutes)

The Reading Comprehension sections has 50 questions about reading passages.

Writing (30 minutes)

The TOEFL PBT administrations include a writing test called the Test of Written English (TWE). This is one essay question with 250–300 words in average.

Test scores

TOEFL iBT Test

The TOEFL iBT test is scored on a scale of 0 to 120 points.

Each of the four sections (Reading, Listening, Speaking, and Writing) receives a scaled score from 0 to 30. The scaled scores from the four sections are added together to determine the total score.

Each speaking question is initially given a score of 0 to 4, and each writing question is initially given a score of 0 to 5. These scores are converted to scaled scores of 0 to 30.

Paper-based Test

The final PBT score ranges between 310 and 677 and is based on three subscores: Listening (31–68), Structure (31–68), and Reading (31–67). Unlike the CBT, the score of the Writing component (referred to as the Test of Written English, TWE) is not part of the final score; instead, it is reported separately on a scale of 0–6.

The score test takers receive on the Listening, Structure and Reading parts of the TOEFL test is not the percentage of correct answers. The score is converted to take into account the fact that some tests are more difficult than others. The converted scores correct these differences. Therefore, the converted score is a more accurate reflection of the ability than the raw score is.

2. IELTS test structure

There are two versions of the IELTS: the Academic Version and the General Training Version:

- The Academic Version is intended for those who want to enroll in universities and other institutions of higher education and for professionals such as medical doctors and nurses who want to study or practise in an English-speaking country.
- The General Training Version is intended for those planning to undertake non-academic training or to gain work experience, or for immigration purposes.

IELTS tests the ability to listen, read, write and speak in English.

Band scores are used for each language sub-skill (Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking). The Band Scale ranges from 0 ("Did not attempt the test") to 9 ("Expert User").

The speaking module is a key component of IELTS. It is conducted in the form of a one-to-one interview with an examiner. The examiner assesses the candidate as he or she is speaking, but the speaking session is also recorded for monitoring as well as re-marking in case of an appeal against the banding given.

All candidates must complete four Modules - Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking - to obtain a band score, which is shown on the IELTS Test Report Form (TRF). All candidates take the same Listening and Speaking Modules, while the Reading and Writing Modules differ depending on whether the candidate is taking the Academic or General Training Versions of the Test. The first 3 parts are given without breaks, which makes the IELTS the longest test without breaks (160 minutes). This test structure provokes absent-mindedness, and according to statistics, the results of the second and third parts are generally lower than the results of the first part.

Listening

The module comprises four sections of increasing difficulty.[10] It takes 40 minutes: 30 - for testing, plus 10 for transferring the answers to an answer sheet. Each section, which can be either a monologue or dialogue,[10] begins with a short introduction telling the candidates about the situation and the speakers. Then they have some time to look through the questions. The first three sections have a break in the middle allowing candidates to look at the remaining questions. Each section is heard only once. At the end of this section students are given 10 minutes to transfer their

answers to an answer sheet. Answers should be grammatically correct including capital letters for countries, streets, names and places.

Reading

In the academic module the reading test comprises three sections, with 3 texts normally followed by 13 or 14 questions for a total of 40 questions overall. The General test also has 3 sections. However the texts are shorter, so there can be up to 5 texts to read.

Writing

In the Academic module, there are two tasks: in Task 1 candidates describe a diagram, graph, process or chart, and in Task 2 they respond to an argument. In the General Training module, there are also two tasks: in Task 1 candidates write a letter or explain a situation, and in Task 2 they write an essay.

Speaking

The speaking test contains three sections. The first section takes the form of an interview during which candidates may be asked about their hobbies, interests, reasons for taking IELTS exam as well as other general topics such as clothing, free time, computers and the internet or family. In the second section candidates are given a topic booklet and then have one minute to prepare after which they must speak about the given topic. The third section involves a discussion between the examiner and the candidate, generally on questions relating to the theme which they have already spoken about in part 2. This last section is more abstract, and, by that, is usually considered the most difficult.

Duration

The total test duration is around 2 hours and 55 minutes for Listening, Reading and Writing modules.

Listening: 40 minutes, 30 minutes for which a recording is played centrally and additional 10 minutes for transferring answers onto the OMR answer sheet.

Reading: 60 minutes.

Writing: 60 minutes.

Break: 10 minutes or so

Speaking: 11–15 minutes

(Note: No additional time is given for transfer of answers in Reading and Writing modules)

The first three modules - Listening, Reading and Writing (always in that order) - are completed in one day, and in fact are taken with no break in between. The Speaking Module may be taken, at the discretion of the test center, in the period seven days before or after the other Modules.

Test scores

IELTS is scored on a nine-band scale, with each band corresponding to a specified competence in English. Overall Band Scores are reported to the nearest half band.

The nine bands are described as follows:

9	Expert User	Has full operational command of the language: appropriate, accurate and fluent with complete understanding.
8	Very Good User	Has full 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, inappropriateness 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 using complex language.
3	Extremely Limited User	Conveys and understands only general meaning in very familiar situations.
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.
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 at all.

Annex D: Suggestions for further reading

Reference / title	URL (where available)
Assigning CEFR Ratings to ACTFL Assessments. American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages	https://bit.ly/2L0drjU
Common European Framework of Reference: Learning, Teaching, Assessment	https://rm.coe.int/1680459f97
EF English Proficiency Index	https://bit.ly/2JtATR3
English as a medium of instruction – a growing global phenomenon, Julie Dearden	https://bit.ly/1UaLGCv
Flowerdew, J., & Peacock, M. (2001). Research perspectives on English for academic purposes. Ernst Klett Sprachen.	https://bit.ly/2Ju7fuT
Helm, F., & Guarda, M. (2015). "Improvisation is not allowed in a second language": A survey of Italian lecturers' concerns about teaching their subjects through English. <i>Language Learning in Higher Education</i> , 5(2), 353-373.	https://bit.ly/2LIPFee abstract
Research Notes Quarterly, Cambridge Assessment English	http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/research-notes/
Rhonda Oliver, Samantha Vanderford & Ellen Grote (2012) Evidence of English language proficiency and academic achievement of non-English-speaking background students, <i>Higher Education Research & Development</i> , 31:4, 541-555	doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2011.653958

