

Quick Guide: Understanding IELTS

IELTS Academic is the test that measures English language competency across 4 skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

The majority of BA degrees require a minimum of **IELTS Band 6** for entry.

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

A Band 6 IELTS is not a particularly high score. This student will be *generally effective, with some inaccuracies, inappropriate words and misunderstandings.*

These students will still need support in specific academic literacies. They will also need support in the genre and discourses specific to their disciplines.

International students need *ongoing language support*, within their degrees.

Writing skills often show little improvement over a degree, and even a decline, perhaps due to 'soft marking'. 1/3 of students did not achieve Band 6 on exit from an Australian tertiary institution (Birrell, 2006).

Key Points

- 21% International Students (2013)
- IELTS gatekeeper
- Entry score ≠ proficiency
- Entry score ≠ indicate discipline specific literacy
- Language supports need to be integrated
- TEQSA Requirements



TEQSA Course Accreditation Standards Applicable:

- **1.2:** provide for appropriate development of key graduate attributes in students including English Language Proficiency.
- **3.2:** students who are enrolled are sufficiently competent in the English language to participate effectively in the course of study and achieve its expected learning outcomes
- **5.6:** The higher education provider is able to demonstrate appropriate progression and completion rates and students who complete the course of study have attained key graduate attributes including an appropriate level of English language proficiency.