

English Language Policy

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Teesside University English Language Policy



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Introduction

- 1.1 This Policy details the University's minimum English language requirements for admission to programmes of study and responsibility for approval lies with the International Compliance Group (ICG).
- 1.2 The University shall endeavour to ensure that programmes at the same level in cognate areas have consistent English language requirements.
- 1.3 Schools may recommend English language entry requirements above the minima for their programmes during the programme approval process, and variants from these minima will be submitted to the Student Admissions Sub-committee for approval.
- 1.4 Variation to English language entry requirements for established programmes may be proposed, with clear justification, by the School Student Learning & Experience Sub-Committee for approval by Student Admissions Sub-Committee. Such changes shall only apply for subsequent recruitment cycles and not be implemented mid-cycle.
- 1.5 The Home Office has set minimum levels of English language for entry based on approved Secure English Language Tests (SELT). Where this Policy shows IELTS, this refers to all approved SELT equivalents.
- 1.6 Appendix A of this Policy contains a link to the Home Office approved SELT list and a list of alternative international qualifications accepted by the University to demonstrate the required level of English language.
- 1.7 Appendix B of this Policy contains a list of EU qualification accepted by the University to demonstrate the required level of English language.
- 1.8 Appendices A and B are subject to change and all changes will be made by Chair's Action following proposal to, and approval by, the International Compliance Group (ICG).

2.0 Minimum Band Scores

- 2.1 The Home Office minimum levels for entry for each band based on approved SELT are:
 - 2.1.1 IELTS 4.0 (or equivalent SELT) for programmes less than RQF (Regulated Qualifications Framework) 6
 - 2.1.2 IELTS 5.5 (or equivalent SELT) for programmes at RQF 6 and above
- 2.2 All students who are applying for a course below Bachelor degree level (below RQF 6) must take a UKVI approved SELT.
- 2.3 The University will accept both UKVI SELT and non-UKVI approved SELT (Academic) or an alternative English Language qualification for admission to degree and postgraduate programmes; this includes integrated

programmes where a foundation or pre-sessional English course forms part of the degree.

2.4 In complying with the Home Office guidelines and noting Teesside University's commitment to quality, the institution's minimum entry levels are set out as follows:

2.4.1 For programmes, which are below RQF 6 (e.g. HNC/D or FD) the entry requirement is IELTS 5.5 overall or equivalent SELT. No band must be below 5.5.

2.4.2 For programmes where the requirement is IELTS 6.0, 6.5 or 7.0 overall, we accept students where no band is below 5.5. There is no local discretion to raise the band minima to 6.0.

2.4.3 Where a student is studying a programme at an overseas franchise partner the minimum score of 5.5 in each band will not apply. A student must meet the overall average entry requirement (e.g. 5.5 overall) but is not required to meet 5.5 in each element.

3.0 Tolerances

3.1 No lower tolerance allowed from the approved published minimum for that programme. No higher threshold shall be set above the approved published minimum for that programme.

4.0 European Union Students

4.1 EU students must have an appropriate level of English language for the course they are applying for – requirements are specified on the relevant Country pages unless they hold a Level 2 (or above) English language qualification studied in the UK.

4.2 Appendix B of this Policy contains a list of EU qualifications for English, however, the School and/or the English Language Centre (ELC) has some discretion in these cases. If applied, this must be approved at the appropriate level. The remainder of this policy applies to non-EU students.

5.0 English language requirements for pre-sessional and foundation year

5.1 For Pre-sessional English, 26, 16, 9 and 5 week programmes, the following entry criteria, based on IELTS, including minimum band scores, applies:

Degree entry requirement	26 week pre-sessional min. entry		16 week pre-sessional min. entry		9 week pre-sessional min. entry		5 week pre-sessional min. entry	
	Overall	Individual bands	Overall	Individual bands	Overall	Individual bands	Overall	Individual bands
5.5	4	4	4.5	4	5	4	5.5	5
6	4		4.5		5		5.5	
6.5	4.5		5		5.5		6	
7.0	5.0		5.5		4.5		6.0	5.0

N.B. If a student exceeds the English language requirements for a pre-sessional English language programme but still wishes to enrol to develop their English, they are permitted to do so, e.g. meets requirements for 5-week pre-sessional programme but opts to enrol on 9 week pre-sessional.

5.2 Extended programmes are four-year degrees with an integrated foundation year that require students to meet the English standards outlined for the main degree programme. This is generally IELTS 5.5 with no band below 5.5.

5.3 The University assigns a 4-year Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) for extended programmes and may use its own method of assessing English language competence where appropriate, based on the English language requirement for the main degree programme.

6.0 Applicants holding qualifications equivalent to a UK degree in an 'approved' country

6.1 UKVI allow students who are a national of, or who have studied a qualification equivalent to a UK degree in a designated majority English speaking country, to be exempt from the need to prove their knowledge of English.

6.2 Where a student is using a degree from a majority English speaking country as evidence of English language proficiency, the student is automatically exempt from having to demonstrate further English language proficiency.

6.3 UKVI defines the list of eligible countries as follows:

- Antigua and Barbuda
- Australia
- Bahamas
- Barbados
- Belize
- Dominica
- Grenada

- Guyana
- Ireland
- Jamaica
- New Zealand
- St Kitts and Nevis
- St Lucia
- St Vincent and the Grenadines
- Trinidad and Tobago
- United Kingdom
- United States

Students also do not need to prove their knowledge of English if one of the following apply:

- They are a national of Canada
- They have studied in the UK before as a Tier 4 (Child) student
- They are applying to come to the UK for a study abroad programme as part of a university degree course in the USA

6.4 Teesside University accepts degrees taught and assessed in English, as evidence of English language, provided the degree completed within the last 3 years. Degrees studied at a UK university; a branch campus of a university from a majority English speaking country; an international programme from selected overseas institutions; and from a partner university are also accepted. In such circumstances, a stamped letter from the institution confirming the degree was taught and assessed in English is required alongside a student's degree certificate.

6.5 Additional assessment of students listening and speaking ability is *not* required as standard (as outlined in section 8) and should only be requested where there is a particular need to assess such skills. If required, this assessment will be undertaken as required by the ELC.

7.0 Secure English Language Tests

7.1 In May 2020, UKVI approved additional providers of Secure English Language Tests (SELT), see link in Appendix A. All SELT must be undertaken in UKVI-designated testing centres, e.g. not all IELTS centres are UKVI-approved and students may take a non-SELT in a UKVI-designated testing centre. The SELT assesses a student's English in four bands: reading, writing, listening and speaking.

7.2 Entry requirements to Teesside University programmes are set using IELTS scores (average score across the four bands) as the benchmark and converted to equivalence in the Trinity system using conversions agreed between the English Language Centre and International Development (see section 8.4)

7.3 The required English language scores used to make admissions decisions are available on the International English language pages of the University's website. The required scores, in IELTS terms, are shown in

the International Prospectus. Conversion to other testing systems will not appear in the hard copy prospectus, as they are changeable.

7.4 SELTs have a validity of 2 years. If a student has a SELT then it must be within its validity period at the point when the academic programme starts, otherwise the student must take the SELT again.

8.0 Assessing a student's English in the absence of an approved SELT

8.1 For students studying at degree level (RQF 6) and above, the Home Office permits Higher Education Institutions to choose their own method to assess English language competence. There are three categories where the University does so:

8.1.1 Where the student has taken a previously accepted SELT (e.g. IELTS non-SELT, Cambridge English) and has met the University's minimum required levels.

8.1.2 The student is from one of the countries listed in Appendix A and has the required grade in one of the High School Certificates shown in the table of countries in Appendix A.

8.1.3 The student has taken a qualification in English, which the University considers demonstrates English language competence in reading and writing, but does not include a secure test for listening and speaking (see table in section 8.4). The protocols to assess alternative qualifications are described in the TELT Operating Procedures held electronically by the ELC.

8.2 For regularly used qualifications, e.g. Indian XII, the ELC has assessed the relevant syllabi against the criteria of being at or above CEFR B2 in reading and writing, as illustrated in section 8.5. The ELC confirms the syllabi covers all the material required to meet the CEFR B2 descriptors for reading and writing and confirm that none of these qualifications examine listening and speaking in an acceptable way.

8.2.1 The University accepts applications on a case-by case basis from non-SELT holders who might present a substantive case as having an appropriate standard of English, including those holding qualifications studied and assessed in English. These students will be interviewed by the ELC to assess listening and speaking.

8.2.2 The interview process includes an ID check by ELC staff to confirm the ID presented is that of the student attending the interview. This interview will be recorded using online image capture technology.

8.2.3 The outcome of the interview will be confirmation that the student's English language competence in listening and speaking is at the level required for entry to the respective

programme. Students will receive a certificate confirming their scores in listening and speaking.

8.3 Teesside University English Language Test (TELT) is carried out in certain circumstances where the student does not hold a SELT qualification at an acceptable level and/or does not have an acceptable English qualification the University has its own test. Students who successfully pass the components will receive a certificate confirming their scores.

8.3.1 The TELT has two variants:

8.3.1.1 Online Test. This tests all four bands. Being web-based, this can only be used where there is good internet connectivity. A Teesside University staff member shall invigilate tests conducted this way and record the session to ensure it was correctly administered. Staff will complete ID checks and confirm there was no switching of students during the test.

8.3.1.2 Offline Test. This is composed of a hardcopy test paper, invigilated by University staff, combined with an interview conducted by ELC to test listening and speaking.

8.3.2 When a TELT has been undertaken and the required English language level not demonstrated, successfully passed components remain valid for 2 years after the date the test was undertaken. Students are permitted to re-sit failed components within the current academic cycle in order to demonstrate the required English language level in all components. Students must complete further English study for a minimum of one month before a subsequent test is attempted, however, the ELC have discretion to allow a re-sit earlier in some cases.

8.3.3 The protocols for running the TELT are described in the TELT Operating Procedures held by the ELC, including processes for retaining test results for audit purposes. TELT scores are valid for the academic cycle during which they were undertaken.

8.4 This section confirms the approved conversions for major test providers and can only be used for degree level (RQF 6) and above programmes in conjunction with an interview.

IELTS Ave required	Lowest IELTS Band	TOEFL Total	TOEFL Minimum Bands				PTE Ave	PTE Lowest Band	Cambridge Overall ¹	Cambridge lowest band	Trinity overall	Trinity lowest band
			L	R	W	S						
5.5	5.5	72	17	18	17	20	51	51	162	160	ISE II Pass	ISE II Pass
6.0	5.5	80	17	18	17	20	52	51	169	160	ISE II Merit	ISE II Pass
6.5	5.5	90	17	18	17	20	58	51	176	160	ISE II Distinction	ISE II Pass
7.0	5.5	100	17	18	17	20	66	51	185	160	ISE III Pass	ISE II

¹ Includes Cambridge Certificate in Advanced English and Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English

												Pass
7.5	5.5	110	17	18	17	20	74	51	191	160	ISE III Merit	ISE II Pass

IELTS Ave required	AS or A-Level English Language and/or Literature (3 years before start of course)	GCSE in English Language	International Baccalaureate English A: Literature	International Baccalaureate English A: Literature and Language	International Baccalaureate English Language Syllabus A	International Baccalaureate English Language Syllabus B	European Baccalaureate (EB) English
5.5	D or higher	C or Grade 4	Standard Level: 4 Higher Level: 4	Standard Level: 4 Higher Level: 4	Standard Level: 4 Higher Level: 4	Standard Level: 5 Higher Level: 5	6 or 75% or above
6.0	C	C or Grade 4	Standard Level: 4 Higher Level: 4	Standard Level: 5 Higher Level: 4	Standard Level: 4 Higher Level: 4	Standard Level: 6 Higher Level: 5	6 or 75% or above
6.5	C	C or Grade 4	Standard Level: 4 Higher Level: 4	Standard Level: 5 Higher Level: 4	Standard Level: 4 Higher Level: 4	Standard Level: 6 Higher Level: 5	7.5 or 75% or above
7.0	C	C or Grade 4	Standard Level: 4 Higher Level: 4	Standard Level: 5 Higher Level: 4	Standard Level: 4 Higher Level: 4	Standard Level: 6 Higher Level: 5	7.5 or 75% or above

IELTS Ave required	(Cambridge English Language Assessment) ESOL Skills for Life Level 1 or Level 2 Certificate	(Cambridge English Language Assessment) Business English Certificate Higher (for Business Courses only)	International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) 0500 & 0522 (English 1st language)	International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) 0510 & 0511 (English 2nd language)	O Level English Language 1115, 1119, 1120, 1123, 1125, 1126, 1127, 1128	City and Guild's IESOL/ISESOL tests
5.5	Pass	B	C	B	B	Communicator B2
6.0	Pass	B	C	B	C	Communicator B2
6.5	Pass	B	C	B	C	Mastery C1
7.0	Pass	A	C	B	C	Expert C2
with Minimum Bands:	'Pass' required in each sub-skill.	Weak in each sub-skill	Reading – E Writing – E Speaking – D (0522) or 2 (0500) Listening – D (0522) or 2 (0500)	Reading – D Writing – D Speaking – C (0511) or 2 (0510) Listening - A		

8.5 Overseas English language qualifications approved by the ELC and assessed for reading and writing to CEFR B2 level are shown in the table in Appendix A. These can only to be used for degree level and above programmes in conjunction with an interview to assess listening and speaking.

9.0 In-session English language provision

9.1 In-session English language support is provided to all non-native English speakers during their first period of study at Teesside University and focuses on supporting students in their transition to UK HE teaching; learning and assessment methods; and their use of academic English.

9.2 All non-native English Language speakers are required to sit a diagnostic study skills assessment at the start of their first course of study at Teesside University. The results of the diagnostic study skills assessment or the pre-session end assessment (if undertaken) are used to determine the format and duration of the English language support students receive.

9.3 For students under 18 years of age who require additional English language support following their diagnostic study skills assessment, arrangements will be made for this to be delivered by an external provider off-campus as supplementary study.

9.4 For students aged 18 and over, attendance at language support classes is strongly recommended where students achieve less than 59% in their diagnostic study skills assessment and is recommended where students achieve less than 60-69% in their assessment. Students should attend in accordance with the table set out below.

Students	Optional/ Compulsory	Length of course (2 hours per week) + 1 individual tutorial	Outcome
New International	Optional when students achieve 70% and above in their diagnostic study skills test	7 weeks or 1 weekend + 3 assessment sessions	UCCE in English for Learning
New International	Recommended when students achieve 60-69% in their diagnostic study skills test	7 weeks or 1 weekend + 3 assessment sessions	UCCE in English for Learning
New International	Strongly recommended when students achieve 59% or below in their diagnostic study skills test	11 weeks	UCCE in English for Learning
Students who have completed a pre-session	Strongly recommended for students who achieve 40-59 in their end-course assessment and	1 hour / week for 13 weeks, classes mapped to degree programme	Certificate of attendance

programme (PSE)	voluntary for those who achieve 60 and above	teaching, learning and assessment methods and would include tutorials for one-to-one feedback on draft assignments.	
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10.0 Professional Bodies

10.1 For entry on to courses approved by the Health and Care Professionals Council (HCPC) students will need either IELTS 7.0 with no element below 6.5 or the equivalent qualification as outlined in one of the tables above.

10.2 For entry on to Nursing degrees the University can only accept IELTS 7.0 or an OET (Occupational English Test) with a minimum Grade of B in all four sub-tests across the two test administrations (with a maximum of two test administrations taken in a six-month period and no grade in any sub-test is below C+ or the equivalent qualification as outlined in one of the tables above.).

International Qualification accepted as English Language levels Section 7 UKVI approved SELT (Secure English Language Tests)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/885893/Approved_Secure_English_Language_Tests_21.5.2020.pdf

CEFR Level	Approved English language test	SELT provider	Minimum grade required	Effective from
B1	Graded Examinations in Spoken English (GESE) Grade 5	Trinity College London	Pass	6 April 2015
B1	IELTS Life Skills– B1 Speaking & Listening	IELTS SELT Consortium	Pass	6 April 2015
B1	LanguageCert International ESOL SELT B1 (Speaking & Listening)	LanguageCert	60/100	3 April 2020
B1	Pearson PTE Home – B1	Pearson Education Ltd	Pass	21 May 2020
B1	Integrated Skills in English I (ISEI)	Trinity College London	Reading: Pass; Listening: Pass; Speaking: Pass; Writing: Pass	6 April 2015
B1	IELTS for UKVI	IELTS SELT Consortium	Listening: 4.0; Speaking: 4.0; Reading: 4.0; Writing: 4.0	6 April 2015
B1	LanguageCert International ESOL SELT B1 (Listening, Reading, Writing, Speaking)	LanguageCert	Listening: 33/50; Reading: 33/50; Writing: 33/50; Speaking: 33/50	3 April 2020
B1	Pearson PTE Academic UKVI	Pearson Education Ltd	Listening: 43; Reading: 43; Writing: 43; Speaking: 43	21 May 2020
B2	Integrated Skills in English II (ISEII)	Trinity College London	Reading: Pass; Listening: Pass; Speaking: Pass; Writing: Pass	6 April 2015
B2	IELTS for UKVI	IELTS SELT Consortium	Listening: 5.5; Speaking: 5.5; Reading: 5.5; Writing: 5.5	6 April 2015
B2	LanguageCert International ESOL SELT B2 (Listening, Reading, Writing, Speaking)	LanguageCert	Listening: 33/50; Reading: 33/50; Writing: 33/50; Speaking: 33/50	3 April 2020
B2	Pearson PTE Academic UKVI	Pearson Education Ltd	Listening: 59; Reading: 59; Writing: 59; Speaking: 59	21 May 2020

Section 8 Assessing a student's English in the absence of an approved SELT

Paragraph 8.1.2

Country	Name of exam	Accepted grades/marks*
Kenya	High School Certificate	Grade C+ or higher
Malaysia	SPM	Grades A - C
Nigeria	WAEC	Grades A1 - C6
Nigeria	NECO	Grades A1 - C6
Uganda	Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education Uganda Certificate of Education	Grades 1 - 6 Grades 1 - 6

*Note – Nursing programmes require a minimum of C4 or equivalent

Paragraph 8.5

Country	Name of exam	Accepted grades/marks
India	CBSE XII	65% + (degree level and above)
India	CBSE XII - Functional English	65% + (degree level and above)
India	CBSE XII English core	65% + (degree level and above)

Acceptable English Language levels for UG entry for EU countries

Austria – Matura grade of 2/gut in English

Belgium – English tends to be the second language in most schools. Whilst schools are not obligated to present a final grade, most will give a percentage so around 75% + in English will be acceptable.

Bulgaria - Diploma Za Sredno with a score of 4.5 in English

Croatia – Matura grade of 3/5 in English (taught as second language)

Republic of Cyprus – Apolyterion subject grade of 12 or above in English

Czech Republic – English is studied as a second language. Maturita or maturini at 2.7 (or lower) to include English language.

Denmark – grade 7 or above in English

Estonia – 75% or above in English

Finland – English is taught as a second language minimum of 4/7

France – 14+/20 in English at Bacculaureate level

Germany – English as Leistungsfach in Abitur with a mark of 10+

Greece – Apolyterion subject grade of 12 or above in English

Hungary – English is second language. At least 3.5 in their Érettségi Bizonyítvány (Secondary Education Graduation Certificate)

Ireland – English is first language

Italy – 70%+ in English at Diploma di Esame di stato

Latvia – Atestats of 8/80% in English

Lithuania – Atestatas of 8/80% in English

Luxembourg – 40%+ in English (Diplome de Fin d'Etudes Secondaires)

Malta – official languages are English and Maltese

Netherlands – HAVO or VWO at 7+ in English

Poland – extended level English with at least 70%

Portugal - Certificado de fim de Estudos Secundários with at least 16/20 in English

Romania – B2 in English

Slovakia – grade 1 or 2 in English in Vysvedčenie o maturitnej skúške (Secondary School Leaving Certificate)

Slovenia - Maturitetno spricevalo (Matura Certificate) with 3 in English

Spain – Bachillerato with at least 7 out of 10 in English

Sweden – VG or 15+ In English

United Kingdom – any NQF Level 2 or Level 3 qualification studied in the UK (i.e. a GCSE grade C or above or an A-level)