



PRESS RELEASE

25 November 2009

THE WORLD'S LEADING ENGLISH TEST CELEBRATES TWENTY YEARS OF GROWTH

The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) celebrates its proud history of certifying English language skills for two decades

The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is proud to celebrate its twentieth anniversary in 2009, marking its unprecedented international growth and success in setting the standard of English language proficiency for Higher Education and migration. Since IELTS was introduced in 1989, it has developed into a global leader, with annual candidate numbers rising to well over one million in 2008, and accepted by over 6,000 organisations worldwide.

Speaking of IELTS' phenomenal growth over the last twenty years, Dr Michael Milanovic, Chief Executive of Cambridge ESOL said: "Over the last two decades IELTS has become the leading and most widely accepted international English language test in the world. Whether for work or study, millions of ambitious candidates have benefited from the life-changing opportunities that IELTS enables".

"Our success has been driven by a continual focus on strong, expert-led research and innovation, along with a commitment to test language ability in a practical, real and relevant way. IELTS is uniquely fit for purpose, as it covers all of the key skills – speaking, writing, reading and listening abilities. Indeed our face-to-face speaking test is the only true-to-life oral test available. Ultimately, IELTS is not just about giving students a certificate, but proving that they have the language skills needed to get the most from learning and working in another country."

With over 6,000 organisations worldwide accepting IELTS scores, it is opening doors for candidates throughout the English-speaking world and beyond. IELTS' globalisation has

been powered by its extensive network of excellent test centres – it is available up to 36 times a year at British Council Oman in Muscat and its attached centres in Salalah and Sohar. Dhofar University has been approved as an attached centre by the IELTS partners and will deliver the tests independently for its students in Salalah under the supervision and support of the British Council.

Truly global and cosmopolitan in nature, IELTS is developed by an international team of writers. The test content is internationally focused, thanks to our network of test materials writers in North America, Australia, New Zealand and the UK. All the standard varieties of English are accepted in candidates' responses.

Carl Rhymer, Head of IELTS at The British Council concludes: "IELTS is proud of its rich heritage as the leading English language test and we are committed to building on our vast experience, to continue to develop IELTS and ensure it remains a secure and reliable indicator of ability that meets the demands of the modern student."

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Notes to editors

IELTS' increasing popularity in the US education market was highlighted last year with the announcement that more than 2,000 US Academic Institutions – including the Ivy League schools – use the test for admissions purposes. IELTS is also used for entry into almost all higher education institutions in Australia, UK, Ireland, and New Zealand.

In addition, IELTS is now one of the approved English language tests used by the UK Border Agency, to test highly skilled and skilled migrants, who are coming to work in the UK and need to prove their English language ability as part of the Government's new 'Points based system' for immigration. IELTS is also accepted by the Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) and Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

About IELTS

IELTS is the International English Language Testing System, the world's proven English language test. Close to 6,000 organisations recognise IELTS as secure, valid and reliable indicator of true to life ability to communicate in English for education, immigration and professional accreditation. IELTS is jointly managed by British Council, IDP: IELTS Australia and the University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations (Cambridge ESOL) in more than 125 countries.

University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations (Cambridge ESOL) is the world's leading provider of exams for learners of English. Each year the exams are taken by close to three million people, in 135 countries.

British Council connects people worldwide with the learning opportunities and creative ideas from the UK and builds lasting relationships between the UK and other countries. The British Council is the UK's international organisation for educational opportunity and cultural relations and is represented in over 100 countries worldwide.

IDP: IELTS Australia is the IELTS testing subsidiary of IDP, Australia's leading international education business. IDP undertakes a broad range of activities from international student recruitment and education research to development project management and English language teaching and testing.

About the test

Candidates are tested in listening, reading, writing and speaking. After completion they receive an IELTS test report form.

There is a choice between Academic and General Training in the reading and writing modules. The Academic reading and writing modules assess whether a candidate is ready to study or train in English at an undergraduate or postgraduate level. Admission to undergraduate and postgraduate courses is based on the results of these modules.

The General Training reading and writing modules are not designed to test the full range of formal language skills required for academic purposes, but emphasise the skills needed in a broad social and educational context. General Training is suitable for candidates who are going to English speaking countries to complete their secondary education, to undertake work experience or training programmes not at degree level, or for immigration purposes to Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

All tests are scored on a banded system from 1 (the lowest) through to 9 (the highest possible score).

A sample of Government and professional associations who recognise or require applicants to hold an IELTS test report form include:

- Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC)
- Australian and General Medical Council
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada
- Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools and National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN), USA
- International Monetary Fund
- Maersk
- New Zealand Immigration Service
- Shell
- UK Home Office – Border agency