

Relating IELTS scores to other Cambridge ESOL qualifications

We are frequently asked how IELTS scores map onto Main Suite and other examinations run by Cambridge ESOL. Please note that it is very difficult to give exact comparisons due to the different design, purpose and format of the examinations. It is also the case that candidates' aptitude and preparation for a particular type of test will vary from individual to individual and some candidates are more likely to perform better in certain kinds of tests than others.

The chart below illustrates how the IELTS band scores map onto the Cambridge Main Suite, BEC and CELS examinations and onto the Common European Framework (CEF) levels. Please note that the IELTS band scores referred to in both tables are the overall scores and not the individual module scores.

This mapping is based upon a growing body of internal research, combined with long established experience of test use within education and society, as well as feedback from a range of test stakeholders regarding the uses of test results for particular purposes.

Work continues to refine our understanding of the relationship between IELTS, other Cambridge ESOL examinations and the CEF levels.

IELTS	Main Suite	BEC	CELS	NQF	CEF
9.0					
8.0	CPE			3	C2
7.0	CAE	BEC H	CELS H	2	C1
6.0	FCE	BEC V	CELS V	1	B2
5.0	PET	BEC P	CELS P	Entry 3	B1
4.0				Entry 2	A2
3.0	KET			Entry 1	A1

The table below indicates the IELTS band scores we would expect to be achieved at a particular CEF or NQF level:

Corresponding NQF Level	Corresponding CEF Level	IELTS approximate band score
Level 3	C2	7.5+
Level 2	C1	6.5/7.0
Level 1	B2	5.0/5.5/6.0
Entry 3	B1	3.5/4.0/4.5
Entry 2	A2	3.0

IELTS – International English Language Testing System
 KET – Key English Test
 PET – Preliminary English Test
 FCE – First Certificate in English
 CAE – Certificate in Advanced English
 CPE – Certificate of Proficiency in English
 BEC – Business English Certificates - H-Higher, V-Vantage, P-Preliminary
 CELS – Certificates in English Language Skills - H-Higher, V-Vantage, P-Preliminary
 NQF – National Qualifications Framework
 CEF – Common European Framework



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