


› UNDERSTANDING AND USING LANGUAGECERT ACADEMIC TEST SCORES



Introduction

LANGUAGECERT Academic is a four-skill, multi-level test of English communicative ability for academic purposes. It is for students who need to demonstrate their English language proficiency for admission to higher education institutions, where English is the medium of instruction. LANGUAGECERT Academic assesses and helps develop the real-world English language skills students need to survive, thrive and flourish in an academic environment. It is a complete test of academic English and the test content across all four skills focuses exclusively on academic language and scenarios. LANGUAGECERT Academic is designed to assess and report proficiency from B1 to C2 of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR).



LANGUAGECERT Academic and the CEFR

LANGUAGECERT Academic test scores are reported on the LANGUAGECERT Global Scale, which measures candidate performance from 0 to 100 and is aligned with the CEFR. The LANGUAGECERT Academic Test Report provides scores for each individual skill along with an overall score and its corresponding CEFR level. Additional personalised performance feedback is provided for Writing and Speaking.

LANGUAGECERT ACADEMIC ALIGNMENT WITH THE CEFR LEVELS B1-C2

LANGUAGECERT Academic	CEFR
100 90	C2
89 75	C1
74 60	B2
59 40	B1

For a list of LANGUAGECERT Academic performance descriptors please see appendix

The accuracy and reliability of the Global Scale and its alignment with the CEFR are underpinned by a comprehensive and continuous programme of research and validation. The alignment of the Global Scale and LANGUAGECERT Academic with the CEFR is confirmed by Ecctis, a leading global provider of qualification and skills recognition services:

Ecctis' evaluation of the test construct, assessment tasks, input texts, marked test-taker responses, and mark schemes found that the LANGUAGECERT Academic test is a sound assessment of English language competency in listening and reading at CEFR levels B1-C2. The writing and speaking productive tasks were found to allow candidates to demonstrate proficiency at the intended CEFR levels B1-C2.

**Executive Summary, LanguageCert General and Academic Tests:
Independent CEFR referencing. Ecctis 2023**

LANGUAGECERT Academic and IELTS Academic

From 2022 to 2024, LANGUAGECERT conducted a concordance study to compare and analyse the test design, content and scores of LANGUAGECERT Academic and IELTS Academic. The study investigated areas of alignment and difference between the tests, including the emphasis given to the range of language skills assessed. The study was designed and conducted by the LANGUAGECERT Research Team and the Centre for Research in English Language Learning and Assessment (CRELLA), and was overseen and the findings verified by an External Validation Panel of leading academics from Australia, Canada, UK and the USA.

The study carried out a comprehensive comparison of the LANGUAGECERT Academic and IELTS Academic tests' assessment focus, language use domains, task types and scoring methods. The study found that:

'the constructs and their assessment across the two examinations – LANGUAGECERT Academic and IELTS Academic – show high degrees of similarity. Mainly, they are both four-skill tests with the intention of measuring language competence in order to predict the ability to operate successfully in an academic setting. Having said that, there are several differentiating factors. **The LANGUAGECERT Academic test is based in the academic context across all four skill components whereas IELTS Academic focuses entirely on the academic domain in the Reading and Writing tests, but is more General English in nature in the Listening and Speaking tests.'**

LANGUAGECERT Academic Concordance Report, October 2024

LANGUAGECERT Academic is designed to have a positive washback effect on language learning and facilitate the acquisition of extra-linguistic skills needed for higher education. For example, the tasks in the 1:1 Speaking test encourage the development of interactional competence, verbal reasoning and critical thinking.

To further support learning LANGUAGECERT Academic, unlike IELTS Academic, provides performance feedback for Speaking and Writing, as well as reporting an overall score for all four skills. This additional feedback is included to give test-takers more detail about their test performance and thereby identify areas for improvement — helping test takers to progress to their desired level of Speaking or Writing proficiency or to meet their receiving institution's requirements.

The strong similarities between task and item types, scoring rubrics and marking methods allowed the concordance study to effectively, reliably and meaningfully measure the correlation and alignment of LANGUAGECERT Academic and IELTS Academic overall test scores and component skill scores.

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN LANGUAGECERT ACADEMIC AND IELTS ACADEMIC

Overall <i>r</i>	Reading <i>r</i>	Writing <i>r</i>	Listening <i>r</i>	Speaking <i>r</i>
.87	.76	.71	.71	.71

Note: r = correlation. All correlations were statistically significant at the $p < .001$ level. Sample size = 1008.

The strong correlation for Overall performance ($r=.87$) indicates the two tests measure similar underlying abilities (Knoch, 2021)¹. The correlations for individual subscales ($r > .7$) suggest that LANGUAGECERT exams perform in accordance with the benchmark language test designed for similar purposes.

[LANGUAGECERT Academic Concordance Report, October 2024](#)

This strong correlation means that performance on LANGUAGECERT Academic is highly predictive of performance on IELTS Academic and vice versa: doing well on one test would translate to doing well on the other while doing poorly on one test corresponds with performing poorly on the other.

¹ Knoch, U. (2021). *A guide to English language policy making in higher education*. International Education Association of Australia (IEAA). www.ieaa.org.au

COMPARING LANGUAGECERT ACADEMIC AND IELTS ACADEMIC TEST SCORES

LANGUAGECERT advises the following linking between overall LANGUAGECERT Academic and IELTS Academic test scores, as shown in the table below. This linking is intended to support decisions related to test recognition, score interpretation and usage.

LANGUAGECERT Academic and IELTS Academic score linking

LANGUAGECERT Academic	IELTS Academic
95	9
90	8.5
85	8
80	7.5
75	7
70	6.5
65	6
60	5.5
50	5
40	4.5

The recommended linking is informed by:

- › The mapping of the LANGUAGECERT Academic score thresholds to the CEFR levels B1-C2, and its independent verification by Ecctis.
- › The findings of the concordance study conducted by LANGUAGECERT and CRELLA, which ensure the meaningfulness of the score comparison between the two tests.
- › UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI) established thresholds for CEFR-aligned English language ability for LANGUAGECERT Academic and IELTS Academic, providing a regulatory framework for score interpretation.

Recommendations for using LANGUAGECERT Academic test scores

Higher education institutions can use LANGUAGECERT Academic test scores as a reliable measure of a student's English language proficiency for academic purposes. The following recommendations outline best practices for interpreting and applying these scores in admission decisions:

SETTING MINIMUM SCORE REQUIREMENTS

- › Institutions should set minimum LANGUAGECERT Academic scores that align with the English language proficiency requirements of their programmes.
- › The CEFR mapping table in this guide can assist institutions in setting minimum score requirements based on the CEFR competencies essential for academic study in each programme. The score linking table between LANGUAGECERT Academic and IELTS Academic can also support decision-making for institutions more familiar with IELTS band score requirements.

USING INDIVIDUAL SKILL SCORES

- › While the overall score provides a general measure of proficiency, the individual skill scores for Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking can help assess whether a student meets the specific English language demands of a programme.
- › The personalised feedback provided for Writing and Speaking can support admissions decisions by offering insights into a student's strengths and areas for improvement and to recommend preparatory courses or language support services for students who marginally meet the requirements.

CONSIDERING THE PERIOD OF SCORE VALIDITY

- › Although LANGUAGECERT Academic test scores do not expire, language proficiency test practices suggest a validity period of two years, and institutions are free to set their own policies regarding score validity.

CEFR Level	Scaled Score	Performance Descriptors
C2	90 - 100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can understand with ease any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, even when delivered at fast speed, provided there is a familiarity with the accent. • 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. • Can write clear, smoothly flowing complex texts in an appropriate and effective style and a logical structure which helps the reader to find significant points. • Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
C1	75 - 89	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly. • Can understand long and complex factual and literary texts, appreciating distinctions of style. • Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices. • Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions.
B2	60 - 74	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. • Can read articles and reports concerned with temporary problems in which the writers adopt particular attitudes or viewpoints. • Can use the language fluently, accurately and effectively on a wide range of general, academic, vocational or leisure topics, marking clearly the relationships between ideas. • Can communicate spontaneously with good grammatical control without much sign of having to restrict what he/she wants to say, adopting a level of formality appropriate to the circumstances.
B1	40 - 59	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in education, work and leisure, etc. • Can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language. • Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. • Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.

The above descriptors are adapted from the Common European Framework for Languages (2018). Text from these is reproduced by kind permission of the Council of Europe.



LANGUAGECERT is an Awarding Organisation recognised by Ofqual. It spearheads innovations in language assessment and certification, providing high-quality services to the global learners' community. It is a UK-based member of the PeopleCert Group, a global leader in the certification industry, that delivers millions of exams in over 200 countries.

LANGUAGECERT is a business name of PeopleCert Qualifications Ltd, UK company number 09620926

[languagecert.org](https://www.languagecert.org) | info@languagecert.org

