

FAQs on English expectations

1. Which spine points on the Pearson PTE Academic scale is the IELTS 5.5 score mapped against?

IELTS 5.5 is equivalent to the range of 42-50 on the PTE Academic spine point
(<http://pearsonpte.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/score1.jpg>)

2. Is it necessary for a student to have studied in English at a particular level in the final two years of school?

No. The expectation does not specify a particular level of study for the final two years of school. It would be for the Centre to satisfy itself that the student did complete the final two years of school in English.

3. The expectations only refer to IELTS 5.5. Can the expectation be met using other English language tests such as Pearson PTE, City & Guilds, Cambridge and ESOL etc.?

Yes. It is for the Centre to satisfy itself that the student's score is commensurate with IELTS 5.5, but the expectation is not limited to the use of IELTS.

4. Are Centres still permitted to adopt their own internal English language test to judge whether students meet this standard? Or, do we need to ask students to produce a valid IELTS certificate (or equivalent)?

Yes, a Centre can adopt its own internal English test. It is for the Centre to satisfy itself that the student's score is commensurate with IELTS 5.5, but the expectation is not limited to the use of IELTS.

5. Are West African Examination Council (WAEC) students exempt from the IELTS expectation?

If the West African Examination Council students study their final two years of school in English, then they will be exempt from the IELTS expectation.

6. If an applicant has attained a full QCF Level 3 award(s), both taught and assessed in English, are they exempted from the IELTS 5.5 expectation?

No, unless the subject was English language, non-native English speakers or those who have not studied the final two years of school in English will be expected to demonstrate capability in English at a standard commensurate to IELTS 5.5.

7. Please can you provide some further guidance on the scores expected in each individual section for other English tests such as TOEFL, PTE and the Cambridge tests?

Please see the English language comparison tables that can be found here:

<http://pearsonpte.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/score1.jpg>

<http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/images/126130-cefr-diagram.pdf>

8. Previously the recommended English language level issued by Pearson was similar to the Home Office Tier 4 guidance, but this new expectation is different, please clarify which guidance centres should follow.

The English language expectation published by Pearson in December 2014 superseded the original recommendation that had mirrored the UK Home Office Tier 4 guidance. The new expectation is higher and students are expected to be able to demonstrate English language comprehension at a level equivalent to IELTS 5.5, with no less than 5.0 in any skill.

9. Would Pearson accept English language assessments from the awarding bodies for English such as Pearson Edexcel, City and Guilds, Trinity and others? If so, what will be your minimum expectation for such qualification under the CEFR grading?

The expectation from Pearson is that the test the student has taken is commensurate with the stipulated IELTS level; therefore the CEFR equivalent would be level B2 (<http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/images/126130-cefr-diagram.pdf>).

10. Would these changes apply to a non-native English speaker who has completed a GCSE O level English or equivalent English test in their home country before settling in UK?

Whether the expectation is met will depend on the results the student received. The result of the English language test is expected to be commensurate with/equivalent to IELTS 5.5.

11. Would these changes apply to a non-native English speaker who has obtained further qualifications taught in English in the last two years?

The exemption only applies to non-native English speakers who have studied the final two years of school in English, for all other students IELTS 5.5 is the expectation from Pearson.

12. We have already admitted students for HND programmes between October and December 2014. These students are expected to start their studies on the 15th of January 2015. We would like to know if their admission will be affected by these changes in English language requirements.

The Pearson expectation of IELTS 5.5 applies to all students recruited to BTEC level 4 and level 5 qualifications after 1st January 2015 (a higher expectation applies for level 6 and level 7). If you have recruited students before this date, but they are due to start after 1st January 2015, then the new expectation will not apply, however it is for the Centre to satisfy itself that the students have been recruited with integrity and that they will be able to cope with the rigour of the programme.