Institute of Tropical Medicine
English Language Proficiency Resources

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Introduction

a. ITM maintains stringent English Language requirements that must be met before your admission to any ITM programme. To assist you in meeting these requirements, we have prepared a listing of free online materials. We hope you find this resource useful in your work to meet the English Language speaking, listening, writing, and reading skill requirements.

b. To begin, we encourage you to take one of the EF SET exams, either the 15-minute quick level check or the 50-minute exam. This will enable you to identify your starting skill level according to the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR), if you meet the requirements outlined by ITM, or if you need additional support with your English learning. These exams can be found here.

c. **Questions? Suggestions? Issues?** Please don't hesitate to reach out and make any issue known via englishsupport@itg.be.

ITM English Language Proficiency Requirements

d. For admission to any ITM course, the minimum language requirements are proof of a TOEFL iBT score of 79-93, an IELTS score of 6.5 or other qualifying evidence of an English CEFR level of B2-C1 meaning a higher tier B2 or C1. A higher tier B2 will generally mean a B2 on all components of language proficiency and would have to be evidenced. (ITM Toefl Code = 7727).

e. Native English speakers are exempt from these language requirements. Applicants whose first language is not English are exempt if they have successfully completed a higher education programme of at least 60 ECTS credits

taught in English or have a higher education diploma from a Flemish Community higher education institution.

f. For applicants to ITM master's programmes (MPH-HSDC & MTM): Non-native speakers who fail to attain the above language proficiency requirements but can prove a reasonable level of proficiency, i.e., iBT TOEFL score 60-78 or IELTS score 6.0 or CEFR B2, can be admitted if they enrol in the English Language Training Programme, Linguapolis – Antwerp, offered 2 weeks before, and again during, the MSc programme.

g. Also for French language proficiency (if relevant) a CEFR level C1 (DALF-C1 or equivalent) or high-B2 (DELF-B2 or equivalent) is applicable.

CEFR, TOEFL, IELTS, and ITACE

h. What is the **CEFR**?

  i. The Common European Framework of Reference for Language (CEFR) is an international standard for describing language ability on a six-level scale, from A1 for beginners up to C2 for those who have mastered a language. This enables an easier comparison of language ability across language learners and exam types. CEFR is the standard to which the TOEFL and IELTS Scores are benchmarked. ITM typically requires a CEFR level of C1 (or high level B2) to enroll.

i. What is the **TOEFL** Exam?

  i. Overview

    1. The purpose of the TOEFL test is to evaluate the English proficiency of people who are non-native English speakers, primarily for academic contexts. In addition, international companies, government agencies, scholarship programs, and recruitment agencies use TOEFL scores to evaluate English proficiency.

    2. The TOEFL has 4 sections, each with a score range of 0-30 that are added up for a total score of 120.

    3. The TOEFL exam is almost entirely multiple choice.

  ii. Format: There are several formats of the TOEFL exam: The internet-based Test (iBT) and the TOEFL Essentials.

    1. The TOEFL iBT can be taken in one of three options or formats:

      a. (1) at a test center via computer administered exam,

b. (2) at home via computer administered exam, or

c. (3) on paper in a test center and at home.

   i. This exam maintains the scoring framework of the internet-based test described above but is administered in two parts. The reading, listening, and writing sections are taken on paper at a test center while the speaking section is taken at home on a computer.

2. The TOEFL Essentials exam is a shorter exam and can be taken at home. As we consider the iBT as the reference for the TOEFL score, the TOEFL Essentials test will not be further discussed in this document.

3. There were previously two additional formats of the TOEFL exam: the "paper-based test" (pBT) and "computer-based test" (cBT). These examinations have been discontinued by ETS to streamline test administration and scoring and are no longer offered. ETS offers a paper administered version of the internet-based test (iBT) as described above.

iii. Materials covered:

1. **Reading**: The reading section assesses reading comprehension skills. Passages are academic focused, like those found in college textbooks. Subjects vary, ranging from philosophy to literature, science to psychology.

2. **Listening**: The listening section measures the test taker's ability to understand English conversations and lectures. These conversations include academic lectures and dialogues, conversations similar to what a student may encounter on-campus.

3. **Speaking**: The speaking section evaluates the test taker's ability to communicate effectively in educational environments, divided across different tasks about different conversations in and outside of a classroom.

4. **Writing**: The writing section gauges the test taker's written abilities in academic settings, including grasp of language, organization, grammar, and argument development.

      iv.   Additional information on the TOEFL exam can be found [here](#).

j.   What is the **IELTS** Exam?

    i.   Overview:

        1.   An equivalent test that can be taken is the IELTS. Similar to the TOEFL, the purpose of the IELTS is to evaluate the English proficiency of people who are non-native English speakers. IELTS focuses on British English, while the TOEFL tests American English. There are several versions of the IELTS test, including an academic modules and a general training module.

        2.   The IELTS has 4 sections, each with a maximum score of 9. These scores are then averaged to give an overall band score.

        3.   The IELTS exam has many different types of questions, including multiple choice, short answer, and gap-filling tasks.

    ii.   Format: There are two primary forms of the IELTS exam: the Academic test and the General Training test.

        1.   The Academic test is intended for those planning to study in higher education or seek a professional registration, visa, or other certification in an English speaking country.

        2.   The General Training test is intended for those looking to study in secondary education, work, or migrate to an English-speaking country.

    iii.   Materials covered:

        1.   **Reading**: You will need to read quickly and efficiently, and manage your time. The content of the Reading test is different for IELTS Academic and IELTS General Training tests but assesses a wide range of reading skills, including how well you read for the general sense of a passage, read for the main ideas, read for detail understand inferences and implied meaning, recognise a writer's opinions, attitudes, and purpose, and follow the development of an argument.

        2.   **Listening**: The IELTS Listening test is designed to assess a wide range of listening skills, including how well you understand main ideas and specific factual information, recognise the opinions, attitudes and purpose of a speaker, and follow the development of an argument.

3. **Speaking**: You will talk to a certified examiner in the IELTS Speaking test using a variety of English accents. The content of the IELTS Speaking test is the same for both the IELTS Academic and IELTS General Training tests.

    a. The IELTS Speaking test is designed to assess a wide range of skills including: how well you can communicate opinions and information on everyday topics and common experiences by answering a range of questions, speaking at length on a given topic using appropriate language, organising your ideas coherently, expressing and justifying your opinions, analysing, discussing, and speculating about issues.

4. **Writing**: The IELTS Writing test is designed to assess a wide range of writing skills, including how well you write a response appropriately, organise ideas, and use a range of vocabulary and grammar accurately.

iv. Additional information on the IELTS exam can be found [here](#).

k. What is the **ITACE** Exam?

   i. Overview

      1. An alternative to both the existing standardised TOEFL and IELTS exams is the **ITACE**, or Interuniversity Test of Academic English. Developed by the InterUniversity Testing Consortium made up of several Language Centers/Institutes of Flemish universities (KU Leuven, Ghent University, University of Antwerp, and VUB), this language test assesses academic English language proficiency according to international test standards. This can be a good exam choice for students already present in Flanders/Belgium, as the **exam can only be taken in person at one of the Language Centers/Institutes of the partner universities**.

      2. The ITACE has three parts and is made up of computer, writing, and oral tests. Only participants who achieve a B1 score or higher on the computer test are allowed to move forward to the other two sections.

      3. All sentences, texts and listening fragments used in the test were taken from a wide range of authentic scientific, academic, and

general contexts. The writing and oral tasks have been designed with a broad student population in mind to ensure that topics are accessible to students from all disciplines.

ii. Format: There are three forms of the ITACE exam: for students, for lecturers, and for CLIL teachers. Applicants at ITM will likely take the student test.

1. Computer test
   a. The computer test is the first stage of the ITACE and is 2 hours long. The exam covers reading, listening, and grammar and vocabulary.
      i. Reading: You are expected to answer multiple choice reading comprehension questions and deduce the meaning of a word from context clues.
      ii. Listening: You are expected to answer multiple choice listening comprehension questions and fill in the blank questions.
      iii. Grammar and vocabulary: You are expected to answer multiple choice and fill in the blank questions.

2. Writing Test:
   a. Provided a test-taker scores at least a B1 level on the computer component, they are permitted to move forward to the writing and oral tests. The writing test consists of two writing tasks and is an hour in length:
      i. You must write a 100-150 word email within a given academic context, as well as a 150-300 word formal text on a given academic topic.
      ii. You must use Microsoft Word for this task and are permitted to use all Word functions, including spell checker, but no other external aids.
      iii. Writing will be evaluated on vocabulary, grammar (range and accuracy), spelling, punctuation, coherence, and flow.

3. Oral Test:
   a. The oral component is a 30 minute face-to-face examination. The oral test consists of two tasks:
      i. Presentation task: You will receive a printout of a set of slides, which include a presentation outline and at least one graph, and use this to prepare a presentation on the given topic. You are expected to interpret the data on the slides and give conclusions.

  ii. Argumentation task: You will be given two different statements/arguments with some background information. Choosing one of the topics, you will prepare an argumentative speech where you introduce the statement and give your opinion, as well as provide examples to defend your case.

 b. You will be given 15 minutes to prepare for both tasks with a pen and paper, but no outside sources are allowed. The test itself takes another 15 minutes and will be recorded.

 c. Speaking will be evaluated on vocabulary, grammar (range and accuracy), fluency, pronunciation, coherence, and cohesion.

II. Scoring

 a. Scoring

  i. While each of the above referenced exams or scales provides its own scoring system, the tests do not correlate exactly across each exam. Therefore, in the below chart you may see several score ranges for each level and individual test.

  ii. Score chart:

CEFR and TOEFL & IELTS Score Comparison

Score Crosswalk				
CEFR			**TOEFL iBT**	**IELTS**
Proficient User		C2	118 - 120	9
			115 - 117	8,5
		C1 - C2	110 - 114	8
		C1	102 - 109	7,5
			94 - 101	7
Independent User		B2 - C1	79 - 93	6,5
		B2	60 - 78	6
		B1 - B2	46 - 59	5,5
		B1	35 - 45	5
			32 - 34	4,5
Basic User		A1 - A2	0 - 31	0-4

Meets ITM requirements
May meet ITM requirements
Does not meet ITM requirements

Table 1: Compare TOEFL iBT Scores. Educational Teting Services (ETS).

b. ITACE Scoring

   i. The ITACE exam is scored by CEFR level. Your overall CEFR level is based on the sum of all of the test component subscores. This means you can compensate for lower scores in some components with higher ones in others. However, for admission to any ITM course, the minimum language requirements are proof of an English CEFR level of B2-C1 meaning a higher tier B2 or C1 (equal to TOEFL iBT score of 79-93, or an IELTS score of 6.5). A higher tier B2 will generally mean a B2 on all components of language proficiency and can be evidenced by the ITACE test component subscores.

Cut Score	CEFR Level
20%	B1
40%	B2
60%	C1
80%	C2

Table 2: Minimum ITACE scores for corresponding CEFR levels. ITACE.

   ii. The result of the computer test is communicated to participants upon completion of the test. Participants who scored less than B1 on the computer test cannot participate in the oral and written task. They will not receive a certificate as the test only assesses level B1 and higher. The results of the computer, writing and oral tests will be communicated within two weeks after participation. Participants are issued a B1, B2, C1 or C2 certificate.

English Language Preparation Materials

c. TOEFL and IELTS Exam Preparation

   i. TOEFL

      1. Free TOEFL Exercises: A set of free TOEFL practice questions and exam sets.

2. [ETS TOEFL Essentials Official Practice Tests](): Three free TOEFL Essentials Practice tests
3. [ETS TOEFL iBT Practice Tests and Problem Sets](): Free TOEFL iBT paper and digital practice tests as well as section specific practice problem sets.
4. [Inside the TOEFL](): TOEFL Overview to get an understanding of the relevant sections and content, as well as test structure.
5. [TOEFL Practice Test](): Brief TOEFL Practice test resources
6. [The TOEFL iBT Test Prep Planner](): An 8-week plan book to prepare for the TOEFL test, including sample questions, tips for the exam, skill-building exercises, and brief lesson overviews.

   ii. IELTS
1. [IELTS Liz YouTube](): YouTube video channel reviewing various sections of the IELTS exam, including speaking, writing, listening, and vocabulary.
2. [IELTS Liz Website](): Useful websites & resources for preparing for and taking the IELTS.
3. [Online IELTS practice tests](): Free online IELTS practice test sections.
4. [IELTS Study mobile apps](): Apps providing videos, podcasts, practice tests, grammar tips, etc. to help prepare for the iELTS
5. [British Council, LearnEnglish](): An excellent resource from one of the administrators of the IELTS exam covering a range of English topics for all level ranges.

   iii. ITACE
1. [ITACE Sample Questions](): The IUTC has provided one set of example questions for each component of the exam. Beyond these, preparatory materials for the TOEFL and IELTS can be used as the exams test similar competencies.

d. Podcasts
   i. [6-minute English](): 6-minute language snippets from the BBC to hear natural conversation covering a broad range of topics.
   ii. [Listening Time](): This podcast is for English learners who want to practice their listening comprehension in a natural way. In each episode, an American speaker talks about different topics without reading a script.

iii. [Bio Eats World](): A podcast exploring the intersection of life sciences, technology, health care, and business. This show looks at the way modern biology is transforming. Episodes include conversations with scientists and business leaders, as well as "Journal club" where academic papers are discussed and explained.

iv. [Global Health Matters](): A discussion of various global health topics including access to medicines, diplomacy, public health programmes, diversity in global health, and more.

v. [TED Health](): TED talk style presentations reviewing various topics in public health, science, and others.

vi. [Infectious Disease Pus-cast](): Scientific review podcast of various journals, new research and developments, and other topics in infectious disease. Available on most podcast platforms.

vii. [Breakpoints](): Society of Infectious Disease Pharmacists podcast reviewing various issues and developments in global infectious disease and public health.

viii. [Public Health Epidemiology Conversations](): A podcast exploring public health epidemiology careers, resources, and strategies for graduate students and professionals interested in the field.

e. Speaking and Listening resources

i. [Learn English Through Listening, Adept English](): Brief English language speaking podcast to learn through listening. Episodes are available for individuals across skill levels.

ii. [Say It: English Pronunciation iOS app](): Application enabling your improvement of English pronunciation. Hear the model from the Oxford dictionary, record your own, and compare.

iii. [Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Lab](): An online resource with many listening exercises.

iv. [ESL Lounge](): An online resource with a range of guides and quiz like exercises.

f. Grammar resources

i. [Purdue OWL](): One of the best resources to guide writing style, citation methods, and other key professional writing items.

ii. [Daily Grammar](): A huge resource of brief daily grammar lessons. Focused on basic mechanics but also includes more advanced topics as well.

iii. [British Council, LearnEnglish – Grammar](#): An excellent resource from one of the administrators of the IELTS exam covering a range of grammar topics for all level ranges.

iv. [Grammarly](#): A web-based software that can check written work for grammar, spelling, tone, and style.

v. [Using English](#): Comprehensive grammar glossary with a variety of resources including terms, quizzes, tests, and guides.

vi. [University of Bristol, Grammar and Punctuation Exercises](#): Comprehensive, yet brief, grammar learning and practice materials. Covers a variety of topics around punctuation, commonly confused words, and others.

vii. [Grammar Monster](#): Comprehensive resource with comprehensive lessons on grammar terms, punctuation, confusing words, and others. Includes videos, practice sets, and quizzes.

viii. [EF Resources for Learning English](#): Comprehensive collection of free English learning resources. Covers grammar lessons, vocabulary, idioms, quotes, and a brief level test to determine your level of English ability.

ix. [Grammar Bytes](#): A resource targeted to English teachers with a number of videos, study resources and guides, presentations, and quizzes to review and learn from.

x. [English Grammar 101](#): Interactive grammar resource covering a comprehensive range of topics. Free resource is limited in scope, paid resource includes exercises and quizzes.

xi. [Grammar for Academic Writing](#): Comprehensive lesson guide and workbook around grammar for academic writing. Covers punctuation, proper sentence structure, among other, more complex topics.

xii. [Using English for Academic Purposes (UEfAP)](#): Extensive guide around writing and using English in academic and research settings. Covers grammar, general spelling and writing tips, vocabulary, speaking, and more.

g. Writing Resources

i. [Politics and The English Language](#): George Orwell's revolutionary essay on writing concisely and clearly, without losing meaning or effect.

ii. University of Antwerp: English Style Guide: English language style guide with grammar, writing, and style tips from the University of Antwerp English Linguapolis course.

iii. Washington State University, Common errors in English Usage: A listing of common errors in English usage and how best to avoid them.

iv. Research writing guides from the University of Washington: A comprehensive resource covering best practices in research writing as well as guide based resources to inform grant, thesis, and other research related writing.

v. English for Research Resources: A wide variety of resources including vocabulary and writing exercises, presentations on research and academic writing, CV templates, and more

vi. Cambridge University Learning English Resources: A plethora of free activities to learn and practice English listening, writing, and mechanics.

vii. Tips from the Masters - Writer's Toolbox: A listing of excellent writing resources for advanced English writers.

h. Vocabulary Resources

i. Ultimate TOEFL Vocabulary List: A list of vocabulary words that may appear on the TOEFL test.

ii. Useful Phrases and Sentences for Academic & Research Paper Writing: A resource covering commonly used phrases in different sections and types of academic writing.

iii. British Council, LearnEnglish – Vocabulary: An excellent resource from one of the administrators of the IELTS exam covering a range of vocabulary topics for all level ranges.

iv. Oxford Dictionary, Academic Word Lists: A list of words one is likely to see if you work or study in an English-speaking setting. Very comprehensive lists, albeit, less user friendly.