IELTS Delivery Update, Score Profile and Preparation Decisions

IELTS Academic

Check the delivery update before booking

These additional notes were checked against official IELTS information on 2 October 2026. Use them beside the preserved test overview. Older descriptions of paper delivery are not a current booking guide.

The IELTS partners announced a move away from fully paper-based tests from mid-2026. Exact change dates vary by market. Check the official provider and test centre for your chosen date and place. The announcement says the assessed skills and interpretation of results remain unchanged. A change in delivery does not mean you must learn a new language skill from the beginning.

In selected markets, **Writing on Paper** 手写写作 is an option within IELTS on computer. Listening and Reading remain on computer. Writing questions appear on screen, but answers are handwritten. The official option page says it is not available for IELTS for UKVI. It also says a Writing One Skill Retake must use the same Writing delivery mode as the original test. Availability and booking conditions must be confirmed with the centre.

Use official familiarisation material for the booked mode. Practise reading on screen, entering answers and checking them within the available time. If handwriting Writing, practise a readable answer under the same time limit. A beautiful pen cannot revise your argument for you. Keep the joke outside your test answer.

Choose the required test rather than guessing from its name

A **receiving organisation** 接收机构 is the university, employer or other body that will use your result. Check its exact requirement for your course or purpose before booking. Record test type, permitted delivery, overall band, each skill minimum and submission deadline. A friend's offer may have different conditions from yours.

Academic and General Training have different Reading and Writing Task 1 content. Do not use a General Training letter as practice for describing an Academic chart. Check any UKVI requirement through the relevant official guidance and receiving organisation. A normal Academic booking is not automatically the correct booking for every visa purpose.

IELTS Online and IELTS on computer at a test centre are different delivery choices. The official ways-to-take page says receiving organisations decide whether to accept IELTS Online. UKVI tests must be taken at an official test centre. Do not assume that a familiar score format proves acceptance of every delivery mode.

Requirement record	What to write
Purpose	Exact course, registration or other requirement
Test	Required type and accepted delivery
Scores	Overall requirement and each skill minimum
Timing	Application deadline and time for results to arrive
Evidence	Official page, date checked and any written clarification

This record organises your checks. It does not book a test or establish a real institution's admission decision.

Calculate the overall band and check every separate minimum

The official scoring rule averages the four section bands and rounds to the nearest half band. An average ending in .25 rounds up to the next half band; .75 rounds up to the next whole band. A section below a required minimum is not repaired by a high overall average.

For invented practice scores of Listening 7.5, Reading 7.5, Writing 6.0 and Speaking 7.0:

$$\text{average} = \frac{7.5 + 7.5 + 6.0 + 7.0}{4} = 7.0$$

Suppose a fictional course requires overall 7.0 and at least 6.5 in each skill. The overall requirement is met. The Writing requirement is not met. The scores do not establish that all other admission requirements are met either.

For a separate set of 6.5, 6.5, 6.5 and 7.5:

$$\text{average} = \frac{6.5 + 6.5 + 6.5 + 7.5}{4} = 6.75$$

The reported overall band is 7.0 after rounding. It is not four section scores of 7.0. Always keep the section profile next to the overall number.

IELTS recommends considering results valid for two years. Organisations may accept them for longer. Check the receiving organisation's rule and the relevant date rather than assume an old result always qualifies.

Use practice results to find a specific learning gap

A **diagnostic** 诊断性练习 helps you find what needs work. It is not an official test result. Record the material, date, time used, raw result and errors. A short worksheet may test only one question type and cannot represent an entire skill band.

Suppose you answer 12 of 20 items correctly in an original classroom exercise. That is 60% on this exercise. It is not automatically IELTS band 6.0. The difficulty, coverage and marking of the exercise may differ from an official test. Official Listening and Reading guidance also describes raw-score conversions as varying slightly between

versions. Do not invent a precise band by joining published anchor points with a straight line.

Classify errors before choosing more practice:

Error seen	A useful next action
Misread the word limit	Practise checking instructions before answering
Understood the idea but used the wrong word form	Review the required grammar and answer form
Chose an answer without evidence	Find the supporting sentence or listening cue
Ran out of time	Rehearse a shorter timed section and review pacing
Writing did not answer the task	Plan the required purpose and main position before drafting

Compare repeated practice on suitable new material after working on the cause. Remembering yesterday's answer key is not evidence of a new skill. Use trained feedback and the official criteria for Writing and Speaking; a typed response cannot show pronunciation.

Build a short preparation cycle with a review decision

Start from your target profile and evidence of errors, not a promise to raise a band in fourteen days. Time needed differs between learners. A retake is an assessment opportunity, not a guaranteed improvement.

For an invented five-session plan:

1. Complete a suitable timed sample and record error types.
2. Practise the weakest identified process, such as checking instructions or supporting a claim.
3. Produce a new answer or recording and review it against appropriate criteria.
4. Repeat a similar skill on fresh material under a time limit.
5. Compare errors, timing and feedback; choose the next focus.

Keep maintenance practice for the other skills too. A high Reading score does not mean Reading can be ignored forever. Use manageable work periods and a realistic schedule around school commitments. Decide whether the evidence supports further practice, feedback or considering a booking. Do not treat one improved classroom score as a promise of the same official result.

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Plan Writing time so both tasks receive an answer

The Academic Writing test lasts 60 minutes. Task 2 carries twice the weight of Task 1. A 20-minute/40-minute split is a useful practice plan, not two separately enforced timers. Include planning and checking in that time.

For example, use Task 1's 20 minutes as 3 planning, 14 drafting and 3 checking. Use Task 2's 40 minutes as 5 planning, 30 drafting and 5 checking. These are teaching suggestions. Change them if practice evidence shows a better workable split. Both tasks still need relevant answers. Do not deliberately leave one blank because it has less weight.

If Task 1 has already taken 25 minutes, only 35 remain for Task 2. Make a brief plan, write a relevant response and use a short final check. Do not spend the remaining time polishing the first introduction. The purpose of pacing is to support complete, relevant responses rather than only neat opening sentences.

Check One Skill Retake eligibility and acceptance separately

Official IELTS information lists a full IELTS on computer test at an offering centre, completion of the retake within 60 days, and one retake per original test. Check actual availability and any access arrangements with the centre. Do not assume every location offers the same service.

A new result form includes the retaken skill and the original other three skills. The official page says you may choose the original or new form. It also advises checking whether the receiving organisation accepts One Skill Retake before booking. Eligibility to sit it is not the same as acceptance for your particular purpose.

For a fictional applicant with one low skill, ask three separate questions:

- Does the original test and centre meet the current eligibility conditions?
- Can the retake be completed within the deadline and the application schedule?
- Does the receiving organisation accept this result for the required purpose?

Then compare further preparation, a full retake or another accepted route. Fees and available dates need a current provider check; these notes do not quote them. No result improvement or admission outcome is guaranteed.

Practice and explained answers

1. Why should a candidate check the current centre rather than rely on an old paper-test comparison?
2. Distinguish Writing on Paper from a fully paper-based Listening, Reading and Writing test.
3. A friend says every university accepts IELTS Online. What evidence is needed before relying on that claim?

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4. Calculate the overall average for 7.5, 7.5, 6.0 and 7.0. Does it meet the fictional 7.0/6.5 profile?
5. Calculate the reported overall band for 6.5, 6.5, 6.5 and 7.5. Are all four skill bands now 7.0?
6. Explain why 12 correct answers out of 20 classroom items cannot simply be called IELTS band 6.
7. Give a next practice action for repeatedly exceeding the answer word limit.
8. Task 1 used 25 minutes of a 60-minute Writing session. How much remains, and what should happen next?
9. A candidate is eligible for One Skill Retake. Why is that not enough to choose it for an application?
10. Outline a preparation review that could change your next learning step without promising a band increase.

■ Explained answers

Answer 1. Official delivery changed from mid-2026, with exact dates varying by market. The booked place, date and provider determine what is available. Old preparation notes may describe an earlier arrangement.

Answer 2. Writing on Paper is an option within the computer test in selected markets. Listening and Reading stay on computer; Writing questions appear on screen and the answer is handwritten. The official option page excludes UKVI and specifies matching Writing delivery for its Writing retake.

Answer 3. Check the exact receiving organisation's requirement for that course or purpose. The official delivery page says organisations decide whether to accept IELTS Online. A friend's experience is not universal evidence.

Answer 4. The average is 7.0. It meets the fictional overall requirement, but Writing 6.0 is below 6.5. It therefore does not meet the complete stated score profile.

Answer 5. The average is 6.75 and the overall report rounds to 7.0. The section scores remain 6.5, 6.5, 6.5 and 7.5.

Answer 6. The raw classroom result is 60% on those items. Their coverage and difficulty do not establish an official conversion. Use errors to guide practice, not invent a band.

Answer 7. Check the instruction before answering, practise the permitted answer form, then verify length. Review fresh examples to see whether the same error has reduced.

Answer 8. Thirty-five minutes remain. Make a brief Task 2 plan, draft a relevant answer and check it. Do not use all remaining time polishing Task 1.

Answer 9. The organisation must accept the retake for the exact purpose, and the result must arrive in time. Centre eligibility alone proves neither. Preparation and costs still need consideration.

Answer 10. Compare new timed work with the recorded error types and appropriate feedback. Choose the next focus from persistent problems. Do not promise a particular score or improvement time.

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