

**IELTS™**

# **IELTS: The Test That Puts People First**

**NAFSA Region III  
New Orleans, LA**

**October 27, 2010**

[www.ielts.org](http://www.ielts.org)



## Agenda

1. IELTS in 2010: where we've been and where we're going
2. IELTS test format and hands-on exercise
3. Test security
4. IELTS examiner system
5. Common FAQs
6. Feedback from you and your colleagues

**IELTS™**



# **IELTS in 2010**

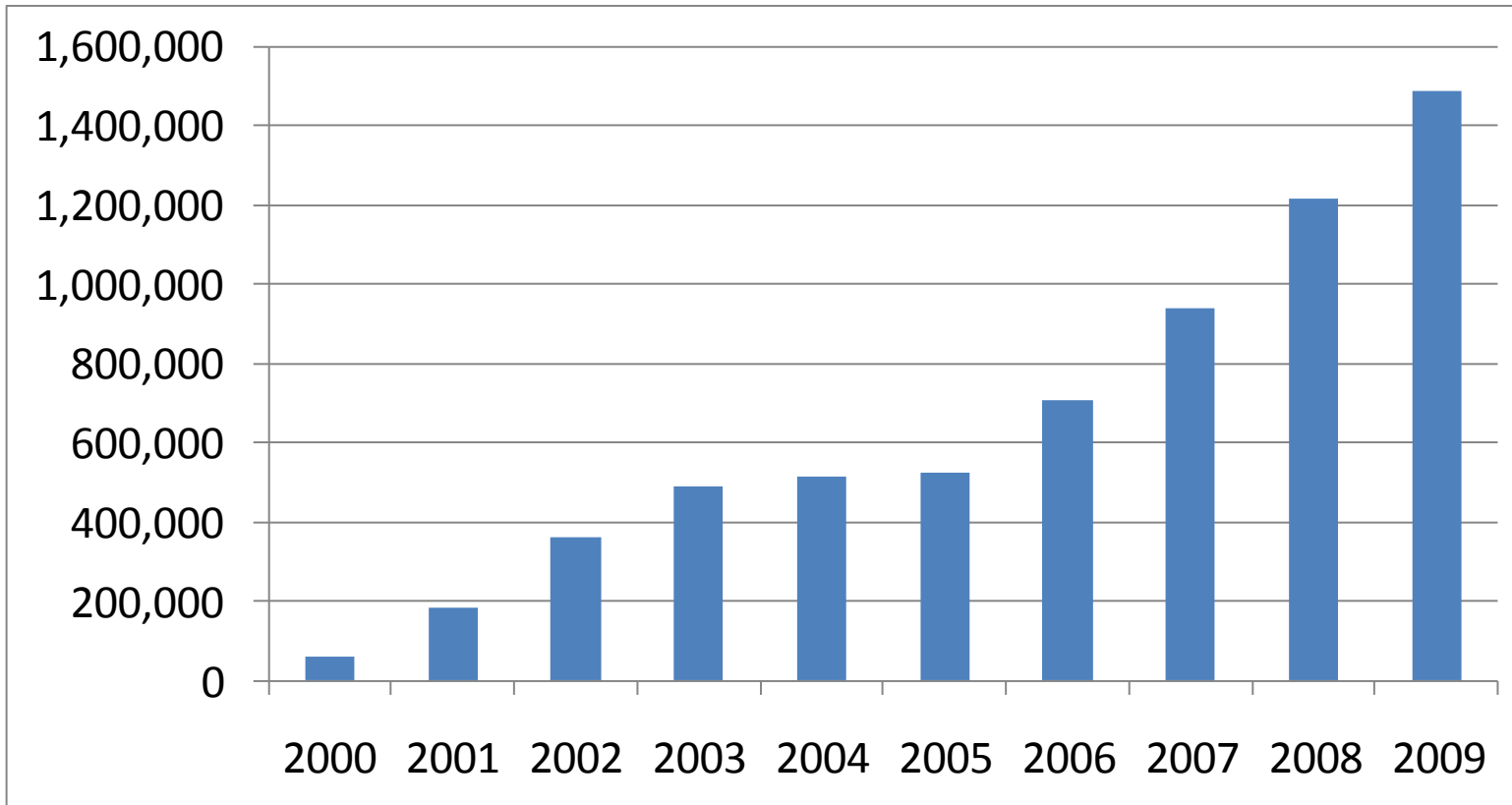
[www.ielts.org](http://www.ielts.org)

# IELTS™ is a test of English as an international language designed...

- To test communicative language proficiency of non-native speakers who intend to study in higher education where English is the language of communication (Academic Module)
  - Academic also used for professional certification (eg, nurses, healthcare professionals)
  - General Training Module used for international high schools (age 16 and over), immigration, work
- As a 4-skills test including listening, reading, writing, and a live, face-to-face speaking test performed by a trained, certified and monitored ESL professional

# IELTS™

## Global Candidature Growth



## “Top 10” nationalities for **US-bound** students

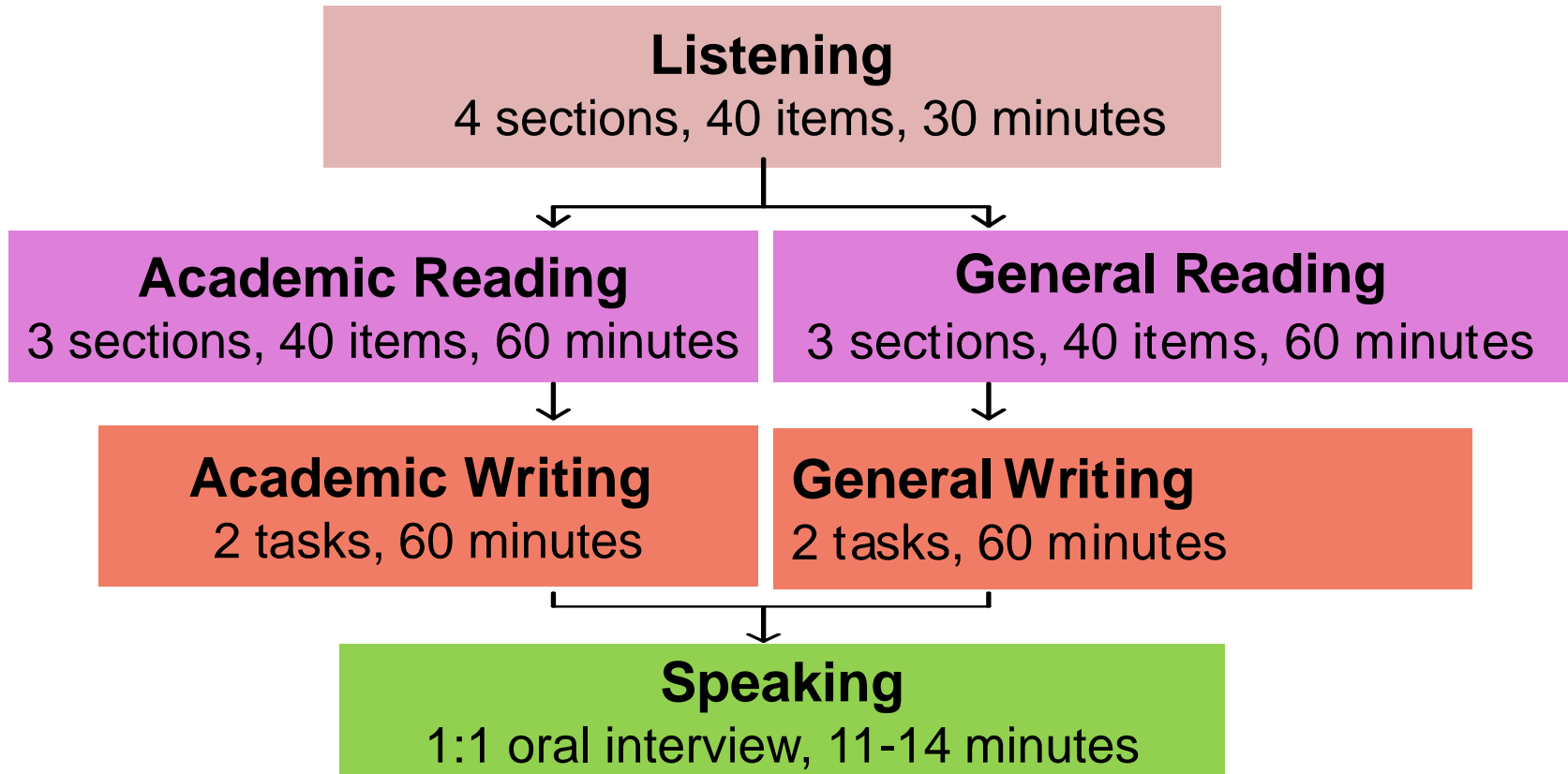
Nationalities of test takers
1. China
2. Philippines
3. India
4. Saudi Arabia
5. South Korea
6. Nepal
7. Hong Kong
8. Thailand
9. Vietnam
10. Libya



# Test Format

## Test Format

2 hours, 45 minutes





## Listening

30 minutes, 40 questions, 4 sections

- Monologues and conversations include a variety of native-speaker accents - North American (US and Canadian), UK, Australian
- Content vetted for cultural specificity and potential bias during test production

SECTION	Topic Area	Input	Main Skill Focus
1	Social needs	<b>Conversation</b> between 2 people with a transactional purpose e.g. finding out about travel services	Listening for and noting specific factual information
2	Social needs	<b>Monologue</b> or prompted monologue with a transactional purpose e.g. giving information about a public event	Listening for and noting specific factual information
3	Education and training	<b>Discussion</b> between 2 – 4 people in an academic context, e.g. tutorial or seminar	Following a conversation which involves negotiation of meaning. Listening for specific information, attitudes, and speakers' opinions
4	Education and training	<b>Monologue</b> in an academic context e.g. lecture	Following an academic argument. Listening for main ideas, specific information, attitude and speaker's opinion

## Academic reading

60 minutes, 40 questions, 3 passages (2,000-2,750 words total)

- Authentic, non-specialist texts from a variety of sources: journals, books, and newspapers
- General interest topics are appropriate and accessible to all test takers
- Any field-specific or technical terms are glossed to eliminate bias

## Multiple task types

### (Listening and Reading)

- Fairness in language testing addressing different learning and test taking styles
- Variety of task types addresses the variety of learning and test taking styles
  - short-answer questions
  - sentence completion
  - notes, summary, diagram, flow chart, table completion
  - classification
  - matching
  - multiple choice
  - identification of writers' views, attitudes, claims

## Academic writing

60 minutes, 2 mandatory writing tasks

Writing Task 1 is 20 minutes, 150 words

- Description of visual information from a chart, table, graph or diagram presented to a defined audience in the test taker's own words

Writing Task 2 is 40 minutes, 250 words

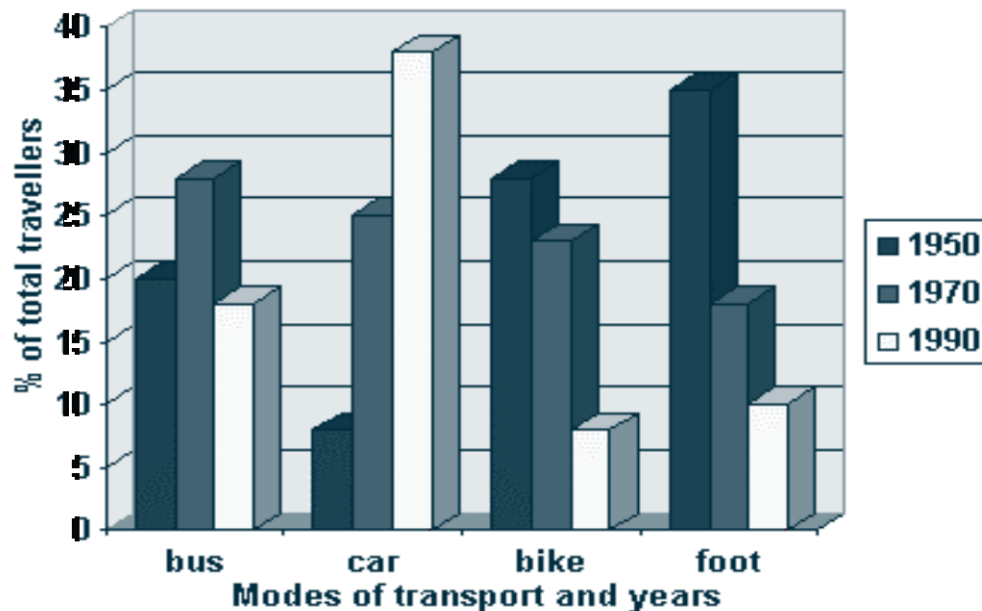
- Presentation of a solution to a problem, justification of an opinion, comparison/contrast of evidence or opinions, or evaluation and challenge of an argument or idea

## Sample writing task 1 (150 words)

*You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.*

*The graph below shows the different modes of transport used to travel to and from work in one European city in 1950, 1970 and 1990.*

*Write a report for a university lecturer describing the information.*



## Sample writing task 2 (250 words)

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Present a written argument or case to an educated reader with no specialist knowledge of the following topic

***It is inevitable that as technology develops so traditional cultures must be lost. Technology and tradition are incompatible - you cannot have both together.***

***To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?***

Give reasons for your answer.

You should write at least 250 words.

You should use your own ideas, knowledge and experience and support your arguments with examples and relevant evidence.

## Speaking test format

<b>Part 1</b> Introduction and Interview	Examiner introduces him/herself and confirms candidate's identity.  Examiner interviews candidate using verbal questions based on familiar topic frames.	<b>4 - 5 minutes</b>
<b>Part 2</b> Individual long turn	Examiner asks candidate to speak for 1-2 minutes on a particular topic based on written input in the form of a general instruction and content-focused prompts. Examiner asks one or two questions at the end of the long turn.	<b>3 - 4 minutes (includes 1 minute preparation time)</b>
<b>Part 3</b> Two-way discussion	Examiner invites candidate to participate in discussion of more abstract nature, based on verbal questions, thematically linked to Part 2 prompt.	<b>4 - 5 minutes</b>



## Sample speaking part 1: Introduction and interview

*Let's talk about where you live.*



- *Do you live in a house or an apartment?*
- *What do you like about your house apartment?*
- *What is the area like where you live?*
- *Would you recommend this area as a place to live for young people (Why / why not)?*

## Sample speaking part 2: Individual long turn

*Describe a teacher or lecturer who has significantly inspired you in your education.*

*You should say:*

- *where you met them*
- *what subject they taught*
- *what was special about them*

*Explain why this person inspired you.*

## Sample speaking part 3: Two-way discussion

### Developments in education

- (describe) changes over the last ten years in your country
- (compare) your experience of education with that of your parents or grandparents
- (speculate) on likely changes in the next fifty years

### A national education system

- (describe) your country's aims for education
- (compare) expectations of today's school-leavers with previous generations
- (evaluate) advantages/disadvantages of grouping learners by ability

### Different styles/methods of teaching and learning

- (describe) teaching styles/methods for different age-groups in your country
- (suggest) your preferred method of learning
- (evaluate) advantages/disadvantages of grouping learners by ability

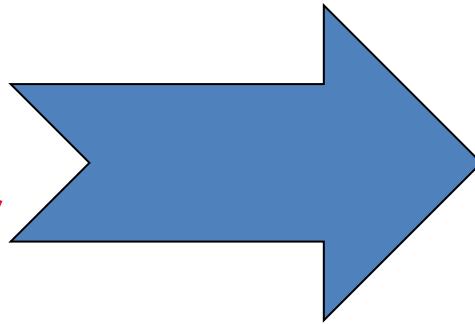


# **IELTS Band Scores**

## How is IELTS scored?

IELTS uses a 9-point scoring system to measure and report test scores

- 9 Expert User
- 8 *Very Good User***
- 7 *Good User***
- 6 *Competent User***
- 5 *Modest User***
- 4 Limited User
- 3 Extremely Limited User
- 2 Intermittent User
- 1 Non User
- 0 Did Not Attempt the Test



Most frequently  
used scores  
for university  
admissions

## Academic mean band scores by nationality (2009 data set)

Country	L	R	W	S	Overall
India	6.01	5.54	5.46	5.72	5.75
China (PRC)	5.59	5.74	5.11	5.18	5.47
Pakistan	6.00	5.62	5.69	6.04	5.90
Korea	6.00	5.98	5.27	5.46	5.74
Japan	6.02	5.98	5.40	5.76	5.85
Taiwan	5.78	5.81	5.32	5.73	5.72
Mexico	6.63	6.88	5.92	6.53	6.55
Saudi Arabia	4.97	4.79	4.69	5.67	5.10
Turkey	6.00	5.85	5.46	5.96	5.88

Source: Cambridge ESOL Research Notes, May 2010

[http://www.cambridgeesol.org/rs\\_notes/rs\\_nts40.pdf](http://www.cambridgeesol.org/rs_notes/rs_nts40.pdf)

Your turn

Speaking  
Part 3

## Speaking assessment criteria

Spoken performance is assessed using performance descriptors on four analytical subscales:

1. Fluency and coherence
2. Lexical resource
3. Grammatical range and accuracy
4. Pronunciation

*Access Public Band Score Descriptors:*

[http://www.ielts.org/PDF/UOBDS\\_SpeakingFinal.pdf](http://www.ielts.org/PDF/UOBDS_SpeakingFinal.pdf)



## Examiner Comments on Candidate J Speaking Part 3: Hobbies

### Band 8

This candidate speaks very fluently and is able to give long, complex and very detailed responses without any loss of coherence, repetition or language searches. She uses a wide range of discourse markers naturally and precisely. Her range of vocabulary allows a high degree of precision and flexibility with plenty of examples of stylistically appropriate language. Only occasional inaccuracies or slight inappropriacies (*Competition is quite big*) restrict her rating. She uses a wide range of complex structures with the majority of sentences being error-free. However, there are examples of inappropriate choice of tense and other occasional, non-systematic errors. Candidate J is easy to understand throughout the test, in spite of her accent. Although there are occasional mispronunciations of individual phonemes, these have minimal effect on communication. She is able to use a wide range of features, such as intonation and contrastive stress, to convey meaning.

This candidate's high overall fluency and wide range of features with only occasional examples of inappropriate usage make her a strong example of a Band 8 candidate.



# **Test security**

## Key aspects of security

- Pre-test day procedures
- Test day procedures
- Marking (scoring) and results production
- Verification

## Pre-test day security

- Rigorous paper production process
- Each test version is unique
- 48 fixed test dates and global zones
- Test takers required to submit 2 passports photos and a copy of the front page of their passport before the test
  - Passport must be used on test day, and test taker, passport and photos must match (facial recognition techniques/security)

## Test center management

- Global security systems and protocols ensure consistent approach
  - All staff required to sign confidentiality agreements
  - Staff delegated specific roles, duties and access rights concerning stock control systems and test materials
- Scheduled and unannounced “spot” audits ensure
  - Rigorous adherence to procedures
  - Quality and integrity of test are protected in every test center in every country
  - Audits documented and reported to the IELTS global partners according to a specific format

## Test day security

- Test day registration
  - ID check: person → ID document → attendance register
  - Additional ID checks conducted throughout the reading and writing and tests
  - Requirement to go through security and registration prior to the speaking test
  - Speaking examiner performs additional ID check and test taker records name, ID number on the test recording
- “Invigilation” (proctoring) and secure storage of test takers’ belongings

## Secure Test Report Forms (TRFs)

- TRF generation
  - Test takers receive **one** personal copy of the TRF
  - Additional copies can be sent by mail or electronically directly from test center to the receiving institution
  - *Never* accept a test taker's personal copy or a copy / fax / unofficial copy of a TRF



# On-line TRF Verification Service (TRFVS) -- All test users should sign up—it's free!

- Log in at [www.ielts.org/TRF](http://www.ielts.org/TRF) and click on “TRF Query”

The screenshot shows the IELTS website interface for an RO Administrator. At the top left is the IELTS logo with the tagline "English for International Opportunity". The page title is "RO Administrator Home:" and there is a "Logout" link in the top right. A left-hand navigation menu contains links for Home, TRF Query, Manage My RO Users, Update My Profile, FAQs, and IELTS.org. The main content area displays a welcome message for Ms Carly Moulding and lists profile details: Address (Educational Enterprises, 10 Spring Gardens, London, SW1A 2BN, United Kingdom), Telephone (020 7389 4005), Fax (020 7389 4140), and Email (ieltscommunications@britishcouncil.org). At the bottom, there are links for "Update My Profile" and "Contact IELTS Administration".



Centre Number:	10294
Centre Name:	International House, London
Candidate Number:	001234
Candidate ID:	A1234
Family Name:	Moulding
First Name:	Carly
Date of Birth:	1980-01-01
Sex (M/F):	F
Repeating IELTS:	N

Previous Test Date:

Previous Test Centre:



# Test Report Form Verification Service (TRFVS)

Test Results	<b>Overall Band 6.5</b>	<a href="#">Band Scores Explained</a>
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Date of Examination:	2007-08-16
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TRF Number:	0710001234SAMJ294A
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Listening	Band 7.5
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Reading	Band 5.5
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Writing	Band 6.5
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Speaking	Band 6.5
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# **IELTS Examiner System**

[www.ielts.org](http://www.ielts.org)

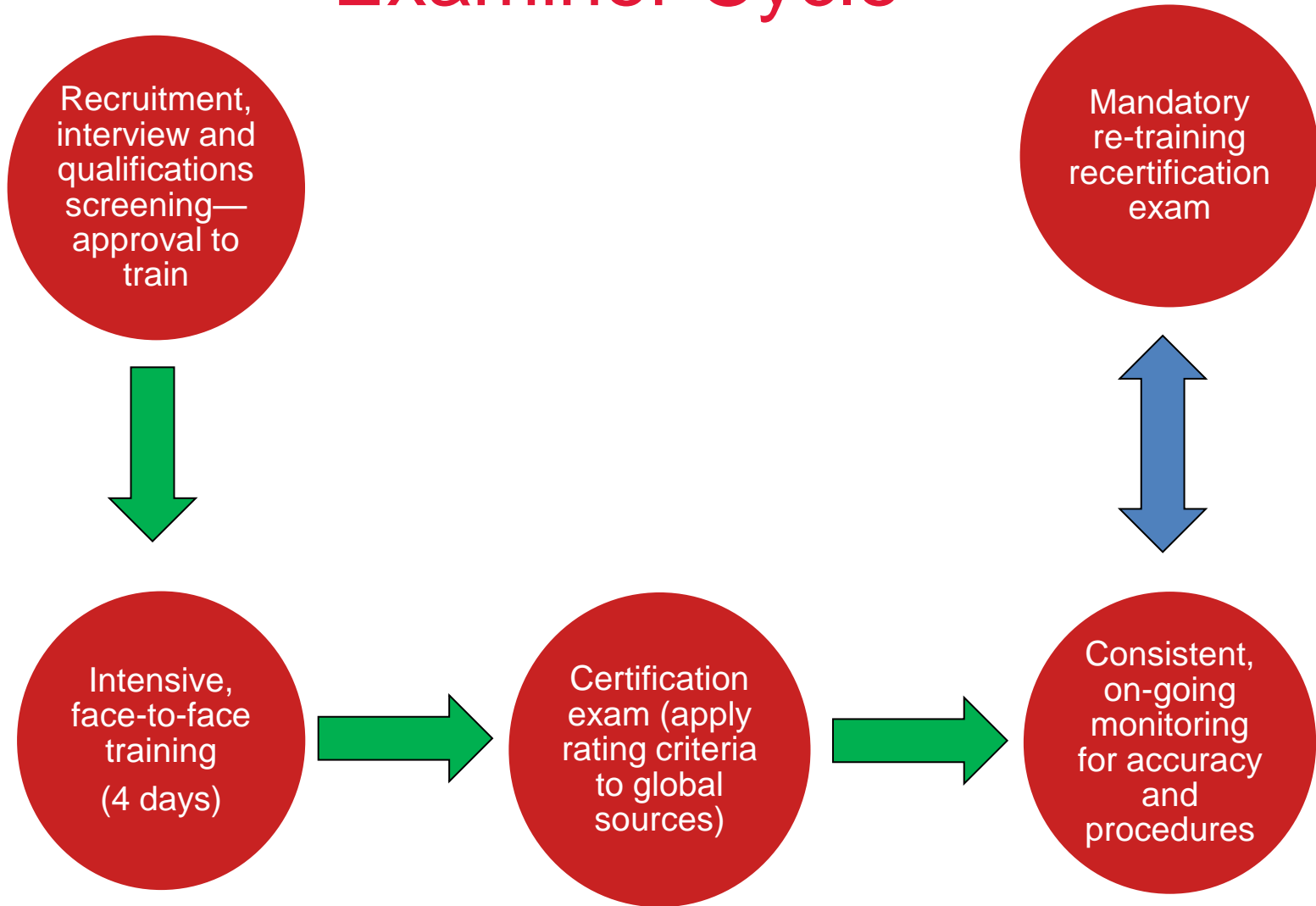
## Examiners: rigorous selection

- Stringent minimum professional requirements
  - Undergraduate degree
  - Recognized TESOL / TEFL certificate (e.g., CELTA, DELTA), M.A. TESOL
  - Minimum 3 years post-qualification teaching experience
- Degrees and certificates verified
- Interview screening by the examiner trainer

## Examiners: training, certification, monitoring

- Training: intensive, 4-day, face-to-face training
- Certification exam
  - Conducted under examination conditions
  - Technology is used to process results
- Monitoring: consistent, on-going monitoring to ensure continuous accuracy of scores and examining procedures
- Professional Support Network (PSN) for examiners

## Examiner Cycle





# Common FAQs

## How often is the test given?

- IELTS is offered up to 4 times per month on Saturdays and Thursdays

## How much does the test cost?

- \$185 in the US
- Fees are set locally by country to reflect the local economy and payable in local currency (see website for locations and fees)

## Where can test takers find information on test centers and dates?

- Search for test centers on [www.ielts.org](http://www.ielts.org)
- Online registration



**Thank you!**

**If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us.**

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