

# IELTS™

# Trial Testing Operations Delivery Handbook

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## Purpose of this document

The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is jointly owned and managed by the British Council, IDP: IELTS Australia (IDP: IA) and Cambridge University Press & Assessment.

IELTS measures the language proficiency of people who want to study or work where English is used as a language of communication.

This handbook is designed to support Trial Test centres to deliver their IELTS Trial Test sessions in accordance with IELTS policy and procedures and in agreement with the IELTS test delivery partners.

This document outlines operational guidance and procedures for centres when delivering IELTS Trial Test sessions and acts as a manual to support centres throughout the Trial Test windows.

This handbook has been created by the cross-partner IELTS Trial Testing Project Group and is designed to support British Council, IDP and Cambridge test centres.

## Support

IDP Contact –

[ielts.trialtesting@idp.com](mailto:ielts.trialtesting@idp.com)

British Council Contact –

[Laurice.Letwaba@britishcouncil.org](mailto:Laurice.Letwaba@britishcouncil.org) or [Saud-Al.Shams@britishcouncil.org](mailto:Saud-Al.Shams@britishcouncil.org)

Cambridge Contact –

[IELTSPretesting@CambridgeEnglish.org](mailto:IELTSPretesting@CambridgeEnglish.org)

IELTS CentreNet (for live IELTS test centres)

<https://www.ieltscentrenet.org/>

Cambridge English Support site (for non-live IELTS test centres)

<https://support.cambridgeenglish.org/hc/en-gb>

Please quote your four-digit Trial Test centre number in any correspondence.

## Security and Integrity

IELTS Trial Test materials are strictly confidential and should be treated in the same way as a live IELTS test. The IELTS Trial Test must be administered in accordance with Cambridge English instructions and security procedures.

Administrators must:

- Check the package on arrival to ensure that it contains the number of question papers, CDs and answer sheets on the envelope. Sign each envelope once checked.
- Complete the Declaration of Security on the envelope.
- Store all examination materials securely, under lock and key, along with other live test material.
- Ensure that materials are not copied or made available to anyone other than the administrator or the invigilator.

You can find more information about test material security in the live IELTS Test Delivery Standards manual on IELTS CentreNet [here](#). IDP Test Centres can access the information [here](#).

## Pre-test day activities

Please open each Trial Test package to check the papers and CDs immediately on arrival and sign the envelopes. Please note CDs will be packaged and sent separately to the Question papers. Once you have done this, they must be stored in a secure place, under lock and key, until they are to be used. They must not be left unsupervised at any time in line with IELTS live test materials guidance.

Please ensure that no Trial Test materials are photocopied without prior approval from your test delivery partners.

Do not transfer materials to other test centres or venues without prior written approval from your test delivery partners.

All Trial Test materials must be kept, in secure storage, at your centre at all times.

Before the Trial Test date ensure you complete the following:

- Provide your Trial Test date(s) to your British Council or IDP regional rep

- Check that you have received an email with the link to access the secure FTP folder and the password. If you have not received this link, please contact [IELTSPretesting@CambridgeEnglish.org](mailto:IELTSPretesting@CambridgeEnglish.org) or for IDP contact [ielts.trialtesting@idp.com](mailto:ielts.trialtesting@idp.com)
- When you receive the FTP folder link you should log in to check and confirm access. Centres should also check and login again 48 hours before their sessions to confirm access and to ease scanning return.
- Check you have received the correct hard copy Trial Test materials.
- Check the versions you have received for each module (L/R/W) as this might impact your test rooms or session set-up.
- Check you have received your listening CDs. If there are any issues with CD arrival, please contact your test delivery partner.
- Centres must ensure that when materials arrive, they are checked, counted and stored to the same security requirements as live IELTS materials (in the CMR or secure storage area).
- Materials must be handled, moved and destroyed in-line with IELTS live materials.
- Centres must prepare all materials ready for the Trial Test Day by organising the test room as you would for a real exam. This includes:
  - **Seating:** space desks far enough apart to prevent Test Takers overlooking each other's work – as in a normal exam. (Advisory distance is minimum of 1.25m in all directions).
  - **'Silence Please' notice:** this should be placed outside the examination room (a copy is available to download from IELTS CentreNet or the Cambridge English Support Site).
  - **Clock/Board:** an accurate clock should be visible. If this is not possible, regular time calls and a 10 minute warning before the end of the test are required. The board is used to write the exam start and finish times.
  - **Test Taker Number:** Test Takers must use the same Test Taker number for each component of the Trial Test (e.g. Reading). The Test Centre can choose this number and the Test Taker numbers must be accurately recorded on the Test Taker Register. The four digit Test Taker numbers should be written on each answer sheet for each part of the Trial Test. Write each Test Taker's name (family name last) in CAPITAL LETTERS on the Test Taker Register next to their Test Taker number.

- **Desk labels:** create a label for each desk with the Test Taker's name and the Test Taker number (a template is available to download from [IELTS CentreNet](#) or the Cambridge English Support Site)

## Identification for Test Day Registration

Test Takers must bring an original and valid photographic form of ID with them for Trial Testing registration (photocopies or electronic copies will not be accepted). This does not need to be a National ID Card or Passport. Acceptable forms of photographic ID for Trial Tests are:

- Valid Driving License
- Student ID card (school or university)
- Residence Permit or Work Permit
- National ID card
- Passport
- Any other accepted local form of ID in that country (ID must have a photo and be in date/valid with full name)

Test takers must remain under supervision from registration onwards to prevent impersonation and other types of malpractice.

Test day staff must ensure that movement is controlled through a managed test taker flow from the registration to the test room. There must be limited opportunity for test takers to leave the test environment unsupervised.

Venue staff must conduct an ID check for each test taker using their Attendance Register before entering the test room. Test Takers should keep their ID on their desk during the Trial Test. Venue Staff must conduct a check to ensure Test Takers are in the correct seat and have entered their correct name and Test Taker number on their Trial Test answer sheets.

## Test day activities

1. Give instructions to Test Takers/students. Invigilators must not leave secure materials unattended at any time.
2. IELTS Trial Test invigilator script can be located in [Appendix C](#) for all test room instructions.
3. Briefly explain what Trial Tests are, i.e. test materials that are trialled before they are used in live exams. Trial Testing allows Cambridge to make sure the exams they produce are at the right level of difficulty and are fair to all Test Takers.
4. Read the list of what Test Takers must and must not do during this Trial Test:
5. You must:
  - Switch off your mobile phone and other electronic devices
  - Leave bags and personal items in the dedicated space outside of the test room.
  - Keep the same Test Taker number for each part of the Trial Test
  - Use a pencil or pen to complete your answers
  - Have water in a clear bottle
6. You must not:
  - Use correction fluid to change an answer, use an eraser
  - Turn over or open the question paper before the Trial test begins
  - Use a dictionary
  - Eat, smoke, vape or have an open bottle on your desk
  - Re-enter the room if you have finished the Trial Test and already left the room
  - Test Takers must not have electronic items or personal belongings in the test room
  - Ensure water bottles/cups are placed on the floor next to the desk and not kept on the desk
7. For each Trial Test component invigilators must:
  - Complete the Register of Test Takers' names in BLOCK CAPITALS, ensuring that Test Takers are allocated the same number for each component. You can either

use the printed Test Taker Register provided and then transfer the details to the Excel template or complete the Excel register on the test day.

- Distribute the question papers and answer sheets but tell the Test Takers NOT to open the question paper until the test begins.
- Hand out answer sheets, ensuring Test Taker numbers match Test Taker numbers on the desk labels.
- On the answer sheets, tell the Test Takers to write in either pen or pencil
  - their full name in BLOCK CAPITALS
  - the Centre name
  - their Test Taker number as it will appear on the Register in the spaces provided
  - the date the Trial Test is being taken
  - the Trial Test version number which can be found on the front of the question paper (e.g. IP151 or AP34)
  - For Writing, the Test Takers should also write their first language in BLOCK CAPITALS (e.g. French/Thai/Korean/Arabic) on the top of each answer sheet (Task 1 and Task 2)
- For the Reading and Listening component, on the top right-hand side of the answer sheet the Test Takers must also fill in the following information in the relevant boxes:
  - A 3-digit first language code which can be found on the reverse of the answer sheet
  - M for Male and F for Female
  - If they are registered to take the IELTS exam in the future, they should write Yes or No
  - They should write AC or GT to indicate whether they are taking the Academic or General Training module
- Write the test Start and Finish times on the board. Insist on silence and begin the Trial Test.
- Monitor that test takers complete the Trial Test according to exam conditions.
  - Test Takers to raise their hands if they need anything.
  - Any Test Taker suspected of cheating should be given one verbal warning and then dismissed from the Trial Test if attempts to cheat continue.

- The Invigilator should stay in the room, watching at all times and should be able to move around the room freely (with the exception of the Listening Trial Test, where this would be a distraction).
- There should be a ratio of invigilator to Test Taker of 1:25. An additional staff member will be needed to assist with toilet breaks and material movement.
- Warn Test Takers verbally 10 minutes before the end of the test (with the exception of the Listening Trial Test, which has a warning to stop).
- Allow 5 extra minutes if Test Taker feedback is required (check back of question paper).
- If Test Takers finish early, they must not leave the test room until the end of the module (L/R/W)
- Test Takers must leave their answer sheets on their desks with their question papers at the end of each module. Invigilators must collect these at the end of the module and check name/Test Taker number match the details on the desk label.
- IELTS Trial Test room regulations (bathroom breaks, early exit procedures etc) are in line with live IELTS test regulations.

## Post-test day activities

All completed materials must be returned immediately after each Trial Test session has been administered. If you are running multiple Trial Test sessions within the window return materials **after each session, do not wait until the end of the window.**

Materials must be scanned and uploaded to the secure FTP folder provided by Cambridge for processing. It is no longer possible to return materials via courier.

### Scanning and uploading to secure FTP

- Before the opening of the Trial Testing window, you will receive an email containing the link to the secure FTP folder location and the password to access the folder. Check you can access the folder before beginning the scanning process
- Collate all the completed Trial Test materials together and scan the materials by component (Reading, Listening and Writing) and version (e.g. IP321, IP479 etc)

- Scan both sides of each Answer Sheet for Reading, Listening and Writing separately
- Check the scan copies are clear and that all answers are visible for marking
- When scanning please ensure pages are scanned in the correct order and that the scanning quality is good enough for marking
- Upload the scan copies to the secure FTP folders separately by component (Reading, Listening and Writing) and by version (e.g. IP321, IP479 etc)
- Using the following naming convention for your PDF scans: Trial Test Centre Number/Component/Version/Candidate Number Range/Total Number of Candidates (e.g. 1234\_Reading\_IP321\_0001-0020\_20 candidates or 1234\_Writing\_IP479\_0021-0040\_20 candidates)
- Upload the completed Excel Test Taker Attendance Register, you will find a blank template available in the FTP folder
- Complete the hard copy Feedback Form and upload one copy for each version for Listening, Reading and Writing to the 'Feedback Forms' folder
- Uploaded and returned scanned documents must match the number of tests delivered. For example: Test session for 20 Test Takers:
  - 40 Writing answer sheets scanned and uploaded (Task 1 & Task 2 combined)
  - 20 Listening answer sheets scanned and uploaded as one file
  - 20 Reading answer sheets scanned and uploaded as one file
  - Test Taker Excel attendance register completed and uploaded
- Scan and upload the completed Trial Test materials after each test sitting, do not wait until all sessions are completed

## Additional guidance for scanning and uploading

### Dos:

- **Do** remember to upload the Test Taker registers at the same time as the scanned PDF files.
- **Do** make sure all Test Takers enter a Test Taker number on the answer sheet and that this corresponds to the number on the Test Taker register.
- **Do** securely destroy all materials once all the results are received.

- **Do** upload a copy of the Feedback form for each version.
- **Do** use your IELTS OSM Scanner for scanning materials. This will ensure good quality scans and returns for fast turnaround for results.

## Don'ts:

- **Don't** upload materials for a single test session over the course of several days. Scan and upload all the answer sheets for a single session on the same day.
- **Don't** scan Task 1 and Task 2 for writing separately, scan these files together (so 10 Test Takers = 1 file with 10 T1 and T2 Answer Sheets combined, not 20 individual files).
- **Don't** return any materials to Cambridge via courier.

Cambridge will not process materials if scans are unclear, if materials are not uploaded correctly (not separated out by version or component) or uploaded into the incorrect folder location or if the attendance register is not received.

Marking and scores processing for Trial Tests will not begin until all materials are complete and booked in. If materials are not received correctly or if information is missing, you will be asked to rescan or reupload materials. The results turnaround time begins once all materials are received correctly and booked in.

## Test Taker Attendance Registers

To submit the details of the test takers that completed the Trial Test you must complete the Excel Test Taker register template (Appendix B or available on IELTS CentreNet [here](#) or on the Cambridge English Support Site [here](#)). IDP test centres can use the link [here](#). The completed Excel template should be uploaded to the Test Taker Registers folder on the secure FTP.

When completing the register please ensure that the Test Taker numbers match with the Test Taker answer sheets to ensure that results are processed for the correct Test Taker.

If you are running more than one Trial Test session within the window, please ensure that there are no repeat test takers, that no Test Taker numbers are duplicated and that you complete the Test Taker register for all test sittings.

## Trial Test Material Storage, Movement and Destruction

Please ensure you move all IELTS Trial Test materials in line with the same procedures for IELTS live materials. You must have approval from your IELTS test delivery partner to move materials between venues, cities or countries.

Do not transfer papers between centres/cities or countries without prior approval, in writing, and you must update your IELTS Trial Test scheduler with test location details and Test Taker volumes.

Sending centre:

- Only sealed bags are to be transferred. No sealed bags must be opened at any stage prior to the test.
- Log out papers from the ISCD sheet (Record Sheet of live test materials) with a note on transfer approval for audit purposes
- Complete a separate sign-out form with the number of QPs and Administrator's signature (receiving centre/staff/venue to keep copy of this form for audit purposes)
- Double check materials and modules to ensure correct versions of materials are despatched
- Leave QPs/CDs unopened in their original sealed sleeve
- Put them in an extra envelope, sealed, stamped and signed by the Administrator on the seals and get them ready for despatch.
- Despatch can only be arranged through official couriers such as DHL, FedEx, UPS, etc. or by authorised centre staff hand-delivering materials in line with live IELTS transport standards
- Pickup and delivery times to be shared with ROSM/RBAT and receiving centre

- Delivery only to nominated staff at confirmed address at receiving centre

If materials are stored overnight with the partner/venue this must remain under IELTS storage conditions as per live IELTS materials under two-tier locking, in a hard shell suitcase in a non-public and non-accessible space with limited access. We may require photographic evidence of where materials are stored.

Receiving centre:

- Confirm receipt of materials immediately after delivery to sending centre and ROSM/RBAT
- Complete the sign-out form from sending centre and file with stock records for audit purposes.
- Confirm the number and quantity of materials received from sending centre are correct, and conduct standard seals check on the materials received

Retain the hard copy Trial Test materials securely in your Test Centre until the end of the Trial Testing window and until all test sessions have been completed.

Materials should be stored in line with live IELTS test materials storage.

### **Destruction of materials:**

After you have received your results for the Trial Test sessions you can securely destroy all completed and unused materials in that window.

Please securely destroy:

- Used/Unused answer sheets
- Used/Unused question papers (you may wish to return question papers on which Test Takers have written notes)
- CDs

Materials securely destroyed must be logged and confirmed on the IELTS stock control documents.

Materials must be securely destroyed following the same process in place for IELTS live materials.

Materials can be securely destroyed once Test Takers have received their results.

No materials must be stored in centre once results have been received and issued.

## Trial Testing Suspected Malpractice

IELTS Trial Test materials are strictly confidential and should be treated in the same way as a live IELTS test. The IELTS Trial Test must be administered in accordance with Cambridge English instructions and security procedures to protect the integrity of the test and to ensure no leak of materials.

Any instances of suspected malpractice encountered during a Trial Testing session should be reported to Cambridge or your Trial Testing partner representative immediately for further follow up. Details including the nature of the malpractice, the test taker(s) involved and any evidence should be included in your report. Cases of suspected malpractice will be reviewed, and a decision may be taken to withhold the IELTS Trial Test scores.

## Marketing

A partner marketing toolkit has been created with digital promotional assets (social / banners etc) to help promote IELTS Trial Test sessions in your area. Test taker messaging has been built to focus on experiencing the test rather than a strong focus on results. See some screenshots of sample creative below:



You can promote Trial Testing on your own social media channels, emails and in centre promotions. To access and download the full suite of creative assets please visit [here](#) for British Council and [here](#) for IDP. For any additional Marketing support please contact your local regional marketing team.

## Results

Reading and Listening papers are clerically marked by Cambridge and Writing papers are marked by trained IELTS examiners. Centres will receive raw scores for Reading and Listening (with an indicative band score) and an overall indicative bandscore for Writing. A combined Excel scores file for all components is sent to test centres within 13 days from receipt of scanned materials.

Completed materials should be returned to Cambridge as soon as possible so that marking and scores processing can begin.

The results turnaround time begins from the date that materials are received by Cambridge for processing. Marking and scores processing for Trial Tests will not begin until all materials are complete and booked in. If materials are not received correctly or if information is missing, you will be asked to rescan or reupload materials. The results turnaround time begins once all materials are received correctly and booked in.

Test centres can use the instructions in Appendices G, H and I to send results to their test takers.

It is important that test centres ensure that test takers are aware that the Trial Test result is an indicative score and as such the format of the result should not be changed to match an IELTS Test Report Form in any way. Trial Testing gives an approximate indicator of Test Taker ability: the fact that a Test Taker achieves a particular result at Trial Testing in no way guarantees that the Test Taker will achieve the same result in the live test.

## Child Protection

IELTS Trial Test Takers under 18 years of age (British Council considers any person under the age of 18 to be a minor. In countries where the law concerning minors is greater than 18 years of age then the local law and age requirement will take precedence and centres must follow local law requirements).

Test Takers under the age of 18 must ask their parent/legal guardian for permission to attend the test. They must bring a copy of the form ([Appendix A](#)) with them to their IELTS Trial Test which contains their parent/legal guardian permission to take the test,

permission to leave the venue unaccompanied or outlining the parent/adult who will collect the test taker at the end of the test including their name and mobile telephone number.

## Special Arrangements

IELTS Trial Testing is currently unable to accommodate applications for modified materials (for example enlarged papers or braille versions of papers).

However, test takers wanting to sit an IELTS Trial Test and requesting additional time or use of support materials can make their request, in writing, to their centre with accompanying medical evidence at least 4 weeks before their Trial Test session. The IELTS test centre will review the application and confirm with the test taker directly what arrangements can be made. IELTS test centres will assess all applications and make every effort to accommodate applications for additional requirements and considerations.

Centres do not need to contact Cambridge regarding special arrangements and can make operational planning for delivery at centre level.

## Further information

For further information on Trial Testing and to access additional resources for use on the Trial Test Day, please refer to IELTS CentreNet or the Cambridge English Support Site.

IELTS CentreNet: <https://www.ieltscentrenet.org/hc/en-gb/categories/115001213063-Trial-Testing-formerly-Pretesting>

Cambridge English Support Site: <https://support.cambridgeenglish.org/hc/en-gb/articles/12941233681426-Pretesting-IELTS-Resources>

IELTS IDP: <https://iknow.ielts.idp.com/articles/ielts-trial-test>

You can also find out more information about IELTS band scores and other aspects of the IELTS question paper production process on the IELTS website [www.ielts.org](http://www.ielts.org)

## Appendices

The following appendices can be accessed online using the links below.

IELTS CentreNet:

<https://www.ieltscentrenet.org/hc/en-gb/categories/115001213063-Trial-Testing-formerly-Pretesting>

Cambridge English Support Site:

<https://support.cambridgeenglish.org/hc/en-gb/articles/12941233681426-Pretesting-IELTS-Resources>

IELTS IDP:

<https://iknow.ielts.idp.com/articles/ielts-trial-test>

**Appendix A: IELTS Minor Consent Form**

**Appendix B: IELTS Trial Test Candidate Register Template**

**Appendix C: IELTS Trial Test Invigilator Script**

**Appendix D: IELTS Trial Test FAQs**

**Appendix E: IELTS Trial Test Scanning and Uploading Guidance**

**Appendix F: IELTS Trial Test Sending Results Instructions**

**Appendix G: IELTS Results Email Template**

**Appendix H: IELTS Scores Sheet**

**Appendix I: IELTS Trial Test Operations Checklist**

**Appendix J: IELTS Trial Test Scanning and Uploading Checklist**