

IELTS vs OET Cambridge Exams

(Format, Content, Grading Criteria)

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Abstract- IELTS (International English Language Testing System) Test determines the English Language proficiency of the test takers in four components: Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking. The test is available in two versions: Academic and General Training. OET (Occupational English Test) is designed to meet the specific English language needs of the healthcare sector. It assesses the language proficiency of healthcare professionals who wish to practice in an English-speaking environment. All four language skills are assessed, with Writing and Speaking tests available in 12 different areas of healthcare. All candidates sit the same Reading and Listening tests. In this article the differences between IELTS and OET, two international exams are going to be reviewed according to their “format, content, objectives and grading criteria, and band scores”.

Keywords- IELTS; OET; format; content; objectives; grading criteria; band scores

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I. INTRODUCTION

Commencing with the definition for each, IELTS stands for the International English Language Testing System, which is acknowledged by universities, companies, professional bodies such as the GMC and NMC, immigration authorities, and government institutions all around the world as a measure of English Language ability. It is a generic test, measuring ability to communicate in English across all four language skills – listening, reading, writing and speaking – and was designed for people who intend to study or work where English is the language of communication. More than 6,000 education institutions, faculties, government agencies and professional organizations around the world now recognize IELTS scores as a valid indicator of the ability to communicate in English.

While, OET is an Occupational English Test, OET is an international English language test that assesses the language communication skills of healthcare professionals who seek to register and practice in an English-speaking environment, which is applied in the UK, Australia, New Zealand and Singapore among others to assess the Medical English skills of a wide range of international healthcare professionals, including doctors, nurses and AHPs. It is a language test for overseas qualified health professionals and is administered by the OET Centre six times a year and in over 40 locations around the world. The Test assesses the English language proficiency as it is used in medical and health professions. The OET Centre originally developed the test under contract to the Australian Federal Government, and is supported by the University of Melbourne's Language Testing Research Centre. (www.occupationalenglishtest.org/why-choose-oet) (www.ielts.org/en-us/)

II. RESEARCH QUESTION, METHOD AND PROCEDURE

Given the extensive interest in English tests, what is somewhat surprising is the fact that there have been several articles and essays related to IELTS, either academic or general, while a lack of interest in learning about other exams such as OET can be noticed. Majority of people who are interested in seeking to get a certificate for getting a better education, employed and immigrating are familiar with the IELTS Exam, yet healthcare professionals, including doctors, nurses and AHPs are assessed by the test which evaluates their English language proficiency as it is used in medical and health professions, as OET.

In this article, we aspire to answer the following question: What are the discrepancies and similarities in all four language skills- listening, reading, writing and speaking-which candidates are going to be tested and types of test takers who are intended to be assessed during each exam. Among different methodologies in research, we consider to establish secondary data analysis / archival study method. The remaining of this paper is organized as following: in section three, the differences and similarities will be uncovered, while in section four we explain the objectives of these two tests. The article conclusion is in section five, and last but not least, references section of the paper resides in the ending.

III. UNFOLDING DISCREPANCIES AND SIMILARITIES BETWEEN IELTS&OET

I. IELTS Academic Reading paper

Texts come from books, journals, magazines, newspapers and online resources, written for a non-specialist audience. All the topics are of general interest to students at undergraduate or postgraduate level. The texts may be written in different styles, for example, narrative, descriptive or discursive/argumentative. At least one text contains detailed logical argument. Texts may also contain diagrams, graphs or illustrations. If texts use technical vocabulary, then a simple dictionary definition is provided.

You will need to transfer your answers to an answer sheet. You must transfer your answers during the hour you are given for the Reading test. Unlike the Listening test, no extra transfer time is given. You should be careful when writing your answers on the answer sheet because you will lose marks for incorrect spelling and grammar.

Types of question:

Candidates and exam takers can be questioned in eleven different forms for each text that are given, that each of them has been explained thoroughly in the following steps.

Question Type 1 – Multiple choices

This type of question may be a question with four possible answers or the first half of a sentence with four possible sentence endings. You have to choose one correct answer (A, B, C or D), then write the correct answer on the answer sheet.

Sometimes you are given a longer list of possible answers and you have to choose more than one answer. You should read the question carefully to check how many answers you need to choose.

The questions are in the same order as the information in the text: that is, the answer to the first question will be before the answer to the second question, and so on.

This type of question tests many different reading skills including: detailed understanding of specific points or general understanding of the main points of the text.

Question Type 2 – Identifying information (True/False/Not given)

In this type of question, you are given a number of statements and are asked: ‘Do the following statements agree with the information in the text?’ You have to write ‘True’, ‘False’ or ‘Not given’ in the boxes on your answer sheet. It is important to understand the difference between ‘False’ and ‘Not given’. ‘False’ means that the statement contradicts the information in the text. ‘Not given’ means that the statement neither agrees with nor contradicts the information in the text. You must be careful not to use any information you already know about the topic of the text when choosing your answer.

This type of question tests your ability to recognize specific information given in the text.

Question Type 3 – Identifying writer’s views/claims (Yes/No/Not given)

In this type of question, you are given a number of statements and asked: ‘Do the following statements agree with the views of the writer?’ or ‘Do the following statements agree with the claims of the writer?’ You have to write ‘Yes’, ‘No’ or ‘Not given’ in the boxes on your answer sheet. It is important to understand the difference between ‘no’ and ‘not given’. ‘No’ means that the statement contradicts the writer’s view or claim. ‘Not given’ means that the statement neither agrees with nor contradicts the writer’s view or claim. You must be careful not to use any information you already know about the topic of the text when choosing your answer.

This type of question tests your ability to recognize opinions or ideas.

Question Type 4 – Matching information

In this type of question, you have to find specific information in the paragraphs (or sections) of a text. The paragraphs (or sections) are identified by letters (A, B, C, etc.). You will need to write the letters of the correct paragraphs (or sections) in the boxes on your answer sheet. Not every paragraph (or section) may be used and some paragraphs (or sections) may be used more than once. When the paragraphs (or sections) may be used more than once, the instructions will say: ‘You may use any letter more than once’.

This type of question assesses your ability to scan a text in order to find specific information. Unlike Task Type 5 (Matching headings), it focuses on specific information rather than the main idea. You may have to find: specific details, an example, reason, description, comparison, summary or explanation.

Question Type 5 – Matching headings

In this type of question, there is a list of headings which are identified by Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, etc.). A heading summarizes the main idea of a paragraph or section of the text. You must match the heading to the correct paragraph or section. The paragraphs (or sections) are identified by letters (A, B, C, etc.). You will need to write the correct Roman numerals in the boxes on your answer sheet. There will always be more headings than paragraphs or sections, so some headings will not be used. It is also possible that some paragraphs or sections may not be included in the task. One or more paragraphs or sections may already be matched with a heading as an example on the question paper. No heading may be used more than once.

This type of question tests your ability to identify the general topic of a paragraph (or section) and to recognize the difference between the main idea and a supporting idea.

Question Type 6 – Matching features

In this type of question, you have to match a set of statements or pieces of information to a list of options. The options are a group of features from the text, and letters (A, B, C, etc.) are used to identify them. Write the correct letter on the answer sheet. You may, for example, have to match descriptions of inventions to the people who invented them. It is possible that some options will not be used, and that others may be used more than once. When it is possible to use any option more than once, the instructions will say: ‘You may use any option more than once’.

This type of question tests your ability to recognize relationships and connections between facts in the text and your ability to recognize opinions and theories. You need to be able to skim and scan the text to find the information quickly so that you can then read that part more carefully for detail.

Question Type 7 – Matching sentence endings

In this type of question, you are given the first half of a sentence based on information in the text and you have to choose the best way to complete the sentence by choosing from a list of possible endings. The endings are identified by letters (A, B, C, etc.). There will be more sentence endings

than beginnings, so you will not use all of them. You must write the letter you choose on the answer sheet. The sentence beginnings are in the same order as the information in the text.

This type of question tests your ability to understand the main ideas in the text.

Question Type 8 – Sentence completion

In this type of question, you have to fill in a gap in each sentence by choosing words from the text. You must write the words you choose on the answer sheet.

You should read the instructions very carefully as the number of words or numbers you may use to fill the gaps can change. A word limit is given, for example, ‘NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER’. You will lose the mark for writing more than the word limit. Contracted words such as ‘they’re’ will not be tested. Hyphenated words such as ‘check-in’ count as single words.

The questions are in the same order as the information in the text.

This type of question tests your ability to find detail/specific information in a text.

Question Type 9 – Summary/note/table/flow chart completion

In this type of question, you are given a summary of a part of the text, and have to complete it using words taken from the text. Note that the summary is not normally of the whole text. The summary may be in the form of:

- a continuous text (called ‘a summary’ in the instructions)
- several notes (called ‘notes’ in the instructions)
- a table with some parts of it left empty or partially empty (called ‘a table’ in the instructions)
- a series of boxes or steps linked by arrows to show the order of events, with some of the boxes or steps empty or partially empty (called ‘a flow chart’ in the instructions).

The answers may not come in the same order as in the text. However, they will usually come from one part of the text rather than the whole text.

There are two variations of this task type. In the first variation, you need to select words from the text which fit into gaps on the question paper. You must write the words you choose on the answer sheet.

You should read the instructions very carefully as the number of words or numbers you may use to fill the gaps can change. A word limit is given, for example, ‘NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS

AND/OR A NUMBER'. You will lose the mark for writing more than the word limit. Contracted words such as 'they're' will not be tested. Hyphenated words such as 'check-in' count as single words.

In the second variation, you have to choose from a list of words to fill the gaps. The words are identified by letters (A, B, C, etc.).

This type of question tests your ability to understand details and/or the main ideas of a part of the text. When completing this type of question, you will need to think about the type of word(s) that will fit into a gap (for example, whether a noun is needed, or a verb, etc.).

Question Type 10 – Diagram label completion

In this type of question, you have to complete the labels on a diagram. The diagram is based on a description given in the text. The diagram may be a type of machine, part of a building or of other information in the text that can be shown through pictures. Write the words that fit into the gap on the answer sheet.

You should read the instructions very carefully as the number of words or numbers you may use to fill the gaps can change. A word limit is given, for example, 'NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER'. You will lose the mark for writing more than the word limit. Contracted words such as 'they're' will not be tested. Hyphenated words such as 'check-in' count as single words.

The answers may not come in the same order as in the text. However, they will usually come from one part of the text rather than the whole text.

This type of question tests your ability to understand a detailed description in the text, and then relate that description to information given in a diagram.

Question Type 11 – Short-answer questions

In this type of question, you have to answer questions about factual details in the text. You must write your answers in words or numbers on the answer sheet.

Answers must be taken from words in the text. A word limit is given, for example, 'NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER'. You will lose the mark for writing more than the word limit. Numbers can be written using figures (1, 2, etc.) or words (one, two, etc.). Contracted words such as 'they're' will not be tested. Hyphenated words such as 'check-in' count as single words. The answers come in the same order as the information in the text.

This type of question tests your ability to find and understand specific information in the text.

II. What's in the IELTS General Training Reading paper?

There are three sections of increasing difficulty. Section 1 may contain two or three short texts or several shorter texts. Section 2 contains two texts. In Section 3, there is one long text.

The texts in Section 1 deal with everyday topics, and they are the sort of texts that a person would need to be able to understand when living in an English-speaking country. You will need to pick out important information, e.g. from notices, advertisements and timetables. The texts in Section 2 focus on work topics, for example, job descriptions, contracts, staff development and training materials. The text in Section 3 deals with a topic of general interest. The style of writing in Section 3 is generally descriptive (containing detailed information) and instructive (telling you how to do something). This Section 3 text is longer and more complex than the texts in Sections 1 and 2. Section 3 texts are taken from newspapers, magazines, books and online resources.

You will need to transfer your answers to an answer sheet. You must transfer your answers during the hour you are given for the Reading test. Unlike the Listening test, no extra transfer time is given. You should be careful when writing your answers on the answer sheet because you will lose marks for incorrect spelling and grammar.

And the questions which examiners deal with are in the same type of Academic test.

(www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams-and-tests/ielts/)

III. How is reading ability assessed in OET?

Reading Part A (the expeditious reading task) tests your ability to skim and scan quickly across different texts on a given topic in order to locate specific information. For that purpose, Part A is strictly timed and you must complete all 20 question items within the allocated 15 minutes. To complete the task successfully, you will also need to understand the conventions of different medical text types and understand the presentation of numerical and textual information.

Reading Part B tests your ability to understand the detail, gist or main point of complex texts commonly found in the healthcare workplace. To complete the task successfully, you will need to identify specific ideas at sentence level.

Reading Part C tests your ability to understand the explicit or implied meaning as well as the attitude or opinion presented in a longer text. To complete the task successfully, you will need to identify the relationship between ideas at sentence and paragraph level. Part C also tests your ability to accurately understand lexical references and complex phrases within the text.

Assessors who mark the Reading sub-test are qualified and highly trained. Candidate responses are assessed against an established marking guide. During the marking session, problematic or unforeseen answers are referred to a sub-group of senior assessors for guidance.

In the third section exam takers will go through the writing part which is reading a case note and writing a letter such as a referral or discharge letter to nurses, doctors, or dentists in 45 minutes.

The Writing sub-test structure

- The task is to write a letter, usually a referral letter. Some alternative letter types are a letter of transfer and a letter of discharge. A letter to advise or inform a patient, carer or group is sometimes used in Pharmacy, Veterinary Science and occasionally for Speech Pathology and Occupational Therapy. Another task variation, with a different focus, is a written response to a complaint (for Radiography).
- Along with the task instructions, you will receive stimulus material (case notes and/or other related documentation) which includes information to use in your response. (<https://www.occupationalenglishtest.org/test-information/reading/>)

II. IELTS Academic Writing paper

There are two Writing tasks and BOTH must be completed.

In Task 1, you have to describe some visual information in your own words (a graph, table, chart or diagram). You need to write at least 150 words in about 20 minutes.

In Task 2, you are given a point of view, argument or problem which you need to discuss. You need to write at least 250 words in about 40 minutes.

You must write your answers using full sentences. You must not write your answers as notes or bullet points. You must write your answers on the answer sheet. You are allowed to write notes on the question paper, but these will not be seen by the examiner.

Marking

Certificated IELTS examiners assess your performance on each Writing task. There are four assessment criteria (things which the examiner thinks about when deciding what score to give you):

- Task achievement/response
- Coherence and cohesion
- Lexical resource

- Grammatical range and accuracy.

Task achievement (in Task 1) and Task response (in Task 2) assesses how accurately, appropriately and relevantly your response covers the task requirements, using the minimum of 150 words for Task 1 and 250 words for Task 2.

In Task 1, all the information you require is given in the diagram.

In Task 2, Task response includes how well you develop your argument in response to the task, giving evidence and examples which may be from your own experience.

Coherence and cohesion assesses how clear and fluent your writing is, and how you organize ideas and information. It includes giving your ideas in a logical order, and using a range of cohesive devices (for example, linking words, pronouns and conjunctions, etc.) appropriately.

Lexical resource assesses the range of vocabulary you have used, and how accurately and appropriately you use it.

Grammatical range and accuracy assesses the range of grammar you have used and how accurately and appropriately you have used it.

Academic Writing – Task 1

In Academic Writing Task 1, you may be asked to describe:

- one or more graphs, charts or tables
- a diagram of an object, device, process or event. You have to include the most important points in the diagram. Some minor points or details may be left out.

You should write in an academic or semi-formal/neutral style.

You should spend no more than 20 minutes on this task. You must write at least 150 words and will be penalized if your answer is too short. While you will not be penalized for writing more than 150 words, you should remember that a longer Task 1 answer may mean that you have less time to spend on Task 2, which contributes twice as much to your Writing band score.

You should remember that you will be penalized if what you write does not relate to the topic. You will also be penalized if your answer is not written as a whole piece of connected text (i.e. you must not use notes or bullet points). You will be severely penalized if your writing is plagiarized (i.e. copied from another source).

This task tests if you can give a well-organized overview of the visual information using language that is appropriate in its register and style.

Depending on the task type, you will be assessed on your ability to:

- organize, present and possibly compare data
- describe stages of a process or procedure
- describe an object, event or sequence of events
- explain how something works.

A minimum of 150 words.

Academic Writing – Task 2

In Academic Writing Task 2, you are given a topic to write about. Your answer should discuss the most relevant issues. You must read the task carefully so that you can write a full answer that is relevant. For example, if the topic is a particular aspect of the wider topic of computers, you should focus on this aspect only in your answer. You should not simply write about computers in general.

You should write in an academic or semi-formal/neutral style. You will need to organise your ideas clearly and make sure you use relevant examples (which can be from your own experience, if relevant) or evidence.

You should spend no more than 40 minutes on this task. You must write at least 250 words and will be penalised if your answer is too short. While you will not be penalised for writing more than 250 words, if you write a very long answer you may not have time for checking and correcting at the end, and some ideas may not be directly relevant to the question. You may also produce handwriting which is unclear.

You should remember that you will be penalised if what you write is not related to the topic. You will also be penalised if your answer is not written as a whole piece of connected text (i.e. you must not use notes or bullet points). You will be severely penalised if your writing is plagiarised (i.e. copied from another source).

You must write your answer on the answer sheet.

This task tests if you can write a clear, relevant, well-organised argument, giving evidence or examples to support your ideas, and use language accurately.

Depending on the task type, you will be assessed on your ability to:

- present a solution to a problem
- present and justify an opinion
- compare and contrast evidence, opinions and implications
- evaluate and challenge ideas, evidence or an argument.

You must write a minimum of 250 words.

I. IELTS General Training Writing paper

There are two Writing tasks and BOTH must be completed.

In Task 1, you have to respond to a situation by writing a letter, for example, asking for information or explaining a situation. You need to write at least 150 words in about 20 minutes.

In Task 2, you are given a point of view, argument or problem which you need to discuss. You need to write at least 250 words in about 40 minutes.

You must write your answers using full sentences. You must not write your answers as notes or bullet points. You must write your answers on the answer sheet. You are allowed to write notes on the question paper but these will not be seen by the examiner.

Marking

Certificated IELTS examiners assess your performance on each Writing task. There are four assessment criteria (things which the examiner thinks about when deciding what score to give you):

- Task achievement/response
- Coherence and cohesion
- Lexical resource
- Grammatical range and accuracy.

Task achievement (in Task 1) and Task response (in Task 2) assesses how accurately, appropriately and relevantly your response covers the task requirements, using the minimum of 150 words for Task 1 and 250 words for Task 2.

In Task 1, Task achievement refers to how well your letter achieves its purpose.

In Task 2, Task response includes how well you develop your argument in response to the task, giving evidence and examples which may be from your own experience.

Coherence and cohesion assesses how clear and fluent your writing is, and how you organise ideas and information. It includes giving your ideas in a logical order, and using a range of cohesive devices (for example, linking words, pronouns and conjunctions, etc.) appropriately.

Lexical resource assesses the range of vocabulary you have used, and how accurately and appropriately you use it.

Grammatical range and accuracy assesses the range of grammar you have used and how accurately and appropriately you have used it. (www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams-and-tests/ielts/)

General Training Writing – Task 1

In General Training Writing Task 1, you are given a situation and you need to write a response of at least 150 words in the form of a letter. Depending on the task, the letter may be personal, semi-formal or formal in style. The question paper tells you what information to include in the form of three bullet points.

You might need to ask for or give information and/or explain a situation. The situations you need to write about are common, everyday situations such as:

- writing to a college accommodation officer about problems with your accommodation
- writing to a new employer about problems you are having with managing your time
- writing to a local newspaper about a plan to develop a local airport
- writing to a renting agency to sort out problems with the heating system in your house.
- The style of writing that you use depends on who you are asked to write to and how well you are supposed to know them. You need to choose a style that is appropriate for your audience and will help you achieve your purpose for writing, e.g. writing to a friend (personal) or writing to a manager (semi-formal or formal).
- You should spend no more than 20 minutes on this task. You need to write at least 150 words and will be penalised if your answer is too short. While candidates will not be penalised for writing more than 150 words, you should remember that a longer Task 1 answer may mean that you have less time to spend on Task 2, which contributes twice as much to your Writing band score.
- You should remember that you will be penalised if what you write is not related to the topic. You will also be penalised if your answer is not written as a whole piece of connected text (i.e. you must not use notes or bullet points). You will be severely penalised if your writing is plagiarised (i.e. copied from another source).
- You do not need to write any addresses at the top of your letter.

This task tests if you are able to write a letter which is well organised and appropriate in its register and style.

Depending on the task type, you will be assessed on your ability to:

- ask for and/or provide general factual information
- express needs, wants, likes and dislikes
- express opinions (views, complaints, etc.).

A minimum of 150 words.

General Training Writing – Task 2

In General Training Writing Task 2, you need to write a semi-formal/neutral discursive essay of a minimum of 250 words.

The instructions for Task 2 give information about an opinion, argument or problem. The instructions then tell you what you should discuss in your essay.

You will need to write about a topic of general interest, such as:

- whether children's leisure activities should be educational
- how environmental problems can be solved
- whether smoking should be banned in public places.
- You should make sure that you write your answer carefully so that you give a complete response that is also relevant. To do this you will need to organise your ideas clearly and make sure you use relevant examples (which can be from your own experience, if relevant) or evidence. For this task, you need to be able to discuss more abstract and complex ideas and use a variety of vocabulary and grammatical structures.
- You should spend no more than 40 minutes on this task. You must write at least 250 words and will be penalised if your answer is too short. While you will not be penalised for writing more than 250 words, if you write a very long answer you may not have time for checking and correcting at the end, and some ideas may not be directly relevant to the question. You may also produce handwriting which is unclear.
- You should remember that you will be penalised if what you write is not related to the topic. You will also be penalised if your answer is not written as a whole piece of connected text (i.e. you must not use notes or bullet points). You will be severely penalised if your writing is plagiarised (i.e. copied from another source).
- You must write your answer on the answer sheet.

This task tests if you can write a clear, relevant, well-organised argument, giving evidence or examples to support your ideas, and use language accurately. Depending on the task type, you will be assessed on your ability to:

- provide general factual information
- outline a problem and present a solution
- present and possibly justify an opinion
- evaluate and discuss ideas, evidence or an argument.

A minimum of 250 words.

The Listening and Speaking parts have the same formats. (www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams-and-tests/ielts/)

II. How is writing ability assessed in OET?

Your performance on the Writing sub-test is marked independently by a minimum of two trained Assessors. Neither Assessor knows what scores the other has given you, or what scores you have achieved in any of the other sub-tests.

Your performance is scored against six criteria and receives a band score for each criterion:

- Purpose (Whether the purpose of the letter is immediately apparent to the reader and sufficiently expanded in the course of the letter)
- Content (Whether all the necessary information is included and accurate for the reader)
- Conciseness & Clarity (Whether unnecessary information is omitted so that the letter is an effective summary for the reader)
- Genre & Style (Whether the register, tone and use of abbreviations are appropriate for the reader)
- Organisation & Layout (Whether the letter is organised and well laid out for the reader)
- Language (Whether the accuracy of the grammar, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation communicates the necessary information to the reader)

Closing section is speaking which lasts for 20 minutes, consisting of two parts.

The Speaking sub-test structure

In each Speaking test, your identity and profession are checked by the interlocutor and there is a short warm-up conversation about your professional background. Then the role-plays are introduced one by one and you have three minutes to prepare for each. The role-plays take about five minutes each.

Role-plays

You receive information for each role-play on a card that you keep while you do the role-play. The card explains the situation and what you are required to do. You may write notes on the card if you want. If you have any questions about the content of the role-play or how a role-play works, you can ask them during the preparation time.

The role-plays are based on typical workplace situations and reflect the demands made on a health professional in those situations. The interlocutor follows a script so that the Speaking test structure is similar for each candidate. The interlocutor also has detailed information to use in each role-play. Different role-plays are used for different candidates at the same test administration. (<https://www.occupationalenglishtest.org/test-information/writing/>)

III. IELTS Listening paper

The paper has four sections, with ten questions in each section. The questions are in the same order as the information in the recording, so the answer to the first question will be before the answer to the second question, and so on.

Sections 1 and 2 deal with everyday, social situations. There is a conversation between two speakers in Section 1 (for example, a conversation about travel arrangements). Only one person speaks in Section 2 (for example, a speech about local facilities).

Sections 3 and 4 deal with educational and training situations. In Section 3 there is a conversation between two main speakers (for example, two university students in discussion, perhaps guided by a tutor). In Section 4 only one person speaks on an academic subject.

You will hear the recordings once only. Different accents, including British, Australian, New Zealand and North American, are used.

You will need to transfer your answers to an answer sheet. You will have 10 minutes at the end of the test to do this. You should be careful when writing your answers on the answer sheet because you will lose marks for incorrect spelling and grammar.

It has got six different types:

Question Type 1 – Multiple choice

This type of question may be a question with three possible answers or the first half of a sentence with three possible sentence endings. You have to choose one correct answer, A, B or C, then write the correct letter on the answer sheet.

Sometimes you are given a longer list of possible answers and you have to choose more than one answer. You should read the question carefully to check how many answers you need to choose.

This type of question tests many listening skills, e.g. a detailed understanding of specific points, or general understanding of the main points of the recording.

Question Type 2 – Matching

In this type of question, you have to match a list of items from the recording to a list of options on the question paper, then write the correct letter on the answer sheet.

This type of question tests your ability to:

- listen for detailed information. For example, whether you can understand information about the type of hotel or guest house accommodation in an everyday conversation
- follow a conversation between two people
- recognise how facts in the recording are connected to each other.

Question Type 3 – Plan/map/diagram labeling

In this type of question, you have to complete labels on a visual which may be:

- a diagram (e.g. a piece of equipment)
- a set of pictures
- a plan (e.g. of a building)
- a map (e.g. of part of a town).

You may have to:

- select your answers from a list on the question paper, then write the correct letter on the answer sheet
- select words from the recording which fit into gaps on the question paper. In this case, you will need to keep to the word limit given in the instructions. You do not have to change the words in the recording in any way.

You should read the instructions very carefully as the number of words or numbers you may use to fill the gaps can change. A word limit is given, for example, ‘NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER’. You will lose the mark for writing more than the word limit. Contracted words such as ‘they’re’ will not be tested. Hyphenated words such as ‘check-in’ count as single words.

This type of question tests your ability to understand, for example, a description of a place, and how this description relates to the visual. It may also test your ability to understand explanations of where things are and follow directions (e.g. straight on/through the far door).

Question Type 4 – Form/note/table/flow chart/summary completion

In this type of question, you have to fill in gaps in an outline of part or all of the recording. The outline will focus on the main ideas/facts in the recording and may be:

- a form: often used for facts, such as names
- a set of notes: used to summarise information and show how different points relate to one another
- a table: used to summarise information that can be divided into clear categories, e.g. place/time/price
- a flow chart: used to summarise the stages in a process, with the direction of the process shown by arrows.

You may have to:

- select your answers from a list on the question paper, then write the correct letter on the answer sheet
- select words from the recording which fit into gaps on the question paper. In this case, you will need to keep to the word limit given in the instructions. You do not have to change the words in the recording in any way.

You should read the instructions very carefully as the number of words or numbers you may use to fill the gaps can change. A word limit is given, for example, ‘NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER’. You will lose the mark for writing more than the word limit. Contracted words such as ‘they’re’ will not be tested. Hyphenated words such as ‘check-in’ count as single words.

This type of question focuses on the main points the person listening would naturally write down.

Question Type 5 – Sentence completion

In this type of question, you have to read sentences that summarise important information from either all of the listening text or from one part of it. You have to fill in a gap in each sentence using information from the recording.

You should read the instructions very carefully as the number of words or numbers you may use to fill the gaps can change. A word limit is given, for example, ‘NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS

AND/OR A NUMBER'. You will lose the mark for writing more than the word limit. Contracted words such as 'they're' will not be tested. Hyphenated words such as 'check-in' count as single words.

This type of question focuses on your ability to identify the important information in a recording. You may also need to understand relationships between ideas/facts/events, such as cause and effect.

Question Type 6 – Short-answer questions

In this type of question, you have to read a question and write a short answer using information from the recording.

You should read the instructions very carefully as the number of words or numbers you may use to fill the gaps can change. A word limit is given, for example, 'NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER'. You will lose the mark for writing more than the word limit. Contracted words such as 'they're' will not be tested. Hyphenated words such as 'check-in' count as single words.

Sometimes you are given a question which asks you to write two or three different answers.

This type of question focuses on your ability to listen for facts, such as places, prices or times, heard in the recording. (www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams-and-tests/ielts/)

I. How is listening ability assessed in OET?

The Listening sub-test is designed to assess a range of listening skills, such as identifying specific information, detail, gist, opinion or the speaker's purpose. These skills are assessed through note-completion tasks and multiple-choice questions.

Assessors who mark the Listening sub-test are qualified and highly trained. Candidate responses are assessed against an established marking guide. During the marking session, problematic or unforeseen answers are referred to a sub-group of senior assessors for guidance and all papers are double-marked to ensure fairness and consistency.

The next part is reading which includes following steps:

Part A – expeditious reading task (15 minutes)

Part A assesses your ability to locate specific information from four short texts in a quick and efficient manner. The four short texts relate to a single healthcare topic, and you must answer 20

questions in the allocated time period. The 20 questions consist of matching, sentence completion and short answer questions.

Part B and Part C – careful reading tasks (45 minutes)

Part B assesses your ability to identify the detail, gist or main point of six short texts sourced from the healthcare workplace (100-150 words each). The texts might consist of extracts from policy documents, hospital guidelines, manuals or internal communications, such as emails or memos. For each text, there is one three-option multiple-choice question.

Part C assesses your ability to identify detailed meaning and opinion in two texts on topics of interest to healthcare professionals (800 words each). For each text, you must answer eight four-option multiple choice questions. (<https://www.occupationalenglishtest.org/test-information/listening/>)

IV. IELTS Speaking paper

The Speaking test is a face-to-face interview between the candidate and an examiner. The Speaking test is recorded.

There are three parts to the test, and each part follows a specific pattern of tasks in order to test your speaking ability in different ways.

Marking

Certificated IELTS examiners assess your speaking performance throughout the test. There are four assessment criteria (things which the examiner thinks about when deciding what score to give you):

- Fluency and coherence
- Lexical resource
- Grammatical range and accuracy
- Pronunciation

Fluency and coherence assesses how well you can speak at a normal speed without too much hesitation. It also includes putting your sentences and ideas in a logical order and using cohesive devices (including linking words, pronouns and conjunctions, etc.) appropriately so that what you say is not difficult to follow.

Lexical resource assesses the range of vocabulary you use and how accurately and appropriately you use vocabulary to express meaning. It also includes the ability to express yourself using alternative vocabulary when you don't know a particular word.

Grammatical range and accuracy assesses the range of grammar you use and how accurately and appropriately you use it.

Pronunciation assesses your ability to speak in a way which can be understood without too much effort.

Part 1 – Introduction and interview

In this part, the examiner introduces him/herself and checks your identity. Then the examiner asks you general questions on some familiar topics, such as home, family, work, studies or interests.

Part 1 is 4–5 minutes long.

This part tests your ability to give opinions and information on everyday topics and common experiences or situations by answering a range of questions.

Part 2 – Long turn

Part 2 is the individual long turn. The examiner gives you a task card which asks you to talk about a particular topic. The card tells you what points you should include in your talk and instructs you to explain one aspect of the topic. You have one minute to prepare your talk, and the examiner will give you a pencil and paper to make notes.

By using the points on the task card and making notes during the preparation time, you should be able to think of appropriate things to say, and have time to structure your talk so that you keep talking for 2 minutes.

The examiner will then ask you to begin talking and will stop you when the time is up. They may then ask you one or two questions on the same topic.

Part 2 lasts 3–4 minutes, including the preparation time.

This part tests your ability to speak at length on a given topic, using appropriate language and organizing your ideas logically. You will need to think about your own experiences to complete the long turn.

Part 3 – Discussion

In Part 3, you and the examiner discuss issues related to the topic in Part 2 in a more general and abstract way and, where appropriate, in greater depth.

Part 3 lasts 4–5 minutes.

This part tests your ability to explain your opinions and to analyze, discuss and speculate about issues.

While OET exam consists of four sections, as well. But the contents considerably differ from IELTS.

Firstly there will be listening which takes about 50 minutes and consists of three parts.

Part A – consultation extracts (about 5 minutes each)

Part A assesses your ability to identify specific information during a consultation. You will listen to two recorded health professional-patient consultations and you will complete the health professional's notes using the information you hear.

Part B – short workplace extracts (about 1 minute each)

Part B assesses your ability to identify the detail, gist, opinion or purpose of short extracts from the healthcare workplace. You will listen to six recorded extracts (e.g. team briefings, handovers, or health professional-patient dialogues) and you will answer one multiple-choice question for each extract.

Part C – presentation extracts (about 5 minutes each)

Part C assesses your ability to follow a recorded presentation or interview on a range of accessible healthcare topics. You will listen to two different extracts and you will answer six multiple-choice questions for each extract. (www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams-and-tests/ielts/)

I. How is speaking assessed in OET?

The whole Speaking test is recorded and it is this audio recording that is assessed.

- The Speaking sub-test is marked independently by a minimum of two trained OET Assessors. Neither Assessor knows what scores the other has given you, or what scores you have achieved on any of the other sub-tests. Your test day interlocutor plays no role in the assessment of your performance.

- OET Assessors' judgments are targeted and specific, not a general evaluation of candidates' ability in spoken English.
- OET Assessors are trained to focus on how a candidate responds to the particular task on the day. They apply specific assessment criteria that reflect the demands of communication in the health professional workplace. Remember that OET is a test of English-language skills, not a test of professional knowledge.
- Candidates who are familiar with the assessment criteria and pay attention to the details of the specific role-play task have a better chance of demonstrating their ability in the key areas. Candidates who use memorized material or merely rely on techniques that worked in other circumstances tend not to perform to their full potential in the test.

Your performance on each of the two role-plays is scored against nine criteria and receives a band score for each criterion:

- Intelligibility (including pronunciation, intonation, stress, rhythm, and accent)
- Fluency (including rate and flow of speech)
- Appropriateness of Language (including use of language, register, and tone that are suitable for the situation and the patient)
- Resources of Grammar and Expression (including range and accuracy of language, ability to paraphrase when required, and capacity to maintain cohesion in longer utterances)
- Relationship-building (including initiating the interaction appropriately, demonstrating an attentive and respectful attitude, adopting a non-judgmental approach, and showing empathy for the patient's predicament)
- Understanding and incorporating the patient's perspective (including eliciting and exploring the patient's concerns, picking up cues from the patient about his/her needs, and relating explanations to the patient's concerns and needs)
- Providing structure (including sequencing the interaction purposefully and logically, using techniques for organizing explanations, and signposting changes in topic)
- Information-gathering (including appropriate use of open or closed questions, avoiding compound or leading questions, supporting the patient's narrative with active listening, clarifying statements that are vague or need amplification, and summarizing information to encourage correction or invite further information)
- Information-giving (including establishing what the patient already knows, giving information in appropriate-sized chunks, checking whether the patient has understood information, and discovering what further information the patient needs).

Another distinction which is noticeable between these two exams is the way that candidates need to prepare for them.

For OET test exam takers are required to learn a wide range of healthcare-related and profession-specific language in order to be able to follow, engage with and participate in a variety of clinical scenarios, as well as understand medical texts and talks. They need to know how to write a healthcare-related letter at an advanced level. Therefore, they are obliged to acquire a range of exam techniques, to be able to work quickly and effectively.

On the other hand, IELTS examinees are supposed to learn huge amounts of vocabulary on a wide range of academic subjects in order to be able to read academic texts quickly and effectively, understand lectures and discussions, talk about abstract questions and give opinions in detail. They need to know how to write reports on various data and a range of essay types. For written texts they are required to know complex structures and grammar and learning a set of key exam technique is a must.

The other differentiation which can be detected is the way they are recognized throughout the world.

IELTS is acceptable by universities in non-speaking countries where a course may be offered in English, and also companies and immigration authorities in many countries around the world.

While OET is a certificate which is recognized by healthcare authorities and Higher Education healthcare educators, including those in the UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Dubai, Ukraine and Namibia. There are over 115 test centers in 40 countries.

(<https://www.occupationalenglishtest.org/test-information/speaking/>)

IV. INTENT UPON IELTS & OET EXAMS

The purpose of the IELTS exam is to test the candidates' ability of handling English language who want to study or work in a country where English is the language of communication. IELTS result is also necessary for the immigration purposes. However OET is particularly planned to evaluate the English language skills of international healthcare professionals desiring to work in an English-speaking environment.

Since these exams are both international ones, there are some similarities which are as followings:

- 1) Both of them include four sub-tests: reading, listening, speaking and writing.
- 2) Both take place on one day.
- 3) There is a graded score rather than passing or failing, IELTS is marked out of 9, with a separate score for each paper, and for OET is graded from A to E, with an equivalent

numerical score to show more precisely where in the grade a candidate sits. Both exams are used to test English for healthcare professions tend to specify an advanced C1 level of language, which is around 7 in IELTS and a B in OET.

- 4) Both exams were improved in the late 1980s and are part-owned by Cambridge Assessment English.

Although there were the resemblances between the two, they are quite different in contents, versions, format, preparation requirements, and recognition.

IELTS tests Academic, which is the version used by healthcare students around the world, contains the ability to write essays, follow lectures, understand academic articles and discuss a wide range of topics, from the environment to education to social trends to cultural values. On the other hand OET tests healthcare English, consist of the ability to communicate effectively in medical scenarios, write a referral or discharge letter, understand a patient consultation, or follow a text taken from a medical journal.

Considering the versions, IELTS exam offers two versions, Academic as mentioned above and General. It is used to assess the more general language which is believed more appropriate for immigration or vocational purposes. Listening and speaking parts are alike in both forms but academic reading and writing skills are more modified for Higher Education than The general Training. (www.occupationalenglishtest) (www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams-and-tests/ielts/)

Academic version includes following parts:

V. Conclusion

It can be concluded that IELTS has a global foundation which thousands of teachers and writers are working for. In addition, it is dealing with universities, specialist training organizations, private language schools and providing published materials and online content to prepare learners to take the test all around the world. In comparison with IELTS, OET is a smaller global organization with the increasing number of specialist training providers and also a small but growing materials base. The organization is running some programs in order to extend their ability to prepare candidates for the specialist nature of OET.

REFERENCES

- [1] (www.occupationalenglishtest.org/why-choose-oet)
- [2] (www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams-and-tests/ielts/)
- [3] (www.british-study.com/blog/occupational-english-test-guide/)
- [4] (www.ielts.org/en-us/)
- [5] (<http://dialolanguage.com/oet-resources/>)

APPENDICES

TABLE I. COMPARISON OF SCORING IN IELTS & OET

IELTS	OET	OET numerical score
8 - 9	A	450 - 500
7 - 7.5	B	350 - 440
6.5	C+	300 - 340
5.5 - 6	C	200 - 290
4 - 5	D	100 - 190
4	E	0 - 90