PTE ACADEMIC™

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ACCURATE

Trustworthy
Universal Consistent
Compliant
Modern
Precise
Relevant
Cultural
Digital
Fair
Genuine
Revolutionary
Accurate
Authentic
Results
Valuable
Innovative
Secure
Objective
Reputation Equal
Convenient
Dynamic
Reliable
Realistic
International

Pearson

We believe fair tests should be *accurate*

The purpose of assessment is to precisely capture a test taker's true level of ability. We believe **PTE Academic** is the most accurate test of academic English in the world.

As the world's leading education company, we understand how important it is to have complete confidence in the qualifications you use as part of your admissions policies.

When it comes to English language testing, the key factor for most institutions is how accurate the test is, i.e. that it provides an accurate and precise measure of students' language ability.

PTE Academic was specifically developed to provide institutions with a more accurate measure of academic English.

What this means for you and your institution:

- The high level of accuracy of **PTE Academic** means you take fewer risks in the student selection process when it comes to ensuring students have the right level of English to study at your institution.

- The greater precision and accuracy of **PTE Academic** means you can trust the English ability of your students.

- Students who don't have the appropriate level of English may hinder the teaching process and may lower overall standards at your university. With **PTE Academic**, students are more likely to thrive in their studies with you.

We demonstrate the accuracy of **PTE Academic** in the following ways:

1 | Standard Error of Measurement (SEM)

According to Classical Test Theory[1], a test taker's 'observed score' – that is, the score reported as a result of a test – comprises their 'true score' and an 'error component'. Typically, the 'true score' remains unknown, which means the 'observed score' constitutes the sole record of a test taker's ability.

In order to obtain a clearer picture, it is important that the observed score is as close as possible to the true score – and to achieve this, a test needs to contain the smallest possible error component. The size of the error component is a function of the reliability of a test and is known in Classical Test Theory as the Standard Error of Measurement (SEM).

SEM is used to track proximity between observed and true scores. The range of scores in which the true score is expected to be found represents the confidence interval associated with an overall test score. Generally speaking, an interval of one or two SEM's around the observed score is used within the academic-testing world.

So, if a test taker obtains a score of 50 and the SEM is given as 2 points, then one SEM would give a score range of 50 plus or minus 2; that is, between 48 and 52. Statistically, there is a 68% certainty that the true score will lie within the observed score, plus or minus one SEM, and a 95% certainty within plus or minus two SEM's. Therefore, we could say that we are 68% certain that the test taker's true score was between 48 and 52, and 95% certain that it was between 46 and 54. The smaller the SEM, the more accurate the test.

PTE Academic[2], TOEFL iBT[3] and IELTS[4] each report the SEM of their tests. To compare these SEM's, we need to transfer all scores onto the same scale to make sure we are comparing like with like. Using the concordance tables in the **PTE Academic** Score Guide[2], TOEFL iBT and IELTS scores can be placed on the same scale as **PTE Academic**. The scale used is the Global Scale of English, which runs from 10 to 90.

In the table below, we use a 95% confidence level. This means that for **PTE Academic**, you can be 95% confident that the test taker's true score falls within the 10-point range shown in the table. For TOEFL iBT the range is 18 points, and for IELTS it is 22 points.

*Comparison tables: Confidence intervals for PTE Academic, TOEFL iBT and IELTS on a common scale (**Global** Scale of English)*

TEST	ERROR	EXAMPLE SCORE	ROUNDED FROM	MIN	MAX	95% INTERVAL	95% INTERVAL
PTE Academic	2.32	59	58.5-59.4	54	64	10 points	10 points
TOEFL iBT	5.64	87	86.5-87.4	75	99	23 points	
TOEFL on GSE		59		50	68		18 points
IELTS	0.23	6.5	6.25-6.74	5.8	7.2	1.4 band	
IELTS on GSE		59		50	72		22 points

	2xSEM	RANGE	SCORE OF 59
PSE			47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70
PTE Academic	10 points	54 - 64	PTE Academic
TOEFL iBT	18 points	50 - 68	TOEFL iBT
IELTS	22 points	48 - 70	IELTS

This demonstrates that **PTE Academic** has the smallest SEM and is therefore the most accurate test of academic English.

2 | Precision of scores

The three tests mentioned above each use a different reporting scale. **PTE Academic** and TOEFL iBT both use a numerical score scale, whereas IELTS uses bands. Because these bands are quite wide, the test providers decided to increase the precision of the IELTS test by introducing half bands – first for reading and listening, and since 2007 for speaking and writing also. Even so, the half bands do not attain the level of precision available from either TOEFL iBT or **PTE Academic**. Both Pearson[2] and ETS (TOEFL iBT)[5] have published studies comparing their scores with IELTS. Pearson shows that within a single IELTS half band there can be up to seven **PTE Academic** score points. For example, if an IELTS candidate gets an overall band of 6.5, this could be equivalent to a **PTE Academic** score of anywhere from 58 to 64.

Comparison table: Difference in score precision between IELTS and PTE Academic

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="2">More precise measurement:
Half an IELTS band corresponds
to as many as seven score
points on PTE Academic
eg. 6.5 = 58 – 64</td><td>IELTS Bands</td><td>PTE Academic Scores</td></tr>
<tr><td>7.5

7.0

6.5</td><td>70

65

60

55</td></tr>
</table>
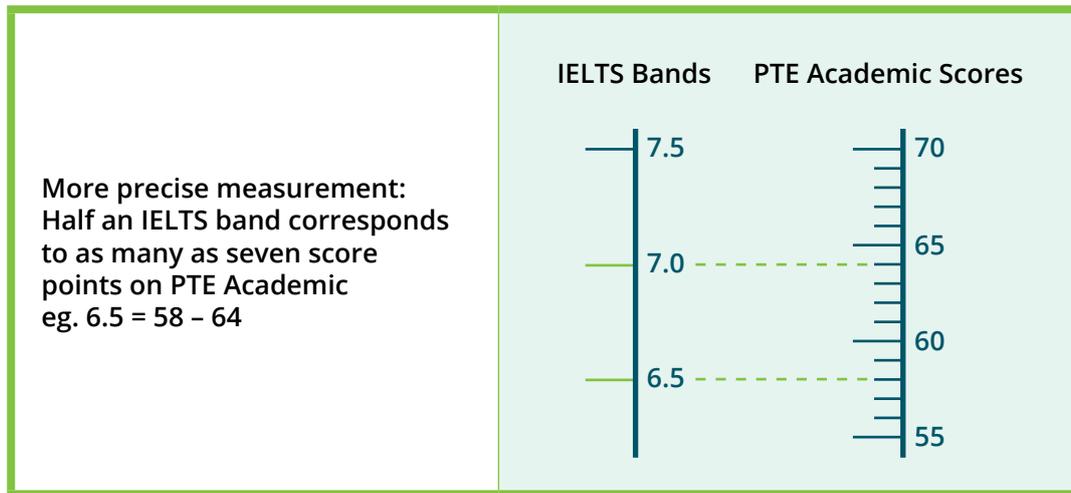
This demonstrates that compared to IELTS, **PTE Academic** provides a greater level of score precision.

References

[1]. *Novick, M.R. (1966)* The axioms and principal results of classical test theory
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[4]. *IELTS Partners (n.d.) IELTS - Researchers - Test performance 2011*
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[5]. *ETS (2010)* Linking TOEFL iBT scores to IELTS scores
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(retrieved 2012-06-29)

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TOEFL iBT is a registered trademark of Educational Testing Service (ETS).