



UK Visas & Immigration

Secure English Language Testing (SELT) Frequently asked questions

What is a SELT provider?

For certain visa applications applicants must demonstrate a certain level of English language ability. This can be through passing a test with a Home Office approved Secure English Language Testing (SELT) provider.

Which immigration routes require a SELT?

You will need to demonstrate you have met the required level in English if you are applying in one of the following routes:

- Tier 1 (Entrepreneur)
- Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur)
- Tier 2 (General)
- Tier 2 (Minister of Religion)
- Tier 2 (Sportsperson)
- Tier 4 (General)
- Representative of an overseas business
- Partner
- Parent
- Settlement
- Citizenship

What tests are accepted as SELT?

From 6th April 2015, customers can only take a SELT test with one of the following:

- Trinity College London (UK only);
- IELTS SELT Consortium (UK or overseas).

The approved Trinity College London tests are:

- Integrated Skills in English (ISE)
- Graded Examinations in Spoken English (GESE)

The IELTS SELT Consortium tests are:

- IELTS for UKVI
- Life Skills

Further information can be found in [Appendix O](#) or on the published [list of approved tests](#).

Which test should I take?

It is for you to decide which SELT test to take. These tests on the published list offered by Trinity College London and the IELTS SELT Consortium are acceptable for a number of immigration routes. You should take the level of test required for the immigration route you are applying for.

What is the difference between the tests?

There are two types of test as different immigration routes require different English language ability. The GESE and Life Skills tests will assess your speaking and listening abilities. The ISE and IELTS tests will test your reading, writing, speaking and listening abilities.

Should I sit a test that just assesses my speaking and listening abilities or the one that assesses all four abilities?

You will need to take the test required for the route you are applying under.

You will need to sit a test that assesses all four abilities if you are applying in one of the following routes:

- Tier 1 (Entrepreneur)
- Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur)
- Tier 2 (General)
- Tier 2 (Minister of Religion)
- Tier 4 (General)

You will need to sit a test that assesses just your speaking and listening abilities if you are applying in one of the following routes:

- Tier 2 (Sportsperson)
- Representative of an overseas business
- Partner
- Parent
- Settlement
- Citizenship

Which test should settlement or nationality candidates take?

Applicants should sit a SELT test that assesses their speaking and listening abilities. They do not need to evidence their reading and writing abilities.

They can sit either the Trinity College London or IELTS SELT Consortium test at level B1.

Which test should customers making initial applications as partners or parents take?

Applicants should take a SELT test that assesses their speaking and listening abilities. They do not need to evidence their reading and writing abilities.

They can sit either the Trinity College London or IELTS SELT Consortium test at level A1 or higher.

What about customers applying to extend their leave as partners or parents?

As announced in January 2016, a new English language requirement at level A2 is being introduced for non-EEA partners and parents.

This affects those applying to extend their stay after 2.5 years in the UK on a 5-year route to settlement under Appendix FM (Family Member) of the Immigration Rules. The new requirement will apply to partners and parents whose current leave under the family Immigration Rules is due to expire on or after 1st May 2017.

What is the process for taking a SELT?

You can only take a SELT test offered by either:

- Trinity College London (UK only); or,
- IELTS SELT Consortium (UK or overseas).

You will need to book your test using the relevant online booking system. The details used to book your test must be as stated on your passport or other the identity document.

On the day of the test you will need to take the document you used when booking the test. The test centre will check this and record your identity. If you cannot pass the identity checks you will not be able to take a test that day.

If you pass the test you will be provided with a unique reference number which you must use in your UK immigration application.

Where are the exam dates published?

Each provider has their own website where the exam dates are published:

Trinity College London
www.trinitycollege.com/SELT

IELTS SELT Consortium
http://www.ielts.org/test_takers_information/findtest_ukvi.aspx

What is the unique reference number?

From 6 April 2015 all candidates who pass a SELT test will be issued with a unique reference number. This number will be used to identify the candidate and to verify their results.

What if I don't have a unique reference number?

If you are not issued with a unique reference number the caseworker dealing with your application will be unable to verify the results. This may result in your application being refused.

Will you accept English language tests that are not on the SELT list?

No. Any tests taken from 6 April 2015 must be on the approved SELT list.

Will you accept English language tests that are on the approved list, but not taken at an approved test centre?

No. Any tests taken from 6 April 2015 must be at an approved test centre. The list of approved test centres is available on our [website](#).

Will you accept all tests from an approved provider?

No. Any tests taken from 6 April 2015 must be on the approved SELT list. You can take IELTS or Trinity tests for many reasons at different centres but only those IELTS and Trinity tests specified for immigration use and taken at an approved centre can be used as part of an application for immigration purposes.

You should take care when booking your test to ensure that the test that you book is the one approved for SELT:

- for IELTS, ensure that you choose 'IELTS for UKVI' rather than 'IELTS';
- for Trinity, ensure that you choose 'Secure English Language Tests for UKVI'.

What checks will the centre do?

On the day of your test, you will need to provide evidence of your identity at the test centre before you will be allowed to take the test. The only acceptable forms of identification for UK centres are:

- a valid passport or travel document;
- a valid EU Identity Card;
- a valid Biometric Residence Permit.

The documents must be originals and include a photograph. Where the document contains a signature, this will also be verified on the date of the test.

Where you are unable to prove your identity you will not be allowed to take the test.

What if my passport is held by the Home Office and I don't have a valid Biometric Residence Permit or EU Identity Card?

You should contact the Home Office to request the return of your passport. If you have, or you are given, a photocopy of your passport the test centre will not allow you to sit the test.

What should I do if I do not have a valid passport, travel document, Biometric Residence Permit or EU Identity Card?

If you do not have one of these documents you should contact the Home Office for advice.

Can driving licences be used as proof of identify?

No. Only the documents listed above can be accepted.

I sat a test in the UK; can I use it if I apply outside the UK?

Yes. Tests sat in the UK can be accepted in applications made in the UK and overseas. Similarly, tests sat overseas can be accepted in applications made in the UK.

What are pop-up centres?

Pop-up centres are temporary test centres that are used on a periodic basis where there is no permanent test centre due to a low number of candidates wishing to book exams.

We have introduced these centres to make sure customers continue to have easy access to a test centre wherever they are.

The list of pop-up centres is available on our [website](#).

There is no test centre in the country where I live. What can I do?

We work with our providers to ensure as many people as possible have access to a SELT test centre but we know there are no test centres or pop up centres in certain countries.

If there is not a SELT test centre in the country where you live, you will have to travel to another country to take a SELT exam.

What if I can't book a test at the location or date of my preferred choice?

If there is no availability of tests in your chosen area you should check the availability at the nearest test centre.

If you are unable to book a test on the day of your choice or at the centre of your choice you should check with other test centres that may have availability. You should always be able to take a test within 28 days of booking but it may not always be at your chosen location.

I hear that some countries have high demand in test bookings is this true?

We have planned the provision of test centres to give adequate global and UK coverage to meet anticipated customer demand. There are some countries where demand for test booking will be high at certain times during the year. However, you should be able to book a test at a permanent test centre within a 28 day period.

I have a disability. Am I exempt from the English language requirement?

There are no exemptions for applicants applying under Tier 1, Tier 2 or Tier 4. If you require support, for example because you have hearing difficulties, you should contact the test provider.

You may be exempt from the requirement if you have a disability and are applying under the family route. Further information is available on our [website](#).

I intend to study in the UK do I need to pass a SELT?

If you intend to study a course at degree level or above at a Higher Education Institution (HEI), the HEI can use its own methods to assess your English language ability. It is not necessary for you to pass a SELT test. However, the HEI may ask that you do.

If you intend to study a course below degree level, you must have taken and passed a SELT test to meet the English language requirements. This applies to all education institutions.

There are also exceptions to the English language requirement. Sponsors do not have to confirm English language ability for:

- Tier 4 (Child) students;
- applicants who have successfully completed a course as a Tier 4 (Child) student which was at least six months in length and ended within the past two years;
- applicants from 'majority English-speaking' countries; and
- applicants who have previously completed an academic qualification equivalent to a UK degree which was taught in a 'majority English-speaking' country.

Where can I get further information?

Information on Secure English Language Testing for immigration purposes is on our [website](#).