

Academic IELTS: its limitations and misuse

1. Content

- What is academic IELTS? What does a band 6 IELTS mean?
- Is IELTS a good predictor of academic success?
- Is IELTS adequate preparation for students' academic (writing) programmes?

2. IELTS worldwide

- over 2,000,000 people take the test annually
- growing at 11-12% a year
- over 8,000 educational institutions, employers, professional associations and governments (including 800 colleges in the USA)
- in 135 countries
- move towards internet-based testing
- sliding scale of fees

3. What does IELTS writing include?

IELTS Writing Task 1

- a task based on graphic or pictorial information
- a descriptive report of at least 150 words on the information provided.

IELTS Writing Task 2

- a written argument on a given topic
- clear organisation of your answer and examples to support your points.
- at least 250 words

4. GUtech foundation programme

- two semesters
- 10 hours per week of academic English (+20 hrs English-medium study)
- semester 1 – general academic English
- semester 2 – increasing focus on IELTS
- target: 4.5 (entry foundation) to 6.0 IELTS (graduate to BSc studies)

5. Types of writing required by ... (length of task)

IELTS	GUtech BSc programmes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • data description (150 words) • essay writing (250 words) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • report writing (800 words +) • project/assignment writing (1500 words +) • examination answers (variable – often short paragraphs) • research papers/thesis writing (5,000 words +/15,000 words +)

6. What writing does IELTS focus on?

- (1) data description + (opinion) essay writing
- (2) basic writing skills:
 - task completion
 - syntax and grammar
 - range/use of vocabulary
 - coherence and cohesion
 - organisation and paragraphing

7. Writing skills

Report writing	Project/assignment writing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • types of report • structuring a report • table of contents/list of figures • introductions • methods • results/data description • analysis • conclusions/recommendations • referencing/citations/quotes • report writing style 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • project/assignment structure • research • evaluation of sources • summarising/paraphrasing • references/citations/quotes • researching/writing in teams • contents/figures • drafting • long texts
Examinations	Thesis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understanding exam questions • reading instructions • keeping to time limits • definitions (extended) • exemplification • explanation • keeping to the topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • time management • reading around the subject • working with a supervisor • drafting • thesis structure • literature review • summarising/paraphrasing • references/citations/quotes

