

The Test of English for Educational Purposes



Candidate Handbook

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1. The Test of English for Educational Purposes (TEEP)

The TEEP is a test of proficiency in English for Academic Purposes (EAP). It is designed to show whether a student has a level of English high enough for degree level study in UK higher education and will inform admissions offices of the acceptability of an applicant's English language proficiency. As TEEP is designed for this specific purpose, it is assumed that candidates will be at the very least 'intermediate' level. Students of Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) levels A1 or A2 in English are likely to find TEEP too difficult to meaningfully attempt.

English language acceptance levels onto degree programmes will depend on the institution, the course and sometimes the individual circumstance. It is therefore important that the TEEP candidate checks what TEEP level is required before sitting the test.

TEEP is held at the International Study and Language Institute (ISLI) at the University of Reading and is used most widely by students who want to begin full-time study at the University of Reading. However, any student whose first language is not English and who needs evidence of their competence in English for entry to UK higher education can take the test.



2. Test structure

TEEP tests English language proficiency in reading academic texts, listening to lectures, writing on an academic topic, speaking alone on an academic topic and discussing a topic with another student. Each TEEP test contains a test of language knowledge, followed by Reading, Listening and Writing parts, all on the same given topic. The Speaking part is given as a separate test, usually in the afternoon following the main test in the morning. The speaking topic is a different given topic to that of the other parts.

The following is a full breakdown of the six parts of TEEP:

PART 1: Language Knowledge 25 minutes.

50 questions in a multiple-choice format. 'Language Knowledge' tests mainly grammar, but also other areas such as vocabulary, syntax and linking words.

PART 2: Focus Task (this part is not assessed) 10 minutes.

This is a chance to see the essay title for the final part of the test in order to begin brainstorming and planning. The same topic links parts 3-5 of the test.

PART 3: Reading 35 minutes.

One passage of approximately 1,000-1,100 words, written in academic style. There is a series of questions that test both general and detailed understanding of the text. Short answers are required, but candidates are not marked down for spelling or grammar errors. The reading passage is in the separate Source Booklet that accompanies the main Task Booklet.

PART 4: Listening Approximately 30 minutes.

One recording, usually a lecture extract, which lasts about 13 minutes and will be heard only once. There is extra time allowed for reading questions and writing up answers. Again, short answers are required, but candidates are not marked down for spelling or grammar errors.

PART 5: Writing 1 hour.

An essay on the topic given in part 2, and related to parts 3 and 4. Candidates are expected to use their own ideas as well as ideas retrieved from the reading and listening sections and write in formal, academic style.

Parts 1-5 last approximately 3 hours in total, with no breaks. Dictionaries (paper or electronic) are not allowed.

PART 6: Speaking 25 minutes.

Carried out with TWO candidates, an interlocutor (person who talks to candidates and grades them), and an examiner (observer who grades candidates in detail). Tasks are based around a topic, on which each candidate plans and then gives a short talk. The topic is then discussed in further detail by the two candidates, using a given situation. Candidates describe the topic, and have a chance to express their opinion.

3. Marking and grading systems

3.1. TEEP Invigilation and Marking standards

- At all stages, the TEEP test is kept secure.
- Strict and detailed invigilation instructions are always followed, which are designed to not only keep the test secure but also to alleviate examination stress.
- While the Language Knowledge section is clerically marked, other sections of TEEP are double-marked by trained and standardised markers. This process ensures accuracy and fairness in grading.
- Results are usually available within 10 days of the test administration, by email.
- A certificate is provided, which features security measures such as an original signature and an embossed stamp.

3.2. How TEEP Reading and Listening are marked

Each administration sees groups of examiners studying the version of TEEP and the key supplied. The examiners are academic EAP staff. As the answers are mainly for open short-answer questions, there may be two or three alternative answers given for a question, so time is spent ensuring that all markers understand the reasons for accepting some answers and not others. Before and during marking there may be some extra alternative allowable answers added, though this must be agreed by the principle examiner and communicated immediately to all examiners. Candidates are not marked down for spelling or grammar errors unless they cannot communicate the correct answer successfully.

All papers are then checked by a second examiner to ensure no mistakes have been made.

Raw scores are converted to the 0-9 scale using unique conversion charts for each TEEP test.

3.3. How TEEP Writing is marked

TEEP tests the ability to write an essay with relevant and meaningful content, which is clearly organised, and with a level of grammar and vocabulary that shows candidates will be able to cope with an academic course.

The examiners refer to a chart which categorises writing skills into *Content, Organisation & Argument, Grammar & Vocabulary*, as well as *Overall Impression*.

Below is a list of the points examiners are looking for, and therefore candidates need to consider when completing the TEEP Writing task:

Content:	Argument & Organisation:	Grammar & Vocabulary:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>have you understood the question? is your answer relevant to the question?</i> • <i>have you answered the question, exploring all necessary aspects?</i> • <i>have you discussed the topic in depth?</i> • <i>have you used your own information and ideas?</i> • <i>have you used information and ideas from Reading and Listening sources?</i> • <i>have you expressed information and ideas from sources in your own words, using correct referencing?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>is your essay simple to read? is there a clear argument, which the reader can follow?</i> • <i>does your essay have a well-developed introduction giving the main idea or argument?</i> • <i>does your essay follow an appropriate paragraph structure?</i> • <i>have you shown that you can plan and organise an essay?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>have you used a good range of vocabulary to express everything you want to say?</i> • <i>have you used a good range of sentence structures to express everything you want to say?</i> • <i>how appropriate is your choice of words?</i> • <i>have you used an appropriate level of formality?</i> • <i>how grammatically correct are your sentences?</i> • <i>how correct is your spelling and punctuation?</i>

The above categories are expressed on the TEEP scale of 0 to 9. The fourth category, *Overall Impression*, is an assessment of how candidates will cope on a full-time degree course at a UK university, also expressed on the TEEP scale of 0 to 9, and it is this Writing grade which is published.

Overall Impression is guided by the grades given in the other three categories, but when markers also consider how well prepared candidates are to cope with the writing demands of a UK university course. An extract from the Writing Markers' chart should clarify this:

grade	Overall Impression
7.5	<u>Will</u> cope with academic course
6.5	<u>Should</u> cope with academic course
5.5	Support on academic course <u>essential</u>
4.5	<u>Will not</u> cope with academic course

(emphasis added)

Essays are double-marked. That is, two markers will separately check each essay. If there is a large disagreement in the two *Overall Impression* grades given, the script will be remarked by a third examiner.

3.4. How TEEP Speaking is marked

Candidates are graded on:

- A Skills in explaining ideas and information (grading of the monologue)
- B Interaction skills (grading of the dialogue)
- C Spoken fluency
- D Accuracy and range of grammar and vocabulary
- E Pronunciation / intelligibility

A and B are based on performance during the two separate stages of the test, and are 'global' grades, in other words they consider how well communication is achieved overall. Both the interlocutor and examiner (observer) grade A and B.

C, D and E are analytical scales based on the whole test performance. Only the examiner (observer) grades C, D and E.

All Speaking tests are recorded and moderated when there is significant disagreement between the examiner and interlocutor.

3.5. How TEEP Language Knowledge is marked

The Language Knowledge part is all multiple-choice, and therefore marked automatically. Raw scores out of 50 are converted using standards established for each individual version of the test.

The Language Knowledge result is expressed as *average*, *below average* or *above average*, and is used to settle on an Overall grade in borderline cases. '*Above average*' means above the expected score for students at the Overall level 6.5 or 7.0. This has been calculated statistically using data over many years.

3.6. Reporting Overall Results

Grades are expressed on a scale 0-9, including half-bands (.5s). Profile grades for Reading, Listening and Writing are given, as well as the Overall grade.

As a general guide, the band system works as follows:

0	no ability in English
Between 1 and 4	some ability in English, but not enough for higher education in the UK
Between 5 and 6	enough ability in English for some less linguistically-demanding courses, or courses which include further English study (for example Foundation courses)*
6.5 or 7.0	the recommended acceptable level for admission on higher education courses in the UK*

7.5 and above

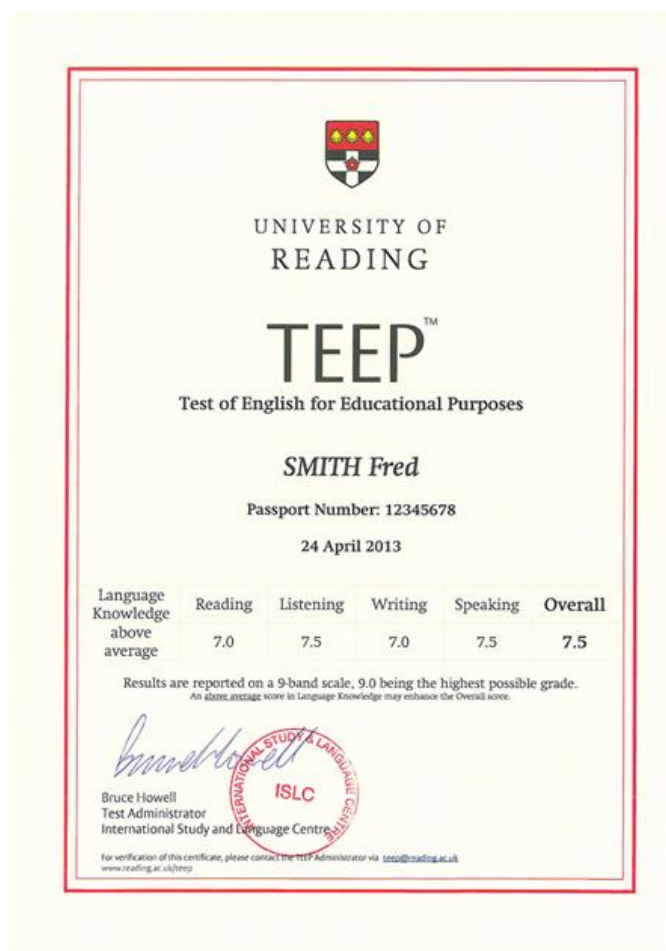
acceptable for admission on higher education courses in the UK*

* Please note that the exact requirements will depend on the institution, the course and various other factors. Documentation for individual cases must be checked. At the University of Reading, the majority of courses require a 6.5 or a 7.0 Overall score.

When the average of the four skills grades (Reading, Listening, Writing, Speaking) fall between two half-bands, i.e. *something.25* or *something.75*, the number will be rounded DOWN to the nearest half-band to form the Overall grade. However, if the Language Knowledge is *above average*, the number will be rounded UP to the nearest half-band to form the Overall grade.

Results are sent directly to the candidate and to the relevant Admissions Department or Faculty (as applicable) as soon as is possible. This is within a week of the test date. A certificate is produced at no extra cost, though a charge is applicable for extra copies.

An example of the reported results is shown below.



4. Preparing for TEEP

ISLI Pre-sessional students will get plenty of preparation for TEEP by attending the University of Reading's Pre-sessional English programme.

Because each TEEP uses a different topic, there is no TEEP topic syllabus. Preparation for TEEP should be done in the context of developing English language and study skills relevant for university study. There are course books available for institutions to buy and use for teaching but at present there are no self-study books available specifically for TEEP. However, there are many ways that English language and study skills relevant for university study can be learnt:

- a pre-sessional course at any UK university
- any other EAP course
- self-study resources for EAP (books and websites)



Having said this, it is vital that candidates become **familiar** with the TEEP format. The best way to do this is to use the sample papers and sound files available on the website: www.reading.ac.uk/TEEP.



ISLI staff believe that the skills and knowledge needed for TEEP are best developed with general practice of the aspects listed below, rather than 'exam practice'.

4.1. PART ONE Language Knowledge tests such areas of vocabulary and grammar as:

- *agreement* – e.g. subject and verb: the **teachers** in the school **are**.. / the **teacher** in the schools **is**...
- *clausal construction* – e.g. relative clauses or indirect speech
- *determiners* – e.g. use of articles
- *tense/aspect* – e.g. contrasts of past simple, past perfect, past perfect continuous
- *logical connectives* – e.g. usage of 'therefore', 'although', 'in spite of', etc
- *prepositional usage* – e.g. verbs with and without prepositions: **go** vs. **go to**

4.2. PART THREE Reading tests:

- skills of finding information in a text (general, specific and implied information)
- understanding of academic English writing structures – not only at sentence level but also at paragraph level
- finding meanings of unknown vocabulary without using a dictionary
- understanding meaning referred to by reference words (such as 'it', 'these systems', 'their' and 'such people') in specific contexts

4.3. PART FOUR Listening tests:

- skills of retrieving both general and specific information, including implied information
- understanding of speakers' attitudes
- taking notes
- understanding of spoken English structures

4.4. PART FIVE Writing (also PART TWO Focus Task) tests:

- ability to use information obtained through listening and reading as well as personal knowledge or experience to plan and organise an essay
- ability to write an essay which expresses ideas in a critical (i.e. academic) style
- ability to produce text which is well structured so that it is easy to read
- grammar and vocabulary

4.5. PART SIX Speaking tests:

- ability to summarise the main points of an issue in sustained speaking for 2-3 minutes
- ability to engage with another speaker, by initiating topics, building on what the other speaker says, and clarifying
- ability to speak with some fluency, without too much hesitation or communication breaking down
- ability to use a range of grammar and vocabulary in speaking
- ability to pronounce the sounds and patterns of English successfully

There are a large number of self-study grammar (and vocabulary) books publicly available to practise the type of question found in the Language Knowledge Section. There are also many courses and self-study books widely available on the market which refer to for Academic Reading, Listening, Writing and Speaking skills. Pre-sessional courses offered at ISLI (University of Reading) cover all of the above skills and more.

5. UK universities recognising TEEP / UK Visas

Although the main function of TEEP is admission to the University of Reading, it can be used for admissions purposes to other universities. Candidates should check that TEEP is a suitable option in their individual case before applying for the test. If applying to universities other than Reading, the safest and most efficient way to check is to contact the institution's admission department directly to check the latest information.

Information for visas to study in the UK must be checked before applying for language tests such as TEEP, as there are often changes in Tier 4 visa rules. Please refer to the official UKVI website for more information: <https://www.gov.uk/student-visa/knowledge-of-english>.

6. Application and contact details

All current test dates, fees and application procedures can be found at the website www.reading.ac.uk/TEEP.

Contact details:

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