

English as an Additional Language at CCSS

Updated January 2018

1. Introduction

All international students whose first language is not English are expected to participate in an EAL course unless they can show a high level of proficiency in English and provide proof of a suitable recognised qualification. The aim of the EAL course is to develop students' ability in English so that they can:

- (i) gain an English qualification (usually IELTS) which is recognised by UK universities
- (ii) study their GCSE and A2 subjects effectively, without being held back by their level of English
- (iii) live, study and socialise in Cambridge

All EAL courses:

- (i) begin by focussing on raising general English skills and independent study skills
- (ii) cover some of the vocabulary needed in other subjects.
- (iii) prepare students for the IELTS exam gradually, with more IELTS-based content being covered as the exam approaches.

2. Exams

- L6th, U6th and 1yr students take IELTS at the beginning of May in the first year with the aim of achieving a score of 6.0 or above in all 4 components and an overall score of 6.5. A level of English equal to IELTS 6.5 not only gains students access to all British universities at degree level but, more importantly, gives students the opportunities to study, socialise and thrive in an English-speaking, academic environment. If students do not achieve a minimum score of 6.5 but achieve a minimum of 6.0, they may re-take the exam in mid-June.
- GCSE students
 - In the 2017- 2018 academic year, take IELTS at the beginning of May, aiming for a minimum score of 6.0.
- Pre-Programme students take IELTS in mid-June. They aim for a minimum score of 5.5.
- Students may not enter themselves for the IELTS exam at other times unless there is a very good reason and they have asked the Deputy Principal.

3. Outlines of EAL programmes

Pre-Programme Course

Students on this course receive (on average) 21 hours of ESL tuition per week. Class teaching prepares them by dealing with a variety of topics. Students are also given systematic grammatical and vocabulary support so that they can communicate effectively both orally and on paper. The spring and summer term focuses on revision and practice for the IELTS examination as the students take their examination in June.

GCSE, Lower Sixth and One Year

Class teaching involves 2.5 hours of group time and includes grammar, vocabulary and practice in the four basic language skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing. The spring term focuses on intensive revision and practice for the IELTS examination as most students take their examination in May. At CCSS, the majority of students aim to achieve an overall IELTS score of 6.5 in order to satisfy the requirements of most UK universities

(minimum 6.0 in all four skill areas). Many universities are interested in the individual component scores for the test consequently it is important to reach a high standard in all aspects.

Upper Sixth

Students who have not achieved a score of 6.0 in each component of their IELTS are expected to retake the examination, usually in the summer of their Upper Sixth Year (although this will depend on their University offers). In the Upper Sixth, students will generally receive 2.5 group hours. As with the GCSE, Lower Sixth and One Year, the course covers all four skill areas, with a focus on grammar and vocabulary. The overall aim is to help students gain confidence in all the language areas, and to raise their level of English to a standard which will not only satisfy university requirements, as measured by IELTS, but will also meet the academic and social demands of university life.