

## Heriot-Watt University – English Language entry requirements

Regulation 2, paragraph 6.4 states that applicants to degree programmes “whose native language is not English may be required to show by examination or by means of documentary or other evidence that he or she possesses sufficient competence in the use of the English language to enable him or her to carry out the work of the proposed course of study and profit by the instruction provided”.

Applicants whose native language is not English and who have not been educated previously in the English language must provide evidence of their English language ability to ensure that they can cope with the demands of a Heriot-Watt programme taught and assessed in English.

The standard requirement for entry to degree level study is a minimum of IELTS 6.0 or equivalent for Undergraduate study and IELTS 6.5 or equivalent for Postgraduate study. There are minor exceptions to this level, which have been set and agreed according to the linguistic demands of the intended programme of study. Any exceptions to this standard requirement must be laid out in the programme documentation and approved by the relevant Studies Committee.

Programme type	Minimum English requirement	Exceptions
Foundation Pathway (Edinburgh) Degree Entry Programme (Dubai) Foundation Programme (Malaysia)	IELTS 5.5 (or equivalent) No component lower than 4.5	
Undergraduate Programmes	IELTS 6.0 (or equivalent) No component lower than 5.5	Actuarial Science – IELTS 6.5 Languages (Int & trans) IELTS 7.5
Postgraduate programmes	IELTS 6.5 (or equivalent) No component lower than 6.0	Languages (Int & trans) – IELTS 7.5

### Acceptable English Language Tests

#### UKVI Tier 4 student requirements

Students wishing to enter the UK on a Tier 4 Student visa can evidence their English Language ability through a SELT (Secure English Language Test). From April 2015, the only SELT available outside the UK is an IELTS test UKVI version taken at a UKVI approved test centre. In the UK, Trinity ISE is also a UKVI approved SELT.

However, as a HEI, **we can also make our own assessment** of a student’s English ability for entry to **degree programmes** (UG, PGT, PGR), so acceptable/preferred alternatives to IELTS and the equivalent scores accepted are given in the table below:

*CEFR	**HWU ENGLISH	IELTS	PEARSON PTE	TRINITY ISE	CAMBRIDGE (NEW)	CAMBRIDGE (OLD)	TOEFL ibt	
C1	B- - A	7.0	65-72	ISE III Reading: pass, Listening: pass, Speaking: pass, Writing: pass	185 – 190	CAE (grade C)	100+	
B2	C+	47 – 60%	6.5	58-64	ISE II Reading: pass, Listening: pass, Speaking: pass, Writing: pass	176 - 184	CAE (grade C) FCE (grade A)	90-99
	C-		6.0	50-57		169 - 175	FCE (grade B)	79-89
	***D+		5.5	42-49		162 - 168	FCE (grade C)	69-78
B1	-	5.0	35 - 41	ISE I Reading: pass, Listening: pass, Speaking: pass, Writing: pass	154 – 161	-		
	-	4.5	30 - 34		147 - 153	-		

*\*CEFR is the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages – For a Tier 4 student visa, students must be at the B2 level for University entry – at the lowest level, this is IELTS 5.5 overall with no individual test component lower than 5.5. Alternatively we can make our own assessment from other acceptable qualifications or evidence of previous study in English.*

*\*\*HWU English refers to grades awarded to students on completion of the HWU pre-sessional programmes*

*\*\*\* While a D+ would be in the CEFRB2 band, it is the lower end and equivalent to IELTS 5.5 and so does NOT meet the HWU entry requirements. Students with a D in HWU English Language report should not be admitted to our programmes.*

**Other acceptable alternatives for Tier 4 students:**

- Students from majority English speaking countries
- Students who have studied in majority English speaking countries
- Postgraduate students who provide evidence that previous degree studies have been conducted with English as the medium of instruction can also be accepted.
- Undergraduate students who have taken A'Levels or International Baccalaureate (IB) qualifications.
- International students who have studied in the UK at private pathway providers/university foundation programmes or language schools are not required to provide a SELT as long as the report from their previous institution gives clear indication of the student's level and how this equates to IELTS or CEFR.

Further specific guidance on what can/cannot be accepted as an alternative to a SELT is provided on the Tier 4 Compliance section of the HWU internal sharepoint:

<https://intranet.hw.ac.uk/ps/gls/ukba/Pages/English-Language-Guidance.aspx>

In **ALL** cases, English language qualifications and/or alternative evidence that applicants provide must be **no more than 2 years old**.

**Foundation Pathway (UK) and Pre-sessional English students:**

Tier 4 Students (UK bound) on these programmes **MUST** provide evidence of their level with a SELT, this means an IELTS test (UKVI version) score from a UKVI approved centre, or, if in the UK, a Trinity ISE II. We are not permitted to make our own assessment of the student's level for these programmes.

**EU students/Students not in need of a Tier 4 student visa**

While Tier 4 compliance is not required for EU students or non-tier 4 students, compliance with the HWU entry requirements, as outlined above, is still required and staff making decisions on admissions of EU or non-tier 4 students must be able to support these decisions with appropriate evidence. We can accept a wider range of qualifications from these students provided they have been achieved within the previous 2 years.

Guidance for Schools Admissions Staff is prepared and circulated by the Tier 4 Compliance Officer and admissions manager.