

Grading Speaking module performances

The Speaking module of the exam takes the following format:

Part	Nature of interaction	Timing
Part 1 Introduction and interview	The examiner introduces himself/herself, and confirms the candidate's identity. The examiner then interviews the candidate on familiar topics such as the candidate's occupation, interests, aspirations and daily life.	4 to 5 minutes
Part 2 Individual long turn	The candidate receives a written stimulus, and is given one minute to prepare to speak for one to two minutes on the topic. The examiner then asks one or two follow-up questions.	3 to 4 minutes
Part 3 Two-way discussion	The examiner invites the candidate to discuss more abstract themes based on the Part 2 topic.	4 to 5 minutes

As with the Writing module, teachers who are not IELTS examiners will generally have to estimate the attainment level of their students' speaking performances based on the nine IELTS bands listed above.

Candidates' performances are assessed according to the following criteria:

Fluency and Coherence

The rate of speech. The linking of ideas to form coherent, connected speech. The logical sequencing of sentences, and the use of cohesive devices such as connectors and conjunctions.

Lexical Resource

The candidate's range of vocabulary, and the precision with which meanings and attitudes are expressed. The variety, adequacy and appropriacy of the words used. The ability to compensate for a vocabulary gap by using other words.

Grammatical Range and Accuracy

The range, accuracy and appropriacy of the candidate's grammatical usage. The length and complexity of sentences, and the range of grammatical structures employed. Especially important is the ability to achieve information focus through the use of grammatical structures.

Pronunciation

The amount of effort required by the listener, and the level of L1 interference.

IELTS candidates typically need to employ the following strategies in the Speaking module:

- Providing personal and non-personal information
- Expressing preferences
- Expressing and justifying opinions
- Comparing, contrasting and analyzing
- Narrating, paraphrasing and summarizing
- Explaining
- Suggesting
- Speculating
- Conversation repair

With the exception of the banding chart, the outline above is the author's interpretation of IELTS criteria, and is not definitive, complete or a quotation of official IELTS documents. Candidates and their teachers are advised to obtain the current IELTS handbook and other materials, available from Cambridge ESOL, 1 Hills Road, Cambridge CB1 2EU, United Kingdom. Tel. +44 1223 553355, Fax +44 1223 460278, email: ESOLhelpdesk@ucles.org.uk. A wide range of information and resources are available from the IELTS website: www.ielts.org