

Ielts and Toefl in the USA and Canada

Ielts and Toefl preparation courses are a popular option with international students wanting to go on to higher education in North America or other English speaking destinations. **BETHAN NORRIS** finds out the latest trends.

Many language schools offer Toefl preparation courses, either as a full course or as an elective as part of a general language course. Demand for higher education programmes in the USA and Canada, where a Toefl score is often required as a part of the enrolment process, means that preparation courses are a popular choice.

Michelle Falzon from EC San Diego in the USA says that they have recently started offering a dedicated Toefl preparation programme due to increasing demand from students and agents. "We introduced the Toefl intensive crash course programme in January. In the past, Toefl was offered as an afternoon elective that students could book once they were in school."

Meanwhile, Kevin Lowther from Centre Linguista in Toronto, ONT in Canada says that Toefl exam preparation courses have always been offered at the school since it opened in 1997. "We have these courses as there are always students who wish to study for these exams," he says.

Changes to the format of this academic language test in recent years mean that preparation courses have had to evolve to stay relevant to students. Keira Bulloch, Director of Heartland International English School in Winnipeg, MB, Canada, says, "With the advent of [the computer-based] Toefl iBT in 2006, our programme has placed a greater emphasis on communicative-based teaching, which is consistent with the greater emphasis the current version of the test places on speaking, both independent of and integrated with other skills." Students at the school can also practise the test in the computer lab.

The introduction of the online test has meant that schools can be a lot more inventive with their course structure while ensuring that students are well prepared to sit the test. Tonya Craft from the American Language Center at UCLA Extension in Los Angeles, CA, USA, says, "[Our] Toefl preparation course has been developed into an online class format, which makes it convenient for anyone to take, regardless of their location."

Less common in North America are Ielts preparation courses, although this is rapidly changing. Certain language schools are tapping into this market as the exam becomes increasingly recognised. Sonia Fantauzzi from ILSC, which has schools in Vancouver, Toronto and Montréal, says, "We decided to offer the Ielts course as the Ielts test is internationally recognised. In Canada, Ielts is the one test used for immigration purposes and is required for overseas professionals to practise in Canada."

John Taplin of Global Village (GV) Calgary, notes that three GV schools are now Ielts test centres, while GV Victoria is as an off-site test centre for a local university. "We became an Ielts test centre in 2005 because we see it as a highly reputable test which is on the rise around the world," he says. "Ielts is rigorously administered and candidate-friendly... and complements GV's emphasis on courses that prepare students for the real world."



PHOTOGRAPH: TREWIN CHOW

Location	Name of school	Courses offered		No. of start dates	Min age of students	Min lang proficiency	Accommodation
		Ielts	Toefl				
CANADA							
Calgary, AB	University of Calgary ELP	✓	✓	-	-	i	h,r
Edmonton, AB	Grant MacEwan College	✓	✓	3	17	a	h,r
Edmonton, AB	University of Alberta ELP	✓	✓	-	17	b	f,h,r
Montréal, QB	Point 3 Language School	✓	✓	4	17	i	h,r,o
Toronto, ON	Centre Linguista Canada	✓	✓	yr	17	e	h,r
Toronto, ON	English School of Canada	✓	✓	-	-	i	h,r
Toronto, ON	Hansa Language Centre	✓	✓	yr	16	i	h
Toronto, ON	ILAC	✓	✓	-	-	i	h,r
Vancouver, BC	Bodwell Language School	✓	✓	yr	16	i	h
Vancouver, BC	King George International Business College	✓	✓	13	18	e	h,r
Vancouver, BC	Simon Fraser University	✓	✓	4	18	i	f,h,r
Vancouver, BC	Vancouver English Centre	✓	✓	-	15	i	h,f,r
Victoria, BC	University of Victoria ELC	✓	✓	4	18	i	h,r
various	International Language Schools of Canada	✓	✓	yr	16	i	h,r
various	LSC Language Studies Canada	✓	✓	13	18	i	h,r,o
Winnipeg, MB	Heartland International English School	✓	✓	3	16	i	h
USA							
Blacksburg, VA	Virginia Tech LCI	✓	✓	6	17	i	f,h,r
Boston, MA	EC Boston	✓	✓	yr	18	a	f,h,r
Boston, MA	English Language Center	✓	✓	12	17	a	f,h,r,o
Chicago, IL	University of Illinois	✓	✓	3	17	b	f,h,r
Ephraim, UT	Snow College	✓	✓	5	17	a	f,h,r
Fort Lauderdale, FL	LAL Language Centers	✓	✓	yr	16	i	h,r

Location	Name of school	Courses offered		No. of start dates	Min age of students	Min lang proficiency	Accommodation
		Ielts	Toefl				
Fort Lauderdale, FL	The Language Academy	✓	✓	yr	18	i	h,r
Fort Lauderdale, FL	Talk International	✓	✓	v	16	n	h,r,o
Kalamazoo, MI	Western Michigan University CELC	✓	✓	3	16	i	h,r
Long Beach, CA	California State University ALI	✓	✓	3	18	b	f,h,r
Los Angeles, CA	UCLA Extension ALC	✓	✓	4	18	n	h,f,r
Miami, FL	Rennert Miami	✓	✓	11	17	i	h,r
New York, NY	EC New York	✓	✓	yr	16	b	h,r
New York, NY	Rennery Bilingual	✓	✓	yr	17	i	f,h,r
Oregon City, OR	Clackamas Community College	✓	✓	-	-	a	h,r
Pensacola, FL	University of West Florida	✓	✓	4-6	18	i	f,r,o
Pittsburgh, PA	University of Pittsburgh, PA	✓	✓	3	18	i	h,f,r
San Diego, CA	College of English Language	✓	✓	yr	16	i	h,r
San Diego, CA	EC San Diego	✓	✓	yr	16	i	f,h
San Diego, CA	International House	✓	✓	-	16	i	h,r
San Diego, CA	University of California	✓	✓	-	18	i	f,h,r,o
San Francisco, CA	Diablo Vallet College, IEC	✓	✓	-	-	i	h,r
San Francisco, CA	St Giles International	✓	✓	3-4	15	i	h,r
San Marcos, CA	California State University San Marcos ALCI	✓	✓	3	18	i	h,f,r
Seattle, WA	Seattle Language Academy	✓	✓	-	-	i	h
Tampa, FL	University of South Florida, ELI	✓	✓	3	17	e	f,r
various	ELS Language Centers	✓	✓	8	17	a	h,r
various	Embassy CES	✓	✓	yr	-	i	h,r
USA and Canada							
various	Global Village English	✓	✓	12	-	i	h,r

a advanced b beginner e elementary f flat share h homestay i intermediate n none o other r residential v varies yr year round - information not supplied