



Comparing TOEFL® and IELTS™ Total Scores

From time to time, ETS receives requests for comparisons between the TOEFL® test and other English-language proficiency tests. Comparing the results of tests can be difficult when there are significant differences in test design, scoring and implementation. However, ETS is aware that score comparison tables have been published in various media. As some of these contain misleading or inaccurate information, ETS has provided the following comparison between the TOEFL and IELTS™ tests based on research conducted with more than 1,100 individuals who took both tests.

TOTAL SCORES	
TOEFL	IELTS
35	5.0
46	5.5
60	6.0
79	6.5
94	7.0
102	7.5
110	8.0
115	8.5

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. Why has ETS released a score comparison between TOEFL and IELTS scores?

ETS receives requests for score concordance information between TOEFL and other tests, including IELTS. ETS has declined until now to provide this type of information for TOEFL and IELTS because the two tests are very different. The TOEFL and IELTS tests are based on different test designs that measure English-language proficiency in different ways. However, we are aware that concordance tables and similar documents are being published in various media. Some of these tables are misleading and inaccurate. Therefore, ETS decided to provide a comparison table that represents what we feel is a realistic comparison at the total-score level.

2. How did ETS create the score comparison table?

ETS collected more than 1,100 sets of TOEFL and IELTS scores from individuals who had taken both tests. An equipercentile approach was applied to each IELTS band score to develop the comparison table. This approach identifies scores for TOEFL that would, for the test takers in the sample, lead to the same percentage of test takers meeting a particular score level as in the equivalent IELTS score band. For example, an IELTS score of 8.5 represents the 90th percentile of the test takers in the sample, as does a TOEFL score of 115.

3. Can I use the table to “translate” a TOEFL score to an IELTS score or vice versa?

ETS created the table for comparison purposes; it is not a full concordance table for each score point. ETS does not know the details of how the IELTS test is designed or scaled, but the tests are very different in design and implementation. Therefore, ETS recommends that the table be used for the purposes of general understanding and not for establishing cut scores. Use of the comparison table should be considered an initial step in establishing score requirements of comparable rigor. Follow-up validity studies would be necessary to validate the score comparison(s). It is not appropriate to use the comparison table to project an individual's IELTS or TOEFL score.