Secure English Language Testing (SELT)
Frequently asked questions

Please note that this document will be updated as new providers come on line.

What is a SELT provider?
For certain visa applications applicants must demonstrate a certain level of English language ability. This can be through passing a test with a Home Office approved Secure English Language Testing (SELT) provider.

Which immigration routes require a SELT?
You will need to demonstrate you have met the required level in English if you are applying in one of the following routes:

- Innovator
- Start-up
- Tier 2 (General)
- Tier 2 (Minister of Religion)
- Tier 2 (Sportsperson)
- Tier 4 (General)
- Representative of an overseas business
- Partner
- Parent
- Settlement
- Citizenship

What tests are accepted as SELT?
Customers can only take a SELT test with one of the following:

- IELTS SELT Consortium (UK or overseas).
- LanguageCert (International) Ltd (UK or Overseas)
- Trinity College London (UK only);

The IELTS SELT Consortium tests are:

- IELTS for UKVI
- Life Skills

The approved LanguageCert (International) Ltd tests are:

- LanguageCert International ESOL SELT

The approved Trinity College London tests are:

- Integrated Skills in English (ISE)
- Graded Examinations in Spoken English (GESE)

Further information can be found in Appendix O or on the published list of approved tests.

The list of approved SELT tests is published on GOV.UK website.
Which test should I take?
It is for you to decide which SELT test to take. The tests on the published list are acceptable for a number of immigration routes. You should take the level of test required for the immigration route you are applying for.

What is the difference between the tests?
There are two types of test as different immigration routes require different English language ability. Tests will assess your speaking and listening ability or will test your reading, writing, speaking and listening abilities depending which immigration route is required.

Should I sit a test that just assesses my speaking and listening abilities or the one that assesses all four abilities?
You will need to take the test required for the route you are applying under.

You will need to sit a test that assesses all four abilities if you are applying in one of the following routes:
- Innovator
- Start-up
- Tier 2 (General)
- Tier 2 (Minister of Religion)
- Tier 4 (General)

You will need to sit a test that assesses just your speaking and listening abilities if you are applying in one of the following routes:
- Tier 2 (Sportsperson)
- Representative of an overseas business
- Partner
- Parent
- Settlement
- Citizenship

Which test should settlement or nationality candidates take?
Applicants should sit a SELT test that assesses their speaking and listening abilities. They do not need to evidence their reading and writing abilities.

Which test should customers making initial applications as partners or parents take?
Applicants should take a SELT test that assesses their speaking and listening abilities. They do not need to evidence their reading and writing abilities.

What about customers applying to extend their leave as partners or parents?
As announced in January 2016, a new English language requirement at level A2 is being introduced for non-EEA partners and parents. This affects those applying to extend their stay after 2.5 years in the UK on a 5-year route to settlement under Appendix FM (Family Member) of the Immigration Rules. The new requirement will apply to partners and parents whose current leave under the family Immigration Rules is due to expire on or after 1st May 2017.

What is the process for taking a SELT?
You can only take a SELT test offered by one of the organisations on the published list of tests. You must book your test using the relevant online booking system. The details used to book your test must be as stated on your passport or other the identity document.

On the day of the test you must take the document you used when booking the test. The test point point will check this and record your identity. If you cannot pass the identity checks, you will not be able to take a test that day.

If you pass the test you will be provided with a unique reference number which you must use in your UK immigration application.
Where are the exam dates published?
Each provider has their own website where the exam dates are published. Details of the booking websites are provided on the published list of tests.

What is the unique reference number?
All candidates who pass a SELT test will be issued with a unique reference number. You must include this number in your UK immigration application. This number will be used to identify the candidate and to verify their results.

What if I don’t have a unique reference number?
If you are not issued with a unique reference number, the caseworker dealing with your application will be unable to verify the results. This may result in your application being refused.

Will you accept English language tests that are not on the SELT list?
No. Any tests taken must be on the approved SELT list.

Will you accept English language tests that are on the approved list, but not taken at an approved test point?
No. Any tests taken must be at an approved test point. The list of approved test point is available on our website.

Will you accept all tests from an approved provider?
No. Any tests taken must be on the approved SELT list. You can take tests for many reasons at different points but only those tests specified for immigration use and taken at an approved point can be used as part of an application for immigration purposes.

You should take care when booking your test to ensure that the test that you book is the one approved for SELT:
- for IELTS, ensure that you choose ‘IELTS for UKVI’ rather than ‘IELTS’;
- For LanguageCert, ensure that you choose
- for Trinity, ensure that you choose ‘Secure English Language Tests for UKVI’.

What checks will the test point do?
On the day of your test, you will need to provide evidence of your identity at the test point before you will be allowed to take the test. The only acceptable forms of identification for UK points are:
- a passport
- a travel document (excluding emergency travel documents);
- an EU Identity Card;
- a Government ID card (only accepted in countries where it was issued);
- a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP)
- a Biometric Registration Card (BRC).

The documents must be originals and include a photograph. The document must not have expired. Where the document contains a signature, this will also be verified on the date of the test.

Where you are unable to prove your identity, you will not be allowed to take the test.

What if my passport is held by the Home Office and I don’t have any other valid identity documents?
You should contact the Home Office to request the return of your passport. If you have, or you are given, a photocopy of your passport the test point will not allow you to sit the test.

What should I do if I do not have a valid passport or any other approved identity documents?
If you do not have one of these documents, you should contact the Home Office for advice.

Can driving licences be used as proof of identify?
No. Only the documents listed above can be accepted.

I sat a test in the UK; can I use it if I apply outside the UK?
Yes. Tests sat in the UK can be accepted in applications made in the UK and overseas. Similarly, tests sat overseas can be accepted in applications made in the UK.
There is no test point in the country where I live. What can I do?
We work with our providers to ensure as many people as possible have access to a SELT test point, but we know there are no test points in certain countries.

If there is not a SELT test point in the country where you live, you will have to travel to another country to take a SELT test.

What if I can’t book a test at the location or date of my preferred choice?
If there is no availability of tests in your chosen area you should check the availability at the nearest test point.

If you are unable to book a test on the day of your choice or at the point of your choice you should check with other test points that may have availability. You should always be able to take a test within 28 days of booking, but it may not always be at your chosen location.

I hear that some countries have high demand in test bookings is this true?
We have planned the provision of test points to give adequate global and UK coverage to meet anticipated customer demand. There are some countries where demand for test booking will be high at certain times during the year. However, you should be able to book a test at a permanent test point within a 28-day period.

I have a disability. Am I exempt from the English language requirement?
If you require support, for example because you have hearing difficulties, you should contact the test provider.

If you think you may be exempt from the requirement because you have a disability you should check the GOV.UK website for further information.