

PTE Academic

Score Guide

Institution

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JULY 2025

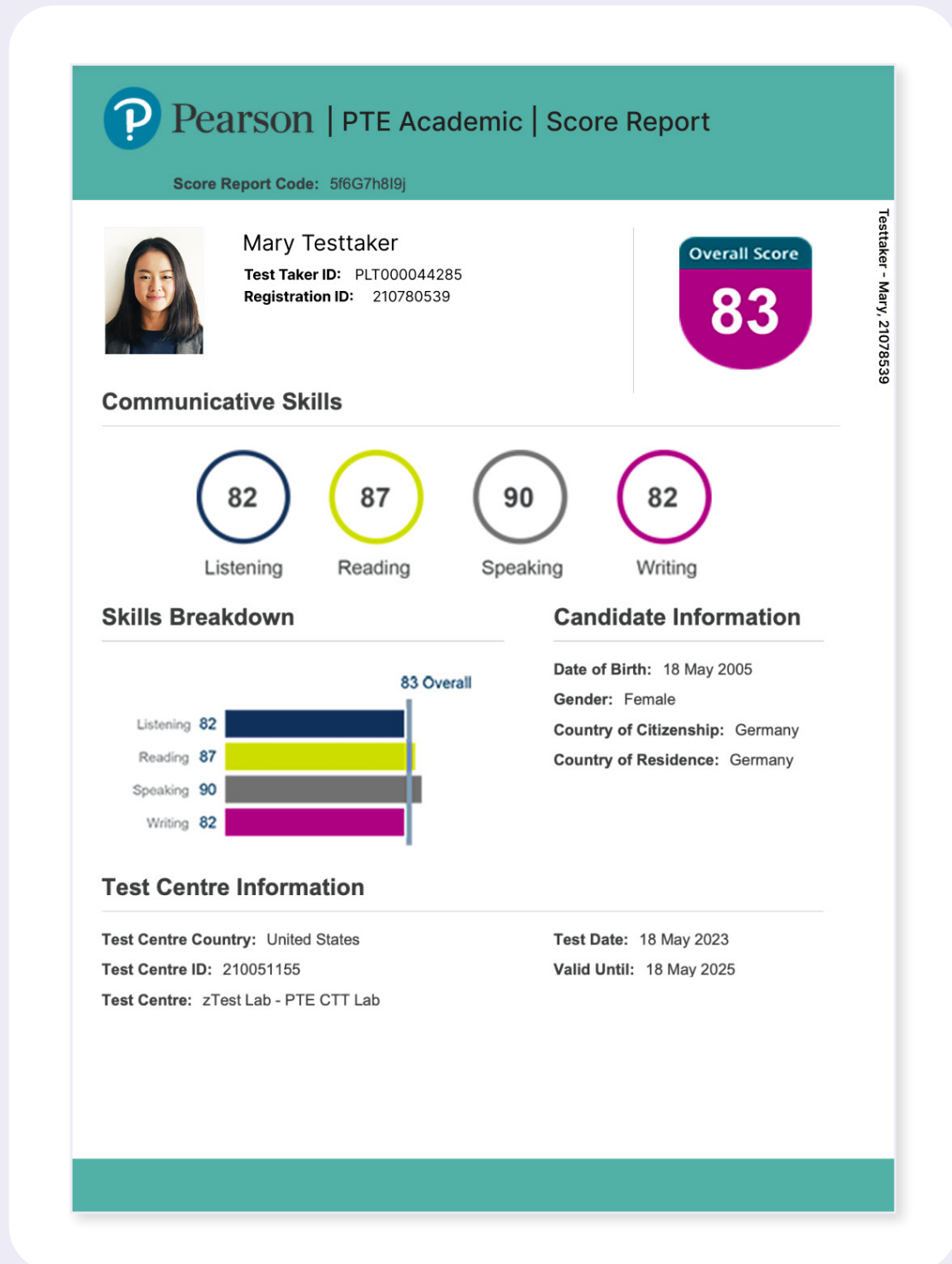
Introduction

Pearson Test of English (PTE) Academic is an international, computer-based English language test. It provides a measure of a test taker's language ability in order to assist education institutions and professional and government organizations that require a standard of academic English language proficiency for admission purposes.

The contents of this Guide, along with those published on [our website](#), provide the only official information about PTE Academic.

1. Reported Scores

The PTE Academic Score Report consists of an **overall score** and four **communicative skills scores (Listening, Reading, Speaking, Writing)** as shown below.



Alternative versions of PTE Academic

PTE Academic UKVI

The PTE Academic UKVI test is taken for UK visas and immigration purposes. The Score Report is identical in content but contains a SELT URN number which allows the UK Government to verify the score.

 **Pearson** | PTE Academic | Score Report

SELT URN: PEL/123456/54321/TST000000002
Score Report Code: 5f6G7h8i9j



Mary Testtaker
Test Taker ID: PLT000044285
Registration ID: 210780539

Overall Score

83

Testtaker - Mary, 210780539

Communicative Skills

82

87

90

82

Listening

Reading

Speaking

Writing

Skills Breakdown

83 Overall

Listening 82

Reading 87

Speaking 90

Writing 82

Candidate Information

Date of Birth: 18 May 2005

Gender: Female

Country of Citizenship: Germany

Country of Residence: Germany

Test Centre Information

Test Centre Country: United States

Test Centre ID: 210051155

Test Centre: zTest Lab - PTE CTT Lab

Test Name: PTE Academic UKVI

Test Date: 18 May 2023

Valid Until: 18 May 2025

SELT URN number

Overall score

The **overall score** is based on your performance across the entire test. You will complete between 65–75 questions in any given test and a range of 22 different question types.

The overall score ranges between 10–90 points.

Note: *The overall score is not an average calculation of the communicative skills scores.*

Communicative skills scores

The communicative skills are **Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing** and their score range is 10–90 points.

Some tasks assess more than one skill at the same time. These are called integrated skills tasks (assessing Listening and Speaking, Reading and Writing, Listening and Writing or Listening and Reading). The scores on these tasks contribute to the scores of both communicative skills that are assessed at the same time.

2. Using PTE Academic Scores

How to use PTE Academic scores

Our experience suggests that most universities require:

Degree/Course type	Recommended cut scores
Foundation courses	Minimum score of between 36–50
Undergraduate degrees	Minimum score of between 51–60
Postgraduate degrees	Minimum score of between 57–67

Each Higher Education Institution determines their own admissions criteria and as such sets their own minimum threshold for the score required to study at degree level or above. This can be based on:

1. A student's overall score.
2. A student's overall score in conjunction with their communicative skills scores.

For example, institutions may:

- Set the admission requirement based on the minimum overall score alone.
- Set the admission requirement based on the minimum overall score in combination with a higher minimum on one of the communicative skills scores, because it is considered particularly important for the program the test taker wants to enter.
- Set the admission requirement based on the minimum overall score in combination with a lower minimum on one of the communicative skills scores, because it is considered less important for the program the test taker wants to enter.

Other combinations of the overall score and one or more of the communicative skills scores may be considered.

3. Alignment between PTE Academic, the CEFR, and IELTS

Based on research and empirical concordance studies, we have produced tables showing the relationship between PTE Academic and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), as well as the concordance between PTE Academic and IELTS Academic.

Please note that score relationships between tests are always an approximation. Tests may be similar but they are not exactly the same. Score concordance studies, even those that are conducted to the highest standards, can only provide estimates of the relationship between scores on different tests.

Alignment with the CEFR

To ensure comparability and interpretability of test scores, PTE Academic has been aligned to the CEFR, which is recognized as a standard across Europe and in many countries outside of Europe. In the USA, the National Council of State Supervisors for Languages (NCSSFL) has introduced the use of the LinguaFolio Self-Assessment Grid (NCSSFL, 2008), which relates language levels to the scales of both the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) and the CEFR.

The CEFR includes a set of consecutive language levels defined by descriptors of language competencies. The six-level framework was developed by the Council of Europe (2001) to enable language learners, teachers, universities, or potential employers to compare and relate language qualifications by level.

Alignment of PTE Academic to the CEFR levels provides a means to interpret PTE Academic scores in terms of the level descriptors of the CEFR. As these descriptors focus on what an English language learner can do, scores that are properly aligned to the CEFR give educators and institutions more relevant information about a test taker's ability.

Please refer to the **Appendix** for a detailed table showing PTE Academic scores aligned to CEFR ranges.

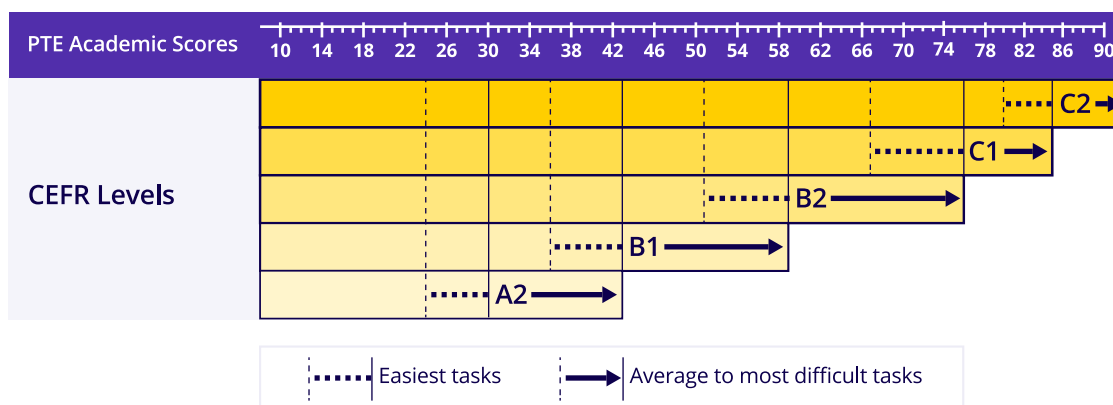
The PTE Academic Score Scale and the CEFR

The explanation of the alignment of PTE Academic to the CEFR is that to stand a reasonable chance at successfully performing any of the tasks defined at a particular CEFR level, learners must be able to demonstrate that they can do the average tasks at that level.

As students grow in ability, for example within the B1 level, they will become successful at doing even the most difficult tasks at that level and will also find they can cope with the easiest tasks at the next level. In other words, they are entering into the B2 level.

The following diagram shows PTE Academic scores aligned to the CEFR levels A2 to C2. The dotted lines on the scale show the PTE Academic score ranges that predict that test takers are likely to perform successfully on the easiest tasks at the next higher level. For example, if a candidate scores 51 on PTE Academic, this means that they are likely to be able to cope with the more difficult tasks within the CEFR B1 level. At the same time, according to their PTE Academic score, it predicts that they are likely to perform successfully on the easiest tasks at B2.

Note: This alignment is unchanged from the previous version of this Score Guide.



Alignment of PTE Academic scores to the CEFR.

Below are descriptions of those threshold levels defined by success on the easier tasks for B2 and B1.

B2 Threshold Level

Has sufficient command of the language to deal with most familiar situations but will often require repetition and make many mistakes. Can deal with standard spoken language but will have problems in noisy circumstances. Can exchange factual information on familiar routine and non-routine matters within his/her field with some confidence. Can pass on a detailed piece of information reliably. Can understand the information content of the majority of recorded or broadcast material on topics of personal interest delivered in clear standard speech.

B1 Threshold Level

Has limited command of language, but it is sufficient in most familiar situations provided language is simple and clear. May be able to deal with less routine situations on public transport e.g., asking another passenger where to get off for an unfamiliar destination. Can re-tell short written passages in a simple fashion using the wording and ordering of the original text. Can use simple techniques to start, maintain or end a short conversation. Can tell a story or describe something in a simple list of points.

PTE Academic and IELTS

The table below shows Pearson's current best estimate of scoring alignment between PTE Academic and IELTS Academic.

Note: This table has been updated from the previous version of the score guide based on updated research released in July 2025.

IELTS Score	PTE Overall	PTE Listening	PTE Reading	PTE Speaking	PTE Writing
4.5	24–30	26–32	29–35	14–23	17–28
5.0	31–38	33–39	36–41	24–38	29–40
5.5	39–46	40–46	42–47	39–53	41–50
6.0	47–54	47–52	48–53	54–65	51–59
6.5	55–62	53–57	54–58	66–75	60–68
7.0	63–70	58–63	59–64	76–82	69–76
7.5	71–78	64–68	65–69	83–87	77–84
8.0	79–85	69–74	70–74	88–89	85–89
8.5	86–89	75–80	75–80	90	90
9.0	90	81–90	81–90	–	–

Error of measurement

Tests aim to provide a measure of ability. PTE Academic measures the ability to use English in academic settings. Naturally, measures of a test taker's English language abilities will vary; some candidates will have higher scores than others. The degree to which scores among test takers vary is the 'score variance'. The purpose of testing is to measure 'true variance' in ability among students, but all measurement contains some error.

The degree to which the score variance is due to error is called the 'error of measurement'. The remainder of the variance is due to 'true variance' in ability among test takers. The error of measurement is related to the reliability of the test: a smaller measurement error means higher reliability of test scores.

The error of measurement can be interpreted as follows:

- The true score of a test taker is within a range of scores around the reported score.
- The size of that range is defined by the error of measurement. For example, if the reported score is 60 and the error of measurement is 3, then the true score, with 68% certainty, is within one measurement error from the reported score; that is within the range of 57 ($60-3$) and 63 ($60+3$).
- The true score, with 95% certainty, is within twice the measurement error; that is within the range of 54 ($60-2 \times 3$) to 66 ($60+2 \times 3$).

There are two main approaches to estimating the error of measurement. In Classical Test Theory (CTT) the reliability estimate is assumed to apply to any score on a test, irrespective of whether the score is low, medium or high. Therefore, the error of measurement is assumed to be the same size anywhere on the test's score scale. That is why in CTT we speak of the Standard Error of Measurement (SEM).

An alternative approach to estimating the error of measurement is used in modern test theory, commonly referred to as Item Response Theory (IRT). IRT recognizes that the reliability of a test is not uniform across an entire score scale. Tests tend to be less reliable towards the extreme low and high score ranges. Consequently, the size of the error of measurement tends to be larger towards these extreme scores. The size of the error is therefore conditional on the score and so, in IRT, we speak of Conditional Errors of Measurement (CEM).

The table below shows the average size of the CEM at five levels (A2 to C2) on the CEFR for the overall score and for the communicative skills scores that are provided on the PTE Academic score report. The following table provides the CEM values within each CEFR level for overall score and the four skill scores based on field test data collected in 2024 for the enhanced PTE Academic.

PTE Academic Scores		Average Measurement Error				
		A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Overall		3.1	2.8	3.2	4.0	4.5
Communicative skills	Listening	4.4	3.8	4.5	5.6	6.5
	Reading	4.8	4.8	5.8	7.3	8.4
	Speaking	6.2	5.5	5.6	6.6	7.8
	Writing	4.9	4.1	4.8	6.3	7.0

Measurement error for overall score and communicative skills scores at levels A2 to C2.

Test reliability

Directly related to measurement error is test reliability, which is another way of expressing the likelihood that test results will be the same when a test is taken again under the same conditions, and therefore how accurately a reported test score reflects the true ability of the test taker.

Reliability is expressed as a number between 0 and 1, where 0 means no reliability at all and 1 means perfectly reliable. For tests that are used to make important decisions, high reliability (0.90 or higher) is required. The following table provides the reliability estimate of the overall score based on field test data collected in 2024 for the enhanced PTE Academic.

For more information on the reliability of PTE Academic, refer to the paper *Establishing Construct and Concurrent Validity of Pearson Test of English Academic*, available at:

pearsonpte.com/research/published-research

Score	Overall
Reliability	0.93

Estimated reliability of overall score and communicative skills scores within PTE Academic score range of 53 to 79.

4. Automated Scoring

As the worldwide leader in publishing and assessment for education, Pearson is using several of its proprietary, patented technologies to automatically score test takers' performance on PTE Academic. Academic institutions, corporations and government agencies around the world have selected Pearson's automated scoring technologies to measure the abilities of students, staff, and applicants. Pearson customers using automated spoken and written assessments include eight of the 2008 Fortune Top 20 companies; 11 of the 2008 Top 15 Indian BPO companies; the U.S., German and Dutch governments; world sports organizations, such as FIFA (organizers of the World Cup) and the Asian Games; major airlines and aviation schools; and leading universities and language schools.

An extensive field test program was conducted to test PTE Academic's questions and evaluate their effectiveness, as well as to obtain the data necessary to train the automated scoring engines to evaluate PTE Academic questions. Test data was collected from more than **10,000 test takers** from 38 cities in 21 countries who participated in PTE Academic's field test. These test takers came from **158 different countries** and spoke **126 different first languages**, including (but not limited to) Cantonese, French, Gujarati, Hebrew, Hindi, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Marathi, Polish, Spanish, Urdu, Vietnamese, Tamil, Telugu, Thai and Turkish. The data from the field test were used to train the automated scoring engines for both the written and spoken PTE Academic questions.

By combining the power of a comprehensive field test, in-depth research and Pearson's proven, proprietary automated scoring technologies, PTE Academic fills a critical gap by providing a state-of-the-art test that accurately measures the English language Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing abilities of a range of speakers.

Scoring written English skills

The written section of PTE Academic is scored using the Intelligent Essay Assessor™ (IEA), an automated scoring tool that is powered by Pearson's state-of-the-art Knowledge Analysis Technologies™ (KAT™) engine. Based on more than 20 years of research and development, the KAT engine automatically evaluates the meaning of text by examining whole passages. The KAT engine evaluates writing as accurately as skilled human markers using a proprietary application of the mathematical approach known as Latent Semantic Analysis (LSA). Using LSA (an approach that generates semantic similarity of words and passages by analyzing large bodies of relevant text) the KAT engine "understands" the meaning of text much the same as a human does.

IEA can be tuned to understand and evaluate text in any subject area, and includes built-in detectors for off-topic responses or other situations that may need to be referred to human readers. Research conducted by independent researchers as well as Pearson supports IEA's reliability for assessing knowledge and knowledge-based

reasoning. IEA was developed more than a decade ago and has been used to evaluate millions of essays, from scoring student writing at elementary, secondary and university level, to assessing military leadership skills.

Scoring spoken English skills

The spoken portion of PTE Academic is automatically scored using Pearson's Versant technology. Versant technology is the result of years of research in speech recognition, statistical modelling, linguistics, and testing theory. The technology uses a proprietary speech processing system that is specifically designed to analyze and automatically score speech from native and a range of linguistic backgrounds of English. In addition to recognizing words, the system locates and evaluates relevant segments, syllables and phrases in speech and then uses statistical modelling technologies to assess spoken performance.

To understand the way that the Versant technology is “taught” to score spoken language, think about a person being trained by an expert rater to score speech samples during interviews. First, the expert rater gives the trainee rater a list of things to listen for in the test taker's speech during the interview. Then the trainee observes the expert testing numerous test takers, and, after each interview, the expert shares with the trainee the score he or she gave the test taker and the characteristics of the performance that led to that score. Over several dozen interviews, the trainee's scores begin to look very similar to the expert rater's scores. Ultimately, one could predict the score the trainee would give a particular test taker based on the score that the expert gave.

This, in effect, is how the machine is trained to score, only instead of one expert teaching the trainee, there are many expert scorers feeding scores into the system for each response, and instead of a few dozen test takers, the system is trained on thousands of responses from hundreds of test takers. Furthermore, the machine does not need to be told what features of the speech are important; the relevant features and their relative contributions are statistically extracted from the massive set of data when the system is optimized to predict human scores.

Further information about automated scoring is available on our website:

pearsonpte.com/research/scoring

5. References

Using PTE Academic scores

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Two On-Site Testing Tools from ETS at a Glance. Handout Berlin Conference 2001. Princeton: Educational Testing Service

Linacre, J.M (1988; 2005) A Computer Program for the Analysis of Multi-Faceted Data. Chicago, IL: Mesa Press

6. Glossary

ACTFL – American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages – An individual membership organization of language educators, students and administrators dedicated to the improvement of the teaching and learning of all languages at all level of instruction organization.

CEFR (also known as CEF) – The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages put together by the Council of Europe to standardize the levels of language exams in different regions. Other exams are mapped to the CEFR.

Communicative skills – Four skills for which PTE Academic test takers receive reported scores. These skills are Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing.

Concordance studies – The relationship between two or more scales of measurement.

Error of measurement – The degree to which the score variance is due to error.

Formal aspects – The form of a response: for example, whether it is over or under the word limit for a particular question type.

Global Scale of English (GSE) – The Pearson GSE is a truly global English language standard. Based on research involving over 6000 teachers from more than 50 countries, it extends the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) by pinpointing on a scale from 10 to 90 what needs to be mastered for the four skills of Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing within a CEFR level, using a more granular approach. For additional information, visit:

<https://www.pearson.com/english/about/gse.html>

IELTS – International English Language Testing System. This test measures the language proficiency of people who want to study or work where English is used as a language of communication.

Integrated skills items – Questions on the test that require the use of more than one skill such as assessing Reading and Speaking, Listening and Speaking, Reading and Writing, Listening and Writing, or Listening and Reading.

Intelligent Essay Assessor™ (IEA) – An automated scoring tool that is powered by Pearson's state-of-the-art Knowledge Analysis Technologies™ (KAT™) engine.

Item Response Theory (IRT) – A testing theory. IRT is based on the relationship between an individual's performance on a test question and that individual's levels of performance on an overall measure of the ability that question was designed to measure.

LinguaFolio Self-Assessment Grid – An assessment tool that relates language levels to the scales of both the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) and the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages).

National Council of State Supervisors for Languages (NCSSFL) – An organization of education agency personnel from across the United States who have the responsibility of foreign/world language education at the state level.

Oral Fluency – The ability to speak, or read, accurately and smoothly.

Overall score – Score based on test taker’s performance on all test questions.

PTE Academic – Pearson Test of English Academic. PTE Academic is a computer-based assessment of a person’s English language ability in an academic context. The test is a maximum of 2 hours 18 minutes long, and assesses an individual’s communicative skills of Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing through questions using authentically-sourced material.

Score variance – The degree to which scores among test takers vary.

SELT – Secure English Language Test, a mandatory test used by the UK government to verify the English language proficiency of individuals applying for particular visas or citizenship.

Traits – Questions measured in PTE Academic that contribute to overall scores. These include Content; Oral Fluency; Pronunciation; Form; Development, Structure and Coherence; Grammar; General Linguistic Range; and Vocabulary.

Versant technology – A proprietary speech processing system that is specifically designed to analyze and automatically score speech from a range of linguistic backgrounds.

7. Appendix

The following table shows PTE Academic scoring aligned to the CEFR (as discussed in section 3), and describes performance indicators at these levels.

PTE Academic Score	Common European Framework Level	Level Descriptor ¹	What does this mean for a score user?
85 – 90	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarize information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.	C2 is a highly proficient level and a student at this level would be extremely comfortable engaging in academic activities at all levels.
76 – 84	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts and recognize implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.	C1 is a level at which a student can comfortably participate in all post-graduate activities including teaching. It is not required for students entering university at undergraduate level. Most international students who enter university at a B2 level would acquire a level close to or at C1 after living in the country for several years, and actively participating in all language activities encountered at university.

¹© The copyright of the level descriptors reproduced in this document belongs to the Council of Europe.

PTE Academic Score	Common European Framework Level	Level Descriptor ¹	What does this mean for a score user?
59 – 75	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialization. Can interact with a degree of oral fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with other speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.	B2 was designed as the level required to participate independently in higher level language interaction. It is typically the level required to be able to follow academic level instruction and to participate in academic education, including both coursework and student life.
43 – 58	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics, which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.	B1 is insufficient for full academic level participation in language activities. A student at this level could 'get by' in everyday situations independently. To be successful in communication in university settings, additional English language courses are required.

PTE Academic Score	Common European Framework Level	Level Descriptor ¹	What does this mean for a score user?
30 – 42	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g., very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.	A2 is an insufficient level for academic level participation.
10 – 29	A1 or below	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.	A1 is an insufficient level for academic level participation.