

**Benchmarking Study between**  
**IELTS and HKDSE English Language Examination**  
**FAQ**

**1. What is the objective of the benchmarking study?**

By comparing students' performance in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and their results in the 2012 HKDSE English Language Examination, the benchmarking study provides useful information to help overseas universities understand the English proficiency of HKDSE candidates and set their admission requirements accordingly.

**2. How are the ranges of IELTS band score calculated?**

A sample of students attaining level 2 to level 5\*\* in the 2012 HKDSE English Language Examination was selected to take the IELTS and their results were collected by the HKEAA. The *mean value*\* of the IELTS results attained was calculated for the candidates achieving each HKDSE English Language level. Based on this mean value, a range of scores is then calculated taking the distribution error of the sample into account.

*\* The mean IELTS band scores of candidates achieving different levels in the HKDSE English Language are shown in Table 1 below.*

**3. Do the ranges shown represent the worst and best scores actually attained by the candidates at each level?**

The ranges shown DO NOT stand for the highest and lowest scores attained by the HKDSE candidates participating in the study. It is an estimate of the ranges of scores that could be obtained by candidates who have obtained different levels in the HKDSE English Language Examination. In fact, some candidates obtaining level 5\*\* in the HKDSE English Language Examination attained a band score of 8 or above in IELTS in this study.

**4. Can different levels of the HKDSE English Language Examination be converted into IELTS band scores directly?**

Levels of the HKDSE English Language Examination should not be converted into IELTS band scores directly as the assessment objectives, curricula, assessment formats and examination design of the HKDSE English Language and IELTS are different even though both are tests of English language proficiency.

**5. The HKEAA conducted a research study to compare the grades of the HKCEE and HKALE to performance on the IELTS in 2004. How do the results of HKDSE English Language compare to those of the HKALE Use of English (UE) and HKCEE English Language (Syllabus B)?**

As the HKDSE Examination, the HKALE and the HKCEE are different examinations targeted at students at different learning stages, it is not possible to make meaningful comparisons between the results in the three examinations. The mean band scores of IELTS results are shown in the table below for each of the three HKEAA examinations for reference. However, it would not be meaningful to make simple inferences by comparing the mean values because the three examinations are for different student cohorts at different stages of their education.

**Table 1: Mean IELTS band score of HKDSE English Language**

<b>HKDSE Eng Lang Levels</b>	<b>Mean IELTS band score (2012)</b>
5**	7.64
5*	7.24
5	6.90
4	6.41
3	5.58
2	4.93

**Table 2: Mean IELTS band score of HKALE Use of English**

<b>HKALE UE Grades</b>	<b>Mean IELTS band score (2004)</b>
A	7.56
B	7.16
C	6.83
D	6.28
E	5.88

**Table 3: Mean IELTS band score of HKCEE English Language (Syllabus B)**

<b>HKCEE Eng Lang (Syl B) Grades</b>	<b>Mean IELTS band score (2004)</b>
A	7.03
B	6.65
C	6.22
D	5.82
E	5.06

- 6. According to the information listed on the HKEAA website, some overseas universities set their English language requirements for both the HKDSE English Language Examination and IELTS. Will these institutions change their English language requirements based on the results of this benchmarking study?**

The HKEAA works closely with overseas universities and provide updated information to their admission staff. Details about the results of the benchmarking studies conducted with the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) and the IELTS can improve understanding and recognition of the HKDSE as a qualification for university admission.