Comparing Kaplan Test of English (KTE) Test Scores

1 Alignment of KTE test scores with the CEFR

The table below shows recommended threshold Kaplan Test of English test scores and their corresponding CEFR levels. This mapping of the test scores to the CEFR level has been externally verified by Ecctis[1] following a comprehensive review and analysis of the test. An executive summary of Ecctis' report is available upon request.

CEFR Levels and Global Descriptors		Recommended KTE threshold score
C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise 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.	535 – 700
C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise 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 organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.	500 – 534
B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native 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.	425 – 499
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 travelling 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 & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.	350 – 424
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.	275 – 349
A1	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.	225 – 274

Table 1. Referencing of KTE Scores to the CEFR

---

[1] Ecctis is a gold-standard provider of solutions and services in international education, training, and skills, and in the development and recognition of globally portable qualifications, and a trusted provider of mapping tests and qualifications to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

2 Comparing KTE test scores to IELTS Academic overall scores

The table below shows recommended threshold KTE test scores and their corresponding IELTS Academic band scores. This score comparison is based on our revised concordance study[2] completed in January 2024 (Kondratek, 2024), using the *kernel method of test equating* (von Davier, Holland, Thyer, 2004; Cardwell et al., 2024). The range shaded in light blue denotes the IELTS band scores which are deemed to be equated to KTE test scores with the highest level of confidence[3], i.e. with the standard error of equating on the IELTS scale at or below 0.075 (Kondratek, 2024). Concordance between IELTS and KTE test outside of the shaded range should be interpreted with caution.

IELTS Band (0-9)	Recommended KTE threshold scores	CEFR Range
9	635 – 700	C2
8.5	603 – 634	C2
8	573 – 602	C2
7.5	542 – 572	C2
7	510 – 541	C1 – C2
6.5	478 - 509	B2 – C1
6	444 – 477	B2
5.5	410 – 443	B1 – B2
5	373 – 409	B1
4.5	333 – 372	A2 – B1
4	289 – 332	A2

Table 2. Equating IELTS bands to KTE scores. NB Light blue shading indicates score comparisons with the highest degree of confidence (SE≤0.075).

When making high-stakes decisions, we recommend institutions consider other factors like high school GPA, other test scores, recommendations, or interviews. As a best practice, when setting minimum thresholds, it is useful to set scores flexibly and conduct periodic reviews of score requirements.

---

[2] The original concordance study was carried out in 2016 based on a sample of 201 test takers who took both the Kaplan Test of English test and the IELTS academic test.
[3] Verifying robustness of the equating functions under different methodological choices is one of the approaches recommended to assess validity of the equating procedure by Cardwell et al. (2024).

3 Comparing KTE test scores to TOEFL iBT overall scores

As both the KTE test scores and TOEFL iBT scores have been aligned to the CEFR Levels (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages), we can compare KTE test scores with TOEFL iBT scores using the CEFR Levels as proxy, as captured in the table below. It is important to note however, that KTE has not been statistically equated with TOEFL iBT (unlike with IELTS, cf. Section 2 above), therefore, comparisons between the two tests should be considered with caution. Test takers are advised to verify institution-specific entry requirements on the institution's webpages directly.

TOEFL iBT recommended threshold score*	CEFR Level mapping	KTE recommended threshold score
114 – 120	C2	535 – 700
95 – 113**	C1	500 – 534
72 – 94**	B2	425 – 499
42 – 71	B1	350 – 424

Table 3. Comparison of TOEFL iBT scores with KTE

*As reported by TOEFL iBT (Papageorgiou et al., 2015).

**The TOEFL iBT test provides the highest measurement precision at language-proficiency levels B2 and C1, which are typical requirements for admissions in higher-education institutions.

4 Comparing KTE test scores to Pearson PTE Academic overall scores

As both the KTE test scores and Pearson PTE Academic scores have been aligned to the CEFR Levels, we can compare KTE test scores with PTE Academic scores using the CEFR Levels as proxy, as captured in the table below. It is important to note however, that KTE has not been statistically equated with PTE Academic, therefore, comparisons between the two tests should be considered with caution. Test takers are advised to verify institution-specific entry requirements on the institution's webpages directly.

Pearson PTE Academic recommended threshold score*	CEFR Level mapping	KTE recommended threshold score
85 – 90	C2	535 – 700
76 – 84	C1	500 – 534
59 – 75	B2	425 – 499
43 – 58	B1	350 – 424

Table 4. Comparison of Pearson PTE Academic scores with KTE

*As reported by Pearson PTE Academic (Pearson PTE Academic, 2023).

5 Comparing KTE test scores to LanguageCert Academic overall scores

As both the KTE test scores and LanguageCert Academic scores have been aligned to the CEFR Levels (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages), we can compare KTE test scores with LanguageCert Academic scores using the CEFR Levels as proxy, as captured in the table below. It is important to note however, that KTE has not been statistically equated with LanguageCert Academic, therefore, comparisons between the two tests should be considered with caution. Test takers are advised to verify institution-specific entry requirements on the institution's webpages directly.

LanguageCert Academic recommended threshold score*	CEFR Level mapping	KTE recommended threshold score
90 – 100	C2	535 – 700
75 – 89	C1	500 – 534
60 – 74	B2	425 – 499
40 – 59	B1	350 – 424

Table 4. Comparison of LanguageCert Academic scores with KTE

*As reported by LanguageCert (2023a).

6 References

Cardwell, R. L., Nydick, S. W., Lockwood, J. R., & von Davier, A. A. (2024). Practical considerations when building concordances between English tests. *Language Testing*, 41(1), 192-202. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1177/02655322231195027

von Davier A. A., Holland P. W., Thayer D. T. (2004). *The Kernel method of test equating.* Springer.

Kondratek, B., (2024) KTE-IELTS 2016 Concordance Study – Revision. *KTS internal report.*

LanguageCert (2023a). The LanguageCert System. Available from: https://www.languagecert.org/en/about-us/research-and-validation/the-languagecert-system-ls

LanguageCert (2023b). LanguageCert Preliminary Concordance Report. Available from: https://www.languagecert.org/-/media/languagecert/document-library/floating/languagecert-preliminary-concordance-report1.ashx

Papageorgiou, S., Tannenbaum, R. J., Bridgeman, B., & Cho, Y. (2015). The association between

TOEFL iBT® test scores and the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) levels. *Research Memorandum No. RM-15-06. Princeton*, NJ: Educational Testing Service. Available from: https://www.ets.org/Media/Research/pdf/RM-15-06.pdf

Pearson PTE Academic, (2023). *PTE Academic Test Taker Score Guide.* Available from: https://assets.ctfassets.net/yqwtwibiobs4/3Bm0RMkKoNVOoOxUe38mg4/f565a92a97e8f3cf60c5506d347dedb8/PTE_Academic_Score_Guide_for_Test_Takers_June_2023.pdf

Pearson PTE, (2023). Understanding your PTE Academic Score. Available from: https://www.pearsonpte.com/pte-academic/scoring/understand-your-score