



Requests for data or materials for academic research

1. Introduction

We hold a large amount of data related to our tests, including IELTS, and we sometimes provide selected data to external researchers for the purpose of academic research. We also have materials such as tests (test papers), videos, and instructions for examiners.

If you want to use Cambridge English data or other materials for your research, please read the information below carefully.

You may also be interested in the [Cambridge English Funded Research Programme](#) or the [IELTS Funded Research Programme](#). For these, requests for data or materials should be made in the application form for the funding programme.

The instructions in this document are only for requests from qualified academic researchers (including graduate students).

2. Publicly available data and materials

A large amount of material is publicly available:

- [Cambridge University Press](#) publishes many authentic Cambridge English tests, including IELTS tests. These include audio files for listening tests as well as learning and teaching materials.
- Sample tests can be found on this website. For example see the [sample tests for B2 First](#) and the [free practice tests for Linguaskill](#).
- Our [YouTube channel](#) has videos of speaking tests and other resources.

Some data is publicly available:

- [Grade statistics](#) give the percentage of candidates at each grade by country. [IELTS test statistics](#) include a variety of data.

These can all be used for research or other non-commercial purposes. You do not need to ask our permission to use them for these purposes. However, the terms and conditions on the relevant websites must be followed. If you want to include data or materials in a publication or presentation, see section 4.

If you have written a research report using our data or materials, we request that you send us a copy by e-mail (though generally we are not able to provide comments or feedback).

You might find useful the [Cambridge Learner Corpus](#), which contains passages of text from over 220,000 responses to our writing tests. This is available to researchers by applying [here](#).

3. Data and materials that are not publicly available

Data and materials that are publicly available are described in the previous section. We sometimes make other data or materials available to researchers, but it is not possible to make a list of these, since the decision depends on many factors including legal and practical issues and the quality and relevance of the proposed research.

Requests for other data or materials are considered carefully. We try to respond positively but in many cases it is not possible to provide what is requested. Rules on the provision of information have numerous exemptions, and one of these might apply in your case, so you should not assume that the data or materials you want will be provided.

These data and materials will generally not be provided:

- Tests (test papers), apart from publicly available tests.¹ Forthcoming and recent tests are confidential for reasons of test security. The tests that are available to external researchers are listed in section 2 of this document.
- Personal data.² This includes any data that could be used to identify a person, either on its own or in combination with other data.
- Numbers of candidates.³ For example, we will not provide the number of candidates who took a certain test last year in a certain country.

Here are some of the reasons why a request might be rejected:

- Some materials are confidential since disclosing them could prejudice our commercial interest.³
- Some materials contain personal data such as video images or test scores.²
- The data might not exist in our systems.
- Gathering the data might take our staff too long.

If you are going to make a request, it is important to make a strong research plan. The reason is that we might decide to provide the data even if it is commercially sensitive, but only if we are interested in the research and the project is sufficiently well designed. In such a case the data will only be provided for specific purposes and under specific conditions. If the research project is not well designed, we may not provide the data.

4. Use of data/materials in publications

If you use sample tests from our website in your research, you can include up to one task from each sample test in a publication, research report, or presentation. Copyright law must be observed, and you should include the following acknowledgement:

This research uses Cambridge Assessment English *B1 Preliminary and B2 First* sample tests which are available online:
<http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams-and-tests/preliminary/preparation/>
<http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams-and-tests/first/preparation/>
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Replace the italic parts as appropriate. If you adapt (edit) any of the tasks, make this clear.

If you want to reproduce other publicly available data or materials in a publication, you must follow the copyright notice on the materials, copyright law, and the [terms and conditions](#) on this website, and also include a similar acknowledgement to the one above.

5. Advice for master's degree and PhD students

When planning or starting a research project, you should not assume that Cambridge English will provide you with data or materials.

¹ Releasing these would violate test security and give commercial advantage to other test-providers.

² Providing personal data would contravene the [General Data Protection Regulation](#).

³ Releasing these would violate our commercial interest and enable other test-providers to gain market share.

It is often a highly valuable experience to plan and conduct your own data-collection. This will produce data that is ideally suited to your research study. You can ensure the sample has the right characteristics and gather additional background information via questionnaires, focus groups, or verbal protocol analysis.

Alternatively, if you want data or materials from us for your academic research project, the first step should be to discuss this with your supervisor/advisor. The next step should be to look at the publicly available materials listed above. The next step, if necessary, is to submit a request for data by following the instructions in section 6.

We are not able to provide further guidance for current or prospective research students, or suggest possible research projects. You may be able to find ideas by browsing [Research Notes](#).

If you have written a thesis or dissertation, you are welcome to send it to us, but generally speaking we are not able to provide comments or advice in such cases.

6. How to request data or materials

Before reading this section, read the sections above. You should not make a request if any of the publicly available materials would be suitable.

To make a request, copy the eight headings below, write the appropriate information below each one, and e-mail it to us at research@cambridgeenglish.org. The subject-line should be REQUEST FOR DATA/MATERIALS FOR RESEARCH.

It may take us several weeks to examine your request and reach a decision. If your request is approved, we may draw up a formal agreement for you to sign. This will specify the terms and conditions under which we will grant you access to and use of the data or materials. It will state that Cambridge Assessment English has the right to see and require changes to reports, articles, and presentations before they are made public.

- (1) NAME, AFFILIATION/EMPLOYER, AND COUNTRY
- (2) STATUS (JOB TITLE OR NAME OF DEGREE COURSE)
- (3) EXACTLY WHAT DATA/MATERIALS ARE REQUESTED
- (4) THEORETICAL BACKGROUND FOR THE STUDY
- (5) RESEARCH QUESTIONS
- (6) PROPOSED METHODOLOGY AND ANALYTICAL APPROACH
- (7) ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES (E.G. PUBLICATIONS OR PRESENTATIONS)
- (8) SUPPORTING LETTER FROM ACADEMIC SUPERVISOR/ADVISOR (FOR PHD/MASTER'S STUDENTS)