Guidelines for Teaching in the Common Unit Program

Presented on behalf of the:

Common Unit Management Group and

School of Academic Language and Learning

By Nicola Rolls

Theme Leader Common Units

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Contents

1.0 Introduction

Welcome to the Common Unit Program teaching team. We hope you will find the experience of working with our students at this crucial point of their transition to higher learning, fulfilling. In your teaching within common units, you will have an opportunity to work with our diverse first year population, enabling them to understand the expectations of university culture and acquire the academic skills and knowledge they need to succeed in their courses. You'll also have an opportunity to learn new pedagogies using innovative technologies and enjoy the benefits that shared knowledge and collaboration with a committed multidisciplinary team bring.

As part of the School of Academic Language and Learning (SALL), the program has an established role as a leader in best practice in supporting students' learning in innovative, student centred and culturally sensitive ways. Through E-learning studios and our online learning materials, we aim to engage all of our increasingly diverse student groups in valuable learning. We also have a strong commitment to collegial and reflective practice. Your experience and expertise is a valued component of the teaching and continued improvement of the program.

These general guidelines for teaching in common units are designed to give you an idea of the commitment required to be part of our teaching teams and act as a resource for dealing with the administrative aspects of your role. Importantly, they help ensure we have a consistent approach to pedagogy, assessment and standards across the Common Unit Program. These guidelines are also an important component of the charter of the School of Academic Language and Learning (SALL) to provide students with a positive, supportive and fruitful experience in their transition into university study.

The guiding documents informing our policies and practice are drawn from the CDU Governance Rules and the Centre for Higher Education Studies.

Please read through this document along with your introductory letter and submit the attached signatory page with your contracts to confirm that you have understood that these are a requirement of your role tutoring in common units.

2.0 Approaches to Teaching & Learning

2.1 Learning Forums

2.1.1 Internal

Internal mode common units are conducted in 2 or 3 hour team taught tutorial sessions each week for 12 weeks a semester. Tutorials normally involve a presentation of key ideas for each week and the facilitation of experiential activities to help students learn the concepts presented. They are conducted in ELearning studios which are laptop and wireless enabled teaching spaces and the teaching approach is designed to incorporate these technologies.

2.1.2 External

External common units require students to work through concepts via online and hardcopy learning resources and discussion forums. Teaching for external mode is therefore more of a support role, where teaching staff interact through email, the phone, discussion forums and wimba. The teacher's role is to encourage students to participate regularly and to be available to provide assistance and clarification when students request it. Thus, there is a strong emphasis on communicating individually with students and being proactive in following up students who are struggling with tasks and in their attendance in weekly forums. Important teaching also occurs through assessments and feedback so the quality of the approach to this is paramount for students learning. This is outlined in the next section.

2.2 Teaching approach

A variety of models for teaching and learning have been used in the design and delivery of the common units all of which emphasise the importance of language learning in context, a recognition of the importance of individual's personal experience and knowledge, and the importance of learning through negotiation and collaboration. In recognition of the multidisciplinary nature of common units, students should be encouraged to practise the skills being learned in the context of their discipline studies.

2.3 Resources

The common units are resource based. The two literacies units CUC100 and CUC106 are supported by readings, an online learning guide and textbooks which provide teaching content for teachers as well as learning content students. CUC107 is supported by readings, an online learning resource and a comprehensive tutors' guide.

2.4 Assessment

2.4.1 Feedback

Because common units' assessment is formative, assignment feedback is a key learning device so feedback should be comprehensive in order that students understand in detail where they went wrong and carry this understanding to the next task.

It's important to explain errors in a meaningful way and in language your student will understand. For example a comment like "incorrect grammar" does not tell them why it's incorrect and how they can improve. If you correct the mistake using tracked changes and explain in brackets (e.g the subject (dogs) was in plural form and verb (barks) in singular so they don't match) this will be more useful for the student. If the student has completely misunderstood the task or errors are so extensive they affect readability, rather than spend time correcting the work, the student can be asked to resubmit after addressing the glaring problems (with the help of the ALLSP tutors).

Feedback should be encouraging and courteous while at the same time pointing out errors. The 'kiss-kick-kiss' method is a good one where students' efforts and achievements are acknowledged before their errors are highlighted. The feedback should then, where possible, end on an encouraging note, for example:

"Joe this assignment indicates considerable thought and effort, however the following aspects of your work need attention: … In all though, you have done well in capturing the key issues in relation to the topic."

Attached to this document is a model of the length and breadth of feedback we expect for assignments. We will provide specific examples of feedback for each assignment as part of the moderation exercise.

Note: When you enter grades and attach the students marked assignment in gradebook make sure you write a comment in the gradebook comment box telling the students to, for example, "*open the attached marked assignment for comments and important feedback to incorporate in future assignments".* This way they are aware that an explanation for their mark has been provided and they are reminded to use the feedback to learn.

2.4.2 Discussion Forums

Students may need initial encouragement to contribute to discussion forums if they haven't used them before. They should be reminded that these are designed to help them think through and share ideas about what they are learning each week so need to be done weekly not all at once at the end of semester.

Meaningful input from the tutor in these discussions helps as does the occasional reminder that discussion forums are part of their assessment. However, while it is important to have a presence in discussion forums it's equally important not to dominate them. We ask that the tutor makes at least one contribution each week to the weekly forum. (NB That is one contribution to each forum not to each student.)

2.4.3 Moderation

Assignments are moderated before grades are finalised. A good way to ensure your marking and standards are consistent with other tutors is to maintain objectivity by basing your judgement of students work *only* on the assignment task requirements and assessment criteria provided in the UI.

2.4.4 Assignment Turnaround

Assignment turn around for short assignments should be preferably by the next week; for longer ones a **maximum 2 weeks**. All final assignments must be marked by the time the examiners' meeting is held (except where students have extensions beyond this date).

2.4.5 Resubmission

The common unit's principle aim is to ensure students acquire a foundation in skills and knowledge which they apply and refine throughout their degree studies. Because the approach to assessment in common units is formative, it is important that they are given the opportunity to learn from assignment feedback and utilise this to improve and acquire the skills necessary to successfully complete that assignment.

Therefore resubmission of assignments should be offered to students where they have made every effort to complete the task correctly but have either misunderstood a fundamental requirement of the task or not or not quite met the standard. The resubmission is allowed on the proviso that they:

- Can only achieve a pass grade

- Must resubmit within an agreed time fame.

If you are uncertain about whether a student should be offered resubmission discuss this with the coordinator or Theme Leader.

2.5 Student grievances, plagiarism

If you encounter any general problems with your students over assessment grades, plagiarism or any other issue please email the unit coordinator and cc the Theme Leader Common Units and they will support you in managing the issue within guidelines.

Following recent faculty policy, if you receive a complaint from a student your response to the complaint should be checked with the theme leader first.

3. 0 Administration

3.1 Class Lists

The coordinator will provide an initial list for your class but you will need to keep the role every week updated.

3.2 Grades

Tutors should keep a record of all students enrolled and allocate grades (in grade book) for each assignment as it arrives. At the end of the semester, where possible, tutors attend an examinations meeting and provide the unit coordinator with final grades for each unit.

A student who achieves a grade of between 45-50 should normally be awarded a PC grade, any exception to this will be discussed at the SALL examination meeting, where grades for all common units are presented before being entered onto the student system.

3.3 Exemptions/ withdrawals etc

Let the students know we are happy to consider applications for recognition of prior learning if they think they have the skills/knowledge covered in parts of or in the entire unit.

Note: Tertiary Enabling Program (TEP) students who achieve a credit or more in the TEP core units are eligible for a credit transfer for CUC100/106

Interested students should make a time to speak to the unit co-ordinator if they want to explore the exemption option. They should check the guidelines for recognition of prior learning on the common unit website first: http://learnline.cdu.edu.au/commonunits/

3.4 Meeting Times

Participation in meetings (either virtually though email/phone hook-up or in person if you are on campus) is an expectation of your contract as these are important way of mentoring and supporting each other and ensuring consistent approaches to teaching and marking.

3.4.1 Weekly meetings

For internal students a brief team meeting for each unit will be held (usually over coffee) each week to trouble shoot the following week's program.

3.4.2 Moderation meetings

We meet just after the due date for each assignment to conduct moderation and other business.

3.5 Your feedback

As you teach in the units/s we welcome your feedback and input about course materials, assignments and teaching approaches. The moderation sessions and final examination meeting are the usual forum for these but feel free to email additional ideas, suggestions and thoughts to the coordinator and theme leader.

Your input is then incorporated into discussions by the unit review committee which meets at least twice a year.

P.S We also welcome any feedback regarding typos, discrepancies in the textbooks and other learning materials.

3.6 Learnline Workshops

If you are not confident with using Learnline you can access either online or on-campus workshops offered by the CDU Teaching and Learning Quality group (TLQG).

For more info see: http://www.learnline.cdu.edu.au/t4l/elearning/learnline.html

4.0 Supporting students learning

4.1 Extensions

Students need to attempt to follow the due dates however we aim to be flexible with extensions (particularly for external students) within reason. **Guidelines**: If extensions are requested they should get them without penalty. If they are not requested then the students can get a maximum of a pass and no resubmission.

4.2 Attendance

Students (Internal) should be told that the expectation for attendance at tutorials is a minimum 80%. However, although an 80% class attendance is encouraged it is not a compulsory university rule.

4.2.1 Changing to external mode

One of the aims of the common units is to provide a range of modes and forums for learning. So, where students find, for timetabling or other reasons, that they prefer to work through materials online they should be allowed to discuss this option with you. If there request is made before census date they should be advised to change their enrolment changed to external mode. If it is after census date, they can continue to be marked as internal on the role but participate as an external student.

4.3 Assignments

Should all be submitted online through Gradebook. There are quick tutes on using gradebook on the learnline home page. CUC100 students also learn how to use gradebook in week 2 of the semester they are enrolled in the unit.

4.4 Negotiating guidelines for each class

As part of introductions in week 1 you might like to work with the students to establish particular guidelines for your class, for example, punctuality, not interrupting, use of mobiles, using facebook, break-time. Some students prefer to work straight through and finish the tutorial 10 minutes earlier.

4.5 Support for lower English literacy students

Students for whom English is not a first language may need additional support with understanding assignments and reading as well as correcting the grammar in their writing. For them each academic task will require considerably more time to complete and the pressure on their time and mental/emotional resources will tend to be greater than for English speaking students. Accents may affect the clarity of oral presentations, contributions to class discussion and communication in general so consideration of these cultural nuances should be built in to your practice and not obscure appreciation of their ability to think and understand concepts.

For ESL students it useful to remind yourself that you are not looking for perfect grammar but rather ideas and structures so ask yourself if the ideas are coming through. This is more important then perfect grammar. While they may lose marks for editing or correct grammar this should not cloud your evaluation of other aspects of the task like structure and content unless grammar is so poor it completely interferes with clarity of ideas.

The English language levels of these students in first year will generally range from IELTS 5 to IELTS 6. (IELTS is the most widely used language testing system.) Although the official entry is 6 a number of students gain entry through VET and other means that do not require a 6. See Appendix C for an indication of the level of language competence you can expect from these levels and the levels of competence recommended for operating at an academic level of language (6.5 or higher). This will illustrate the considerable challenges they face with the language requirements of their study.

Beyond this time and consideration which are a normal part of supporting students' individual needs, students with lower English literacy may need also to be referred for additional support. As soon as you become aware of their need for support (normally after the first assignment has been marked) send their details to the Theme Leader for Common Units so that appropriate support can be arranged.

Note: Quick tips for supporting ESL learners will be provided for staff as a separate document.

Appendix A: Example of the marking and feedback required.

Grade book entry on Learnline

Grade 66.5/100

Comment box
Hi J…
Please see attached for detailed feedback within your assignment and at the end of criteria sheet. This feedback will help you improve your writing in future assignments
Cheers
R…

Assignment and criteria attached in gradebook (coversheet removed for anonymity)

Dyer,J. 2009, "How Communication Works", *The Business Communication Handbook, Pearson Education, Australia.*

Dyer (2009) writes his article about the ideas of communication and how it can benefit you in the work place. He goes on to say that communication can be verbal and non verbal communication. He writes that communication must be between two people for it to work properly. Dyer then goes onto the seven steps of communication as well as exploring how noise and outside interferences can interfere with communication. Dyer's next section is devoted to communication in the work place and how the flow will impact the effectiveness of the conversation. Also he incorporates the idea of ethics when it comes to communication and says that a person (avoid personal pronouns like 'I' and 'you') must be fair and act honestly in the work place. Finally he goes on to explore communication in a multicultural society, which he says is ongoing and that communication may not be as effective due to cultural barriers. He concludes the article with stating communication is one thing that can lead to a successful workplace.

Dyer's article is very contemporary in a sense that it is completely easy to relate to someone from this generation. It does not contain bias as he explores all the areas of communication. Communication is one of the key factors in teaching as children interoperate?? interpret? what their teachers are trying to teach them. Teachers need to develop excellent communication skills and create a engaging ("fun" is too informal a word to use for academic writing) environment in which the children are willing to learn so communication is easier. A child is not going to learn if a teacher is not communicating with them properly. Dyer's article presents the factors to communication and states how to overcome adversity so your information in received and encoded by the listener. The points the author raises are relevant

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to teacher and the context is very open to who is reading it due to its contemporary nature. All teachers should posses these qualities.

Hall, D, 1996."Protean careers in the 21st century", *Academy of Management Executive,* **Vol. 10, No 4.**

Hall (1996) suggests to his audience that in this day and age it is more common for someone to adapt and change career paths as opposed to the old fashioned climbing of the corporal ladder also known as a protean career.(a bit informal/colloquial) A protean career is important because it will give a person psychological success and have something to pride themselves in. Hall also says that continuous learning is needed and a person must commit themselves to this new career. Its more personal in a sense that its more about the person and not what they know how to do but their ability to learn how to adapt in your working environment. Also in a protean career a person needs to agree with the work they are doing (need to explain this more what do you mean agree with it – do you mean feall committed to the ethics of the work?). The protean career is more suited to people willing to keep their 'heart' within the workplace. Protean careers also fit into both categories of long and short term goals and a person should set 'realistic' goals. As well as that a person needs the desire to learn and continue to learn. He also argues that a person needs to make connections as well as be independent, do not think someone else will do the job for you. He finishes with saying you need to learn about yourself, learning differently with different people and about people who are different.

(Hall's article is very light hearted and optimistic.Really? He gives a sense of being able to do anything under this new world that contains the protean career. The author dives into this concept and discusses what it takes to make it work and he compels his reader to really try and make it work in a protean career. This kind of comment is what you would find in a critique but is not required for this annotated bibliography. You were asked only to comment on its relevance to your essay topic)

The article is relevant to considerations about trends in the teaching profession because the world of teaching is always changing and adapting as newer generations go into school. Technology is one big factor in how fast school is changing. Also new teaching methods are being discovered and teachers just need to be flexible to accept these new ideas and not reject them.

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Smith, R. 1995, 'Guidelines for critical thinking', *Challenging Your Preconceptions: Thinking Critically about Psychology* **, Brooks/Cole, Pacific Grove, CA, pp. 1-8.**

Smith (1995) argues the point of how critical thinkers think and how they challenge themselves in thinking critically. Smith goes through numerous steps in order to discuss (to his readers the surgery ??) that goes into dissembling an article to get the right information. First he says they must be flexible they need to be able to deal with ambiguity reframe from looking at the world in black and white. They need to understand there are more colours out there in the world you need to explain this metaphor. Next they need to discover if the author is showing any means of bias. Usually an author has a hidden agenda and it clouds their judgment and their article may become one sided.

The author lists the do's and don'ts for critical thinking which include the following. If you do encounter bias, choose another article and compare it to this one. Next you must maintain an air of skepticism. Make sure your answers are not too (far-fetched what does this mean?). You need a skeptical attitude towards ideas and accept simple facts (of science he didn't say that). As well as that, separate facts from opinions because opinions do not have the necessary criteria to back you up. Once you have your analysis make sure you do not over simplify because the world is a complicated place and it is very complex. Use logical inference processes as well, rethinking the validity and accuracy of ideas and assertions. Finally never jump to conclusions, make sure you have the information and evidence to back up your final statement before you go and draw a line of conclusion.

Smith's article is a process of preparing and giving advice on thinking critically. The author intends on giving detailed pre-steps to get the readers mind ready (for when it is time to read an article critically he's not just talking about reading article critically but also approaching life from a critical thinking perspective). Teachers often need to read over articles they give to their class because they themselves need to see if it is valid or not before they give it to their class. More importantly teachers needs to constantly respond to challenges to do with diversity of students and the effects of rapid technological and societal change on their profession. This requires them to think critically, without bias and in creative ways.

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Assignment 2: Assessment Criteria	
Text organisation & bibliographical formatting 5 marks	**4**
• Each individual reading summary has a heading comprised of the bibliographical details? **1**	1
• Bibliographical details formatted in **bold** using **hanging indent** (with first line at margin and the indent set at 1cm) and **italics** where appropriate **3**	2
• Bibliographical details and summaries follow one after the other (as per example). **1**	1
Content 30 marks Reading 6.1	**24**
• Are the bibliographical details correctly referenced using the Harvard style? **2**	2
• Does the summary capture the meaning of the text with only the main points summarised? **12** some meanings are distorted a bit	9
• Have the original ideas been paraphrased and summarised rather than copied or quoted? **3**	2.5
• Does the writing express conceptual clarity? **3**	2.5
• Is the writing grammatically correct? **4**	4
• uses formal/academic tone? **2**	1
• is the required length? **2**	1
• has been thoroughly edited and proofread for spelling and punctuation? **2**	2
Content 30 Reading 7.1	**19.5**
• Are the bibliographical details correctly referenced using the Harvard style? 2	2
• Does the summary capture the meaning of the text with only the main points summarised? **12** A bit too wordy	7
• Have the original ideas been paraphrased and summarised rather than copied or quoted? **3**	2
• Does the writing express conceptual clarity? **3**	1.5
• Is the writing grammatically correct? **4**	3.5
• uses formal/academic tone? **2 too conversational/colloquial in places**	1
• is the required length? **2**	1.5
• has been thoroughly edited and proofread for spelling and punctuation? 2	1

Content 30 Reading 2.1	**14**
• Are the bibliographical details correctly referenced using the Harvard style? 2	2
• Does the summary capture the meaning of the text with only the main points summarised? **12**	5
• Have the original ideas been paraphrased and summarised rather than copied or quoted? 3	1
• Does the writing express conceptual clarity? 3	1.5
• Is the writing grammatically correct? 4	3.5
• uses formal/academic tone? 2	0
• is the required length? 2	1
• has been thoroughly edited and proofread for spelling and punctuation? 2	0
Presentation (as per assignment one) 5 Assignment 2 has been word-processed and presented with:	**5**
• document contains required, concise file name 1	1
• a completed cover sheet attached as Page 1 of the document? 1	1
• correct margin settings? 1	1
• appropriate information in the header and footer? 1	1
• suitable text styles for Heading 1 and Body text? 1	1
Comments Hi (students first name) Your first summary was well written but the next two required some work. You must be very careful to avoid personal pronouns (I, we, you) and chatty colloquial language in academic writing. You did not always represent the original accurately and your comments on the relevance of the articles to your profession could have been developed further. Please also take the time to edit your work before submitting. Overall you showed that you understood the readings and you have made a good start in mastering the skills of summarizing and paraphrasing. Regards (tutor first name)	**66.5**

Appendix B: HE Grading definition

(from CDU Council Assessment Rules 2009)

Notation	Grade & Explanation	Percentage
HD	High Distinction Demonstrates imagination, originality or flair, based on proficiency in all learning objectives of the unit; work is interesting or surprisingly exciting, challenging, well read or scholarly.	85% and over
D	Distinction Demonstrates awareness and understanding of deeper and less obvious aspects of the unit, such as ability to identify and debate critical issues or problems, ability to solve non routine problems, ability to adapt and apply ideas to new situations, and ability to evaluate new ideas.	75% - 84%
C	Credit Demonstrates ability to use and apply fundamental concepts and skills of the unit, going beyond mere replication of content knowledge or skill to show understanding of key ideas, awareness of their relevance, some use of analytical skills, and some originality or insight.	60% - 74%
P	Pass Satisfies all of the basic learning requirements of the unit, such as knowledge of fundamental concepts and performance of basic skills; demonstrates satisfactory, adequate, competent, or capable achievement of the objectives of the unit.	50% - 59%
F	Fail Fails to satisfy the requirements of the unit.	Below 50%
PC	Pass Conceded This grade is used when a student falls short of satisfying all basic requirements for a Pass but can be granted concession for the deficiencies through: • Being close to satisfactory overall; or • Having compensating strengths in some aspects of the unit; or • Having compensating strengths in other units; or • Other evidence of achievement in relation to the objectives of the course.	45 – 49

Appendix C: English language level
Levels recommended for academic courses

Band	Linguistically demanding **academic** courses	Linguistically less demanding **academic** courses	Linguistically demanding **training** courses	Linguistically less demanding **training** courses
7.5-9.0	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
7.0	Probably acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
6.5	English study needed	Probably acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
6.0	English study needed	English study needed	Probably acceptable	Acceptable
5.5	English study needed	English study needed	English study needed	Probably acceptable

The appropriate level for entry to your institution is something that you decide. We will, however, provide any advice and assistance you may need.

Guidance on setting appropriate band score requirements in provided in the 'IELTS Scores Explained' DVD (available from www.ielts.org). The DVD also contains detailed descriptions of the test components, sample test materials and examples of candidates' writing and speaking performances at different band levels.

Test scores

IELTS provides a profile of a candidates ability to use English.

Results are reported as band scores, on a scale from 1 (the lowest) to 9 (the highest), as shown.

IELTS Band Scores	
9	Expert user
8	Very good user
7	Good user
6	Competent user
5	Modest user
4	Limited user
3	Extremely limited user
2	Intermittent user
1	Non user
0	Did not attempt the test

Candidates received an overall band score as well as individual scores for each test component (Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking).

The IELTS Band Scores

Each band corresponds to a level of English competence.

Band 9	**Expert user**	has fully operational command of the language: appropriate, accurate and fluent with complete understanding.
Band 8	**Very good user**	has fully operational command of the language with only occasional unsystematic inaccuracies and inappropriacies. Misunderstandings may occur in unfamiliar situations. Handles complex detailed argumentation well.
Band 7	**Good user**	has operational command of the language, though with occasional inaccuracies, inappropriacies and misunderstandings in some situations. Generally handles complex language well and understands detailed reasoning.
Band 6	**Competent user**	has generally effective command of the language despite some inaccuracies, inappropriacies and misunderstandings. Can use and understand fairly complex language, particularly in familiar situations.
Band 5	**Modest user**	has partial command of the language, coping with overall meaning in most situations, though is likely to make many mistakes. Should be able to handle basic communication in own field.
Band 4	**Limited user**	basic competence is limited to familiar situations. Has frequent problems in understanding and expression. Is not able to use complex language.
Band 3	**Extremely limited user**	conveys and understands only general meaning in very familiar situations. Frequent breakdowns in communication occur.
Band 2	**Intermittent user**	no real communication is possible except for the most basic information using isolated words or short formulae in familiar situations and to meet immediate needs. Has great difficulty understanding spoken and written English.
Band 1	**Non-user**	essentially has no ability to use the language beyond possibly a few isolated words.
Band 0	**Did not attempt the test**	No assessable information provided.

IELTS Speaking band descriptors (public version)

Band	Fluency and coherence	Lexical resource	Grammatical range and accuracy	Pronunciation
9	• speaks fluently with only rare repetition or self-correction; any hesitation is content-related rather than to find words or grammar • speaks coherently with fully appropriate cohesive features • develops topics fully and appropriately	• uses vocabulary with full flexibility and precision in all topics • uses idiomatic language naturally and accurately	• uses a full range of structures naturally and appropriately • produces consistently accurate structures apart from 'slips' characteristic of native speaker speech	• uses a full range of pronunciation features with precision and subtlety • sustains flexible use of features throughout • is effortless to understand
8	• speaks fluently with only occasional repetition or self-correction; hesitation is usually content-related and only rarely to search for language • develops topics coherently and appropriately	• uses a wide vocabulary resource readily and flexibly to convey precise meaning • uses less common and idiomatic vocabulary skilfully, with occasional inaccuracies • uses paraphrase effectively as required	• uses a wide range of structures flexibly • produces a majority of error-free sentences with only very occasional inappropriacies or basic/non-systematic errors	• uses a wide range of pronunciation features • sustains flexible use of features, with only occasional lapses • is easy to understand throughout; L1 accent has minimal effect on intelligibility
7	• speaks at length without noticeable effort or loss of coherence • may demonstrate language-related hesitation at times, or some repetition and/or self-correction • uses a range of connectives and discourse markers with some flexibility	• uses vocabulary resource flexibly to discuss a variety of topics • uses some less common and idiomatic vocabulary and shows some awareness of style and collocation, with some inappropriate choices • uses paraphrase effectively	• uses a range of complex structures with some flexibility • frequently produces error-free sentences, though some grammatical mistakes persist	• shows all the positive features of Band 6 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 8
6	• is willing to speak at length, though may lose coherence at times due to occasional repetition, self-correction or hesitation • uses a range of connectives and discourse markers but not always appropriately	• has a wide enough vocabulary to discuss topics at length and make meaning clear in spite of inappropriacies • generally paraphrases successfully	• uses a mix of simple and complex structures, but with limited flexibility • may make frequent mistakes with complex structures, though these rarely cause comprehension problems	• uses a range of pronunciation features with mixed control • shows some effective use of features but this is not sustained • can generally be understood throughout, though mispronunciation of individual words or sounds reduces clarity at times
5	• usually maintains flow of speech but uses repetition, self-correction and/or slow speech to keep going • may over-use certain connectives and discourse markers • produces simple speech fluently, but more complex communication causes fluency problems	• manages to talk about familiar and unfamiliar topics but uses vocabulary with limited flexibility • attempts to use paraphrase but with mixed success	• produces basic sentence forms with reasonable accuracy • uses a limited range of more complex structures, but these usually contain errors and may cause some comprehension problems	• shows all the positive features of Band 4 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 6
4	• cannot respond without noticeable pauses and may speak slowly, with frequent repetition and self-correction • links basic sentences but with repetitious use of simple connectives and some breakdowns in coherence	• is able to talk about familiar topics but can only convey basic meaning on unfamiliar topics and makes frequent errors in word choice • rarely attempts paraphrase	• produces basic sentence forms and some correct simple sentences but subordinate structures are rare • errors are frequent and may lead to misunderstanding	• uses a limited range of pronunciation features • attempts to control features but lapses are frequent • mispronunciations are frequent and cause some difficulty for the listener
3	• speaks with long pauses • has limited ability to link simple sentences • gives only simple responses and is frequently unable to convey basic message	• uses simple vocabulary to convey personal information • has insufficient vocabulary for less familiar topics	• attempts basic sentence forms but with limited success, or relies on apparently memorised utterances • makes numerous errors except in memorised expressions	• shows some of the features of Band 2 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 4
2	• pauses lengthily before most words • little communication possible	• only produces isolated words or memorised utterances	• cannot produce basic sentence forms	• speech is often unintelligible
1	• no communication possible • no rateable language			
0	• does not attend			

IELTS Task 1 Writing band descriptors (public version)

Band	Task Achievement	Coherence and Cohesion	Lexical Resource	Grammatical Range and Accuracy
9	• fully satisfies all the requirements of the task • clearly presents a fully developed response	• uses cohesion in such a way that it attracts no attention • skilfully manages paragraphing	• uses a wide range of vocabulary with very natural and sophisticated control of lexical features; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips'	• uses a wide range of structures with full flexibility and accuracy; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips'
8	• covers all requirements of the task sufficiently • presents, highlights and illustrates key features / bullet points clearly and appropriately	• sequences information and ideas logically • manages all aspects of cohesion well • uses paragraphing sufficiently and appropriately	• uses a wide range of vocabulary fluently and flexibly to convey precise meanings • skilfully uses uncommon lexical items but there may be occasional inaccuracies in word choice and collocation • produces rare errors in spelling and/or word formation	• uses a wide range of structures • the majority of sentences are error-free • makes only very occasional errors or inappropriacies
7	• covers the requirements of the task • (Academic) presents a clear overview of main trends, differences or stages • (General Training) presents a clear purpose, with the tone consistent and appropriate • clearly presents and highlights key features / bullet points but could be more fully extended	• logically organises information and ideas; there is clear progression throughout • uses a range of cohesive devices appropriately although there may be some under-/over-use	• uses a sufficient range of vocabulary to allow some flexibility and precision • uses less common lexical items with some awareness of style and collocation • may produce occasional errors in word choice, spelling and/or word formation	• uses a variety of complex structures • produces frequent error-free sentences • has good control of grammar and punctuation but may make a few errors
6	• addresses the requirements of the task • (Academic) presents an overview with information appropriately selected • (General Training) presents a purpose that is generally clear; there may be inconsistencies in tone • presents and adequately highlights key features / bullet points but details may be irrelevant, inappropriate or inaccurate	• arranges information and ideas coherently and there is a clear overall progression • uses cohesive devices effectively, but cohesion within and/or between sentences may be faulty or mechanical • may not always use referencing clearly or appropriately	• uses an adequate range of vocabulary for the task • attempts to use less common vocabulary but with some inaccuracy • makes some errors in spelling and/or word formation, but they do not impede communication	• uses a mix of simple and complex sentence forms • makes some errors in grammar and punctuation but they rarely reduce communication

5	▪ generally addresses the task; the format may be inappropriate in places ▪ (Academic) recounts detail mechanically with no clear overview; there may be no data to support the description ▪ (General Training) may present a purpose for the letter that is unclear at times; the tone may be variable and sometimes inappropriate ▪ presents, but inadequately covers, key features / bullet points; there may be a tendency to focus on details	▪ presents information with some organisation but there may be a lack of overall progression ▪ makes inadequate, inaccurate or over-use of cohesive devices ▪ may be repetitive because of lack of referencing and substitution	▪ uses a limited range of vocabulary, but this is minimally adequate for the task ▪ may make noticeable errors in spelling and/or word formation that may cause some difficulty for the reader	▪ uses only a limited range of structures ▪ attempts complex sentences but these tend to be less accurate than simple sentences ▪ may make frequent grammatical errors and punctuation may be faulty; errors can cause some difficulty for the reader
4	▪ attempts to address the task but does not cover all key features / bullet points; the format may be inappropriate ▪ (General Training) fails to clearly explain the purpose of the letter; the tone may be inappropriate ▪ may confuse key features / bullet points with detail; parts may be unclear, irrelevant, repetitive or inaccurate	▪ presents information and ideas but these are not arranged coherently and there is no clear progression in the response ▪ uses some basic cohesive devices but these may be inaccurate or repetitive	▪ uses only basic vocabulary which may be used repetitively or which may be inappropriate for the task ▪ has limited control of word formation and/or spelling; ▪ errors may cause strain for the reader	▪ uses only a very limited range of structures with only rare use of subordinate clauses ▪ some structures are accurate but errors predominate, and punctuation is often faulty
3	▪ fails to address the task, which may have been completely misunderstood ▪ presents limited ideas which may be largely irrelevant/repetitive	▪ does not organise ideas logically ▪ may use a very limited range of cohesive devices, and those used may not indicate a logical relationship between ideas	▪ uses only a very limited range of words and expressions with very limited control of word formation and/or spelling ▪ errors may severely distort the message	▪ attempts sentence forms but errors in grammar and punctuation predominate and distort the meaning
2	▪ answer is barely related to the task	▪ has very little control of organisational features	▪ uses an extremely limited range of vocabulary; essentially no control of word formation and/or spelling	▪ cannot use sentence forms except in memorised phrases
1	▪ answer is completely unrelated to the task	▪ fails to communicate any message	▪ can only use a few isolated words	▪ cannot use sentence forms at all
0	▪ does not attend ▪ does not attempt the task in any way ▪ writes a totally memorised response			