



Demand for IELTS Certification in Uzbekistan: Trends and Changes

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Abstract: This article explores the growing demand for the IELTS exam in Uzbekistan, especially among students and professionals seeking international education and employment opportunities. Using a descriptive method, it highlights the reasons behind this trend, including global mobility, academic ambitions, and government scholarship programs. The article presents results based on observed trends and offers a discussion on the implications for language learners and educational institutions. (El-Yurt Umidi Foundation, 2023).

Key Words: IELTS, Uzbekistan, English proficiency, education, global mobility, language learning, scholarships

Introduction

In recent years, Uzbekistan has seen a significant increase in the demand for International English Language Testing System (IELTS) certification. This surge reflects broader educational reforms and a growing aspiration among youth and professionals to engage with global academic and professional environments. English language skills are no longer a luxury but a necessity for those seeking to study, work, or live abroad. As



such, many Uzbek citizens now regard IELTS as a fundamental stepping stone to international success. Government-supported initiatives such as the ‘El-Yurt Umidi’ scholarship, which supports overseas education, play a crucial role in this rising demand. Likewise, the emergence of English-centric businesses and industries in the local market emphasizes the value of language proficiency. Moreover, the rapid growth of private language centers offering IELTS preparation courses has enhanced access and motivation, particularly in urban areas. (British Council, 2024; World Bank, 2023).

Methods

To evaluate the rising demand for IELTS in Uzbekistan, this study draws on a variety of sources. These include statistical reports from official IELTS test centers operated by the British Council and IDP, government publications addressing employment and educational reforms, and feedback collected from surveys distributed among IELTS candidates. The research focuses on the period from 2018 to 2024, a time marked by dramatic changes in both educational policy and career outlooks. Key metrics examined include the annual increase in IELTS registrations, regional distribution of test centers, and the primary motivations behind test participation—whether for academic, migration, or employment purposes. This multi-source approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of the evolving linguistic landscape in the country. (IDP Education, 2024; British Council, 2024).

Results

Findings indicate a consistent and substantial growth in the number of IELTS candidates in Uzbekistan over the past six years. According to statistics from IDP and the British Council, the number of test takers has quadrupled since 2018. Several core drivers contribute to this trend:

1. International Education: A greater number of Uzbek students are applying to universities in English-speaking nations such as the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and the United States, where IELTS is often a mandatory requirement.
2. Migration Opportunities: A growing segment of the population is exploring permanent



or temporary residence options abroad. Many countries demand proof of English proficiency through IELTS for visa and immigration processes.

3. Professional Development: Major firms in fields like information technology, finance, hospitality, and international trade prioritize hiring individuals with demonstrated English skills, often requiring or encouraging IELTS certification. (British Council, 2024).

As shown in the table below, the number of test takers continues to rise year over year:

Year	Number of Test Takers
2018	10,000
2019	15,000
2020	18,500
2021	25,000
2022	30,000
2023	35,000
2024	40,000

Discussion

The upward trend in IELTS participation highlights Uzbekistan’s strategic orientation toward global integration. National scholarship schemes, particularly ‘El-Yurt Umidi,’ offer financial support for high-achieving students to pursue degrees abroad, provided they meet strict IELTS score thresholds. Additionally, several local universities have begun requiring IELTS results as part of their admission criteria, marking a shift toward English-medium instruction. In the corporate sector, companies aiming to expand internationally often expect English-speaking staff, reinforcing the importance of formal certification. While alternative assessments such as TOEFL and PTE are becoming more familiar, IELTS remains the most popular option due to its credibility, accessibility, and preparation infrastructure. Furthermore, the government's promotion of English learning at earlier stages of education will likely sustain this momentum in the coming years. (World Bank, 2023).



Conclusion

In conclusion, the growing popularity of IELTS in Uzbekistan is a clear reflection of the country's educational transformation and rising international ambitions. Whether for academic mobility, skilled migration, or professional advancement, English language certification is becoming indispensable. IELTS, in particular, is poised to maintain its dominant role due to its widespread acceptance and relevance. As more Uzbeks seek global opportunities, continued investment in English instruction and exam preparation will be essential for sustaining this progress. (Kamilov, 2019).

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