



We believe fair tests
should be as **secure** as
possible

Cheating is unfair and undermines the
efforts of the honest majority. We
believe PTE Academic is the most secure
test of academic English in the world.

Test security focuses on protecting the confidentiality of test content, ensuring that tests are administered in such a way that test takers are not able to gain an unfair advantage through cheating and providing confidence that the results received are genuine and represent the true ability of the test taker.

Delivered through Pearson's highly secure test centers, state-of-the-art biometrics are applied to ensure the security of the testing process for PTE Academic. These include using digital photographs, palm-vein scanning and electronic signatures to authenticate test taker identity. Test center administrators also implement video and audio monitoring in the test center to provide the highest level of security. To protect test content, PTE Academic uses secure question banking software and unique test forms are randomized to minimize question exposure and fraud.

What this means for you and your institution:

- PTE Academic's stringent security checks mean you can have more confidence that the scores you receive are based on the work of the actual student
- PTE Academic students are required to prove their ability to effectively communicate in English, not their ability to memorize. This means they are more likely to effectively contribute to your institution
- Accepting PTE Academic test takers means you reduce the risk of disruption to teaching and learning as a result of students admitted with fraudulent scores
- PTE Academic security measures ensure greater compliance with government visa policies and therefore less risk of damage to your institution's reputation

We demonstrate the security of PTE Academic in the following ways:

1

Randomized test forms

Each PTE Academic test is built from a large pool of content and through a process of using the best possible assembly, each test ends up with an almost identical level of difficulty. The test taker is therefore presented with a test that is of comparable difficulty to the tests set to other test takers but with a different compilation of questions. The tests are assigned randomly to test takers. In this way no two test takers will be taking the same test at the same time in the same test center and it is highly unlikely that they will have more than two or three questions in common. This makes attempts at communicating test content to other test takers futile, reduces the likelihood of test memorization, and renders the organized gathering of test questions almost impossible. With most other tests all the test takers in one session will sit the same test at the same time, increasing the risk of test fraud.

This demonstrates that PTE Academic reduces the risk of copying within the test center and the organized theft of test questions.

2

Paperless testing

From registration through to the final delivery of results, PTE Academic is the only fully computerized, paperless, academic English language test in the world. Paperless testing further enhances test security by eliminating the possibility of exam papers being copied, stolen, leaked or lost. It also prevents certificates from being forged.

At its test centers Pearson uses the following test and test taker data security procedures:

Prior to their appointment, the data required to admit a test taker and deliver a test are automatically downloaded from Pearson's central hub. This is done via a protected communications link and stored securely on the test center file-server for subsequent test delivery. Biometric data is collected from the test taker at the time of admission, captured by the system, and stored securely on the test center file-server. While on the server, the biometric data is protected from unauthorized access by numerous safeguards (including network access restrictions and a locked server room).

During test delivery, questions are individually decrypted for presentation to the test taker. Responses are individually written to the encrypted results file. At no time during test delivery is more than one question or response available to the system in an unencrypted form.

Following test delivery, the test results file and biometric data are packaged for upload to the Pearson hub. No data remains in the test center.

Users of the PTE Academic Results Service access score reports via a secure verification website. In order to avoid the potential for forgery, only PTE Academic scores stored on this site are guaranteed to be authentic. Both test takers and score report users have secure login credentials to enable them to access score data.

PTE Academic is the only major test of academic English that is entirely paperless for both the test delivery and the certification. By removing paper altogether PTE Academic can guarantee a greater level of security.

3

Consistent use of test security measures across all centers

PTE Academic is the only major academic English test that uses test security measures consistently across all centers. This includes three types of biometrics and video monitoring and recording. Other tests either do not use any biometrics, or if they do only use them in select test centers.

By using consistent security measures, PTE Academic guarantees an equally high level of security for all test results, no matter where the test is taken.

4

Palm vein authentication

All around the world, test centers that deliver PTE Academic are equipped with advanced palm vein recognition technology. These devices capture and recognize the unique patterns in a test taker's palm veins using non-intrusive scanning technology. During the check-in process a comparison is made between the pattern recorded and Pearson's "No Test List". This ensures that individuals who have previously been prohibited from testing are not able to do so under an assumed identity or as a proxy for another test taker. Furthermore all test taker identities are automatically verified when taking and returning from breaks.

The system also provides an enhanced service, known as 'one-to-many matching'. It is configured to compare each test taker's biometrics to an entire test taker database prior to the release of the test results. The system detects duplicate record creation, including proxy testing, and where duplicates are identified the results are automatically held whilst an investigation takes place.

PTE Academic is the only test to offer this type of biometric assessment as an automated security feature. This use of innovative technology demonstrates that PTE Academic is at the forefront of the fight against proxy test taking.

5

Invigilator to test taker ratios

The ratio of invigilators to test takers is an important indication of the level of test security within the test room. Lower ratios mean an increased level of vigilance of the individual test takers. PTE Academic has an invigilator to test taker ratio of 1:15 which is the lowest ratio of all the major academic English tests.