

ELTS Writing Task 2 Sample Questions 2026

Sample 1: IELTS Writing Task 2 (Opinion Essay)

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Write about the following topic:

Some people believe that universities should require all students to study at least one subject outside their main field of study, while others think students should focus only on their chosen discipline. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience. Write at least 250 words.

Answer for Band 7 Level

Introduction

It is argued by some that universities should make it compulsory for students to study subjects beyond their primary discipline, while others contend that academic focus should remain exclusively within a chosen field. I largely agree that exposure to broader subjects benefits students, though some degree of specialisation must be preserved.

Body paragraph 1

Studying outside one's main field encourages critical thinking and adaptability, qualities that modern employers value highly. A student of engineering who takes an economics module, for example, gains an understanding of market forces that can directly inform product development decisions. Furthermore, many contemporary challenges — climate change, public health crises — demand interdisciplinary responses, meaning graduates equipped with knowledge from multiple domains are better positioned to contribute meaningfully to society.

Body paragraph 2

However, requiring too many additional subjects risks diluting the depth of specialisation that certain professions demand. Medical or law students, for instance, must dedicate considerable time to mastering complex core content, and mandatory unrelated courses could reduce the time available for essential training. A more balanced approach would be to offer optional interdisciplinary modules rather than

enforcing them, allowing motivated students to broaden their horizons without compromising academic rigour.

Conclusion

In conclusion, while there are clear advantages to encouraging students to explore subjects outside their specialisation, universities should be cautious about making this a strict requirement. A flexible, incentive-based system would better serve the diverse needs of different academic disciplines and individual career goals.

Answer for Score Band 8 Level

Introduction

The question of whether universities should mandate cross-disciplinary study or allow students to concentrate solely on their chosen field is one that touches on the very purpose of higher education. While there is merit in deep specialisation, I firmly believe that requiring students to engage with at least one subject outside their discipline produces more versatile and intellectually capable graduates.

Body paragraph 1

One of the most compelling arguments for cross-disciplinary requirements is that it cultivates cognitive flexibility – the capacity to approach problems through multiple analytical lenses. A computer science student who studies philosophy, for instance, develops ethical reasoning skills that are increasingly vital as artificial intelligence reshapes society. Universities such as MIT and Stanford have long recognised this, embedding humanities and social science components within their STEM programmes precisely because narrow technical expertise, without broader contextual awareness, can lead to solutions that are efficient yet socially harmful.

Body paragraph 2

Critics rightly point out that compulsory breadth requirements may burden students whose disciplines are already demanding. Trainee surgeons or civil engineers must master intricate core content, and poorly designed mandates could dilute the rigour of their professional preparation. This concern, however, speaks to curriculum design rather than to the principle itself. When additional modules are thoughtfully integrated – concise, relevant, and assessed proportionately – they complement rather than compete with primary studies.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the benefits of structured cross-disciplinary exposure — sharper critical thinking, greater adaptability, and a more nuanced worldview — substantially outweigh the logistical challenges of implementation. Universities that embrace this model are not diluting academic standards; they are elevating them.

Answer for Score Band 9 Level

Introduction

Universities have long debated whether their role is to produce specialists or well-rounded thinkers. Those who advocate for disciplinary focus argue that depth of knowledge is the currency of professional competence, while proponents of broader curricula contend that intellectual silos produce graduates ill-equipped for a complex world. I would argue unequivocally that requiring students to engage meaningfully with at least one field beyond their own is not merely beneficial — it is essential to the integrity of a university education.

Body paragraph 1

The strongest case for cross-disciplinary study lies in real-world problems, which are resolutely indifferent to academic boundaries. Climate change, for instance, demands contributions from scientists, economists, sociologists, and ethicists simultaneously; a climate scientist oblivious to policy mechanisms, or an economist dismissive of ecological limits, is not merely incomplete — they are potentially dangerous. Research from Carnegie Mellon University's interdisciplinary programmes consistently demonstrates that students who engage across disciplines outperform their peers in innovation metrics, precisely because creativity flourishes at the intersection of distinct knowledge systems rather than at their respective centres.

Body paragraph 2

The objection that mandatory breadth compromises professional rigour deserves scrutiny rather than dismissal. It rests on a false premise: that intellectual time is zero-sum. In practice, a single well-designed module in, say, medical ethics or behavioural economics does not meaningfully erode a student's grasp of surgery or finance. What it does is fundamentally alter how that student perceives the human stakes of their expertise — a transformation that universities, as institutions committed to producing responsible citizens rather than mere technicians, are uniquely positioned to facilitate.

Conclusion

Ultimately, the debate reveals a deeper question: what is a university for? If the answer is vocational training alone, narrow specialisation suffices. If, however, universities aspire to cultivate individuals capable of navigating an interconnected and rapidly evolving world, cross-disciplinary study is not an optional enrichment — it is a foundational obligation.