

A woman with dark hair and glasses, wearing a red and blue plaid shirt, is standing in profile and writing on a whiteboard with a marker. The background is blurred, showing an indoor setting with some greenery.

## The Indonesian International Education Foundation uses the *TOEFL ITP*® test to help all eligible Indonesian citizens gain access to opportunities for advancement.

The Indonesian International Education Foundation (IIEF), a nonprofit located in South Jakarta, strives to help Indonesian citizens seize opportunities to improve their skills and quality of life, which helps develop a cadre of Indonesian leaders, businesspeople and professionals who strengthen the nation as a whole. It's a twofold mission the IIEF shares with the Indonesian government and many Indonesian colleges and universities, according to IIEF Director Diana Kartika Jahja.

Because academic English proficiency is very often a prerequisite for these opportunities, the IIEF positions the *TOEFL ITP*® Level 1 Test as a tool in awarding them. TOEFL ITP test scores, along with other selection criteria, are used to **grant scholarships**; admit students to colleges and universities; determine placement in English-language classrooms; monitor and measure English language learning; promote

students from English-language instruction; and select employees for professional training and advancement.

And a new purpose recently emerged as part of the Indonesian government's plan to help its economy recover from the COVID-19 pandemic: Using the TOEFL ITP test to **evaluate the English-language proficiency of college lecturers** in regions, such as tourism destinations, where English already plays a role in public life.

An important element of the nation's, and IIEF's, shared mission "is education and the quality of teachers and lecturers," explained Jahja, who is charged with devising the strategic plan for all IIEF programs. As the thinking goes, using TOEFL ITP test scores to ensure that teachers' English-language skills are strong should boost the English-language skills of their students and produce stronger Indonesian candidates for roles at home and abroad.

That the TOEFL ITP test represents “an international standard” makes it ideally suited to this goal, and dovetails with the government’s plan to grow international tourism by promoting Indonesia as “the new Bali,” she said.

“TOEFL ITP is the door to more opportunities,” Jahja stressed. It provides opportunities that are vital to people’s lives. Consequently, the IIEF strives to ensure all eligible Indonesians have access to the TOEFL ITP test, even those living in the most remote parts of the island country.

The IIEF supports as many as 350 testing sites nationwide to help it achieve this goal. Recently, as an unexpected result of helping test centers endure during the pandemic, the IIEF further increased access by leading the **transition from paper to digital TOEFL ITP testing**.

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—Diana K. Jahja, IIEF Director

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Here’s a closer look at how the IIEF and other Indonesian institutions use the TOEFL ITP test to move their shared mission forward.

## The importance of the TOEFL ITP test to scholarship programs in Indonesia ...

According to Jahja, domestic and international scholarships are a critical gateway to higher education, job training and promotions for Indonesians. After college, most graduates either try to get a scholarship or get a job, she said, adding, “Scholarships are something that many, many students try to get.”

Consequently, scholarship selection generates the most TOEFL ITP test takers for the IIEF, though many of these test takers use their scores for multiple purposes.

Most scholarship programs — like those funded by the Indonesian government or by foreign countries



Diana K. Jahja, IIEF Director

like the United States and Australia — include TOEFL ITP test scores among the criteria for their awards. “They believe in TOEFL ITP because it reflects international standards,” Jahja said. “The score is reliable and valid and helps them a lot in making the applicant pool smaller.”

Even with as many as 350 testing sites, the IIEF continues to expand access to the TOEFL ITP test to increase access to scholarships. “Access is still a problem because of our huge archipelago and the complexity of our country,” the director stressed. “That’s why we work with so many institutions — to make sure people don’t have any problems accessing the test.”

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“We believe that TOEFL ITP expands people’s opportunities. Our principle and our vision are that everybody who needs a scholarship, wherever they are, and whatever kind of infrastructure they have, has the same access to the test,” she said. “People in Papua, for example, have to have the same access as people in Jakarta.”

## Transitioning from paper to digital TOEFL ITP testing: A pandemic turning point.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, administration of the TOEFL ITP test in Indonesia was essentially “100% paper-delivered,” Jahja recalled. So, when the economy shut down as a strategy for halting transmission of the virus, TOEFL ITP testing centers were plunged into crisis. What they feared was a daunting transition to digital testing standing squarely between them and citizens poised to further their professional journeys. “That was quite challenging. They didn’t know whether they had the capacity to do that.”

To overcome the challenge, the IIEF relied on two of its core strengths. First, “the fact that we are a nonprofit really gives us leverage in working in this education arena,” she said. Meaning, they already had the testing sites’ trust. And second, the IIEF had previously piloted providing one-on-one remote support to scholarship clients and could now use the strategy to help test centers.

“I have to give credit to my team, because once the pandemic happened, one of the very first things my team did was work together,” Jahja remembered.

“Everybody was nervous. They didn’t know what would happen.” Using weekly Zoom® meetings, IIEF team members led testing center employees through the transition to TOEFL ITP digital testing, step-by-step, providing reassurance along the way. “We’re in this together,” she added.

“It really, really made a difference,” she said. Near the end of 2020, “We started to see things picking up. Currently, our testing numbers actually match our numbers from before the pandemic, if not even higher. And surprisingly, almost 70% is now from digital testing.”

“We were actually quite surprised to see how well students and test centers adapted to this new, drastic change,” she noted. “As shown by our numbers, it’s **wow!** We’re talking about different places, different cities, different provinces. Even in the eastern parts, where we still have problems of infrastructure, poor internet connectivity, things like that. So, it’s amazing.”

Having achieved the transition, Jahja expects TOEFL ITP digital testing to continue to overtake paper testing, but not to completely replace it: “It will still have a role, I believe. But now we offer something new, *TOEFL®* digital, something that they didn’t realize was so easy and convenient before.”

## Shared purpose helps the IIEF use the TOEFL ITP test to achieve its mission.

Like other branches of the Indonesian government, **the Ministry of National Development Planning** — the agency charged with planning the growth of the Indonesian economy — offers scholarships through its Center for Education and Training of Planners to help employees pursue work-related master’s or doctoral degrees in Indonesia or overseas.

The Level 1 TOEFL ITP test is the first stage of the scholarship selection process for employees who plan to conduct their studies in Indonesia, according to Pandu Pradhana, a project manager and policy analyst for the center. “The TOEFL ITP helps our unit to assess the scholarship candidates’ English-language competence, which leads them to obtaining the scholarship and succeeding in their graduate degree.”

Since the agency’s employees are located throughout the archipelago, improved access is as important to the ministry as it is to the IIEF, he noted. And the recent shift to digital TOEFL ITP testing has helped the institution target government officials across the country, particularly those in remote areas of Indonesia.

## Using the TOEFL ITP test to strengthen English-language learning helps the IIEF achieve its mission.

**The International Language Institute (LBI FIB UI)**, located on both the Jakarta and Depok campuses of the University of Indonesia, uses the TOEFL ITP test to measure the English proficiency of students with different needs, including students enrolled in the university's educational programs, as well as adult members of the public who seek the center out strictly for language learning and certification.

The diverse skills and abilities of the center's students — who can range in age from 18 to 55 and ability from beginner to advanced — present instructional challenges for its 129 full- and part-time teachers, which they have resolved by using the TOEFL ITP test as a tool for planning and differentiating instruction and selecting instructional resources.

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*“The TOEFL ITP test really open up people's lives, you know?”*

—Diana K. Jahja, IIEF Director

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For instance, Hilda Sutandyo, the center's vice-director, recalls staff analyzing questions in the Structure and Written Expression section of the TOEFL ITP test to prepare materials for a writing class, and discovering that teaching compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences was important to helping students improve. The teachers also concluded that students would benefit from learning how to integrate reduced clauses into their writing.

What's more, since the center designed the course based on the content of the TOEFL ITP test, it used the same reasoning to purchase instructional resources. For example, it bought new reading books that teach academic reading skills, she noted. Because these resources were relevant to the skills students needed to master, their language proficiency improved significantly.

Sutandyo also pointed to the mixed-ability class in which the center places all scholarship recipients planning to study overseas. To ensure all students improve, staff decided to use students' TOEFL ITP test scores to place them in groups, then differentiate instruction for each level. Afterward, they found the method was “effective in helping them improve their English-language proficiency because the language input was at the right level,” she said.

In more than 10 years of conducting the course with different cohorts, students' TOEFL test exit scores attest that the method is very accurate in improving participants' English proficiency to targeted levels, Sutandyo observed.

## Using the TOEFL ITP test to diagnose and remediate English language learning helps the IIEF achieve its mission.

**Brawijaya Language Center** — located within Brawijaya University in Jawa Timur — began administering the TOEFL ITP test to all undergraduate and some graduate students in 2015 as a means of determining whether they achieved a graduation requirement of competency in English. Almost immediately, staff found that the resulting scores gave them insight into the language skills of low scorers, remembered Didik Hartono, the center's director.

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*“You want to be ready to have more people with good qualifications? TOEFL ITP test is the answer.”*

—Diana K. Jahja, IIEF Director

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To the staff's surprise, students whose courses of study required only superficial use of English often scored higher on the test than students whose courses of study required deeper engagement with the language.

A difference between the two groups, they later realized, was that the center provided lower-level



English users with language instruction, but had assumed higher-level users did not need it. However, they deduced from the score discrepancy that while the latter group used the language more freely, many students did not understand why their usage was right or wrong.

Staff analyzed the sections of the TOEFL ITP test to gain an understanding of the structures associated with the difficulties, the director noted, then developed a curriculum designed to strengthen the skills of all their students.

“We believe it is important for participants to be able to achieve above-average TOEFL ITP scores,” Hartono said. “This is very much to their benefit, not only for seeking employment, but also if they

desire to continue to higher levels of education. Our program, climate and staff are directed to instill this achievement through hard work and meticulousness.”

## Program Snapshot

- Website: <https://www.iief.or.id>
- Instagram® and Twitter®: IIEFJakarta
- YouTube®: IIEF Channel
- Founded in 1982
- A TOEFL® Resource Center
- A Country Master Distributor for the TOEFL ITP® Tests
- More about Indonesia’s “New Bali” campaign: <https://bit.ly/3nSHRXu>

To find out how the TOEFL ITP tests can serve  
your program or institution, contact

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