

General Guidelines

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Conducting Examinations

Centres must adhere to the Interlocutor-Invigilator instructions throughout the examination session(s).

The Speaking component at all levels must be conducted with two Candidates present, with only the Candidates and Interlocutor engaging in the examination tasks.

The Reading and Writing examinations at all levels (and Listening at Entry Level 3 and above) may be conducted on a one-to-one basis or with a group of Candidates in one session. If Centres wish to conduct group examinations, they must ensure that the room meets minimum requirements as listed in the published Gatehouse Awards **Regulations for Conducting Controlled Assessments**.

The timings provided for all examinations must be adhered to.

Any recordings or papers submitted to Gatehouse Awards where the Interlocutor-Invigilator or any other member of Centre staff has not followed the regulations provided may be considered a form of maladministration. Please refer to the Gatehouse Awards **Malpractice and Maladministration Policy** for further details.

Conducting Speaking Examinations

The Interlocutor Booklet provides full guidance for the conduct of the Speaking tasks. An audio and video recording must be made as a record of the Candidate's performance in these tasks.

Printed Candidate Materials must only be provided to the Candidate at the appropriate point indicated in the Interlocutor Booklet. Instructions appear on the cover of the printed materials. Candidates should sign where indicated.

Candidates are examined in pairs.

Where there are an odd number of Candidates in a given examination session, a Candidate who has already been assessed can reappear. In order to ensure that no Candidate is disadvantaged in such a scenario, the Candidate who is reappearing would not be assessed on their performance. Interlocutors should clearly identify on the audio / video recording any Candidate who is not being assessed in the task.

The examination times are guide times.

Conducting Listening, Reading, and Writing Examinations

The Reading, and Writing examinations at all levels and the Listening examination at Entry Level 3 and above consist of paper-based examinations, which must be kept securely and provided to the Candidate only at the commencement of the examination session. Instructions appear on the cover of the printed materials.

Audio recordings for the Listening tasks at Entry Level 3 and above are provided as digital MP3 files to play to Candidates during the Listening tasks.

The examinations times must be adhered to.

Where groups of Candidates are taking the Listening, Reading, or Writing assessments together, the ratio of Candidates to Interlocutor-Invigilator must not exceed 12 to 1. This means that one Interlocutor-Invigilator can supervise no more than 12 Candidates.

Assessment and Grading Information

Speaking Examinations

In the Speaking examinations at all levels, Candidates are assessed on their skills in the areas of:

- Communicative Effectiveness

and/or (at B1 and above)

- Overall Linguistic Competency

For Communicative Effectiveness, each task is assessed separately. Candidates are assessed on their ability to complete the given task and use spoken communication effectively and appropriately.

For Overall Linguistic Competency, the Candidate's overall performance is assessed, across the following categories:

- **Vocabulary Range:** the Candidate's lexical repertoire.
- **Vocabulary Control:** the Candidate's ability to use lexical choices appropriately and accurately.
- **Grammatical Range:** the Candidate's ability to make appropriate grammatical and syntactical choices.
- **Grammatical Control:** the Candidate's ability to use grammatical and syntactical forms appropriately and accurately.
- **Phonological Control:** the Candidate's ability to produce comprehensible speech at word and sentence level to fulfil the demands of the test.
- **Fluency:** the Candidate's ability to produce free-flowing and unhesitating speech and how easily they express themselves.
- **Coherence:** the Candidate's ability to link ideas, sentences and phrases to produce speech which is logical and coherent.

Based on the above Overall Linguistic Competency criteria, the marker makes an assessment decision in each category.

The total number of marks available in Speaking and Listening at Entry Level 1 (A1) is 36.

The total number of marks available in Speaking and Listening at Entry Level 2 (A2) is 38.

The total number of marks available in Speaking at Entry Level 3 and above (B1-C2) is 55.

Listening Examinations

In the Listening examinations, Candidates are assessed on each task separately.

There are 22 questions, with one mark available for each correct answer.

The total number of marks available in the Listening examination is 22 marks.

Reading Examinations

In the Reading examinations, Candidates are assessed on each task separately.

There are 22 questions, with one mark available for each correct answer.

The total number of marks available in the Reading examination is 22 marks.

Writing Examinations

In the Writing examinations at all levels, Candidates are assessed on their skills in the areas of:

- Task Achievement

and/or (at B1 and above)

- Overall Linguistic Competency

For Task Achievement, each task is assessed separately. Candidates are assessed on their ability to complete the given task and use written communication effectively and appropriately.

There are a total of 27 marks available in Task Achievement.

For Overall Linguistic Competency, the Candidate's overall performance is assessed, across the following categories:

- **Vocabulary Range:** the Candidate's lexical repertoire.
- **Vocabulary Control:** the Candidate's ability to use lexical choices appropriately and accurately.
- **Grammatical Range:** the Candidate's ability to make appropriate grammatical and syntactical choices.

- **Grammatical Control:** the Candidate's ability to use grammatical and syntactical forms appropriately and accurately.
- **Spelling, punctuation and legibility:** the Candidate's ability to spell words correctly, use the expected range of punctuation appropriately and produce text which is presented legibly.
- **Propositional precision:** the Candidate's ability to convey information and meaning using an appropriate degree of detail and precision.
- **Coherence:** the Candidate's ability to link ideas, sentences and phrases to produce writing which is logical and coherent.

Based on the above Overall Linguistic Competency criteria, the marker makes an assessment decision in each category.

The total number of marks available in Writing at Entry Levels 1 and 2 (A1 – A2) is 38.

The total number of marks available in Writing at Entry Level 3 and above (B1-C2) is 55.

Overall Assessment Decisions

Completed scripts and audio recordings are externally marked and moderated by GA's team of ESOL International Examiners and Moderators.

In order to achieve the overall qualification at the level entered for, a 'Pass' is required for each examination. This will give the Candidate a grading reflecting the level achieved.

Gatehouse Awards markers apply a mark scheme to each examination. The criteria have been mapped to the level descriptors in the CEFR scales.

Successful Candidates will be awarded a 'Pass' or a 'Pass with Merit'. This grading will appear on the qualification certificate.

In order to achieve a Pass

In order to achieve the qualification at any given level, Candidates must achieve the minimum overall pass mark of 55% in each of the four examinations/components.

In order to achieve a Pass with Merit

In order to achieve the qualification and be awarded a Pass with Merit at any given level, Candidates must achieve the minimum overall pass mark of 75% across the four examinations.

Hints and Tips for Candidates

Candidates should read the following advice in preparation for the examinations.

In the Speaking examination...

- try to relax and enjoy speaking in English! Practice asking and answering questions and having full conversations and discussions in English as much as you can at home.
- you can even record or video yourself practising speaking English! This is a great way to develop your pronunciation and listening skills at the same time.
- try to talk as much as you can and make sure you speak in full sentences, developing your answer when you can. Remember – one word answers don't demonstrate what you can really do.
- always listen carefully to the questions and to what others are saying. It's fine to ask the Interlocutor or other Candidate to repeat themselves if you didn't quite understand the first time.
- don't learn prepared answers to any questions – even the presentation. You'll be asked questions about your presentation, but you won't know what they will be!
- during the prepared presentation, listen carefully to the other Candidate speaking. Make some notes if it helps and make sure you ask questions at the end, avoiding questions that have already been answered.
- try to express your opinions and own ideas - you won't lose marks by disagreeing with the Interlocutor!

In the Reading and Listening examinations...

- start by carefully reading the instructions for each task.
- if you find a question very difficult, move on to the next one and come back to it later.
- in multiple choice tasks, quickly read the questions first. This will give you an idea what the topic of the text or recording is!
- remember, all the questions only have 1 correct answer!
- if at the end of the exam you are still not sure about some answers, choose the ones that you feel fit best.
- if you really don't know the answer, have a guess – there are no minus marks for wrong answers!
- make sure your final answers are clearly marked – if the marker is not sure what answer you chose, you will not get any marks.
- try to relax – you don't have to answer every single question correctly to pass!

In the Listening examination...

- you will have some time to read the questions in each task before you hear the listening for the first time. Try to read all the questions and all the possible answers.
- you will hear the recording twice, so if you don't know all the answers the first time, you will have another chance.
- even if you think you got all your answers right the first time, listen to the recording a second time to make sure you got it right.
- you should be able to hear the recordings loud and clear. If you don't, tell the invigilator straight away!

In the Reading examination...

- start with the reading task you feel most comfortable with.
- don't use your dictionary to check the meaning of every word you don't understand or are not sure about – you will run out of time to complete the exam.
- remember, all reading questions only have 1 correct answer!
- don't answer any questions without reading the text. You might think you know the answer, but you could be wrong. Always check with the reading text!
- keep an eye on the time - try to allow 5 minutes before the end of the examination time to go back and check through your answers.

In the Writing examination...

- spend 5 minutes reading all the questions. Choose the questions you feel more comfortable answering – all the questions have the same number of marks.
- read the question carefully before you start writing. Make sure you answer the exact question in the paper to get the maximum number of marks!
- think about what you are going to write before you start and plan it in your head or on paper.
- spend about half of your time on Task 1, and the other half on Task 2.
- try to save about 5 minutes at the end to check both of your answers for spelling and grammar mistakes.
- you don't have to follow the order of tasks in the paper – you can start with the question you find easier.

Access to Assessment, Special Considerations and Reasonable Adjustments

GA examination materials are designed to be inclusive, non-discriminatory and as accessible as possible. Gatehouse Awards adhere to these principles throughout the development of all qualifications and throughout the writing of assessment and examination materials. Please note the differing definitions of Reasonable Adjustment and a Special Consideration, as outlined in the *GA Candidate Access Policy* document (available on the GA website).

Centre staff need to ensure that any requests for reasonable adjustments where prior authorisation from GA is required are submitted in good time prior to the examination date, otherwise the Candidate's results may be withheld and the Candidate may have to re-sit the examination. Such requests should be communicated to GA by submitting a ***Request for Reasonable Adjustment Form*** (available as an Appendix to the ***Candidate Access Policy***) a **minimum of 10 working days prior to the date of the examination.**

Candidates requesting reasonable adjustments must provide their Centre with evidence of their medical condition or learning needs and a copy of this must be provided to GA with the request form, if applicable, or upon request as part of external quality assurance activities.

The following are examples of conditions which may constitute a situation where possible reasonable adjustments can be applied in order for a Candidate to undertake the ESOL International assessments. Please note that this list is not exhaustive:

Candidates with Visual Impairment

GA can support the use of:

- large print or Braille examination materials
- coloured paper or overlays
- extra time allocated for the examination
- a professional reader/scribe in the speaking and listening examinations, to facilitate the completion of the examination paper
- a professional scribe in the reading examination to facilitate the completion of the examination paper (not a reader)
- an audio recording of the Listening examination

Candidates with Hearing Impairment

GA can support the use of:

- hearing aids/hearing induction loops
- extra time allocated for the examination

Candidates with Learning Difficulties

GA can support the use of:

- examination papers printed on different coloured paper/different coloured ink
- extra time allocated to the examination
- a professional reader/scribe in the speaking and listening examination to facilitate the completion of the examination paper
- a professional scribe in the reading examination to facilitate the completion of the examination paper (not a reader)
- an audio recording of the Listening examination tasks (which may be applicable to learners with very low levels of literacy and reading skills)

Examples of adjustments GA **cannot** support within the context of ESOL International qualifications include:

- the use of a translator or interpreter
- translations of examination materials into any other language apart from English
- the use of BSL (British Sign Language) for any aspect of the examinations
- allowing Candidates to have sight of examination materials prior to the examination session (except where explicitly permitted by GA, e.g. the Prepared Presentation in the speaking examination)
- the use of any (English or bilingual) dictionaries, except where permitted in the examination instructions
- a reader for the reading examination
- a scribe for the writing examination

The above adjustments are not allowed due to the nature of the assessment criteria.

A Special Consideration is given to a Candidate who has temporarily experienced an event outside of their control which has had, or is reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on that Candidate's ability to take an examination or demonstrate his or her level of attainment in an examination.

Examples of events that attract special consideration would be:

- temporary illness*
- injury*
- bereavement
- fire or similar emergency during the examination
- building work/loud noise at the examination Centre
- failure of equipment during the examination

- failure of the Centre to implement a requested reasonable adjustments, or the reasonable adjustments put in place are unworkable or incorrect

*For Illness and Injury, arrangements as for disabilities would be put into place. However, medical evidence (such as a doctor or hospital letter) would be required to support such arrangements.

Centres must complete the **Record of Reasonable Adjustments / Special Considerations Form** in order to record the decisions made by the Centre. A copy of the form should be retained by Centres along with and supporting evidence or other relevant records for audit purposes.

Centres should refer to the GA **Candidate Access Policy** for full details of how to apply for Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations.