



Guidance for Interlocutors (Online Classic IESOL)

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Other relevant documents:	Gatehouse Awards Regulations for Conducting Controlled Examinations Gatehouse Awards Malpractice and Maladministration Policy & Procedure Gatehouse Awards Candidate Access Policy & Procedure Gatehouse Awards Centre Handbook

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1. Purpose & Scope

This booklet contains regulations and guidance for the delivery of Gatehouse Awards IESOL online spoken examinations.

2. The Role of the Interlocutor

An Interlocutor is a member of staff, either at Gatehouse Awards or an Approved Centre, who is responsible for the delivery of Speaking examinations.

The main role of the Interlocutor is to give Candidates the opportunity to complete the Speaking Tasks to the best of their ability. They are also responsible for eliciting appropriate samples of the Candidates' language for the Marker to arrive at a valid and reliable assessment decision.

This can be achieved by:

- ensuring that the required examination standards are met.
- ensuring that the examination is recorded properly.
- following the instructions set out in the *Interlocutor Booklet*.
- ensuring that the Candidates are given adequate opportunities to speak.
- keeping to the time limits set out in the *Interlocutor Booklet*.

Interlocutors are not responsible for making assessment decisions.

The only other persons permitted on the call during spoken examinations are Gatehouse Awards Examination Observers, members of the internal or external quality assurance team of the GA Centre or trainee Interlocutors.

3. Examination Equipment

Before the examination begins, the Interlocutor must check that:

- they have received the Candidate's ID document scan to check against the real one on camera.
- they have the *Prepared Speaking Tasks* document open on their device and ready for screen share (during Task 2).
- they have the *Candidate Visual Prompts* document open on their device and ready for screen share (before Task 3).
- the Candidates have a pen and a blank sheet of paper on their desks.
- they have a silent clock or stopwatch for the Interlocutor to monitor the Candidates' adherence to the guideline times.
- they have a copy of the *Interlocutor Booklet* available to them, either on paper or on a second device that isn't used for Zoom.

For information about Candidate room requirements and other technological requirements for online speaking exams, please see the *GA Online IESOL Exams Frequently Asked Questions* document.

4. Commencement of Examinations

At the beginning of each assessment, the Interlocutor should place all other candidates who are not participating in the session into the Waiting Room on Zoom. During this time, they should check each candidate's ID document on camera against the scanned copy provided.

Once the ID checks have been completed, the Interlocutor should:

- do a 360-degree check of the Candidates' rooms by asking them to turn their cameras around the room, paying particular attention to their desks or tables.
- ask candidates to remove everything from their tables. They are allowed a drink, a pen, a blank piece of paper and their ID document.
- inform the candidates that mobile phones and other electronic devices must be on silent and away from their desks during the Speaking exam.
- inform candidates that no dictionaries or external websites can be accessed during the exam.
- if the Candidate wishes to have a relative or friend present in the room during the examination, inform them politely that this is not allowed. (See *FAQs* for interruptions during the exam)
- welcome them to the session.
- explain that the examination will be recorded, and it should be completed in one continuous session. The spoken examination may only be paused or discontinued in case of emergency, and the nature of that emergency must be clearly communicated by the Candidate and recorded in the *Exam Report Form*.

5. During the Examination

The Interlocutor script and instructions are found in the *Interlocutor Booklet*. Interlocutors must ensure that each Candidate completes all Speaking Tasks.

- All Speaking examination activity must be recorded on Zoom in both video and audio format.
- The recording should be continuous – no breaks or pauses are allowed between the Tasks.
- The Candidates and the Interlocutor must be audible and visible throughout. The Interlocutor can ask candidates to move closer to their microphones or speak louder if the volume is not sufficient.
- If a Candidate loses connection, see *FAQs* for guidance on this. This should be recorded in the *Exam Report Form*.

6. General Guidance for Interlocutors

- The Interlocutor should read the *Interlocutor Booklet* before the start of the examination to ensure that they are familiar with the script, as well as the time limits for each task.
- The Interlocutor should ensure that the Candidates adhere to the guideline times by monitoring this using a silent clock or stopwatch. If a Candidate significantly exceeds the

stated time, the Interlocutor should prompt them gently and politely to move onto the next question /task.

- Where the *Interlocutor booklet* dictates the exact words to be read aloud to the Candidates, the Interlocutor must not deviate from the script.
- Where the *Interlocutor booklet* allows deviation from the script, the Interlocutor should ensure that the language used is at a level appropriate to the examination being conducted.
- The Interlocutor should keep in mind the language level of the candidates:
 - at levels A1 and A2, speak slowly and clearly in short sentences emphasizing key words.
 - at levels B1 and B2, speak clearly at natural speed, as appropriate when speaking to a stranger who may not speak your language fluently.
 - at levels C1 and C2, speak in a completely natural way, making no concessions to the fact that the Candidates are not native speakers.

Interlocutor DOs

The Interlocutor should:

- ✓ maintain a friendly and relaxed approach, to allow the Candidates to perform to the best of their ability.
- ✓ maintain reasonable eye contact with the Candidates, except during preparation times.
- ✓ use nods and phrases to indicate that you are listening and interested in the Candidates' output, for example: 'ah-hah', 'yes', 'OK', 'right', 'I see' etc.
- ✓ use a lively, rising intonation to invite contributions.
- ✓ use downward intonation to indicate that a particular element of the assessment is coming to an end.
- ✓ speak clearly and with confidence and use Candidates' names at regular intervals throughout the assessment – this is very important to allow the Markers to correctly identify who is speaking when the recording is being marked.
- ✓ keep their own input to a minimum.
- ✓ clearly guide the Candidates through all the elements of the assessment.

Interlocutor DON'Ts

Interlocutors should not:

- ✗ echo or rephrase Candidates' answers.
- ✗ correct Candidates' errors.
- ✗ suggest answers, provide vocabulary or expand on Candidates' responses for them. If a Candidate is struggling to find the right word, encourage them to give a definition, description, or an explanation instead.
- ✗ give any indication of a Candidate's performance, for example 'fine', 'good' or 'that's great'. 'Thank you' is the preferred response.
- ✗ allow the conversation to lapse into complete silence for more than several seconds where the Candidates might be gathering their thoughts before answering a question or making further contributions.
- ✗ speak too much – the Interlocutor's contributions should be brief, even those made to elicit further contributions from the Candidates or help the Candidates relax

For further examination-specific Interlocutor Guidance, please refer to the *Interlocutor Booklet*.

7. At the end of the Examination

When the Speaking Tasks are finished, the Interlocutor:

- should politely thank the Candidates for their contribution.
- not give any indication as to the Candidates' performance.
- stop the recording as soon as one exam finishes. If there is another set of Candidates, the Interlocutor must start a new recording for the second exam.