

QUALIFICATION SPECIFICATION - LRN Entry Level

Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 1) (CEF A1)

Qualification Accreditation Number: 603/0506/X



Learning
Resource Network

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BACKGROUND TO LRN

Learning Resource Network (LRN) is an Awarding organisation which creates qualifications for educational institutions, independent learning providers and employers.

LRN is recognised for its portfolio of international English qualifications for those who want to provide evidence of their English Language skills for their professional or personal development. These qualifications are internationally recognised as providing proof of the skills and abilities required by educational institutes, professional bodies and governments.

LRN also creates qualification in business, enterprise, management, Islamic banking as well as qualifications in education and training. LRN offers its customers qualifications that are easy to deliver, cost effective and user friendly.

In producing its qualifications the project team drew upon the experience and expertise of academics, professionals working in the pertinent industries and colleagues with a wealth of practice and knowledge of validation, verification, delivery and assessment.

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ESOL INTERNATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

ESOL International qualifications are designed for candidates who are not native speakers of English and who wish to achieve a high quality, internationally recognised qualification in English that is both available and recognised worldwide and covers the whole range up to the highest level (NQF level 3 / CEF C2). They are suitable for candidates who are preparing for entry to higher education or professional employment in the UK or elsewhere. ESOL International qualifications are designed to reference the descriptions of language proficiency in the Common European Framework Reference for Languages (CEF). The levels in the CEF have been mapped to the levels in the National Qualifications Framework for England, Wales and Northern Ireland (see Pathways to Proficiency: the alignment of language proficiency scales for assessing competence in English Language).

INTRODUCTION

This specification document provides an overview and orientation to LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 1) (CEF A1) for candidates, centres, administrators, teachers and examiners and outlines the key features and administrative procedures required for this test.

OBJECTIVE

LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 1) (CEF A1) is designed for all "non-native English" speakers that are required to improve their English language skills at CEFR level A1. Candidates taking LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 1) (CEF A1) will need to demonstrate that they can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type; introduce themselves and others, ask and answer questions about personal details (e.g. home and possessions); and interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help. Candidate responses will be at a level of language that would be expected on the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR) at A1.

CANDIDATE CATEGORY

Candidates interested in taking the LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 1) (CEF A1) may include those:

1. needing a starting point in order to work towards a qualification in English.
2. Working or seeking work in an English speaking environment.
3. Living and working in a country where the native and official language is English.

Candidates who take LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 1) (CEF A1) are made up of a range of different national and cultural backgrounds.



ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

There are no entry requirements for candidates upon taking this qualification, including prior knowledge, levels of understanding and areas of familiarity. It is also not necessary for candidates to have achieved a qualification in English prior to registering. However, LRN would recommend that candidates are well-prepared before taking this test. Downloadable sample materials are accessible through the qualifications section of the LRN website whereby candidates can access sample assessment material. LRN approved centres ensure that candidates are fully prepared to sit LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 1) (CEF A1) through using fully trained teachers and appropriate resources as laid out in the centre agreement with LRN.



PROGRESSION

LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 1) (CEF A1) has been designed to reflect the wide variation in candidates' origins, levels of education and career aims. Progression opportunities may, therefore, take a variety of paths. Depending on the level of qualification achieved, it may be appropriate for the candidate to progress to:

- A higher level of any ESOL International qualification – E.g. Entry 2 ESOL (CEF A2) qualification
- A key skills or functional skills qualification
- Vocational qualifications

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

Please refer to LRN Recognition of Prior Learning Policy which is available on LRN website.



LANGUAGE OF ASSESSMENT

LRN aims to use English that is plain, clear, free from bias and appropriate to Entry Level candidates. All assessments and assessment related materials are written in English and rigorously checked by LRN officers and subject specialists before release. Teachers preparing candidates are expected to ensure that their materials are clear, diverse and appropriate to Entry Level ESOL candidates

QUALIFICATION OVERVIEW

LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 1) (CEF A1) is based on the CEFR in that it reflects the level(s) of language ability which are as defined by the CEFR. LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 1) (CEF A1) is a single unit qualification. Candidates are assessed in all four components of reading, listening, writing and speaking. The total qualification time are 256 hours for this qualification. The breakdown of total qualification time (as below):

Guided learning hours (GLH)	250
Self study (SS)	52
Total Assessment Time (TAT)	2 hours
Total Qualification Time (TQT)	304 Hours (GLH+SS+TAT)

QUALIFICATION FEATURES

The LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 1) (CEF A1) is a four language skills qualification which assesses four sub skills of the English language: reading, listening, speaking, and writing. References to the CEFR are made in the LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 1) (CEF A1) Mark Scheme in order to demonstrate linkage between the qualification construct and CEFR. The information below is a breakdown of LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 1) (CEF A1) qualification features.

Speaking:

Duration: 12 minutes

Section	Tasks and Functions
Part 1	Introduction based on familiar topics. The examiner asks candidates questions about themselves (e.g. family/friends, home, possessions, objects in the classroom) - 3 minutes
Part 2	Topic presentation (1 minute) based on a prepared topic from a given list of 4 (i.e. home, family/friends, likes/dislikes, possessions) followed by examiner's question(s) - 5 minutes
Part 3	Picture description (45 seconds) followed by a response to one question put forward by the other candidate.
Skills tested	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give personal information; • Describe a picture; • Ask and answer basic questions; • Express likes/dislikes; • Relate to other speakers.

Writing:

Duration: 40 minutes

Section	Tasks and Functions
Section 1	Complete a basic form with personal information (approx.. 15 words and numbers)
Section 2	Describe a picture. Key words provided. (40 – 60 words)
Skills tested	<ul style="list-style-type: none">form letters and numbers to produce legible and intelligible text;spell correctly a small number of high-frequency, personally significant words (e.g. name, address, common items)form short basic sentences correctly in the present tense;use a small range of task-appropriate lexical items (related to personal information, people's looks, clothes, common objects, basic actions)use full stops and capital letters.





Listening:

Duration: 25 minutes | Number of Questions: 25

Section	Tasks and Functions
Section 1	Listen and respond to 5 simple questions for personal information (multiple choice out of 3)
Section 2	Identify the gist and context of 5 short audio clips (match the correct picture to each of the 5 audio-contexts)
Section 3	Understand 5 short instructions (multiple choice out of 3, tick or click on the correct pictorial response option)
Section 4	Listen and respond to 5 examples of social convention (multiple choice out of 3)
Section 5	Listen for detail in a voice message up to 50 words long (multiple choice out of 3)
Skills tested	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• listen for gist and specific information;• listen for phonological detail;• listen and respond appropriately to questions for personal information;• follow simple short instructions.

Reading and use of English:

Duration: 40 minutes | Number of Questions: 20

Section	Tasks and Functions
Section 1	Place 5 signs in their most likely context (match each sign to the place in which it is most likely to be encountered).
Section 3	Read for gist and specific detail in two short, simple messages/texts (7 open comprehension questions)
Section 3	Read and understand a simple factual text providing basic information (5 cloze test items, 3 True/False questions)
Skills tested	<ul style="list-style-type: none">understand with ease virtually everything read;read with ease virtually all forms of the written language, including abstract, structurally or linguistically complex texts such as manuals, specialised articles and literary works;understand and interpret critically virtually all forms of the written language including abstract, structurally complex, or highly colloquial literary and non literary writings;summarise information from different sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation of the overall result.



CEFR Global Scale

Independent User	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics, which are familiar, or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

CAN DO SUMMARY

The ALTE 'Can Do' Project

The CAN do Project has been developed by [Association of Language Testers in Europe \(ALTE\)](#) which offers a framework that covers six levels of language competency that is aligned to the [Council of Europe Common European Framework \(CEFR\)](#) – see Appendix D of the CEFR for more information. The CAN do summary outlines how language candidates can perform and what they can do at each level. They are divided into three areas, Social & Tourism, Work and Study, and are detailed below for CEFR Level B1 and give examples of typical ability.

Summary of overall ability

	Speaking & Listening	Reading	Writing
A1	CAN understand basic instructions or take part in a basic factual conversation on a predictable topic.	CAN understand basic notices and instructions or information.	CAN complete basic forms and write short descriptions or notes.

Social & Tourist Skill Area

	Speaking & Listening	Reading	Writing
A1	CAN ask simple questions of a factual nature and understand answers expressed in simple language.	CAN understand simple notices and information in commonly frequented places. CAN understand simple instructions.	CAN leave a very simple message or note.



Work Skill Area

Speaking & Listening

A1

CAN take and pass on simple messages of a routine kind, e.g. "Friday meeting 10am".

Reading

CAN understand short reports or descriptions on familiar matters, provided these are in simple language and the contents predictable.

Writing

CAN write a simple routine request to a colleague, e.g. "Can I have 20 pieces, please?"

Study Skill Area

Speaking & Listening

A1

CAN understand basic instructions on class times, dates and room numbers.

Reading

CAN read basic notices and instructions.

Writing

CAN copy times, dates and places from notices on classroom or notice boards.

RESULTS

LRN trained examiners are allowed to mark the writing and speaking components of the LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 1) (CEF A1). Marks are allocated for each candidate in accordance with the LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 1) (CEF A1) mark scheme for writing and speaking. The timescales in which LRN will issue its results is between 4 to 6 weeks (upon receiving the candidate results from the test centre).

READING AND LISTENING

The marking of Reading and Listening components of LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 1) (CEF A1) are completed by clerical markers using answer keys for each question paper. To ensure standardisation of each exam, the Reading and Listening clerical markers completed induction training followed by standardisation exercises prior to each paper (where required).

Results are then moderated by the moderation team in accordance with LRN's moderation policy. Moderated results are then forwarded to the Lead Moderator for final approval.

SPEAKING & WRITING

Speaking examination is conducted by one examiner, trained by LRN, and is recorded on a dictaphone. Marks are allocated for speaking and writing skill to each candidate in accordance with the LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 1) (CEF A1) mark scheme. LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 1) (CEF A1) is 100% externally assessed by an LRN examiner.

Speaking sub skill are assessed in pairs, where there are odd number of registered candidate, the dummy candidate will be use as a pair candidate.

Candidates will receive pre-released speaking topics 5 working days prior to exam from their centre.

Results are then moderated by the moderation team in accordance with LRN's moderation policy. Moderated results are then forwarded to the Lead Moderator for final approval.





MARKING

- Speaking is a three part exam and carries a maximum of 20 marks
- Each Reading question carries 1 mark (20 questions)
- Each Listening question carries 0.8 marks (25 questions)
- Writing is based on 2 tasks with a combined maximum of 20 marks

For each sub-component candidates will be graded as follows:

- o 0-9 = Fail
- o 10-12 = Pass
- o 13-15 = Merit
- o 16+ = Distinction

Each sub-component skill mark is out of 20 and the total marks for this qualification are 80.



GRADING

Results are reported as distinction, merit, pass or fail grades.

Candidates' marks for all sub-components will be added together to give an overall grade based on the minimum marks per grade level below:

Minimum Marks required (overall)	Grade
0-39	Fail
40-51	Pass
52-63	Merit
64+	Distinction



RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 1) (CEF A1) has been designed in line with the Common European Framework for Reference for Languages (CEFR) and follows the principles of reliability and validity through the following steps:

Validity

1. Producing quality items to the required standard that measure performance with links to the CEFR.
2. Validating performance through piloting and feeding back into the test development cycle to ensure consistency of items.

The validity of LRN tests is evaluated in terms of the uses and interpretations of scores. The two main concerns in validation studies are:

1. The uses and their meaning to which scores are put in terms of the latent trait(s) they engage and measure. Several validation frameworks, such as Messick (1989) and Kane (2012), emerge from this. Supporting evidence of validity arguments potentially vary from test to test as every test produced has a unique validity argument.

The following inferences are included, following Kane's framework (2012):

- a. Evaluation - clear and sufficient domain definition and operationalisation.
- b. Generalisation - how confidently performance can be extrapolated on the test to a universe of the tasks.
- c. Explanation - analogous to conventional construct validity.
- d. Accuracy of scores - representing the amount of the latent trait under assessment.
- e. Extrapolation - analogous to conventional criterion validity.
- f. Accuracy of candidate performance on the test - prediction of performance on similar devices as well as the target language domain.

Tests developed by LRN are subjected to rigorous data analysis methods in order to ascertain the validity of the uses and interpretations of scores. Consultation is received by a team of experts who assist in undergoing latent trait model analysis on data sets in order to determine the quality of the test.

Evidence yielded from these analyses is used to judge the validity argument of the test.

Reliability

1. Delivering examiner training against LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 1) (CEF A1) mark scheme with links to the CEFR.
2. Conducting standardisation and monitoring to ensure consistent interlocutor performance and accurate grading.
3. Carrying out moderation to ensure consistent, accurate and reliable results.
4. The LRN validation team work with a variety of models relevant to language testing and psycholinguistics. Validation studies for each qualification are produced for every 800 - 1000 responses / grades generated.

*Please visit the LRN website for further updates on validation and reliability under our Research section.

ADMINISTRATION AND ASSESSMENT DELIVERY

The duration of LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 1) (CEF A1) is approximately 2 hours with the main test sitting (reading, listening and writing) lasting approximately 1 hour and 50 minutes in one continuous assessment session on the same day (with a short break in between each component). Speaking tests are scheduled between one and three days before or after the main test sitting.

One invigilator is assigned to, every 15 candidates, for reading, listening and writing sub skills with an additional invigilator to accompany candidates, in instances where they leaving the assessment room for any reason. The invigilator is also responsible for checking candidate identification and is always present for the duration of the assessment. Invigilators are also responsible for ensuring candidates have no unauthorised materials in the examination room.



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