

Quality assurance policy

The Path Examinations Ltd. quality assurance policy covers every stage of the examination process, from design to certificate delivery, and is intended to:

- ensure the integrity of examination materials throughout the process
- set high standards of professionalism, to be observed by all concerned in production, delivery and assessment processes
- determine, as accurately as possible, our candidates' competency in English.

The stages of the examination process are determined as follows:

- design
- audio production
- printing
- secure delivery
- distribution to examination centres
- speaking examiners
- invigilators
- exam day organisation
- collation, storage and return of exams to Path Examinations Ltd.
- marking of examination papers
- awarding of marks
- appeal procedure and moderation
- distribution of certificates
- verification
- feedback
- record-keeping

Appendix 1: online examinations

Quality assurance in detail

Design

All Path exams are designed by language professionals with minimum qualifications of a Bachelor's degree (or equivalent) in TESOL and 10 years full-time teaching experience. Designers have deep knowledge of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

Audio production

Recordings are produced by professional voice-over artists. The studio engineers and voice actors sign confidentiality agreements to the effect that they must not discuss the recordings or scripts when away from the studio, including not making any posts on social media or the internet, regarding the content of the recordings or scripts. Recordings are provided to Path Examinations partners shortly before exam day.

Printing

Printing is carried out by a professional company. Directors, managers and collaborators of the company undertake not to discuss the content of examination papers outside of the print centre, including not making any posts on social media or the internet in relation to the content of the papers. The examination papers are printed one-sided, in colour where appropriate, and inserted loosely into a folder, i.e., not stapled or fastened together, enabling the candidate to work on more than one sheet at a time.

Secure delivery

Our examinations are offered worldwide and administered by international partners of Path Examinations Ltd. Once printed, examination papers are dispatched in packages (one for each examination centre) to Path Examinations partners. The packages are then stored in a secure and locked location, to which only designated persons have access. Designated persons are under contract to Path Examinations partners.

Distribution to examination centres

On receipt of the packages containing the examination papers for each centre, Path Examinations partners distribute them, either by courier or in person, to the examiners responsible for the exam sessions, who take the packages to the examination centres. Each centre is under contract to Path Examinations partners to ensure the integrity of the papers on exam day. The papers are stored in a secure and locked location, to which only designated persons have access. On exam day, the packages are opened by the examiner responsible for the exam session, in the

presence of centre director(s) and invigilator(s). The centre director(s) must all fill in a confirmation form and sign it, then enclose it in the return package once the exam session has finished. No one is permitted to see the papers up until exam day.

Speaking examiners

Path Examinations speaking examiners are language professionals with minimum qualifications of a Bachelor's degree (or equivalent) in TESOL. Speaking examiners have vast knowledge of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. They are trained by Path Examinations Ltd. and by Path Examinations partners to conduct the speaking examinations. Only external examiners are used, that is they are not known to the examination centre. Examiners must abide by strict instructions provided by Path Examinations Ltd. on the examination paper. Speaking examinations are assessed locally. Examiners do not make the results known to candidates. 100% of the speaking examinations is recorded, and the recordings are sent to Path Examinations Ltd. in the UK for moderation purposes.

Invigilators

Invigilators are teachers who maintain a presence in the examination room and ensure that the rules outlined on the cover sheet are strictly observed. They also have the responsibility of distributing the examination papers and gathering them in when the session is over, as well as timekeeping. When all the papers are gathered in, the invigilator passes them to a designated person, who stores the papers in a secure and locked location, until they can be delivered to Path Examinations partners for onward transmission to Path Examinations Ltd. in the UK.

Exam day organisation

The examination is divided into three parts:

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|--------|----------------------------|
| PART A | Warm-up session |
| PART B | Listening module |
| PART C | Reading and writing module |
| PART D | Speaking module |

The 4 parts can be done in a different order or on different days.

Warm-up session

Before the speaking module begins, the examiner gathers all candidates in a room to have a brief conversation. This is not part of the assessment and is intended to make candidates feel at ease so that they can use their speaking skills at their best.

Listening module

The invigilator distributes the listening module and starts the recording. The recording commences with an explanation of the rules, which are also listed on the cover sheet which is in front of the candidates. All instructions, pauses and repetitions are contained in the recording. All the invigilator needs to do is start and stop the recording; there is no need for him or her to pause, rewind or fast forward the recording nor give instructions. When the listening examination is complete, the recording includes an instruction to stop. The timing of the listening examination is controlled by the recording.

Reading and writing module

The invigilator distributes the reading and writing module. After going through the rules, which are on the cover sheet, with the candidates, she or he writes the finishing time on a board and allows the examination to begin. The invigilator is not permitted to communicate with the candidates, except in the event of an emergency. If a candidate needs to use the toilet during the examination, she or he must be accompanied by another member of staff as far as the bathroom door. The invigilator must announce the time remaining at 30 and 10 minutes to the end of the examination. When the examination is over, all candidates must stop writing and pass their paper to the invigilator. The invigilator gathers the reading and writing papers and passes them to a designated person who must place them in a secure and locked location.

Speaking module

The speaking examinations are conducted in accordance with the task table. Timings must be adhered to. All interviews are recorded and sent to Path Examinations Ltd. in the UK. Some of the examinations include a prepared task. The task sheet is made available to the examination centre seven days before the examination. The centre must then send it to the candidate. Candidates are free to use whatever methods they choose in order to prepare for the task, however the instructions provided on the task sheet must be strictly adhered to.

Collation, storage and return of papers to Path Examinations Ltd.

A designated person collates the papers and places them in a secure and locked location. At the earliest opportunity, the papers are returned to Path Examinations partners who send them to Path Examinations Ltd.

Marking of examination papers

All exam modules are returned to Path Examinations Ltd. to be checked and marked by our board of examiners. Examiners are language professionals with minimum qualifications of a Bachelor's degree (or equivalent) in TESOL. Examiners have vast knowledge of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. To ensure fairness and equality, no information about the candidate, including their name, is known to the examiner. Papers are referenced by a candidate number.

Awarding of marks

All Path examinations make up a total of 100 marks. The number of marks available on each question is assigned by the designers, in accordance to the question. The pass mark is 60. Total marks of 59 will be automatically rounded up to 60. This will not happen in the event of marks of 58.

In case the candidate achieves between 49 and 58 marks, they will be issued a certificate of the previous level. This applies to A2 Preliminary or higher levels as they only feature open questions, and the examiner can clearly determine the candidate's real competency.

SPA examinations are tests of achievement and cannot be failed. All candidates receive an awarding certificate as proof of their accomplishments.

Appeal procedure and moderation

Should any candidate feel dissatisfied with their mark, they have an automatic right to appeal within 5 working days of receiving it. The appeal procedure may be commenced by contacting the Head Teacher of the candidate's examination centre, in writing. The request for appeal will then be directed to Path Examinations partners who in turn will forward it to Path Examinations Ltd. Papers and speaking recordings subject to appeal will be referred for moderation to our Chief Examiner, whose decision will be final.

Distribution of certificates

Candidates will receive a digital and encrypted certificate issued by Path Examinations Ltd. in the UK. Candidates can also request a printed version of the certificate. In that case, Path Examinations Ltd. will send the paper certificates by international courier to Path Examinations partners, who will then distribute the certificates to the examination centres. These centres will also receive a list of candidates and their awards, which must be checked against the actual certificates before they are distributed to candidates.

Candidates who obtain between 49 and 58 marks can only opt for a digital and encrypted certificate that accredits the previous level of the corresponding module(s).

Verification

Certificates awarded by Path Examinations Ltd. will bear the Chief Examiner's signature. Each certificate will also contain a foiled Path logo, a Path hologram, and a serial number, and the candidate's number which can be verified on our global website.

Path certificates provide a confirmation of level. They do not show marks or grades.

Feedback

Path Examinations Ltd. has a policy of continuous improvement. Feedback will be requested from candidates, invigilators, learning and examination centres, and examiners.

Record-keeping

Examination papers will be securely destroyed 5 years after the examination, with the exception of appealed papers which will be stored permanently. Exam results and feedback will be kept in perpetuity.

Review of this policy

Date: 15th January 2021

Review date: 15th January 2022

Appendix 1

Online examinations

Path Examinations Ltd. has its own online platform, Beyond™, to conduct the speaking, listening and reading and writing modules remotely. This system has been specially designed to meet our high quality standards and assess candidates fairly, transparently and securely. Remote proctoring is used to verify student identity, protect assessment content and prevent plagiarism. Our examinations are adapted and uploaded onto the platform by our team of developers who guarantee a user-friendly solution. Candidates can access their exam at the date and time agreed using their unique candidate number and password, which are provided via email 48 hours before the day of the exam.