QUALIFICATION SPECIFICATION - LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 3) (CEF B1)

Qualification Accreditation Number: 601/8050/X

Contents

BACKGROUND TO LRN

Learning Resource Network - LRN - is an awarding organisation that offers qualifications to candidates, educational institutes, training providers, schools and employers who can access qualifications either through registered educational institutions.

It was founded by a group of educators and business people and specialises in ESOL and management qualifications.

A full list of LRN qualifications can be found on the register of regulated qualifications.

LRN London head office is supported by a team of representatives around the world.

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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 3) (CEF B1) 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 3) (CEF B1) is designed for all "non-native English" speakers that are required to improve their English language skills at CEFR level B1. Candidates taking LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 3) (CEF B1) will need to demonstrate the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc and focus on familiar and everyday situations and contexts. Candidate responses will be at a level of language that would be expected on the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR) at B1.

CANDIDATE CATEGORY

Candidates interested in taking the LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 3) (CEF B1) 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 3) (CEF B1) 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 3) (CEF B1) 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 3) (CEF B1) 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. Level 1 ESOL 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 3) (CEF B1) 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 3) (CEF B1) 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)	200	
Self study (SS)	50	
Formative Assessment	3 hours 14 minutes	**Total Assessment Time (TAT)**
Summative Assessment	2 hours 46 minutes	**6 hours**
Total Qualification Time (TQT)	**256 Hours (GLH+SS+TAT)**	

QUALIFICATION FEATURES

The LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 3) (CEF B1) 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 3) (CEF B1) 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 3) (CEF B1) qualification features.

Speaking:

Duration: 16 minutes

Section	Tasks and Functions
Section 1	Introduction based on familiar topics. The examiner asks candidates questions about themselves- 2 to 3 minutes
Section 2	Topic presentation (1 minute) based on a prepared topic followed by a comment and brief conversation- 6 to 7 minutes
Section 3	Longer turn in response to Examiner's follow-up questions– 6 minutes
Skills tested	- Express statements of fact; - Give personal information; - Take part in social interaction; - Express, and ask about, feelings, likes/dislikes, viewpoints and opinions; - Give an account/narrate events in the past; - Relate to other speakers.

Writing:

Duration: 60 minutes

Section	Tasks and Functions
Section 1	Informal letter/e-mail (e.g. "invitation to a party") (90-110 words)
Section 2	Choose ONE topic from three: informal correspondence, creative story and essay. (110-150 words)
Skills tested	• recognise the process of planning and drafting when writing certain types of text; • make notes as part of the planning process; • structure main points of writing in short paragraphs; • show sequence through the use of discourse markers and conjunctions; • proof-read to check for content and expression, on paper and on screen; • use basic sentence grammar accurately; • use punctuation to aid clarity in relation to beginnings and ends of sentences; • apply knowledge of spelling to a wide range of common words and special interest vocabulary.

Listening:

Duration: 30 minutes
Number of Questions: 20

Section	Tasks and Functions
Section 1	9 short conversations (multiple choice out of 3)
Section 2	4 longer conversations (multiple choice out of 3)
Skills tested	- extract information from texts of varying length; - listen for grammatical and phonological detail; - listen for gist and specific information; - recognise a variety of feelings and viewpoints expressed by a speaker.

Reading and use of English:

Duration: 60 minutes
Number of Questions: 40

Section	Tasks and Functions
Section 1 & 2	3 texts (multiple choice out of 3), 15 questions.
Section 3 & 4	Use of English (cloze test/multiple choice out of 3), 25 questions.
Skills tested	- extract the main points and ideas, and predict words from context; - scan different parts of texts to locate information; - read every word to obtain specific information; - use knowledge of syntax and grammar, to work out meaning and confirm understanding in other types of text at this level; - use a variety of reading strategies to help read and understand an increasing range of unfamiliar words.

CEFR Global Scale

Proficient 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.
Independent User	**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.
Basic User	**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
B1	CAN express opinions or abstract/cultural matters in a limited way. CAN offer advice within a known area CAN understand instructions or public announcements	CAN understand routine information and articles.	CAN write letters or make notes on familiar or predictable matters.

Social & Tourist Skill Area

	Speaking & Listening	Reading	Writing
B1	CAN express opinions on abstract/cultural matters in a limited way. CAN pick up nuances of meaning/opinion.	CAN understand a letter where personal opinions are used.	CAN write letters on a limited range of predictable topics related to personal experience and express opinions in predictable language.

Work Skill Area

	Speaking & Listening	Reading	Writing
B1	CAN offer advice to clients within own job area on simple matters. CAN state routine requirements within own area of work.	CAN understand the general meaning of non-routine letters and theoretical articles within own work area.	CAN make accurate notes to a reasonable degree at a meeting where the subject matter is familiar.

Study Skill Area

	Speaking & Listening	Reading	Writing
B1	CAN understand instructions on classes and assignments given by a teacher or lecturer. CAN understand the general meaning of a lecture, demonstration or presentation on a familiar or predictable topic.	CAN understand basic instructions and messages, for example computer library catalogues with some help.	CAN write down some information at a lecture, if this is more or less dictated.

RESULTS

LRN trained examiners are allowed to mark the writing and speaking components of the LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 3) (CEF B1). Marks are allocated for each candidate in accordance with the LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 3) (CEF B1) 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 3) (CEF B1) 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 3) (CEF B1) mark scheme. LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 3) (CEF B1) 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.

Candidate 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

- Each Reading question carries 0.5 marks (40 questions)

- Each Listening question carries 1 mark (20 questions)

- Writing is based on 2 questions each carries a maximum of 10 marks

- Speaking is a three part exam and carries a 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 require (overall)	Grade
0-39	Fail
40-51	Pass
52-63	Merit
64+	Distinction

RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 3) (CEF B1) 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 3 Certificate in ESOL International (CEF B1), LRN Level 1 Certificate in ESOL International (CEF B2), LRN Level 2 Certificate in ESOL International (CEF C1) and LRN Level 3 Certificate in ESOL International (CEF C2) 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 3) (CEF B1) is 2 hours and 46 minutes with the main test sitting (reading, listening and writing) lasting 2 hours and 30 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.