

Quick guide: EFL exams

There are many providers of EFL exams, Cambridge ESOL being the most widely known. Exams are usually linked to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). This is a six-level benchmark from A1 (beginner) to C2 (native-speaker level), with detailed descriptions of competencies at each level, which help teachers and learners evaluate their level of English (it can be applied to other languages, too) and compare students' abilities. Teachers need to have a good working knowledge of the CEFR. The Wikipedia entry has a good quick summary of the CEFR levels and links to where you can find more details.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_European_Framework_of_Reference_for_Languages

General English

Cambridge ESOL

Widely used in Europe and other parts of the world. Exams test all four skills and the suite runs from A2 to C2. Tests include speaking, listening, reading comprehension, written composition and discrete-item 'Use of English' tests.

KET (Key English Test) – basic level

PET (Preliminary English Test) – intermediate level

FCE (First Certificate in English) – upper-intermediate level

CAE (Certificate in Advanced English) – advanced level

CPE (Certificate of Proficiency in English) – proficiency level

Trinity College London

Trinity College offers grade exams from 1 (beginner) to 12 (native-like) in spoken English. The exams are a mixture of spontaneous conversation tasks and discussion of a topic prepared by the candidate. Trinity also offers Integrated Skills in English (ISE) exams at three levels, which test all four skills in integrated tasks. The exams include a presentation of a portfolio of written work prepared by the candidate.

Academic English

IELTS (International English Language Testing System)

IELTS is recognized as an entrance requirement by British, Australian, New Zealand and Canadian universities, as well as for secondary, vocational and training programmes. It is also accepted by some US institutions. All candidates are tested in listening, reading, writing and speaking.

TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language)

Most people who take the TOEFL are planning to study at colleges and universities in the United States or Canada. The test is suitable for levels intermediate and above, is offered online and includes all four skills.

Business English

BEC (Cambridge English: Business Certificates)

Trinity College London SEW (Spoken English for Work)

LCCI (London Chamber of Commerce and Industry) English-language qualifications

TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication)

These exams are aimed at students who need to use English in the workplace and for international business communication and are offered at a range of levels, except for TOEFL and TOEIC, which are single exams with a wide-ranging points scale to differentiate candidates.