

# Overview of post-16 ESOL provision, accreditations, standards and delivery across Northern Ireland



Susan Good

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standards and delivery across Northern Ireland*

by Susan Good

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# 1 INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE AUDIT AND RESEARCH INCLUDING THE OFMDFM FUNDING AND THE KEY AIMS

Connect – NICEM applied for and were granted funding from the Minority Ethnic Development Fund 2013-2015. This research report on the Post-16 English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision accreditation, standards and delivery across Northern Ireland was conducted in 2013-2014.

The research will be used to enable non-English speakers and those supporting their learning and development to navigate their way through the wide range of ESOL provision at a variety of levels in order that they can develop their English skills appropriately, in particular with reference to accessing employment and education and ensuring that they can effectively access their entitlements and public services. This is key to the development of Black and Minority Ethnic Communities (BME) individuals and communities in order to promote and support integration with the wider community.

At the moment delivery and standards are fragmented and this piece of research will begin to identify effective and ineffective methods and structures within the ESOL sector. Delivery of ESOL also creates economic opportunities for those individuals to work and become economically active, and also the delivery of English programmes which ensures that non-English speakers have the opportunity to learn and participate more fully within the social and cultural life of wider society.

## 1.2 AIMS

- To review the present post-16 ESOL provision and qualifications available within the formal, private and voluntary sectors for those who speak English as a second language across Northern Ireland.
- To examine a comparison of levels of achievement and terminology used by a range of English language accrediting organisations.
- To assist learners, employers and professional bodies to compare levels of achievement in qualifications across the accreditation and qualification frameworks in order to identify which qualifications are more suitable for their needs and at which level.
- Investigate the issues facing ESOL learners, in terms of barriers to ESOL provision.
- To recommend as to how delivery programmes may be improved to meet the wide variety of learners, from personal to professional body requirements.

## 1.3 METHODOLOGY

In order to examine the ways in which ESOL post-16 provision is currently delivered for minority ethnic communities in Northern Ireland, the research was conducted as follows:

1. Current data on ESOL post 16 providers in the formal, voluntary and private sector was established. There is however, no document providing a list of all active providers in Northern Ireland. Embrace NI (a network of religious support groups) have developed their own small data list of providers in the voluntary and private sector. This directory was used as a starting point for the provider search and consultation with individual providers and web searches.
2. Contacts were then established with Further Education Colleges and the Inclusion and Diversity Service NI in the formal sector.
3. Contacts were also established with a wide representation of providers in the voluntary sector, those providers in the private sector and those with one employer.
4. The Department for Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland (DELNI) and the Northern Ireland Council for Curriculum Examinations and Assessment were also contacted.
5. In order to examine the present structures and levels of provision, data was collected by means of:
  - Interviews with ESOL post-16 providers in the formal, voluntary and private sectors.
  - Questionnaires were used as part of the interviews.

In the Formal Sector, all six Education Colleges in Northern Ireland were contacted; three of the six colleges took part in the interviews.

Fifteen organisations were contacted in the voluntary sector and all the providers took part in the interviews.

Four language schools in the private sector were contacted; two of the schools took part in the interviews.

The research findings will be disseminated to all providers who took part in the interviews.

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## 2 ESOL AND THE NORTHERN IRELAND CONTEXT

### 2.1 ESOL IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Northern Ireland has a number of small but well-established ethnic minority communities, including the Indian and Chinese communities, who have been present since the 1930s and 1940s respectively (McDermott P, 2013).

The 2004 expansion of the European Union (EU) facilitated further arrival from new member states, notably from Poland and Lithuania. According to the statistics from the Worker's Registration Scheme, between 2004 and 2011 55.2% of the registrar were Polish, 18.8% Lithuanian and 13.3% Slovakian. Moreover, lessening levels of violence and higher expectancy of economic stability in the period of 1998 and 2008 made Northern Ireland a more attractive location for migrant workers and consequently a more culturally diverse society (McDermott P, 2013).

The 2011 census shows that the proportion of the usually resident population born outside Northern Ireland rose significantly from 9% in 2001 to 11% in 2011. This change was largely as a result of inward migration by people born in the 12 countries which have joined the European Union (EU) since 2004. These EU accession countries accounted for 2 per cent (35,700) of people usually resident in Northern Ireland on Census day 2011.

**Northern Ireland is also distinct as it has a disproportionate number of A8 citizens (particularly Polish), compared to the rest of the United Kingdom (UK). In more recent years, there has been a dramatic rise in asylum claims, with refugees and asylum seeker communities consisting of Somalians, Chinese, Sudanese, Iranians and those from African countries (Malischewski, 2013).**

Through this piece of research, it was evident that over the last year there has been an increase in Spanish and Italian migrants attending ESOL classes in both Further Education and the Community Sector. This is anecdotal information from a number of current ESOL providers. However there are no figures available on the number attending ESOL classes.

Traditionally, South Belfast is where many of the ethnic minority communities are settled (Jarman and Byrne 2002) and whilst this is still a highly concentrated area, many migrants have settled throughout other areas of the province, such as the mid-Ulster area. Migrant worker families represented approximately 8% of the district (NIHE 2012) working mostly in the food processing industry and agriculture.

The population changes are particularly dramatic in Northern Ireland and have resulted in increased demands for ESOL classes in Northern Ireland (Ward J, 2008). The learner's needs regarding ESOL have changed over the last decade (Maitland S, 2013). Maitland, in her case study research, interviewed adult learners attending 4 ESOL community classes in the Belfast area.

She cited that students attended ESOL classes predominantly to improve communication, gain or improve employability and integrate with the local society.

The most common reasons given to attend a particular class include the cost, the locations and the timetable. Lack of childcare provision was considered to be a barrier to attendance. Refugees attending classes were required to pay fees, unlike in England. Adult asylum seekers are eligible for free ESOL classes and now do not need to meet the 6-month period of residence requirements as they did previously.

Further Education Colleges deliver the majority of ESOL provision to Northern Ireland, which accounts for approximately 75 per cent of all ESOL learners. The Voluntary / Community Service delivers ESOL to approximately a quarter of learners and to a small number of learners in prison and through one employer.

The bodies primarily responsible for the funding of ESOL are DELNI, who fund approximately 70 per cent of ESOL provision in Northern Ireland through Further Education Colleges. The Further Education recurrent block grant is delivered to Further Education Colleges through the Funded Learning Unit (FLU), designed to support DELNI. The funding is allocated from the Executive out of the UK Treasury Grant. The remainder of the funding is delivered by OFMDFM, European Social Funding, employee contribution and course fees.

Furthermore, the ESOL Skills for Life programme in Northern Ireland is not designated an Essential Skill as it is in Great Britain (Essential Skills for Living: Strategy and Action Plan for Adult Literacy in Northern Ireland, 2002). In the rest of Great Britain there is funding for ESOL as an essential skill through a variety of Government programmes. Funded community groups deliver appropriate ESOL programmes that take into consideration the needs of the ESOL learner outside the formal setting, as the formal sector was not meeting the needs of those who wished to attend classes in order to integrate into society.

Policies on the need for ESOL in Northern Ireland are on the whole determined by Westminster. The provision of ESOL as a part of lifelong learning is determined by the Northern Ireland Assembly in order to deliver language training to promote the social inclusion of non-English speakers and ensure that migrant workers can contribute to the Northern Ireland economy.

The Department of Education Northern Ireland is responsible for carrying out inspections in Further Education Colleges in Northern Ireland.

An inspection of ESOL provision in Northern Ireland in 2005 found 3726 learners from 45 countries in 15 Further Education providers. ESOL learners were not a homogenous group and could be characterised in six bands determined by their existing English competence, learning capacity and levels of achievement in academic or vocational education. The report noted that there were effective partnerships with local business and industry; the learners had high levels of motivation and learning disposition, the tutors showed commitment, hard work and a strong ethos of tutor support. However, there was a need for tutor training and Continuing Professional Development (CPD), greater differentiation of teaching approaches and more formal and appropriate accreditation (The Provision for English for Speakers of Other Languages and Modern Languages in Education, ETI, 2005)



## 2.2 ESOL LEARNERS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Potential ESOL learners fall into four principal broad categories. Each of them brings a wealth of cultural experience and diversity to this country, but this very diversity presents challenges to planning and offering appropriate learning provision. The categories are:

### **Settled Communities of second and third generations:**

Principally, although by no means exclusively, the settled community is from the Asian sub-continent and from Hong Kong. Challenges include difficult to reach groups and problems with access to provision for new spouse. Some would-be students work long and irregular hours in, for instance, the restaurant trade and therefore cannot attend classes regularly.

### **Refugees and Asylum Seekers:**

Asylum Seekers – most of whom are very keen to learn and for whom the chances of effective settlement would be greatly improved by being able to begin learning English, but who are faced by problems with settlement, difficulties understanding the system, housing problems, lack of money, immigration status, as well as general culture shock and trauma from their experiences.

Settled Refugees - with exceptional leave to remain (ELR) or full refugee status. They may have their status confirmed but many will have English language needs that must be met before they can gain access to education, training or work.

It is now stipulated that an applicant for British Citizenship must show sufficient knowledge of English, to be determined by possession of a specified certificate, or by taking a citizenship test. This change to the UK naturalisation regulations is likely to have an impact on the number of learners seeking assistance in the future (Scottish Executive, 2007) and will require providers to become familiar with Home Office policies regarding citizenship and gain knowledge of the teaching and learning required for the test.

### **Migrant Workers:**

Mostly from elsewhere in Europe, some of these may be here as short term visitors to learn English and so may pay for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes. However, many are here to work and settle for all or most of their life and thus need access to ESOL.

### **Spouses and Partners of Students and/or Migrants:**

Commonly from all parts of the world, there are those who are settled for a number of years and need to participate in the local community but may be prevented by family commitments or low income.

Within these groups, the needs of learners will vary considerably depending upon their age, aspirations, educational background, language background and aptitude for learning languages.

### ***Language Background***

The learner may be:

- A fluent speaker, reader and writer of a language(s) with a Latin script.
- A fluent speaker, reader and writer of a language(s) with a different script.
- A fluent speaker of one (or more) other language(s), but not very confident in reading and writing in that language/those languages.
- Have very few or no reading and writing skills in any language.

### ***Educational Background***

This could be anywhere on a continuum from no formal education at all to higher education and professional training.

### ***Aspirations***

These range across and are likely to include:

- Learning English to help with everyday life.
- Aiming to progress through the UK system (e.g. NVQs, GNVQs, GCSEs or A-Levels). This is particularly the case for many young people.
- Aiming for progress in the labour market through vocational training, re-qualification, updating of professional skills or higher education.

## **2.3 IMPORTANCE OF ESOL**

The field of ESOL is one of the huge challenges facing the post-16 learning and skills sector in the whole of UK and Ireland. Significant changes in migration trends have led to new and increased demand for English language learning, and long term settled immigrants continue to need access to English language provision.

Migrants bring a wealth of skills, knowledge and talent and make a substantial and positive contribution to the economic, social and cultural life of the nation (Refugee Council 2002). In return, it is vital that they are supported to acquire the English language skills they need to live and thrive in Northern Ireland.

Language skills are recognised in both policy and research outcomes as the essential underpinning of social integration and of labour market success. Immigrants with fluent English language are 20% more likely to be in employment and earn approximately 20% more than those with underdeveloped language skills. It is important not to draw a sharp and artificial distinction between economic and social aims.

This has had a major impact on individuals, communities and employers as populations and workforces have become more diverse and complex. Inevitably this has affected English language learning demands, requiring all concerned to take a fresh look at policy, strategy, practice and funding.

### 2.4 ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES (ESOL)

The term ESOL is widely accepted and used most frequently nowadays to describe English language learning for those whose first language is not English. The British Council provides a brief definition: “ESOL refers mainly to learning English as a new resident in an English speaking Country” (British Council, 2008). Typically the term ‘learners’ includes migrant workers, refugees and asylum seekers and non-English speaking spouses or partners.

The tuition usually focuses on functional English for use in daily life and work, and may include basic skills. It does not presuppose literacy in the learners’ mother tongue. It is distinguished from the field of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) by being aimed at students who need English because they are living in a country where English is spoken widely as the native language and is generally publicly funded.

The term EFL (English as a Foreign Language) is English language tuition for adults or young people who are not long term residents in the country. This typically includes the few paying, private students from abroad who are studying at University, Further Education Colleges and Private Language Schools.

English as an Additional Language (EAL) is delivered to school aged pupils who do not speak English as a first language. EAL pupils in Northern Ireland are referred to as “Newcomers”.

The term “Newcomer” is used to refer to a pupil who does not have satisfactory language skills to participate fully in the school curriculum and does not have a language in common with the teacher (DELNI 2012).

Schools with pupils who do not speak English as a first language are supported and advised by the Inclusion and Diversity Service (IDS) in Northern Ireland. The IDS is a regional service and key services offered by them include:

- Multilingual website for teachers/tutors and parents.
- Diversity co-ordinators who work with teachers/tutors/tutors to support the newcomer pupils in schools.
- Interpreting and translation services.
- Toolkits for diversity – these have been developed for pre, primary, post-primary and special schools.
- Continuous professional development (CPD).
- Training in the use of The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR).

For more information see: [www.education-support.org.uk](http://www.education-support.org.uk).

For the purpose of this report, the term ESOL will be used throughout.

### 2.5 QUALIFICATIONS REGULATORY BODIES IN NORTHERN IRELAND

#### 2.5.1 Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CEA formerly CCEA)

The Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CEA) is Northern Ireland's examination board which also acts as the regulator of qualifications and the awarding body in Northern Ireland. The CEA was established in April 1994 and replaced both the Northern Ireland Schools Examination and Assessment Council and the Northern Ireland Schools Examination Council. It is the only Northern Ireland based examination board that has the power to award GCSE and A Level qualifications; however, Northern Ireland's learners can also enrol in schools which are regulated by other UK examination boards, such as England's OFQUAL and Wales' DCELLS. The CEA is responsible for the regulation of general qualifications alone. Vocational qualifications in Northern Ireland are regulated by the OFQUAL.

The CEA has a wide range of responsibilities. In addition to setting examinations, the CEA also advises the Northern Ireland Government on the curriculum and what should be taught in schools, offers support and guidance to the Government on the development of qualifications and monitors qualifications and examinations, similar to the OFQUAL in England and the DCELLS in Wales. It reports to the Department of Education in Northern Ireland.

#### 2.5.2 Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (OFQUAL)

The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (OFQUAL) is the regulator of qualifications, examinations and assessments in England and the regulator of vocational qualifications in Northern Ireland. It is responsible for ensuring that all qualifications and assessments meet high quality standards by monitoring awarding organisations, assessments and examinations and taking the necessary action to ensure that the qualifications meet the needs of learners, higher education institutions and employers. OFQUAL is responsible to the UK Parliament and the Northern Ireland Assembly.

The role of the OFQUAL is to ensure that the learners are provided with access to high quality qualifications which meet appropriate standards. This is achieved by monitoring the awarding bodies and taking action whenever and wherever there is a risk to quality. OFQUAL also makes sure that the qualifications awarded by organisations are of comparable quality with other qualifications in the UK and overseas, that the candidates have equal access to qualifications and assessment, and that debate about topics such as standards of qualifications is encouraged.

## 3 QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS – EU AND NATIONAL

### 3.1 THE COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE (CEFR)

The CEFR plays a central role in language and education policy worldwide. It has growing relevance for language testers and examination boards, helping to define language proficiency levels and interpret language qualifications. The main purpose of the CEFR is to provide a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabi, examinations, and textbooks.

Many educators find the CEFR useful in that it describes, in a comprehensive way, what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language effectively for communication.

The CEFR describes language ability on a scale of levels from A1 for beginners up to C2 for those who have mastered a language. This makes it easy for anyone involved in language teaching and testing (learners, teachers/tutors, teacher trainers, etc.) to see the level of different qualifications. It also means that employers and educational institutions can easily compare qualifications and see how they relate to exams they already know in their own country.

The CEFR is also referred to as the CEF.

CEFR LEVELS	
<b>C2 Mastery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read.</li> <li>• Can summarize information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation.</li> <li>• Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.</li> </ul>
<b>C1 Advanced/ Effective Operational Proficiency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts and recognize implicit meaning.</li> <li>• Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions.</li> <li>• Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic, and professional purposes.</li> <li>• Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed texts on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors, and cohesive devices.</li> </ul>
<b>B2 Vantage/ Upper Intermediate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can understand the main idea of complex texts on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialization.</li> <li>• Can interact with native speakers quite possibly without strain for either party.</li> <li>• Can produce clear, detailed texts on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.</li> </ul>
<b>B1 Threshold/ Intermediate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc.</li> <li>• Can deal with most situations likely to arise while traveling in an area where the language is spoken.</li> <li>• Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest.</li> <li>• Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes, and ambitions, and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.</li> </ul>

### 3.2 QUALIFICATIONS AND CREDIT FRAMEWORK (QCF)

<b>A2 Waystage/ Elementary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 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, and employment).</li><li>• Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters.</li><li>• Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment, and matters in areas of immediate need.</li></ul>
<b>A1 Breakthrough/ Beginner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type.</li><li>• 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.</li><li>• Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.</li></ul>

It must however be understood that the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages was not designed to provide the basis for precise equating, nor was it intended to be a prescriptive tool to impose standardised solutions. Rather, it was designed as a common framework of reference, primarily intended as 'a tool for reflection, communications and empowerment', as described by John Trim, its coordinating author (Saville, N 2005).

### 3.2 QUALIFICATIONS AND CREDIT FRAMEWORK (QCF)

The Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) in the UK is a new credit transfer system which has replaced the National Qualification Framework (NQF). It recognises qualifications and units by awarding credits. As each unit has a credit value and the credits can be transferred, the system gives the learners the ability to get qualifications at their own pace. The QCF is jointly regulated by the England's regulator OFQUAL, Wales' DCELLS and Northern Ireland's CEA.

The QCF system is based on units that have credit value and levels (from Entry Level to Level 8). One credit roughly equals 10 learning hours which allows the learners to evaluate how much time they will need to gain the desired qualification. According to the QCF system, the learners can gain three types of qualifications:

- awards
- certificates
- diplomas

#### **How Credit Points are Awarded**

To gain an award, it is necessary to have 1 to 12 credit points, which equals 10 to 120 hours of learning. Learners who have 13 to 26 credits (130 to 260 hours) are awarded certificates, while those who have 37 credits or more are awarded diplomas. The QCF system gives awards at any difficulty level from 1 to 8, which is due to the fact that it reveals the size of the qualification and not its difficulty level. The latter is indicated by the title of the qualification, which, however, also reveals the size of the qualification and its subject.

### **How Quality of Units is Referred to**

In addition to developing units, developing and accrediting qualifications, and awarding credits and qualifications, the regulators of the QCF are also responsible for maintaining a unit databank and monitoring the organisations that operate within the QCF in order to ensure that all awarded qualifications meet the regulatory requirements. These are specified in the Regulatory arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework that has been developed jointly by the regulators in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

QCF is a framework that is applicable to all subject areas determined in the UK, not solely for ESOL.

## 4 ENGLISH AND ESOL QUALIFICATIONS – MAIN ACCREDITING BODIES

### 4.1 THE INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEST (IELTS)

The IELTS is a test that measures the language proficiency of people who want to study or work in an environment where English is used as a language of communication.

IELTS is available in two modules, **Academic** or **General Training**. The candidate must decide prior to applying which module is most appropriate for their needs.

- The **Academic** module is for people who want to study an undergraduate or postgraduate degree course or who wish to register with a professional body.
- The **General Training** module focuses on basic survival skills in a broader social and educational setting.

#### **IELTS Band Scores**

Candidates are graded on their performance, using scores from 1 to 9 for each part of the test – listening, reading, writing and speaking. The results from the four parts then produce an Overall Band Score.

This unique 9-band system measure is internationally recognised and provides candidates with a reliable international currency. IELTS scores have a recommended validity period of two years.

Each band corresponds to a level of English competence. All parts of the test and the Overall Band Score can be reported in whole and half bands, e.g 6.5, 7.0, 7.5, 8.0.

**Band 9 - Expert User:** has fully operational command of the language: appropriate, accurate and fluent with complete understanding.

**Band 8 - Very Good User:** has fully operational command of the language with only occasional unsystematic inaccuracies. Misunderstandings may occur in unfamiliar situations. Handles complex detailed argumentation well.

**Band 7 - Good User:** has operational command of the language, though with occasional inaccuracies and misunderstandings in some situations. Generally handles complex language well and understands detailed reasoning.

**Band 6 - Competent User:** has generally effective command of the language despite some inaccuracies, and misunderstandings. Can use and understand fairly complex language, particularly in familiar situations.

**Band 5 - Modest User:** has partial command of the language, coping with overall meaning in most situations, though is likely to make many mistakes. Should be able to handle basic communication in own field.

**Band 4 - Limited User:** basic competence is limited to familiar situations. Has frequent problems in understanding and expression. Is not able to use complex language.



**Band 3 - Extremely Limited User:** conveys and understands only general meaning in very familiar situations. Frequent breakdowns in communication occur.

**Band 2 - Intermittent User:** no real communication is possible except for the most basic information using isolated words or short formulae in familiar situations and to meet immediate needs. Has great difficulty understanding spoken and written English.

**Band 1 - Non-User:** essentially has no ability to use the language beyond possibly a few isolated words.

**Band 0 - Did Not Attempt the Test:** No assessable information provided.

In Northern Ireland there are two IELTS test centres, namely Queens University Belfast and in South Eastern Regional College, which became a centre in December 2013.

IELTS bands 4-9 (NQF Level Entry 3 to Level 3) are accredited by OFQUAL (Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation).

## 4.2 CAMBRIDGE ENGLISH EXAMINATIONS

Cambridge English examinations are accepted by over 13,500 universities, employers and governments around the world. These examinations can be used for entry to higher education and for improving employment opportunities and, because they are globally recognised, can increase learners' choices for study or work.

Cambridge English examinations cover all four language skills – reading, writing, speaking and listening. In some cases, candidates will need to pass the exam with a minimum score in particular skills or with a minimum overall score for all four skills.

In addition to Tier 4 student visas, Cambridge English exams are also recognised by the UK Home Office as meeting the language requirements for Tier 1 and Tier 2 immigration, covering working in the UK and spouse/partner visas (for up to date visa requirements contact the UK Visas and Immigration Service).

### **KEY – Key English Test (KET)**

Cambridge English: Key, commonly known as *Key English Test (KET)*, is an elementary level qualification for basic, everyday written and spoken English.

Cambridge English: Key is set at CEFR Level A2. This tests a learner's ability to: understand simple questions and instructions in English, express simple opinions or needs in English, and complete forms and write short letters related to personal information.

### **PRELIMINARY – Preliminary English Test (PET)**

Cambridge English: Preliminary, commonly known as *Preliminary English Test (PET)*, is an intermediate level qualification for learners who need to use English in a practical, everyday way to communicate.

Cambridge English: Preliminary is set at CEFR Level B1. This gives learners the skills to: understand the main points of straightforward instructions or public announcements in English, deal with most of the situations they might meet when travelling, ask simple questions and take part in factual conversations in work settings and write letters or make notes on familiar matters.

### **FIRST – First Certificate in English (FCE)**

Cambridge First: First, commonly known as *First Certificate in English* is an upper intermediate qualification for learners who need to use English in a practical every day way to communicate.

Cambridge English First is set at CEFR B2 Level. This is useful for practical everyday purposes including business and study. It is useful for anyone studying abroad or seeking to develop a career that requires language skills, including business, medicine and other professions.

### **ADVANCED – Certificate in Advanced English (CAE)**

Cambridge English: Advanced, commonly known as *Certificate in Advanced English (CAE)*, is a useful for undergraduate or graduate level study, or work in international business.

Cambridge English: Advanced gives a more in-depth assessment of a learner's ability and fluency at CEFR Level C1. It is useful for those wishing to follow any undergraduate academic course, carry out research and communicate effectively at a managerial level.

### **PROFICIENCY – Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE)**

Cambridge English: Proficiency, commonly known as *Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE)*, is the qualification that proves exceptional English ability.

Cambridge English: Proficiency gives an in-depth assessment of a learner's ability and fluency at CEFR Level C2. This is suitable for those studying at postgraduate level, involved in research and communicating at board level.

### **BUSINESS ENGLISH CERTIFICATE – Preliminary**

Business English Certificate: Preliminary is the qualification for professionals and learners who want to operate at an intermediate level in an international business environment.

Business English Certificate: Preliminary gives an in-depth assessment of a learner's ability and fluency at CEFR Level B1 in a business context. Learners will be able to use their business English skills in practical everyday situations. It tests a learner's ability to follow a simple presentation in English, advise clients on simple matters, understand routine letters or memos on a familiar subject and make notes on a familiar subject.

**BUSINESS ENGLISH CERTIFICATE – Vantage**

Business English Certificate: Vantage is suitable for professionals and learners who want to operate at an upper-intermediate level in an international business environment.

Business English Certificate: Vantage gives an in-depth assessment of a learner's ability and fluency at CEFR Level B2 in a business context. It tests a learner's ability to accurately take and pass on most messages at work, present arguments and opinions to a limited extent, understand the general meaning of a report even if the topic is unfamiliar and write a non-routine letter where it is restricted to matters of fact.

**BUSINESS ENGLISH CERTIFICATE – Higher**

Business English Certificate: Suitable for professionals and learners who want to operate at an advanced level in an international business environment.

Business English Certificate – Higher: gives an in-depth assessment of a learner's ability and fluency at CEFR Level C1 in a business context. It tests a learner's ability to deal with unpredictable questions, argue a case effectively and specify needs precisely, write a report that communicates the desired message and understand most letters and reports.

**International Legal English Certificate**

International Legal English Certificate (ILEC) demonstrates to employers and clients that an individual has the language skills to work effectively in a legal context.

ILEC gives an in-depth assessment of a learner's ability at CEFR Levels B2 to C1 in a legal English context. ILEC is a Cambridge English examination, produced in collaboration with the TransLegal Group. It tests a learner's ability to follow a presentation or lecture, argue their case effectively, write most correspondence they are required to do and write a report that communicates a desired message.

**International Certificate in Financial English**

International Certificate in Financial English (ICFE) demonstrates that finance professionals have the English language skills to succeed in the global business environment. ICFE gives an in-depth assessment of a learner's ability at CEFR Levels B2 to C1 in a financial context. It tests a learner's ability to follow a presentation or lecture, argue their case effectively, write most correspondence they are required to do and write a report that communicates a desired message.

**Business Language Testing Service**

Business Language Testing Service (BULATS) empowers organisations and learners to assess their workplace language skills in a quick and reliable way.

BULATS is a set of value added language tests specifically designed for companies, organisations and learners who need a reliable way of assessing language ability. BULATS is available in English, French, German and Spanish. It measures candidate

results on a scale of 1-100, which equates to CEFR Levels A1 to C2. BULATS is developed and delivered by Cambridge ESOL in collaboration with Alliance Française, Goethe-Institute and Universidad de Salamanca.

### 4.3 CITY AND GUILDS

#### **International Spoken ESOL**

The City & Guilds International Spoken ESOL (ISESOL) qualifications will help students to demonstrate their ability to communicate in English to enable them to work or study in English-speaking countries and/or environments.

The International Spoken ESOL (ISESOL) qualifications are for anyone who is a non-native speaker of English and who would like to demonstrate their ability to communicate in English. These qualifications complement the International ESOL series. Many English-speaking universities accept this qualification as evidence of language proficiency for entry on to their courses.

#### **International Listening ESOL**

The City & Guilds International ESOL – Listening examination offers a comprehensive test of listening skills in English (CEFR) at A1 level which can either be taken as a stand-alone examination or a complement to the International Spoken ESOL examinations.

International ESOL – Listening qualification is designed to reference the descriptions of language proficiency in the CEFR at A1 level. The levels in the CEFR have been mapped to the levels in the National Qualifications Framework for England Wales and Northern Ireland.

The International Listening Exams are for:

- Non-native speakers of English worldwide.
- Young people or adults attending an English course either in the UK or overseas.
- Students learning English as part of their school or college curriculum.
- People needing English for their everyday or working life.
- Learners who require externally recognised certification of their levels in English.
- Those who are attending courses over a period and require a series of graded examinations that provide steps up in the ladder of proficiency.
- Learners attending short courses in English.
- People needing proof of their English language knowledge, to be submitted to UK Visas and Immigration as part of the Visa application.

They are available in following countries:

- England
- Wales
- Northern Ireland
- International

### **City and Guilds International ESOL Diploma**

This internationally recognised English qualification assesses all four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. They are for anyone who wants formal recognition of their proficiency in English language for visas, employment and other purposes.

The diploma is a combination of the International ESOL examination and the International Spoken ESOL. Due to the comprehensive range of skills covered by the International Diploma, it is recognised by governments and universities in many parts of the world.

City and Guilds International ESOL is recognised among others, by:

UCAS – a United Kingdom organisation coordinating the academic progression of foreign students at UK institutions of higher education and the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA).

City and Guilds are accredited by the Qualification and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and are therefore part of the National Framework of England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

### **English for Office Skills**

This qualification is ideal for those dealing with or producing paperwork in English. Candidates undertake a range of realistic workplace based tasks, which test their listening, reading and writing skills. The award recognises the accuracy of their use of English in a range of business documents – such as memos, minutes and reports – and their ability to proofread the work of others, ensuring precise and effective business communications.

Typical candidates for these assessments are clerical or secretarial staff who may not have to draft original documents, but are expected to prepare final drafts or prepare documents for publication.

The principal skills tested are linguistic accuracy (spelling, syntax, vocabulary and punctuation), comprehension (listening and reading) and proof reading.

As with English for Business Communication, assessment is undertaken mainly through practical tasks based on realistic documents.

Spelling is one of the principal skills tested; the use of dictionaries is therefore not allowed in these examinations.

### **English for Business Communication**

This qualification recognises a learner's ability to read and write the complete range of business communications from email to letter. Whatever the field or profession, it will help learners boost their confidence and proficiency in English in a business-based environment.

English for Business Communications examinations are a suite of qualifications in modern, written Business English. They are designed to meet the needs of present day organisations for fast and accurate communication in the international sphere. The test focuses on the candidates' ability to perform in real business situations through the medium of English. It tests candidates understanding of business communications and the ability to carry out a series of written tasks concisely and clearly.

### **Parts of the Test**

#### ***Reading***

- Demonstrating an understanding of written based communications
- Completing and extracting information from business documents

#### ***Writing***

- Writing concise letters, writing memos in response to instructions or situations, drafting documents or reports (depending on level)

### **Available Levels**

**Level 1** – equivalent to A2 Level on the CEFR

Suitable for clerical and administrative staff who have to read and draft routine communications in English according to clear instructions.

**Level 2** – equivalent to B2 Level on the CEFR

Suitable for staff who are expected to read a variety of communications in English and reply to them independently and in appropriate style.

**Level 3** – equivalent to C2 Level on the CEFR

Suitable for staff who are expected to read the full range of work related documents in English, including those that require complex replies, and to draft documents where choice and tone of expression may be critical to the success of the transaction.

### **Assessment**

The examination paper consists of a selection of realistic documents – letter, memos, emails, faxes, reports – that the candidate has to deal with by drafting appropriate replies or by writing documents in accordance with instructions. These are assessed according to how effective they are as written communication e.g.

- whether the candidate has interpreted the source documents correctly
- whether the replies convey the right message and whether they would achieve the desired results

Correct language is important, but the emphasis is on successful communication.

In recognition of the realistic nature of the examination tasks, candidates may use a monolingual (English-English) dictionary in the examination.

#### 4.4 TRINITY COLLEGE LONDON

Trinity College London is an international examination board, fully accredited in the UK as an independent awarding body.

##### **The Graded Examinations in Spoken English (GESE)**

Trinity's Graded Examinations in Spoken English provide a scheme of assessment through which learners and teachers/tutors can measure progress and development.

This series of 12 progressively graded exams is designed for speakers of languages other than English and sets objectives in listening to and speaking with English speakers. The 12 grades provide a continuous measure of linguistic competence and take the learner from absolute beginner (Grade 1) to full mastery (Grade 12).

Progress is marked by:

- Increasing evidence of the use of communicative skills.
- Greater linguistic demands categorised under language functions, grammar, lexis and phonology.
- An increasing degree of independence which allows the candidate to initiate and take control of the interaction.

This qualification recognises progress by acknowledging small steps. All learners make progress at different rates, and a graded system ensures that at every stage of their development there is an opportunity for them to mark that progress.

##### **The Integrated Skills in English (ISE) Examination**

Trinity's Integrated Skills in English (ISE) examination assess all four language skills – reading, writing, speaking and listening.

The examination includes a portfolio approach. By assessing classroom work as well as tasks carried out under exam conditions, a wide and varied sample of learner work is taken into account.

ISE includes the assessment of language skills through computer-assisted writing, offering candidates the opportunity to word process part of their assessed work.

ISE examinations are available at five levels mapped to the CEFR. ISE and GESE are recognised by colleges, universities and employees worldwide.

##### **Trinity College London ESOL Examinations**

Trinity's Spoken English for Work (SEW) examinations provide a scheme of assessment that measures progress and development of English language use in a workplace context. The four levels provide a measure of linguistic competence from independent user to proficient user; B1 to C1 in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: learning, teaching, assessment (2001).

The overall focus of the suite is to provide an examination of contextualised English through tasks that assess a full range of speaking and listening sub-skills that are required for day to day spoken communication in the world of work.

The Spoken English for Work examinations are open to anyone aged 16 and above. They are intended for those who have learnt English as a foreign, second or additional language. Candidates will either be preparing to enter the world of work or already have had some work experience. The examinations cover a range of subjects and tasks that reflect a variety of real life working situations. Candidates are assessed on their language abilities and not their knowledge of specific professions.

The suite takes the learner from being an independent user (SEW CEFR Level B1) to proficient user (SEW CEFR Level C1).

The ESOL examinations are available worldwide. In the UK, ISE, GESE and SEW are accredited by OFQUAL and its respective partners in Wales and CCEA in Northern Ireland. They are also mapped to the CEFR.

### 4.5 EDUCATIONAL TESTING SERVICE (ETS)

#### **The TOEFL iBT Test – Teaching of English as a Foreign Language**

The TOEFL iBT test is administered via the Internet. The TOEFL iBT test evaluates how well one combines listening, reading, speaking and writing skills to perform academic tasks.

The average English skill level ranges between Intermediate and Advanced.

- Students planning to study at a higher education institution.
- English-language learning program admissions and exit.
- Scholarship and certification candidates.
- English-language learners who want to track their progress.
- Students and workers applying for visas.

#### **The TOEIC Listening and Reading Test – The Test of English for International Communication**

The TOEIC Listening and Reading test assesses English language skills used in the workplace.

When the Listening and Reading test is taken together with the TOEIC Speaking and Writing tests, TOEIC test scores provide an accurate measurement of proficiency in all four English-language skills.



### The TOEIC Speaking and Writing Test

The TOEIC Speaking and Writing tests are assessments of English language speaking and writing skills for the workplace.

- Speaking skills are useful for effective presentations, face-to-face communication, meetings, video conferencing, teleconferencing and telephone.
- Writing skills are necessary for clear, persuasive emails and other forms of business correspondence.

The TOEIC Speaking and Writing tests complement the TOEIC Listening and Reading test. Together, they provide a reliable measurement of all four English-language communication skills.

TEOFL and TOEIC are developed and administered by ETS (Educational Testing Service), a US based organisation.

## 4.6 NATIONAL OPEN COLLEGE NETWORK (NOCN)

Over 7 million adults in England have difficulties with literacy and numeracy and it is estimated that a million of these have a first language other than English. 'Breaking the Language Barriers' (Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) – previously known as The Department for Education (DfES), 2000) identified the need for *'...a range of awards and qualifications suitable for ESOL learners that recognise achievement below Level 1 and that match goals and aspirations beyond Level 2.'*

The NOCN Entry Level Certificates in ESOL Skills for Life at Entry 1, Entry 2 and Entry 3 form part of a suite of qualifications that can be flexible, accessible and delivered in a range of contexts to meet needs of learners identified with ESOL needs below Level 1.

Each of the qualifications has a unit-based approach. This allows learners to achieve in small steps and gain separate certification for the three modes of Speaking and Listening, Reading and Writing at appropriate levels to their learning needs. This builds confidence for the achievement of whole qualifications over time.

The qualifications contribute to the UK Government's Skills for Life initiative by providing assessment of ESOL, which is designed around the standards for the Adult Literacy and Adult ESOL Core Curriculum. They are designed to cover the standards and curriculum with sufficient range, breadth and depth to properly reflect the use of the English language in real world situations, appropriate to the needs of client groups and the National Qualifications Framework level in question.

The ESOL Skills for Life programme in Northern Ireland is not included as part of the Essential Skills programme as it is in the rest of Great Britain.

Flexibility in relation to assessment of the four skills is provided within the qualification structure. Assessment tasks have been carefully designed to take account

of the broad categories identified in 'The New and The Old', the report of the 'Life in the UK' advisory group (Home Office Social Policy Unit, 2003). Assessment tasks provide opportunities not only for language development but also to learn about aspects of life and society in the UK that are relevant to settling in and the ease of integration within their community.

The guided learning hours for an average learner following an ESOL Skills for Life qualification are estimated to be between 80 to 120 hours for each unit. This is a notional figure for the basis of calculating the substance of whole qualifications which are based on the Adult Literacy Standards and Adult ESOL Core Curriculum. Some learners may be able to achieve these units in a shorter time, other learners, particularly those with literacy requirements, may take longer.

Each learning outcome has been mapped to the Adult ESOL Core Curriculum. In designing activities for assessment the mapping can be used to identify which basic skills could be addressed through evidence generated by learners. The qualifications are fully accredited by OFQUAL and CEA.

The NOCN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL Skills at Entry 1, Entry 2 and Entry 3 are particularly suitable for those with very little English who may have recently arrived in the UK, or who have newly identified literacy and ESOL needs.

These qualifications are suitable for the following groups of learners:

- Refugees and asylum seekers.
- Migrant workers from the European Union and Commonwealth countries.
- Partners and spouses and other family members of older and new entrants into the UK.
- Members of established ethnic communities who have been settled in the UK for some time, but who need to improve their level of English.

The minimum age for access to the qualification is 16, in line with the full ESOL Skills for Life qualification.

There are no specific entry requirements for these qualifications. It is recommended that learners complete an initial and diagnostic assessment to check the level that they should work towards and to identify key areas to develop within that level. Evidence of initial assessment is a requirement if the qualification is being used for Citizenship purposes as learners must progress a level before being eligible for Citizenship.

### **Recognition of Prior Learning**

Recognition of prior learning is an assessment method leading to the award of credit. The process involves considering if a learner can meet the specified assessment requirements for a unit through knowledge, understanding or skills that they possess already as a consequence of which they do not need to undertake a course of learning.

Centres are encouraged to recognise the previous achievements and experience, either formal – for example through accredited units or qualifications – or informal, for example through continuous learning. This involves the recognition of achievement from a range of activities that will have been assessed through any valid method of assessment. When using the process of the recognition of prior learning, it is essential that the assessment requirements of a specific unit or, more exceptionally, a qualification have been met. The evidence of learning provided must be sufficient, reliable, authentic and valid. Evidence is not time-limited.

### Progression Opportunities

NOCN Entry Level Certificates in ESOL Skills for Life enable progression to employment; further learning opportunities or further study.

Progression for ESOL learners can cover a broad spectrum of progression intentions. Learners can progress to higher levels or sub-levels of the core curriculum as appropriate to their individual learning needs. Learners could also progress to further adult or community education and work-based learning. Learners may aspire to a working knowledge of English to gain improved access to work, to local services such as health and education, or to participate more in local life.

ESOL is taught at a variety of levels as described in the table below. The majority of the ESOL delivered in Northern Ireland is at pre-entry and entry levels.

<b>Pre-Entry Level</b>	Does not have sufficient language ability to meet the criteria for entry 1.
<b>Entry 1</b>	<p>Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.</p>
<b>Entry 2</b>	<p>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).</p> <p>Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters.</p> <p>Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.</p>
<b>Entry 3</b>	<p>Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc.</p> <p>Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken.</p> <p>Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest.</p> <p>Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.</p>

<p><b>Level 1</b></p>	<p>Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation.</p> <p>Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party.</p> <p>Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages.</p>
<p><b>Level 2</b></p>	<p>Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning.</p> <p>Can express himself/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions.</p> <p>Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes.</p> <p>Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.</p>

Source: Common European Framework – Global Scale.

### **NOCN International**

ESOL International qualifications are designed for learners who are not native speakers of English and who wish to achieve a high quality, internationally recognised qualification in English that is available and recognised world-wide and, at the highest level (NQF Level 3/CEFR C2), are suitable for learners who are preparing for entry to higher education or professional employment in the UK or elsewhere. NOCN ESOL International qualifications are also recognised by ASEP, the Greek Supreme Council of Personnel Selection.

ESOL International qualifications are designed to reference the descriptions of language proficiency in the Common European Framework Reference for Languages (CEFR).

## **4.7 ASCENTIS AND PEARSON**

### **Business English Levels**

All levels of the Business English Examinations have listening, reading and writing elements. The tasks at all levels have a business or work-related topic or context. The tasks are designed for students who find themselves working every day with office technology and modern forms of communication. In addition the format of the tasks is designed to give the student the best possible chance of showing his or her skills in, and knowledge of, the language.

### **Pearson Academic Test**

PTE Academic measures a student's English ability by testing their level of English through tasks that reflect real life settings. PTE is a computer based international language test administered by Pearson Education. The test is recognised internationally and is accepted for admission to UK and US universities as well as government organisations. The test is accepted by Queens University Belfast.

## 5 STANDARDS REQUIRED BY ACCREDITING BODIES FOR DELIVERY OF ENGLISH AND ESOL COURSES AND EXAMINATIONS

### 5.1 BRITISH COUNCIL

Accreditation UK is a voluntary quality assurance scheme for providers of English language teaching (ELT) services in the UK. The scheme is open to language schools, home tuition providers, Further Education and Higher Education institutions, international study centres and independent schools.

The scheme operates as a partnership between the British Council and English UK (formerly the Association of Recognised English Language Services and the British Association of State English Language Teaching).

The aim of the scheme is to give an assurance of quality to international students who are studying or planning to study English language in the UK. This is achieved by external inspection, ensuring that providers that are accredited through the scheme meet agreed quality standards.

British Council accredited providers have a continuing obligation to work to the agreed standards, and make a declaration each year that they are doing so. They are re-inspected every four years, and each year a number of accredited providers, selected at random, undergo an unannounced interim visit.

The costs of administering the scheme are covered through an annual fee. Individual providers pay for the costs of their inspection.

Students studying with Accredited UK are assured of a level of service defined by the section standards of the scheme. These cover Management, Resources and Environment, Teaching and Learning and Welfare and Student Services.

Below is an outline of some of the main standards of the Scheme:

#### **Management**

- The management of the provision will operate to the benefit of its students, in accordance with its publicity and in accordance with the Declaration of legal and regulatory compliance form. This form is submitted as an application by accredited providers.
- Inspectors may spot check elements of the legal and regulatory declaration, as well as awareness of and attention paid to compliance.
- There will be a clear structure of management and administration for the ELT operation, and arrangements to ensure its continuity at all times.
- The duties of all staff working with ELT students will be specified.
- There will be effective channels of communication between all involved in the ELT operation (including homestay hosts and group leaders), and between the ELT operation and any wider organisation of which it is a part.
- In addition to complying with the statutory requirements, the provider will have and

implement appropriate human resources policies for all staff, including:

- recruitment policy
- appointments procedure
- Employers will take all reasonable steps to investigate and verify the qualifications and experience of all prospective employees.
- The provider will have and implement appropriate induction procedures for all staff.
- There will be clear procedures for monitoring and appraising all staff, and for handling unsatisfactory performance.

#### **Student Administration**

- Staff will be helpful and courteous to students and there will be sufficient administrative staff and resources to handle the volume of work efficiently.
- There will be effective systems to maintain up-to-date records of students' local and emergency or next of kin contact details. These will be accessible at all times to the person(s) within the ELT organisation responsible for responding to emergencies.

#### **Quality Assurance**

- Providers will submit an appropriate action plan, based on the points to be addressed from a previous inspection report, in preparation for the next inspection or earlier as required by the Accreditation Scheme Advisory Committee. This plan will include a timeframe and will form part of the next inspection. There will be a satisfactory explanation for points not addressed.
- Providers will review systems, processes and practices with a view to continuing improvement. Appropriate action will be taken and recorded.
- The provider will regularly obtain and record feedback from students on all the services offered. This will include initial and end-of-course feedback. Feedback will be circulated to relevant staff and appropriate action will be taken and recorded.
- All publicity and information (including social media) about the provider and the services it offers will be in clear and accurate English, accessible to non-native speakers, or in translation.
- Publicity and information about the provider and the services it offers will be accurate and give rise to realistic expectations about the premises, location, and the extent and availability of the services and resources.

For further information see [www.britishcouncil.org](http://www.britishcouncil.org).

## **5.2 CAMBRIDGE ENGLISH**

Becoming a centre requires a commitment to achieving and maintaining the standards set by Cambridge English.

Becoming a centre requires a number of pre-approval checks, and successful applicants pay a fee for being approved as a centre.

Before an organisation applies to become a centre, they need to consider the following questions in relation to requirements.

- Have you identified whether there is a need for a Cambridge English examination centre in your area?
- Has your institution been in operation for a minimum of three years?
- Is your institution financially sound?
- Could you provide us with a 3-year business plan with sales forecasts?
- Would you be prepared to visit state schools in your area to promote Cambridge English examinations and to increase candidate numbers?
- Do you have suitable computer facilities to enable you to increase the number of computer-based tests?

For more information – [www.cambridgeenglish.org](http://www.cambridgeenglish.org).

### 5.3 INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE TESTING SYSTEM (IELTS)

IELTS takes a rigorous approach to test security, including measures before test day, on test day and after test day. These mechanisms are to ensure that the integrity of the test is upheld.

Each prospective IELTS test centre agrees to a stringent set of contractual conditions. The conditions of IELTS test centre operations include an audit programme involving scheduled site audits and spot audits, to ensure test centre operations are maintained at a high level.

- Every test taker must present a valid identity document before being accepted to sit a test.
- A high-resolution photograph of each test taker is captured at registration. This ensures that the photograph that appears on the Test Report Form is that of the person who sat the test.
- Biometric systems are used to capture and record each test taker's finger scan at test registration and before entry to the test. This finger scan is checked on test day to verify test taker identity and ensure that the same person sits all four components of the test.
- Each test version includes a unique combination of questions – no two versions of the tests are the same.
- Restricted user rights among test centre staff mean access to test materials is controlled.
- Systems are in place to automatically scrutinise test results. When an anomaly is identified, the test taker, test centre and any organisation that has been sent the result are notified and appropriate action is taken, which may include cancellation of a test taker's result.



Organisations recognising IELTS may use the IELTS Test Report Form Verification Service. This free, secure online service lets you:

- quickly verify that an applicant is presenting a genuine result
- conveniently download electronic Test Report Forms in batches

### **Availability**

- IELTS is available at more than 800 locations around the world.
- There are 48 test dates per year.
- Test fees are usually payable in local currency.
- Many IELTS test centres will deliver testing for groups of test takers onsite at their workplace or educational institution.
- Many test centres offer online booking as well as face-to-face customer support with booking the test

### **Test Takers with Special Requirements**

To ensure that language proficiency is assessed fairly and objectively, IELTS provides a comprehensive service for test takers who have special requirements, including hearing, visual and learning difficulties.

These services include:

- Modified and enlarged test papers.
- Braille papers.
- A hearing-impaired (lip-reading) version of the Listening test.
- Extra time.
- A scribe to write answers on a candidate's behalf.
- Use of assistive technology.

### **Results Delivery**

- Results for test takers can be previewed online on the 13th calendar day after their test.
- Test Report Forms are posted or are available for pick-up from the test centre 13 calendar days after the test.
- Only one copy of the Test Report Form is sent to the test taker unless they are applying to the Canadian government.
- A test taker may request to have their Test Report Form automatically sent to five institutions of their choice free of charge.

(IELTS Band Scores 11.7)

### 5.4 NATIONAL OPEN COLLEGE NETWORK (NOCN)

NOCN Recognised Centres must have established high quality standards and have effective quality management systems and processes in place to underpin the delivery of NOCN units and qualifications.

Recognised Centres are monitored on a regular basis against the Centre Agreement, NOCN policies and procedures, and the requirements set out in the NOCN Centre Handbook

Recognised Centres are required to have:

- Robust assessment practices, Internal Quality Assurance and standardisation which support External Verification.
- Appropriate staffing, resources, management and administrative arrangements, policies and procedures.

Any centre delivering NOCN or OCN provision must have quality systems in place to underpin its delivery. Systems will vary between centres according to what is appropriate in the particular situation. Practices that work in a large centre will not necessarily work in a small one and the context of, for example, an employer-based provider may mean that there are different requirements from that of a college. Whatever the situation there are two key points – there must be an appropriate system in place and there must be evidence that it is implemented effectively.

‘Quality system’ is an umbrella term that includes a number of key aspects of the way in which a centre operates its quality assurance. Centres are required to deliver a range of outcomes, including:

- A team of well-informed committed and supported tutors, sufficient in number for the planned provision.
- Adequate resources to support learners’ study.
- Guidance and support for learners and provision for individual needs.
- Equal opportunities in practice that help to maximise the participation of learners.
- Assessment procedures that are inclusive and offer participation, equity and reliable standardisation.
- Systems that provide efficient recording and evaluation.
- Systems that ensure consistency and validity of the assessment outcomes and that provide clear direction to learners and centre staff in regard to appeals and malpractice.
- Progression routes for learners and preparation for work and/or further study, including confidence building and basic/key skills achievements where appropriate.

**Internal Verification arrangements must include as a minimum:**

- An identified individual responsible for co-ordinating the internal verification process.
- A planned structure for internal verification that incorporates all of a centre's NOCN and/or OCN provision.
- An agreed and published annual timetable for internal verification, including internal verification meetings.
- Clear and documented roles and responsibilities for all those involved.
- A forum for discussion of borderline cases and good practice in assessment.
- Sampling of assessment tasks and assessed work.
- Standardisation of assessed work.
- Full and clear records and action plans.
- Regular evaluation of the process.

An internal verifier has a central role in the operation of the centre's quality system. A centre may have one or more internal verifiers, according to the size and variety of its provision. All must have experience relevant to the area(s) for which they have responsibility. They should also have an understanding of quality assurance and improvement.

## 6 ENGLISH LANGUAGE EXAMINATIONS MAPPING TO COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE TO LANGUAGES AND NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

The following tables provide a visual representation of how some commonly used ESOL levels and qualifications map to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). They also provide an indication of how an ESOL level or qualification, or one framework corresponds to a different level on another framework.

### 6.1 USES OF THE MAPPING EXERCISE

The mapping exercise is intended to support those working in the ESOL field in assessing learners' English language skills that may help one to plan learning experiences, which are closely linked to learners' needs. The tables may also be of use as an indication to employers regarding employees' qualifications, to those who are supporting persons with English as a second language into employment and in the identification of necessary qualifications provided in Northern Ireland.

The system of mapping qualifications does not mean that all qualifications will be the same, or that the same approaches to teaching and learning will necessarily be appropriate. Qualifications will continue to differ, for example in the extent of coverage of particular language modes, and in the content and emphasis provided for different client groups. However, such a system will make it easier for teachers/tutors and educational managers to select the most appropriate qualification and level for their students, and to plan for progression in English and in other disciplines. Employees may also find the ESOL Skills for Life competency statements in Appendix 11.2

#### Further Information

The following examinations span more than one CEFR Level:

BULATS – A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2

ICFE and ILEC – B2, C1

IELTS – B1, B2, C1, C2 (see also the IELTS 9-band scale)

Skills for Life Entry 1-3 – A1, A2, B1

Skills for Life Levels 1+2 – B2, C1

Not all existing ESOL qualifications and ESOL levels have been included in the tables. However, it was felt appropriate to include widely known and used qualifications by colleges and universities in Northern Ireland.

Making comparisons between scores on different tests is challenging because many of the current range of test products differ in their design, purpose and format (Taylor, 2004a). Candidates' aptitude and preparation for a particular type of test may also vary and individual candidates or groups of candidates may perform better in certain tests than in others

Specifying the relationship between a test product and the CEFR is challenging because, in order to function as a framework, the CEFR is deliberately underspecified

(Davidson & Fulcher, 2007; Milanovic, 2009; Weir, 2005). Establishing the relationship is also not a one-off activity, but rather involves the accumulation of evidence over time (e.g. it needs to be shown that test quality and standards are maintained).

**6.2 INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNISED ENGLISH LANGUAGE EXAMINATIONS - HOW THEY MAP TO THE COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK (CEFR) LEVELS AND THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATION (NQF) LEVELS**

CEFR	QCF	National Examinations	IELTS	Cambridge ESOL Suite	TOEFL IBT	PTE	TOEIC	BULTAS IBT
A1 Beginner	Entry 1-3	Key Stage 3	Less than Band 3					
A2 Elementary	Level 1	Foundation GCSE Grades D-G	Band 3	<u>KET</u>	<u>0-31 Spouses and Partners</u>	<u>30-42</u>	<u>246-380</u>	<u>20</u>
B1 Intermediate	Level 2	Higher GCSE Grades A*-C	<u>Band 4-5</u>	<u>PET</u>	<u>32-45 Spouses and Partners</u>	<u>43-58</u>	<u>381-540</u>	<u>60</u>
B2 Upper Intermediate	Level 3	AS/A Level	<u>Band 5-6</u>	<u>FCE</u>	<u>46-78</u>	<u>59-75</u>	<u>541-700</u>	<u>75</u>
C1 Advanced	Level 4	Undergraduate Education	<u>Band 6.5-7</u>	<u>CAE</u>	<u>79-101</u>	<u>79-101</u>	<u>701-910</u>	<u>40</u>
C2 Mastery	Level 5	Undergraduate Degree and HND's	<u>Band 7.5-9</u>	<u>CPE</u>	102-120	<u>102-120</u>	910+	<u>90</u>

CEFR	QCF	City and Guilds International Spoken ESOL	City and Guilds International Listening, Reading and Writing ESOL	Trinity ISE	Trinity GESE
A1 Beginner	Entry 1-3	<u>A1 Spouse and Partner Preliminary</u>	A1 Preliminary		<u>Grade 2 Spouse and Partners</u>
A2 Elementary	Level 1	<u>A2 Access</u>	A2 Access	ISE 0	<u>Grade 3-4</u>
B1 Intermediate	Level 2	<u>B1 Achiever</u>	Achiever	<u>ISE I</u>	<u>Grade 5-6</u>
B2 Upper Intermediate	Level 3	<u>B2 Communicator</u>	Communicator	<u>ISE II</u>	<u>Grade 7-9</u>
C1 Advanced	Level 4	<u>C1 Expert</u>	C1 Expert	<u>ISE III</u>	<u>Grade 10-11</u>
C2 Mastery	Level 5	<u>C2 Mastery</u>	C2 Mastery	<u>ISE IV</u>	<u>Grade 12</u>

**CEFR:** Common European Framework

**QCF:** Qualifications and Credit Framework

**ESOL:** English for Speakers of Other Languages

**GESE:** Graded Skills in Spoken English

**IELTS:** International English Language Teaching Score – Cambridge

**ISE:** Integrated Skills in English

**TOEFL IBT:** Internet Based Educational Training Service

**PTE:** Pearson Test for English

**TOEIC:** Educational Training Service Test of English for International Communication

**BULTAS IBT:** Business Language Teaching Service Internet Based – Cambridge

\* Underlined text = English Language tests that have been assessed as meeting the Home Office UK Border Agency’s requirements from 20/11/13 (individuals should always check)

## 6.3 CERTIFICATE IN ESOL SKILLS FOR LIFE EXAMINATIONS

### 6.3 CERTIFICATE IN ESOL SKILLS FOR LIFE EXAMINATIONS – HOW THEY MAP TO THE COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK (CEFR) AND THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (NQF)

	QUALIFICATIONS AND CREDIT FRAMEWORK (FORMERLY NQF)					
	Entry 1	Entry 2	Entry 3	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
City and Guilds	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	To be developed
NOCN	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	To be developed
Trinity College London	✓ Not on NQF	✓ NQF Entry 1	✓ NQF Entry 2	✓ NQF Level 1	✓ NQF Level 2	To be developed
Cambridge ESOL	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
English Speaking Board (ESB)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Edexcel	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Ascentis	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
CEFR	A1 Beginner	A2 Elementary	B1 Intermediate	B2 Upper Intermediate	C1 Advanced	

**NQF** – National Qualifications Framework

**QCF** – Qualifications and Credit Framework

### 6.4 ENGLISH LANGUAGE EXAMINATIONS FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES – HOW THEY MAP AGAINST THE COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK (CEFR)

CEFR	ILEC	ICFE	SEW	Ascentis Practical Business English	Ascentis Intermediate Business English	Ascentis Advanced Business English	Ascentis Proficiency English	EBC SETB	Cambridge Business Higher	Cambridge Business Vantage	Cambridge Business Preliminary	EBC	EOS
A1 Beginner								Stage A				Level 1	Level 1
A2 Elementary				A2							A2	Level 2	Level 2
B1 Intermediate			SEW 1		B1			Stage B		B1		Level 3	
B2 Upper Intermediate	ILEC	ICFE	SEW 2-3						B2				
C1 Advanced	ILEC	ICFE	SEW 4			C1		Stage C					
C2 Mastery							C2						

**CEFR:** Common European Framework

**EBC:** English for Business Communication

**ILEC:** Cambridge Legal Certificate

**SETB:** Spoken English for Business (City and Guilds)

**ICFE:** Cambridge Financial Certificate

**EBC:** English for Business Communication (City and Guilds)

**SEW:** English for Work Speaking and Listening – Trinity

**EOS:** English Business for Office Skills (City and Guilds)

## 7 OVERVIEW OF ENGLISH AND ESOL QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED TO MEET CURRENT ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

The following are requirements of English language qualifications from a range of professional bodies.

### 7.1 UNITED KINGDOM BORDER AGENCY IMMIGRATION PURPOSES

The UK Border Agency (UKBA) (now UK Visas and Immigration) prepared a list of approved English language tests called Secure English Language Tests (SELTs). The list was compiled for use with all of the different immigration tiers; therefore, not all of the tests are suitable for all immigration purposes. For example, some of the tests are not able to provide reliable scores for immigrants needing only low levels of English proficiency, while others do not include content that enables assessment of an applicant's readiness to study at university through the medium of English. Each test on the list should be considered in relation to its purpose and evidence that demonstrates its validity for that purpose.

The UKBA use of the CEFR levels enables them to refer to language proficiency levels independent of any single test. As long as entry requirements are equal to or higher than those set by the UKBA, universities remain free to set their own English language entry standards. In most cases, the level of English required for success at university will exceed the minimum requirements set by the UKBA for immigration purposes.

The UKBA Secure English Language Tests are highlighted on the Examination Mapping Tables. For further information on Secure English Language Tests see [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk)

### 7.2 UNIVERSITY ENTRY

International students wishing to apply to Queens University and to the University of Ulster must be able to demonstrate their competence in English in order to benefit fully from their course of study or research.

Table 7.3 shows the currently accepted English language qualifications by both universities. INTO Queen's University Belfast is a partnership with Queen's University, which offers academic courses and English Language programmes designed specifically for international students.

Details of other UKBA approved tests can be found on the Queen's University website: [www.qub.ac.uk](http://www.qub.ac.uk).

## 7.3 ACCEPTED ENGLISH LANGUAGE QUALIFICATIONS

QUALIFICATIONS	LINGUISTICALLY LESS DEMANDING COURSES	MOST COURSES	LINGUISTICALLY MORE DEMANDING COURSES
<b>IELTS International English Language Testing System – Academic</b>	6.0 with minimum of 5.5 in all four elements of the test	6.5 minimum of 5.5 in all four elements of the test	7.0 with minimum of 5.5 in all four elements of the test
<b>TOEFL iBT (Internet based test)</b>	80 with minimum marks as follows: Listening – 17 Reading – 18 Speaking – 20 Writing – 17	90 with minimum marks as follows: Listening – 17 Reading – 18 Speaking – 20 Writing – 17	95 with minimum marks as follows: Listening – 17 Reading – 18 Speaking – 20 Writing – 17

**Please note** that some degree programmes may require higher scores in the individual sub-skill components of IELTS and TOEFL tests. The following table may be used as a guide.

<b>IELTS International English Language Testing System – Academic</b>	7.0 with minimum of 6.0 in all four elements of the test	7.5 with a minimum of 6.5 in all four elements of the test	6.5 with a minimum of 6.0 of all four elements of the test	6.5 overall with 6.0 in Speaking and Listening, and 5.5 in Reading and Writing
<b>TOEFL iBT (Internet based test)</b>	95 with minimum marks as follows: Listening – 20 Reading – 19 Speaking – 21 Writing – 20	105 with minimum marks as follows: Listening – 23 Reading – 21 Speaking – 22 Writing – 23	90 with minimum marks as follows: Listening – 20 Reading – 19 Speaking – 21 Writing – 20	90 with minimum marks as follows: Listening – 20 Reading – 18 Speaking – 21 Writing – 17

## 7.4 STANDARD REQUIREMENTS FOR UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

The University of Ulster website includes a section on Frequently Asked Questions – English Language Requirements. Additionally, further information on other acceptable examinations to university courses and minimum levels needed to meet the university’s English Language entry requirements can be found on the University of Ulster website: [www.ulster.ac.uk](http://www.ulster.ac.uk).

TEST	SCORE
International English Language Testing System (IELTS) – An IELTS certificate is only valid for 2 years	6.0 overall with no less than 5.5 in and one band
TOEFL Internet Based Test (ibt) – A TOEFL ibt certificate is only valid for 2 years	80.0 overall with no less than 17 in listening, 18 in reading, 20 in speaking and 17 in writing
Pearson Test of English (PTE): Academic – A PTE Academic score is only valid for 2 years	56 with no less than 51 in listening, reading, speaking and writing



## 7.5 OVERSEAS TRAINED NURSES

The number of nurses recruited from abroad has significantly increased since the late 90s. In 2003/2004 there were 14,122 nurses from overseas (outside the EU) registered as initial entrants to the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) register.

Many of these recruits have chosen to seek short-term contracts as continual professional opportunities in the NHS and independent centre within the HPSS in Northern Ireland (Guidance on International Nursing Recruitment, 2001).

The shortage of nurses working in 1999, led to the issue of work permits for several Filipino nurses to work in the NHS and private nursing homes.

To address staff shortages in the province, many employers have welcomed the growth of international nursing recruits to Northern Ireland in recent years. Our international colleagues have and continue to play a pivotal role in the delivery of nursing care across many services. While the culture and background of these nurses is varied, healthcare providers are recognising that they need to promote an organisational culture that values diversity and mutual respect (Hayes. E, Director of Nursing, Belfast City Hospital).

The NMC states that all nurses and midwives who are trained in a country outside of the European Union (EU) must undertake the International English Language Test (IELTS) at the academic level and achieve minimum scores of seven, both overall and in each of the four assessment branches of listening, writing, reading and speaking. The IELTS must be undertaken by all applicants who are applying for registration through the overseas application route, including those whose first language is English or who hold British citizenship. In order to maintain consistency and impartiality, the NMC will not assess the English language competence of an applicant in any other way.

Good communication between nurses, patients and other medical staff is essential to ensure effective and safe patient care. This communication must be underpinned by a high standard of proficiency in English. The NMC has committed to using the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) as an objective and fair system of assessing language competency as part of the wider registration process for nurses and midwives trained outside the European Union.

IELTS is used by healthcare regulators in the United Kingdom and internationally as it provides an objective, consistent and internationally accessible means for professionals to demonstrate their language proficiency.

### **New Language Checks on European Doctors**

New language checks on European doctors were scheduled to come into force in June 2014.

Under previous legislation, the General Medical Council (GMC) could assess overseas doctors applying to work in the UK, but not those from other countries within the European Union.

The changes require doctors from other European countries to provide evidence of their English skills or undergo a language assessment, if the GMC has concerns about his or her ability to communicate effectively with their patients.

The GMC also announced that, from the summer, all overseas doctors who take a test to demonstrate their English language skills would need to achieve a higher score.

Doctors from overseas wanting to practise in the UK will need to achieve an overall score of 7.5 out of 9 in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test.

The new requirement will be introduced at the same time as new language checks on European doctors.

‘Doctors who want to practise in the UK must be able to communicate effectively in English to ensure the safety of their patients.’

‘These new measures to ensure doctors from other European countries can communicate in English, combined with the higher test score requirements, will help us strengthen protection for patients. They will also bring about a greater degree of fairness between our requirements for European doctors and for those from outside Europe (N. Dickson, CE GMC, February 2014).’

‘These are important steps to tighten up our procedures. But, while we welcome the Government’s support for our determination to achieve reform in this area, there is more to do. This is part of a package of measures that will further increase our scope to make sure that doctors coming to the UK from the European Union are able to communicate safely. Employers, including locum agencies, must also play their part, and ensure that all doctors for whom they are responsible can communicate and practise safely.’

### **IELTS Scores**

- Before they can register, international medical graduates (IMGs) must demonstrate that they have the necessary knowledge of English. Most IMGs do this by getting satisfactory scores in the academic version of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). Some IMGs provide alternative evidence (for example, documentary evidence of a recent PMQ taught and examined solely in English).
- The GMC’s current language requirement, which has been in place since 2010, is a minimum overall score of 7.0 and scores of least 7.0 in each of the four elements of the IELTS test – speaking, listening, writing and reading.
- The GMC last raised requirements for IELTS in October 2010.
- In 2012 the GMC commissioned the Centre for Language Assessment Research at the University of Roehampton to refresh and extend the 2004 study over all four IELTS domains.

This research suggested:

- The IELTS test provides an adequate measure of English language ability for IMGs seeking admission to the GMC register.

- The current required scores are not adequate as a preliminary language screen for International Medical Graduates (IMGs).
- If the GMC is in future able to assess the language knowledge of EEA doctors and require them to pass IELTS, the same IELTS scores should be required as those required of IMGs.

#### **UNISON Northern Ireland – support for health care workers**

UNISON is a public service union. UNISON represents over 1.3 million people UK wide, working in education, health and community/voluntary sectors. They provide employment advice and representation, legal services, campaigning and bargaining support to fight for better conditions in the workplace and better public services in general.

In Northern Ireland, UNISON has organised a number of activities to support its migrant worker members. This includes English support classes (general English classes and IELTS preparation classes). The classes are provided by an independent tutor and all courses are free for members.

Members of the UNISON and Black Migrant Workers Group Northern Ireland attended a conference in England in January 2014. One of the motions submitted at the conference called upon the National Black Members Committee and other relevant structures of UNISON to put pressure on the Nursing and Midwifery Council to visit the criteria it has in place for Overseas Qualified nurses to gain registration with the NMC UK.

The motion explained that the current English level requirement from the Nursing and Midwifery Council to practice as a nurse is both unfair and inadequate. The standard required (7 in all categories of the International Languages Test System – IELTS) is extremely high in terms of English grammar...something that will not necessarily leave staff best equipped to deal with 'real life' situations locally.

There is also at present, an online petition that UNISON UK will deliver to the Nursing and Midwifery Council, requesting the Council to consider the following suggestion:

- Reduce the academic IELTS score for NMC registration
- Provision of exclusion for nurses who completed a degree or masters from UK universities
- Reduce the IELTS requirements for overseas nurses who have three or more years of work experience in the healthcare sector in the UK.

#### **7.6 OVERSEAS-TRAINED TEACHERS/TUTORS**

In Northern Ireland a number of migrants who are qualified teachers/tutors in their home country are working in the education sector as classroom assistants and also in the voluntary sector as ESOL tutors. It is important that they have their overseas qualifications recognised in order to teach in schools and colleges in Northern Ireland.

The Department of Education in Northern Ireland (DENI) does not appear to provide specific advice on employing overseas-trained teachers/tutors. It does however on its website, under Teacher and Qualifications and Registration, provide a link on requirements for European (EU) and non-EU applicants for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) in Northern Ireland. Under 'Qualified to Teach in Northern Ireland', it states that:

'The General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI) which is a self-regulatory professional body for teachers/tutors has a statutory duty to determine who should be a member of the teaching profession in Northern Ireland.

All teachers/tutors who wish to have their qualifications approved for the purposes of registration with the GTCNI and eligibility to teach should contact the GTCNI.'

Advice, however, on employing overseas-trained teachers/tutors (OTTs) can be downloaded on the Department of Education UK website – Advice on Employing Overseas-Trained Teachers/Tutors (April 2013).

### **Overview of UK guidance for teachers not from the European Economic Area**

Non-European Economic Area (non-EEA) Teachers/Tutors are people who have qualified as teachers/tutors in a country outside of the European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland, having successfully completed a course of initial teacher training that is recognised by the relevant authorities in their home country.

Since 1 April 2012, qualified teachers/tutors from Australia, Canada, New Zealand or the USA can apply to the National College for Teaching and Leadership (previously the Teaching Agency) for qualified teacher status (QTS) without undertaking further training or assessment in England.

The Education (Specified Work) (England) Regulations 2012 allow teachers/tutors trained in a country outside of the UK to teach in state maintained schools and non-maintained special schools in England for up to four years.

However, they are not permitted to teach in pupil referral units (PRUs) until they have been awarded qualified teacher status (QTS). This rule applies to teachers/tutors who qualified in countries outside of the EEA and Switzerland except for teachers/tutors who qualified in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the USA. OTTs are allowed to teach in state maintained schools and non-maintained special schools in England as unqualified teachers/tutors for four calendar years. QTS is awarded by the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL).

For example, if a teacher first teaches on 2 April 2013, they are allowed to teach without QTS until 1 April 2017. The expiry date remains 1 April 2017 even if the teacher did not teach for the whole period between 2 April 2013 and 1 April 2013 unless they are eligible for one of the statutory extensions detailed below.

In order to teach after four years, OTTs must have been awarded QTS. OTTs who have been awarded QTS by the end of their four-year period become qualified teachers/tutors and are allowed to continue teaching, subject to UK Visas and Immigration permission, if required under the terms of their UK entry. A number of exceptions are allowed for cases involving maternity, paternity, adoption or pregnancy related absences.

### **Overview of UK guidance for Teachers/ from the European Economic Area (EEA)**

In order to teach in state maintained schools or most academies in England one needs to have Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), which is the professional qualification for teachers/tutors. European Economic Area (EEA) nationals who are recognised as qualified school teachers/tutors in another EEA member state may apply for QTS in England under the terms of Council Directive 2005/36/EC without the need to undertake further teacher training in England. An application needs to be made for QTS to the NCTL.

If the NCTL are unable to award a teacher QTS, he/she will need to undertake a course of initial teacher training in England leading to the QTS award. There are a range of training options available, which you can find out more about online.

## 8 OVERVIEW OF ESOL DELIVERY IN NORTHERN IRELAND – BASED ON RESPONDENT INFORMATION

### 8.1 PUBLIC / FORMAL SECTOR

#### 8.1.1 Overview of Provision

Further Education in Northern Ireland is provided through six multi-campus colleges. The Department for Employment and Learning is responsible for the policy, strategic development and financing of the statutory Further Education Centre. Further Education Colleges are free-standing incorporated bodies. Management responsibility lies within each college's governing body.

#### **Belfast Metropolitan College (BMC)**

Belfast Metropolitan College is the largest in Northern Ireland with five main sites, which are Millfield, Titanic Quarter, Castlereagh, Tower Street and Whiterock. ESOL classes are mainly delivered at the Titanic Quarter Campus, with some provision in Millfield (Saturday morning) and Castlereagh. All learners are assessed and enrolled before commencing an ESOL class.

BMC offers a wide range of courses in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL), which focuses on general, academic and professional English. Windsor Women's Centre, one of its outreach centres, also offers ESOL classes.

City and Guilds and University of Cambridge ESOL Skills for Life Courses are part time (four hours per week) or on an intensive basis (13.5 hours per week). The college also offers preparation classes for:

- IELTS examinations
- University of Cambridge ESOL examinations
- First Certificate in English (FCE)
- Certificate in Advanced English (CAE)
- Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE)
- Business English Certificate (BEC)

Belfast Metropolitan College is accredited by the British Council for the Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages and has a UKBA Highly Trusted Sponsor Licence. The college also has an International Office to support the international students.

Further information is available on the college website: [www.belfastmet.ac.uk](http://www.belfastmet.ac.uk).

#### **Northern Regional College (NRC)**

The Northern Regional College has eight campuses around the North-East of the province. The college offers the City and Guilds International ESOL qualifications, as well as ESOL Skills for Life qualifications as part time courses. The college has an International Department.

Further information is available on the college website: [www.nrc.ac.uk](http://www.nrc.ac.uk).

**North West Regional College (NWRC)**

North West Regional College is in the North West region of Northern Ireland. The college has three main campuses in Derry, Limavady and Strabane. The college offers part time City and Guilds ESOL Skills for Life.

Further information is available on the college website: [www.nwrc.ac.uk](http://www.nwrc.ac.uk).

**South Eastern Regional College (SERC)**

The South Eastern Regional College has six campuses in total; Ballynahinch, Bangor, Downpatrick, Lisburn, Newcastle and Newtownards, and has out-centres in Carrowdore and Holywood.

The College offers City and Guilds ESOL Skills for Life Entry 1-3 and Level 1 and 2. SERC became an IELTS test centre in December 2013. The centre is at its Bangor Campus. The College also has an International Study Department offering International Students a wide range of courses.

Further information is available on the college website: [www.serc.ac.uk](http://www.serc.ac.uk).

**Southern Regional College (SRC)**

Southern Regional College is the largest Further and Higher Education College outside Belfast. It has a total of six campuses across the counties of Armagh and Down, and covers four more district councils.

SRC offers a part time pre-ESOL programme at its Portadown campus and outreach centres via their Transforming Learning Communication project.

It also offers part time courses in the Cambridge Advanced Certificate in English (CAE) and the Cambridge First Certificate in English (FCE), as well as the City and Guilds Certificate in ESOL International Entry Level 1-3 and Levels 1 and 2.

**Southern Regional College – ESOL Projects*****The Voice Project – Giving New Communities a Voice***

Southern Regional College Newry hosted twelve course participants from across the Newry, Mourne and Upper Bann regions to complete their OCN Level Two Certificate in 'English Learning Support for Speakers of Other Languages'. Among them were classroom assistants from various schools, teachers/tutors with special responsibility for pupils with limited English, others who help with voluntary English classes, Good Relations support officers, South Down Health Initiative Culture Club, Transforming Learning Communities organisers and staff from Craigavon Intercultural Partnership.

The aim of the qualification is to allow participants to engage, involve and empower those within our community who do not speak English as their first language.

SRC ESOL Co-ordinator Deborah Wark and SRC lecturer Michael Toman have designed extensive learning materials on the topics of health, education, housing and the

workplace. These DVDs use Northern Irish accents and will be made available free of charge to all course participants.

### ***Learning for Living Project***

This project aims to support staff/teachers/tutors gain the knowledge & skills they need to assist migrants/minorities to integrate more fully within their college/university and local community.

Staff/teachers/tutors gain an understanding of the issues facing migrant workers and their families who come to their host country. This project provides learners from ethnic minority communities with a pathway to improve their knowledge and competences around language learning and provide them with added support.

As part of the “Learning for Living” project, partners from Cumbernauld College (Scotland), the Italian Language School, University of Palermo (Italy) and Helsinki Diakonia College (Finland) gathered at the Portadown Campus of SRC (Northern Ireland) to share their experiences and develop working relationships.

### ***Transforming Learning Communities – Southern Regional College and Trademark Belfast***

This project is a five-year project funded by the Big Lottery’s Live and Learn Programme which works to increase learning opportunities and promote well-being among Northern Ireland’s most disadvantaged communities. The aim of the Transforming Learning Communities Project is to deliver a range of educational and support services to Migrant and Traveller communities; to reduce prejudice and to empower the target group by improving their skills. The College is currently providing pre-ESOL, pre-Essential Skills and accredited and non-accredited programmes across the Southern region.

The Project is delivered through a partnership that includes the Southern Regional College (the lead partner), and Trademark (the core partner).

Southern Regional College was awarded the Beacon Award UK for its ‘Transforming Learning Communities’ or TLC Project in February 2014, which actively attracts adult learners to re-engage in learning and is proactive with two local communities of migrant workers and travellers. The college demonstrated its clear strategic commitment to disadvantaged communities and to identifying their learning needs.

### **South West Regional College (SRC)**

The South West Regional College operates on four campuses: Cookstown, Dungannon, Enniskillen and Omagh. Of the six area based colleges, SRC is the smallest in size, but covers the largest geographical area of counties Tyrone and Fermanagh. The college offers City and Guilds ESOL International Examinations and City and Guilds Certificate in ESOL.

Further information is available on the college website: [www.swc.ac.uk](http://www.swc.ac.uk).



### 8.1.2 FINDINGS

The six Further Education Colleges in Northern Ireland were contacted. Belfast Metropolitan College, South Eastern Regional College and Southern Regional College took part in the interviews. The other three colleges; North Regional, North West Regional and South West Regional did not contribute directly to these findings.

#### Reasons for Attending Classes

In the three colleges interviewed each stated that the reason for attendance was to gain a qualification in order to find employment, for visa requirements and to upgrade skills. Students also attended in order to integrate into society, to make friends and for individual reasons.

#### Attendance Rate

On the whole attendance was good. Students tended to miss classes such as before and after holiday periods e.g. Christmas and Easter. South Eastern Regional College found that attendance was poor at Saturday morning classes. Southern Regional College attendance rate averaged at 73 per cent.

#### Levels Taught

All three colleges provided ESOL Skills for Life Class Entry 1-3 and Levels 1-2. Southern Regional College offers pre-ESOL classes that are taught on the campus and at Outreach Centres via the Transforming Learning Communication Project. Pre-ESOL classes were introduced as it was felt that Skills for Life entry levels did not meet the needs of the learners. Pre-ESOL classes are also offered at Belfast Metropolitan College.

South Eastern Regional College is an International English Language Testing Service test centre and will be starting IELTS preparation courses in March 2014.

Belfast Metropolitan College and Southern Regional College offer Cambridge English Examinations and a City and Guilds Certificate in ESOL International at Entry Level 1-3 and Level 1 and 2.

#### Accrediting Organisations

All College ESOL courses are accredited. Accrediting organisations include City and Guilds, Cambridge and British Council.

#### Individual Learning Plan

All three colleges have developed their own learning plans. Initial assessment is carried out for student placement and group teaching plans are based on individual student needs. Individual lesson plans are put in place with intensive ESOL courses. One provider commented that this was a useful strategy for planning and monitoring student learning.

#### Waiting List for Classes

There is a waiting list in all colleges; however Belfast Metropolitan College reported that in general they are able to accommodate applicants in the wide range of classes

on offer. Southern Regional College reported that they currently had a waiting list but plans were in place to ensure that all learners' needs are met before July 2014.

#### Percentage Increase in Last Five Years

South Eastern Regional College stated that numbers had declined slightly across the board, however those students who sat examinations continued to attend. All three providers commented that the overall problem was that many students felt intimidated about sitting examinations. Class attendance was affected by those students in shift work and those with no family network. All three providers felt that this issue needs to be addressed. The Southern Regional College presented the following data:

Year	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
Number of Students	1029	1348	1168	1048	1038

#### Age Range

16+ years in all colleges. The Southern Regional College findings were as follows:

Age Range	<20	20-29	30-39	40-49	50+
Number of Students	27	356	388	160	107

#### Course Fees

Course fees varied within the colleges. All course fees can be found on the individual college websites, both for International and ESOL students living in Northern Ireland. The current fees for a non-EEA national will have a detrimental effect, as they are required to pay fees four times higher than an EEA national.

#### Student Nationality

All providers noted a wide range of nationalities. Mainly EU (Spanish, Italian, Polish, Lithuanian, Romanian, French and Greek), Non EU (Indian, Sub-Continent, Chinese) and students from Russia, Argentina and the Philippines. Student nationality changed each year depending on global and migration patterns, economic factors and countries facing conflict and war.

#### Childcare

Belfast Metropolitan College offered child care in out-centres during the day. Southern Regional College offered child care through some partnership / organisation projects.

#### Help with Transport

Help is given if students have applied for a hardship fund to support with payment of fees and transport costs. This subject has been raised with Department for Education and Learning (DELNI).

### **Links with Colleges in Other Sectors**

There are links with various employers in local areas. Two colleges wish to further develop links with residential homes and the hospitality sector to develop programmes on English for Specific Purposes. Belfast Metropolitan College has links with the NEXUS project, Southern Regional College has strategic links through the Curriculum Director's Forum and informal links at staffing levels via network / training events.

### **Number of Students / Frequency of Classes**

The number of students ranged from approximately 200-1034 in one academic year. Courses are weekly from September to June, ranging from 2-3 hours per week. The South Eastern Regional College provides a nine week course for 2 hours per week for beginners.

### **Tutors / Tutor Qualifications**

Colleges have both full time and part time teachers/tutors. Southern Regional College has only part time ESOL teachers/tutors. All teachers/tutors are trained with ESOL experience and have either a CELTA or DELTA (Certificate / Diploma in Teaching English to Adults Qualification).

## **8.2 VOLUNTARY / COMMUNITY / TRADE UNION SECTOR**

### **8.2.1 OVERVIEW OF PROVISION**

The researcher contacted fourteen providers in the voluntary sector, all of whom took part in the interviews. Information on these findings are based on those organisations who responded. (Appendix 11.2)

### **8.2.2 FINDINGS**

#### **Reasons for Attending ESOL Classes**

The main reasons for attending ESOL classes within this sector were for social integration, access to services - such as help with job applications and job seekers allowance forms - and inclusion and integration into the local community to improve their prospects of finding employment.

Others attended because the classes were free and they were using them to supplement classes they were attending at Further Education Colleges, such as Windsor Women's Centre and Whiterock Children's Centre.

Spanish mobile migrants, who were here for a short period of months, attended The Meeting Point, Belfast and Shaftesbury Square Reformed Presbyterian Regional Church. They attended the classes for conversational English or to add to their CVs. Those who felt isolated, especially women, who attended classes, saw it as a means of building friendships and of being able to help their children with homework and communicate better with their children's teachers/tutors, e.g. Barnardos, Windsor Women's Centre and Whiterock Children's Centre.

### **Attendance Rate**

Attendance at classes, on the whole, ranged between 65-100%. However, providers who offered an open door policy, such as The Meeting Point and Willowfield Church Belfast, had a high percentage of attendance. Factors affecting attendance are those who leave when they find employment, and those who are shift workers; therefore, attendance numbers are higher at the beginning of courses. The Northern Ireland Community of Refugees and Asylum Seekers (NICRAS) noted a 50% dropout rate due to the fact that they were only enrolling students who were asylum seekers and refugees.

Windsor Women's Centre had multicultural group workers who assisted the learners with outside factors that may affect their attendance. The provider stated that it was of utmost importance that they provided an intense level of support to their learners. Attendance rates in ESOL classes at the centre were higher than those who attended classes at the local Further Education College. Word of mouth was reported as the most effective method of promoting classes and encouraging new learners to attend.

### **Levels Taught**

A wide range of levels were offered by the organisations, from beginner classes to advanced levels. Initial assessment was carried out by the majority of providers. Tutors at Willowfield Church, Belfast have designed their own assessment tool kit, whilst others - e.g. Dialogue for Diversity, Portadown - used the Common European Framework of Languages (CEFR) as an assessment tool.

Windsor Women's Centre and Whiterock Children's Centre in Belfast employed tutors through Belfast Metropolitan College and in general felt it was best that those who had ESOL qualifications assessed the students. In the Portadown/Craigavon area, Dialogue for Diversity and First Steps Women's Centre employed tutors from Southern Regional College.

### **Number of Students / Frequency of Classes**

The number of students varied within each geographical area. In one organisation, they provided support for approximately 120 students with 15 to 20 in each of the six classes held twice a week.

In other organisations, class sizes ranged from fifteen students to 50 students. Classes were held twice or three times a week. Courses were ten weeks long in six of the centres, and those that had adapted a drop in policy held classes over an academic year.

NICRAS and Barnardos have a small number of students, the reason being that they only support refugees and asylum seekers.

### **Tutors / Tutor Qualifications**

In all centres, there was at least one CELTA / DELTA tutor. Other tutors were qualified teachers/tutors, but with no ESOL qualifications. Four centres had volunteers from Poland who were overseas trained teachers/tutors. Three centres had teachers/tutors who spoke English as a second language and another two had volunteers who had

English as a second language. Others had voluntary workers, some were retired teachers/tutors but with no ESOL qualifications.

ESOL teachers/tutors reported that they may be the only 'native' English speakers that some students had contact with on a regular basis. They felt that in such a situation, they had to act as a 'social interface' when dealing with official bodies and government agencies about who to pass students on to in order to speak about particular issues.

### **Accrediting Organisations**

Accreditation where it existed was through the Further Education colleges in each geographical area. Accrediting bodies were City and Guilds. Windsor Women's Centre has OCN accredited status and employed a tutor from the local Further Education College to teach ESOL Skills for Life Entry 1-3 at the centre and then the examinations were taken at the college. The tutors' fees were paid for by the centre. This was also the case in the YMCA in Bangor.

### **Individual Learning Plans**

Individual learning plans were carried out by some of the providers. However, with large numbers of students, this was a difficult task and accommodating those depended on the number of volunteers each provider had. Initial assessment was used rather than individual learning plans.

### **Waiting Lists for Classes**

Waiting lists varied in each organisation. In First Steps Women's Centre, Dungannon there were 115 students on the waiting list. Those providers offering a drop in/open door approach had no waiting list e.g. Willowfield Church, The Meeting Point and Shaftesbury Square Reformed Church.

### **Percentage Increase in the Last Five Years**

Providers indicated an overall increase in the last five years, from 50-70 percent, with two having a 100 percent increase and one having a 122.5 percent increase.

### **Age Range**

16 – 75 years old

All providers stated that the majority of their students were in their mid-20s to mid-30s.

### **Course Fees**

Within the voluntary sector, the majority of classes were free. Those students who attended Cambridge Skills for Life and Cambridge International Examinations classes at Further Education Colleges paid fees. First Steps charged a £10 administration fee, whilst Windsor Women's Centre paid for the student fees. It is worthy to note that those providers who paid fees all received funding from various sources.

### **Employers Proportion**

Not applicable in Voluntary Sector.

### **Student Nationality**

All providers noted a wide range of nationalities, Polish students constituted the highest percentage, followed by Portuguese, East Timorese and Lithuanian. A smaller percentage originated from Guinea Bissau on the West African coast. Guinea Bissau speakers hold Portuguese passports and are EU Citizens. These students mainly attended ESOL Classes in the mid-Ulster area.

There was also an increase in students from Spain, Italy and Greece who were looking for work and attending classes due to the economic situation in those countries.

In the greater Belfast area and South Down, student nationality majorities were Sudanese, Iranian, Iraqi, Bulgarian and Roma.

It was noted that student nationality changed each year depending on global and migration patterns, economic factors and countries facing conflict and war.

### **Childcare**

Five providers offer childcare facilities and two on an informal basis and Sure Start/Splash hope to have the facility in place by mid-2014. Two organisations provide childcare for students who take external examinations. Windsor Women's Centre provided childcare to 5pm during the week. It was felt that childcare was crucial in order to encourage mothers to attend the ESOL classes.

### **Transport Facilities**

This was on an informal basis in ten of the providing organisations. First Steps Women's Centre in Dungannon provided transport for a total of eighteen women and two children.

### **Links with Colleagues in Other Sectors**

In the mid Ulster area, providers had links with organisations, such as the Craigavon Intercultural Programme, St Vincent de Paul, the Southern Health Trust (promoting well-being team) and the local Further Education college.

First Steps Women's Centre, Dungannon had links with the South Tyrone Empowerment Programme and Sure Start.

In Belfast, the church based providers networked to provide support to each other and advertised in other local church magazines for volunteers to support the students attending ESOL classes.

Providers had links with schools, integrated services that supported migrant families and with the local Further Education Colleges. Windsor Women's Centre had employed a Development Officer to link with employees in the local area, for example at George Best City Airport.

The YMCA in Bangor had links with the local Further Education Colleges and other providers.

Sure Start/Splash felt that it was important for groups within geographical areas to network. Bangor First Presbyterian Church felt that networking was paramount in order to provide a high standard of support for learners.

## 8.3 PRIVATE SECTOR

### 8.3.1 OVERVIEW OF PROVISION

#### **Eden Language School Belfast**

Eden Language School in Belfast offers a range of English language courses, including part time, full time and one to one classes. Eden, at present, is the only Callan Method School in Northern Ireland.

The Callan Method is specifically about language acquisition in EFL (English as a Foreign Language). The method is divided into 12 stages (also known as levels) from Beginner to Advanced.

At Eden, part time students are enrolled in the Callan Method to improve their speaking skills. These students are all living and working in Northern Ireland and they study at Eden mainly for personal and professional reasons.

From January 2014, there are approximately a total of 50 students enrolled in full time General English and Callan Method classes.

As has already been stated, the Callan Method is specifically about language acquisition in EFL, and therefore there is no direct link to the National Curriculum. Although in some cases it may assist in admitting non-native speakers of English onto a study programme at third level.

Eden is not presently a Cambridge Examination Centre and does not have any students enrolled specifically for these examinations. However the school will in the near future offer City and Guilds IELTS examinations.

Eden Language School provides intensive English classes for students who are in Northern Ireland on International Placement Programmes. The classes are generally held 1-3 weeks prior to the students taking up a work placement. The work placements are organised by Intern Europe (formally Baker Tilly) who have for several years partnered with organisations around the European Union to bring students, graduates and young professionals to Belfast for vocational and education training, primarily through work placements. The students choose to do an international placement in order to gain professional experience to develop their language skills and to broaden their horizons.

Organisations in Northern Ireland that have provided a placement include Bombardier, Belfast City Council, Translink, Bank of Ireland and Lagan Technologies.

### **International House Belfast**

International House Belfast is a certified Cambridge ESOL examination centre. It offers preparation courses for the IELTS examination; First Certificate in English and Advanced and Proficiency courses in English.

IELTS examinations are taken by students who plan to study at university in the UK. Cambridge preparation courses give students the opportunity to study for an internationally recognised qualification.

International House also offers 'General', 'Executive' and 'Specialist' courses for adults and an English and work placement course (EU citizens only).

For more information see [www.ihbelfast.com](http://www.ihbelfast.com)

### **North West Academy**

The North West Academy of English is situated in the City of Derry and was established in 2003. The Academy offers preparation courses in Cambridge and TOIEC examinations, as well as IELTS and General English and Intensive English Courses.

For further information: [www.northwestacademy.net](http://www.northwestacademy.net).

### **Foyle International**

Foyle International is a language school based in Derry. It has been providing English language courses since 1990. The school offers language teaching programmes for Cambridge and TOIEC examinations, as well as preparation for IELTS. It also runs General English and Intensive English Language Programmes.

For further information: [www.foyle.eu](http://www.foyle.eu)

## **8.3.2 FINDINGS**

The researcher contacted four private language schools in Northern Ireland. Eden Language School and International House took part in the interviews.

### **Reasons for Attending Classes**

One reason for students attending classes was to gain qualifications for employment reasons and to attend preparation classes for examinations required by Universities, as well as adding qualifications to curriculum vitae. Students living in Northern Ireland felt it was beneficial for future employment. The schools also provided guidance for Masters and PhD students in writing theses.

### **Attendance**

100% - There was a strong study ethic in place in both schools.



**Levels Taught**

Beginner to Advanced. Each school has its own method of assessment. Students were initially assessed at induction against CEFR levels and then assigned to a suitable class level.

**Accrediting Organisations**

British Council and Cambridge.

**Individual Learning Plans**

When requested by students.

**Percentage Increase in Last Five Years**

There has been a steady increase over the last three years. The number of enrolments is dependent on the economic situation in Europe.

**Number of Students / Frequency of Classes**

One school had five classes with a maximum of eight in each class, with two classes convening twice per week. However, the number of hours were dependent on the needs of the students in both schools. If required, students who attended language classes through Intern Europe Ltd were given support after they completed their 1-3 week language course, whilst they were in work placements.

**Tutors / Tutor Qualifications**

All teachers/tutors employed had CELTA/DELTA qualifications and in Eden Language School all were trained in the Callan Method of Teaching. This training was developed by the director of the language school.

**Waiting List**

One school had a waiting list for students at beginner level.

**Age Range**

In both schools, the age of the students ranged from 18-70 years. However the majority of students attending both schools fell into the mid-20s to mid-30s age group.

**Course Fees**

Course fees varied with the different examinations offered by the two language schools. Details can be found on their websites.

**Employers Proportion**

Executive immigrant course fees are paid by those firms who send students to the two language schools.

### **Student Nationality**

A wide range of nationalities attended the schools. The nationalities were dependent upon global and migrant factors. Student backgrounds were mainly professional recently unemployed or those who have finished university.

Childcare and Transport facilities are not applicable to the schools interviewed.

### **Links with Colleges in Other Sectors**

Both schools have links with private, local and overseas businesses and with Intern Europe. Both have links with Belfast Metropolitan College and Queen's University Belfast. Eden Language School reported having links with the Chinese Welfare Association Northern Ireland and Belfast Chamber of Commerce.

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## 9 ESOL POLICY CONTEXT

In Northern Ireland there is no overall ESOL policy as in England, Scotland and Wales. A number of strategies and programmes have however been written over the past decade.

### 9.1 NORTHERN IRELAND LANGUAGE FOR LIFE STRATEGY

The languages strategy for Northern Ireland was created against a background of profound change. Globalisation, the continuing development of the European Union, the growth of low cost air travel and demographic change are factors that are already affecting Northern Ireland's society and its economy and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

After a lengthy period of consultation with the public, with a range of stakeholders and the government departments, Languages for the Future: The Northern Ireland Languages Strategy was received by the Minister of Education, John O'Dowd, MLA on 18th September 2012. He welcomed the strategy and recognised the importance of its proposals for the development of vital linguistic skills in the province.

In 2006 the Department of Education commissioned the Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies, Northern Ireland to undertake the developments of a Comprehensive Languages Strategy for Northern Ireland. This group is part of the Higher Education Academy, based at the University of Southampton. The project was directed by Professor John Gillespie (University of Ulster) and Professor David Johnston (Queen's University Belfast) and was supported by a steering committee and a small team of researchers. There was also an Advisory Committee representing a wide range of groups with an interest in languages.

The report is comprehensive in that it examines all aspects of languages in the province (indigenous languages, migrant languages, modern foreign languages, sign languages and English as an additional language). The report makes 39 recommendations as to how key targets can be achieved. It focuses in particular on the importance of language learning and on the need to improve the uptake of languages in schools and colleges. The report also recognises that languages are important for wider economic, social and community reasons. It is divided into three major sections: Languages for Life – considering languages as a key skill within the education sector; Languages for Prosperity – outlining recommendations for languages within the business sector; and Languages for Understanding – exploring how communication and mutual understanding are important aspects of social cohesion.

The publication of the strategy was only the beginning. The Advisory Committee will continue its work to make sure that the various proposals, which have been widely welcomed, will be implemented in all aspects of education, business and society and that the public's awareness of the importance of languages and linguistic competence in our globalised world is fully accepted and understood.

### 9.2 OFQUAL CONSULTATION ON ESOL DELIVERY

OFQUAL, in their 2012-2013 corporate plans, stated that they would improve the regulation of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) qualifications in England and Northern Ireland.

The current ESOL regulations were put in place at different times between 2000 and 2008 by OFQUAL's predecessor, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). Since these regulations were introduced, there have been changes in the way ESOL qualifications are both used and regulated. It was found that ESOL qualifications are subject to a higher than usual incidence of malpractice.

In some cases, ESOL qualifications are now being used to support immigration applications. The Home Office is responsible for UK border control and they set the rules that must be met by any non 'English language requirement' by providing evidence they have gained an approved English Language qualification.

In light of such changes, OFQUAL decided to review the current regulations to reflect the way ESOL qualifications are now used and to be compatible with new General Conditions.

Based upon the responses received to the consultation and discussions held with the UK Border Agency (UKBA), the Home Office, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Department for Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland, OFQUAL decided:

- Against further conditions for a new qualification called ESOL for Life in the UK – most of the consultation respondents felt that existing ESOL qualifications already provided appropriate qualifications for UK entry, settlement and citizenship. In April 2013, the Home Office announced that it would accept a range of qualifications – including OFQUAL regulated ESOL qualifications – as evidence of English language competence to meet the Home Office Knowledge of Language and Life (KoLL) requirement. Applicants for UK settlement and citizenship would also need to pass the Home Office's Life in the UK test, which is subject to stringent security arrangements. It was considered that this would go some way to mitigating the identified malpractice issues. Therefore, it was considered that there would be no requirement to introduce a new ESOL qualification for the purposes that were outlined at the time of the consultation.
- For additional general conditions of recognition for ESOL International qualifications – these will specify a consistent requirement for 100% external assessment and mapping to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). There was support from stakeholders for both of these conditions.
- That the additional regulation currently in place for ESOL Skills for Life (SfL) will be retained. This regulation requires ESOL SfL qualifications to demonstrate a clear relationship to the Adult ESOL Core Curriculum published by BIS. The responses

from the majority of stakeholders said that they wanted this relationship to continue. In February 2013, the Skills Funding Agency announced that it would continue to support only ESOL qualifications that are based on the National Standards for Adult Literacy and the Adult ESOL Core Curriculum.

- On withdrawal of the additional regulations currently in place for ESOL for Work. These regulations were already covered by the General Conditions of Recognition and so this change was intended to remove duplication and streamline regulation of this qualification.

### 9.3 ESOL PROVISION FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS

#### **ESOL – Access to Further Education Classes for Asylum Seekers – DELNI Circular August 2012**

From 1 September 2012, asylum seekers will be eligible to access ESOL provision, and other further education courses, as soon as they have made an application for refugee status. The current six-month waiting period will be removed. Colleges will be able to draw from FLU funding when the applicant has provided confirmation that an application for asylum has been submitted to UK Visas and Immigration. In this regard, it is worth noting that students who have “no recourse to public funds” included in their passport stamp would not be in breach of their immigration conditions if they had access to education in the UK. “Public Funds” are defined in the Immigration Rules, and the benefits and services listed do not include education or education funding.

In addition, as part of the pilot, asylum seekers will be given free access to ESOL provision – effectively, they should be treated in the same way as learners receiving Essential Skills provision. However, if asylum seekers access other further education provision, colleges’ normal fees policies will apply.

ESOL provision, like Essential Skills provision, attracts the highest weighting in the FLU funding model and this will continue to be the case.

Asylum seekers who commence an ESOL course and then attain refugee status part way through the course should complete the course free of charge. However, subsequent enrolments on ESOL would not be free and normal college fees would apply.

Most asylum seekers whose claim to refugee status has been refused lodge an appeal. Individuals will continue to be eligible as outlined above while their appeal process is underway – colleges will want to be satisfied that such an appeal is under way.

The spouse/civil partner of an asylum seeker, who has been so since the date of application for refugee status, and the child/children of the asylum seeker or of the spouse/partner of an asylum seeker, who was under 18 when the application for refugee status was made, will also be eligible as outlined above in respect of asylum seekers.

### 9.4 BLACK AND MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

This study explored the ways in which provision was made in 2002 for supporting the acquisition and development of English language skills of members of minority ethnic communities in Northern Ireland. In addition, the experiences of members of these communities in accessing provision were examined and a number of issues that might be considered in the further development of provision and policy were identified.

The study pointed out that in Further Education the range and variety of needs makes effective provision difficult. There was great variation in the first language, length of residence in Northern Ireland, knowledge of English, reasons for coming to Northern Ireland, reasons for wishing to study etc. of students, making it extremely difficult to plan support programmes.

Amongst the major issues identified by staff and students in FE were:

- Limited data on numbers of potential students and their needs.
- The range of levels of support required.
- Irregular attendance patterns linked to, for example, transport difficulties, the need to work, family/childcare responsibilities.
- Variations in levels of student motivation and commitment.
- Recruitment and retention of suitably qualified teaching staff.
- Publicising the availability of classes in ways that potential students can access.

Many of the above issues were also mentioned by the providers who were interviewed in this given research and reference is made to them in the Barriers to Accessing Current ESOL Provision in 8.4.

In the conclusion of the report, Hasson, Morgan and Dunn identified the following key issues and made suggestions about possible strategies for post-16 ESOL provision.

- The provision of English courses for post school age students was very variable. Given the range of geographical areas people were coming from and the differences in the levels of familiarity with English which they displayed, initial assessment of individual needs is very important. Many colleges found it difficult to provide the resources to carry out such assessments and subsequently to match provision to need.
- The importance of links between colleges and co-operation in sharing good practice or providing different courses in different locations so that numbers can be concentrated might be valuable strategies.
- The formal mechanisms through which adults become aware of courses did not seem to function very effectively. Many students 'hear from friends' and wider dissemination of information and the involvement of minority ethnic community organisations might make it easier to reach target groups.
- In order to inform decision-making, the availability of reliable and up-to-date statistics is vital. Whilst the Department of Education collects information via the annual school census it would be valuable if more detailed information could

be collected to assist in planning and encouraging co-operation and sharing of resources and expertise.

Similar suggestions were mentioned in the interviews carried out in this given research and have been referred to in the recommendations under part 10.2 of this research.

### **9.5 THE PROVISION OF ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES AND MODERN EDUCATION IN FURTHER EDUCATION**

This report, on the provision for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Modern Languages, is written against the background of the changing nature and the diverse needs of the workforce in Northern Ireland. It acknowledges the increased opportunities for employment, travel and socially related mobility in Europe as a whole. The report considers both curricular areas within the wider context of institute development planning.

The survey data in the report indicated that migrant workers now form a significant proportion of the ESOL cohort of learners; these learners have become an increasingly visible learning community in the majority of institutes. Data to record and accurately track specific categories of ESOL learners is, however, poorly maintained. In NI there is now a wider pool of skilled and semi-skilled workers and an increased capacity for jobs.

The survey data indicates that institutes have established industrial and business links across a number of areas. They cater currently for ESOL learners across a wide range of learning settings including textiles, horticulture and farming, as well as local engineering and construction companies, nursing homes, hospitals, primary and manufacturing industries, poultry and meat processing factories and firms, and hospitality industries. In addition, institutes report new links with the National Health Service and the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) to provide training in interpreting skills.

The report pointed out that there are key areas for development at both sectorial level and individual institute level, to put in place a strategy that will aim to address a number of important areas. These include:

- The gathering, analysis and subsequent use of data to determine accurately the numbers of learners at regional and local level and the extent of the learners' needs.
- The development of the capacity to make suitable provision available for ESOL learners and their families.
- The strengthening and development of links between local businesses and industry and further education to monitor training and language needs.
- Access for ESOL learners to training in areas of skills shortages within the Northern Ireland economy.

- The provision, monitoring and evaluation by the FE sector of comprehensive learning pathways in language development and vocational skills development for ESOL learners and their families.
- A review by the Department of Employment and Learning of the funding mechanisms and allocations pertinent to ESOL.

However, in this given research, tutors in the colleges who were interviewed felt that there is still the need for much expansion in the above areas.

The ETI report commented that the implementation of the “Essential Skills for Living” policy in NI, aimed at improving the skills base of individuals and of the local workforce, has coincided with a significant increase in the numbers of migrant workers entering the workforce in NI. It pointed out that migrant workers contribute positively to the economy. Moreover, these citizens have formed increasingly more visible and willing learning communities in the FE institutes and have brought a welcome richness in cultural diversity to society in NI. At the same time, these learners have brought a new range of challenges for the sector, namely organisational, social, teaching and learning.

### 9.6 ACCESS TO FREE ESOL CLASSES FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES IN NORTHERN IRELAND – THE LAW CENTRE NI

The Law Centre NI in its paper recommends the following (to date, point 2 has been implemented):

1. Free ESOL classes for all asylum seekers and refugees resident in Northern Ireland and their dependants.
2. Availability of ESOL classes should begin on arrival.
3. For immediate academic year, DEL to provide funding for ESOL classes.
4. As a long term policy change: ESOL classes to be designated as an Essential Skill.

### 9.7 FUNDING PROGRAMMES FOR ESOL IN NORTHERN IRELAND

ESOL funding in Northern Ireland is a fundamental problem. Government funding is only provided in the formal sector, thus excluding certain groups.

Costs for ESOL classes vary depending on the level of course and the time length. In Belfast Metropolitan College, fees for a full-time IELTS course for non-EU nationals is £4500. An ESOL Skills for Life Speaking and Listening course is £340 for 14 weeks and a 5 week course is £140. A 14-week preliminary course costs £415.

ESOL providers in the voluntary sector need to apply for funding to various organisations and bodies such as the Big Lottery, European Social Funding and OFMDFM.

Two providers interviewed, the Whiterock Children’s Centre and Trademark, stated that the ESOL funding they currently recover would finish by the end of March 2014.



## 10 OVERALL CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 10.1 CONCLUSION

The 2004 expansion of the European data from the Northern Ireland Census 2011 shows that there has been a significant increase of non-native speakers, living and working in the province.

The 2011 census shows that the proportion of the usually resident population born outside of Northern Ireland rose significantly from 1.8% in 2001 to 9% (32,400) in 2011. This change was largely as a result of inward migration by people born in the 12 countries that have joined the European Union (EU) since 2004. These EU accession countries accounted for 2 per cent (35,700) of people usually resident in Northern Ireland on Census Day 2011.

There is a continued need for ESOL support, particularly at pre-entry and entry levels, and also to meet the changing immigration policies.

At present, many tutors are employed on a part-time basis and on an ad-hoc basis which may not attract many to work in the ESOL field. ESOL classes are delivered on a part-time basis. Full-time intensive courses may better prepare people for employment.

The lack of appropriate childcare provision is a huge issue, especially for women with young children. Community buildings appear to be a more favourable location for learners who find the Further Education Colleges rather intimidating.

Waiting lists disadvantage many, and at the same time, there is the need to accommodate those who are employed as shift workers. ESOL providers in all sectors need to work closely to plan and meet the needs of the learners and share good practice and further develop links with employers to support those in the workplace.

ESOL post-16 is provided through the DELNI and through the Further Education Colleges. Many groups are disadvantaged by the current model of funding. Within the community sector, much of the funding is short term. This puts a strain on ESOL providers and at the same time it proves difficult for planning of future provision for the voluntary and community sectors.

### 10.2 RECOMMENDATIONS – POST-16 ESOL PROVISION IN NORTHERN IRELAND

The Department of Employment and Learning should re-designate ESOL as an Essential Skill in line with UK ESOL policy. The recommendations stated below will not be able to function unless ESOL is re-designated.

- Not all tutors/teachers are ESOL qualified. Full-time employment would ensure stability and a consistent high quality of teaching and guidance. Employment and training of suitably experienced staff should be a priority.
- Planning of provision should take into account the diversity of potential learners where there are local indications that certain groups with ESOL needs are being excluded, such as shift workers and women. Length and cost of ESOL courses can be a barrier to accessing provision. Barriers include class times, location of classes, childcare issues, lack of transport, regular shift work and overtime.
- Examinations at community level FE colleges may be intimidating for learners who have limited experience of education in a formal setting.
- ESOL provision in the formal sector should ensure there are sufficient places for ESOL learners at all levels.
- Providers should engage in active outreach to ensure equal opportunities for all learners.
- Providers should engage more with employers promoting ESOL qualifications, alongside the added value they offer through flexible and onsite delivery. Where possible courses, should be customised to suit employers' needs.
- Providers would welcome the introduction of vocational courses for example, English for nurses and English for accountants.
- Providers would welcome the opportunity to share good practice through local or single ESOL networks.
- Partnership working is important within and through all sectors if competition is to be avoided.
- Demand is high for IELTS preparation classes. Doctors and nurses who have arrived from non-EEA countries for the purpose of registration in order to practice in the UK need to achieve a high band score in IELTS. Preparation classes set by colleges and private language schools prove costly.

# 11 APPENDICES

## 11.1 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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## 11.2 TABLE OF ESOL PROVIDERS

### 11.2 TABLE OF ESOL PROVIDERS

ORGANISATION	LEVELS TAUGHT	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	TUTOR QUALIFICATIONS	CONTACT DETAILS
<b>Barnardos, Belfast</b>	Basic to Intermediate	44	ESOL Trained	Joan McGovern 028 9066 8766
<b>Belfast Metropolitan College</b>	ESOL Skills for Life Entry 1-3 / Levels 1-3		TESOL / CELTA	Teresa Conlin teresaconlin@belfastmet.ac.uk
<b>Belfast Migrant Centre</b>	Beginners / Pre-Intermediate/ Intermediate	20	TESOL / CELTA	info@belfastmigrantcentre.org 028 9043 8962
<b>Dialogue for Diversity</b>	Beginners / Pre-Intermediate/ Intermediate	120	TESOL / CELTA Primary School Teacher TEFL Trained Voluntary	Brendan MacPartlin migrantappointments@gmail.com 028 3898 8610
<b>Eden Language School, Belfast</b>	Beginners to Advanced Callan Method Based on Pupils Needs	Continuous Enrolment	CELTA / TESOL Callan Trained	Alison Gammel www.edenlanguageschoo.com 028 9045 9111
<b>First Bangor Presbyterian Church</b>	Beginners / Intermediate / Advanced	28	TESOL	Helen Sloan First Bangor Presbyterian Church
<b>First Steps Women's Centre, Dungannon</b>	Pre-ESOL ESOL Entry 1-2	99	HA in Polish Philosophy & Pedagogy BA Hons / CELTA / TEFL Business English / TEFL Qualifications	Joan McCool fswcjoan@googlemail.com
<b>GEMS NI</b>				Maeve McKeague 028 9033 2313
<b>International House, Belfast</b>	IH Level 1-7 Beginners to Advanced Based on Pupils Needs	Continuous Enrolment	CELTA / DELTA	study@inbelfast.com
<b>Moy Park Chicken</b>	ESOL Entry 1-3	48	ESOL/CELTA	Lynne McAvoy lynne.mcavoy@moypark.com
<b>NICRAS</b>	Beginners to Intermediate	8	Volunteers Students with TESOL Qualifications invited to Tutor Short Term	Justin Kouame edjakouame@hotmail.com
<b>Shaftesbury Square Reformed Presbyterian Church, Belfast</b>	Beginners to Advanced Mainly Conversation Classes		TEFL – Grafton, Dublin Voluntary Teacher and Students – No ESOL Qualifications	Michael Holland Shaftesbury Square Reformed Presbyterian Church, Belfast
<b>South Eastern Regional College</b>	ESOL Skills for Life	180-200	British Council Accredited	Natalie Le Seelleur nieseelleur@serc.ac.uk
<b>Southern Regional College</b>	Pre-ESOL ESOL Skills for Life Entry 1-3 / Levels 1-3	1034	TESOL / CELTA 14 Part-Time Tutors	Andrew Porterfield porterfielda@src.ac.uk

ORGANISATION	LEVELS TAUGHT	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	TUTOR QUALIFICATIONS	CONTACT DETAILS
<b>Sure Start / Splash, Craigavon</b>	Pre-ESOL	Class to Commence in Near Future	DELTA / ESOL Trained	Keith Cullen info@splashsurestart.com 028 3832 7807
<b>The Meeting Point, Belfast</b>	Beginners / Elementary / Intermediate / Upper Intermediate	40-45	CELTA	Keith Preston 133 Lisburn Road, Belfast
<b>UNISON, Belfast</b>	Beginners IELTS Preparation Classes	14 28	B.Ed in TESOL MA in TEFL	Nathalie Donnelly n.donnelly@unison.co.uk
<b>Whiterock Children's Centre, Belfast</b>	Beginners / Advanced	20-25	ESOL	Deirdre Walsh whiterockcreche@hotmail.com
<b>Willowfield Church, Belfast</b>	Beginners / Pre Intermediate	20-25	Diploma in TESOL Volunteers Retired Teacher	James Myles 028 9045 7654
<b>Windsor Women's Centre</b>	ESOL Skills for Life Entry 1-3 / Levels 1-3	32	CELTA / DELTA / ESOL	Satya Roberts satya.roberts@windsorwomenscentre.com
<b>YMCA, Bangor</b>	Beginners / Intermediate	24	ESOL	Irene McDonald irene@northdownymca.org

## 11.3 ORGANISATIONS CONTACTED

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### 11.3 ORGANISATIONS CONTACTED

Bangor First Presbyterian Church	South Eastern Regional College
Barnardos, Belfast	South West Regional College
Belfast Metropolitan College	Southern Regional College
Belfast Migrant Centre (Now Migrant Centre NI)	Sure Start / Splash, Craigavon
Bombardier, Belfast	The Law Society, Belfast
Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment NI	The Meeting Point, Belfast
Department of Education and Learning Northern Ireland	Trademark, Belfast
Dialogue for Diversity, Portadown	UNISON NI, Belfast
Eden Language School, Belfast	University of Ulster
First Steps Women's Centre, Dungannon	Whiterock Children's Centre, Belfast
Foyle Language School, Derry	Windsor Women's Centre, Belfast
GEMS NI Learn Language for Work, Belfast	Woodstock Road Reformed Presbyterian Church, Belfast
General Teaching Council in Northern Ireland	YMCA, Bangor
Inclusion and Diversity Service NI	
Intern Europe Ltd, Belfast	
International House, Belfast	
Moy Park Chicken, Northern Ireland	
NICRAS Belfast	
North West Academy, Derry	
North West Regional College	
Northern Regional College	
ORCUS Consulting, Belfast	
Queens University Belfast	
Shaftesbury Square Reformed Presbyterian Church, Belfast	

11.4 OUTLINE OF QUESTIONNAIRES

REASONS FOR ATTENDING CLASSES	
ATTENDANCE RATE	
LEVELS	
ACCREDITING ORGANISATIONS	
INDIVIDUAL LEARNING PLANS – USEFULNESS	
WAITING LISTS FOR CLASSES	
% INCREASE IN LAST 5 YEARS	
AGE RANGE	
COURSE FEES	
EMPLOYERS PROPORTION	
STUDENT NATIONALITY	
CHILDCARE	
HELP WITH TRANSPORT	
LINK WITH COLLEAGUES IN OTHER SECTORS	

ORGANISATION	SECTOR	LEVELS TAUGHT	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	FREQUENCY OF CLASS	TUTOR	TUTOR QUALIFICATION

### 11.5 ESOL LEVELS

<b>Pre-Entry Level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not have sufficient language ability to meet the criteria for entry.</li> </ul>
<b>Entry 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.</li> </ul>
<b>Entry 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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).</li> <li>Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters.</li> <li>Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.</li> </ul>
<b>Entry 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc.</li> <li>Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken.</li> <li>Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest.</li> <li>Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.</li> </ul>
<b>Level 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation.</li> <li>Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party.</li> <li>Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages.</li> </ul>
<b>Level 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning.</li> <li>Can express himself/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions.</li> <li>Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes.</li> <li>Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.</li> </ul>



## 11.6 CEFR LEVELS

<b>C2 Mastery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read.</li> <li>• Can summarize information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation.</li> <li>• Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.</li> </ul>
<b>C1 Advanced/ Effective Operational Proficiency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts and recognize implicit meaning.</li> <li>• Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions.</li> <li>• Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic, and professional purposes.</li> <li>• Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed texts on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors, and cohesive devices.</li> </ul>
<b>B2 Vantage/ Upper Intermediate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can understand the main idea of complex texts on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialization.</li> <li>• Can interact with native speakers quite possibly without strain for either party.</li> <li>• Can produce clear, detailed texts on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.</li> </ul>
<b>B1 Threshold/ Intermediate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc.</li> <li>• Can deal with most situations likely to arise while traveling in an area where the language is spoken.</li> <li>• Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest.</li> <li>• Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes, and ambitions, and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.</li> </ul>
<b>A2 Waystage/ Elementary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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, and employment).</li> <li>• Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters.</li> <li>• Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment, and matters in areas of immediate need.</li> </ul>
<b>A1 Breakthrough/ Beginner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.</li> </ul>

### 11.7 IELTS BAND SCORES

- Band 9 Expert User:** has fully operational command of the language: appropriate, accurate and fluent with complete understanding.
- Band 8 Very Good User:** has fully operational command of the language with only occasional unsystematic inaccuracies and inappropriacies. Misunderstandings may occur in unfamiliar situations. Handles complex detailed argumentation well.
- Band 7 Good User:** has operational command of the language, though with occasional inaccuracies, inappropriacies and misunderstandings in some situations. Generally handles complex language well and understands detailed reasoning.
- Band 6 Competent User:** has generally effective command of the language despite some inaccuracies, inappropriacies and misunderstandings. Can use and understand fairly complex language, particularly in familiar situations.
- Band 5 Modest User:** has partial command of the language, coping with overall meaning in most situations, though is likely to make many mistakes. Should be able to handle basic communication in own field.
- Band 4 Limited User:** basic competence is limited to familiar situations. Has frequent problems in understanding and expression. Is not able to use complex language.
- Band 3 Extremely Limited User:** conveys and understands only general meaning in very familiar situations. Frequent breakdowns in communication occur.
- Band 2 Intermittent User:** no real communication is possible except for the most basic information using isolated words or short formulae in familiar situations and to meet immediate needs. Has great difficulty understanding spoken and written English.
- Band 1 Non-User:** essentially has no ability to use the language beyond possibly a few isolated words.
- Band 0 Did Not Attempt the Test:** No assessable information provided.

## 11.8 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

<b>A LEVEL</b>	Advanced Level	<b>IELTS</b>	International English Language System
<b>ACCA</b>	Association of Chartered Accountants	<b>ILEC</b>	International Legal English Certificate
<b>BME</b>	Black and Minority Ethnic Communities	<b>ILESOL</b>	International Listening ESOL
<b>BULATS</b>	Business Language Testing Service	<b>ISESOL</b>	International Spoken ESOL
<b>CAE</b>	Cambridge Advanced English	<b>KET</b>	Key English Test
<b>CCEA</b>	Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, (now <b>CEA</b> ) Examinations and Assessment	<b>KoLL</b>	Knowledge of Language and Life
<b>CEF</b>	Common European Framework	<b>NCTL</b>	National College for Teaching and Leadership
<b>CELTA</b>	Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults	<b>NISRA</b>	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
<b>CPD</b>	Continuing Personal Development	<b>NMC</b>	Nursing and Midwifery Council
<b>CPE</b>	Cambridge Proficiency English	<b>NQF</b>	National Qualifications Framework
<b>DCELLS</b>	Department for Children, Education, Life Long Learning Skills	<b>NVQ</b>	National Vocational Qualification
<b>DELNI</b>	Department of Education and Learning Northern Ireland	<b>OFMDFM</b>	Officer of First Minister and Deputy First Minister
<b>DELTA</b>	Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults	<b>OFQUAL</b>	Office of Qualifications
<b>DfEE</b>	Department for Education and Employment	<b>OTT</b>	Overseas Trained Teacher
<b>DfES</b>	Department for Education and Skills	<b>OTT</b>	Overseas Trained Teachers/Tutors
<b>EAL</b>	English as an Additional Language	<b>PET</b>	Preliminary English Test
<b>EEA</b>	European Economic Area	<b>QCA</b>	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
<b>ELR</b>	Exceptional Leave to Remain	<b>QTS</b>	Qualified Teacher Status
<b>ESL</b>	English as a Second Language	<b>SFL</b>	Skills for Life
<b>ESOL</b>	English for Speakers of Other Languages	<b>TLC</b>	Transforming Learning Communities
<b>EU</b>	European Union	<b>UCAS</b>	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
<b>FCE</b>	First Certificate in English		
<b>FLU</b>	Funding Learning Unit		
<b>GCE</b>	General Certificate in Education		
<b>GCSE</b>	General Certificate of Secondary Education		
<b>GMC</b>	General Medical Council		
<b>GNVQ</b>	General National Vocational Qualification		
<b>GTNI</b>	General Teaching Body Northern Ireland		
<b>ICFE</b>	International Certificate in Financial English		
<b>IDS</b>	Inclusion and Diversity Service		

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