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A sound assessment of
English language competency.”



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Adaptive nature of Oxford Test of English praised in independent report

Oxford University Press recently commissioned Ecctis (formerly UK NARIC) to perform an independent benchmark against the CEFR for the Oxford Test of English – the only English proficiency test certified by the University of Oxford.

Assessing each of the four modules – Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing – as well as the test as a whole, the resulting report confirmed that the review found the Oxford Test of English to be “well-aligned to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), providing a sound assessment of English language competency in Listening, Reading,

Writing, and Speaking at CEFR levels A2-B2.”

The report also found the adaptive nature of the Listening and Reading modules to be “of particular note”. Ecctis highlighted how this element of the test is beneficial for both candidates and those using the certificate to assess an individual's English language proficiency, as it ensures “that the test provides a fair test of the candidate’s competency in these skills.”

The Oxford Test of English Listening and Reading modules both use adaptive technology, meaning the test's algorithm adjusts the difficulty of the questions in response to the test taker's answers. As a result, two candidates sitting next to each other are unlikely to ever be looking at the same question at the same time. As the questions are targeted around their actual ability, not only do test takers receive a more precise measurement of their English level, but they also feel more confident during the test because the questions are pitched at the right difficulty level.

What does this all mean?

By concluding that the Oxford Test of English, and therefore the Oxford Test of English for Schools, is “well-aligned to CEFR levels A2-B2”, this independent report offers assurance to institutions, companies, and other public bodies looking to recognise the Oxford Test of English that the test serves as a dependable indicator of a student's language proficiency, which they can use as a reference point against the language-related competency descriptors set out in the Framework.

Oxford Test of English Approved Test Centres and students can also find assurance in the conclusion that the test design provides a fair and accurate assessment of the candidate's competency in the four skills, so can be confident in the results they present; whether that be to external stakeholders, or potential employers and higher education institutions.

About the Oxford Test of English

Developed by Oxford University Press and certified by the University of Oxford, the Oxford Test of English and the Oxford Test of English for Schools are general English proficiency tests, targeted at learners aged 16 and above or between the ages of 12 and 16, respectively. They are the same test, with

the same format and marking criteria, but provide tailored content to better suit the interests and experiences of the test taker. Independent of any curriculum or course, the test is designed by a team of education, language, and assessment experts; providing results that universities, employers, and professional bodies can trust.

The Oxford Test of English was launched in Spain in March 2017, and globally from October 2018, and is already recognised by the Ministries of Education in a number of countries, as well as a large number of universities, regional education authorities and prestigious institutions. The Oxford Test of English for Schools (for the 12-16 age group) was launched in 2020.

Available online through a network of Approved Test Centres, the tests assess understanding and communication across three levels of the CEFR: A2, B1 and B2. The Listening and Reading modules are adaptive, meaning the test adjusts according to the test taker's responses – providing more precise test results than traditional non-adaptive tests. The Speaking and Writing modules present individualized tasks, which are then marked by trained human assessors. The modules can be taken or re-taken together, on their own, or in any combination.

The whole test takes just two hours to complete, and test takers receive a Module Report Card for each module taken, and a certificate if they have completed all four modules.

About Ecctis

Ecctis is a leading information service provider offering impartial, trusted judgement on international qualifications. They support institutions, employers, professional bodies, UK Government departments, and immigration advisers to help them understand more about educational, vocational, and professional systems outside the UK, and ensure that the skills, competencies and qualifications of those coming to the UK to work, study, practise or settle are recognised at the appropriate level. Their database of international qualifications is also the largest in the world, with over 5,000 qualifications from more than 200 countries.

Ecctis manages and operates the following functions on behalf of the UK Government:

- UK ENIC: the designated United Kingdom national agency for the recognition and comparison of international qualifications and skills. Operating under contract to the Department for Education (DfE), UK ENIC serves as the UK's information point on the recognition of overseas qualifications. They also provide the only official source of information on international education systems and qualifications attained from outside the UK, as prescribed by the Lisbon Recognition Convention.
- Visas and Nationality services.
- The UK Centre for Professional Qualifications (CPQ): the national point of contact on matters relating to the recognition of international professional qualifications in the UK. Ecctis performs this function on behalf of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

About Oxford University Press

Oxford University Press (OUP) is a department of the University of Oxford. It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship, and education by publishing worldwide. OUP is the world's largest university press with the widest global presence.

It currently publishes thousands of new publications a year, has offices in around fifty countries, and employs approximately 6,000 people worldwide.

It has become familiar to millions through a diverse publishing program that includes scholarly works in all academic disciplines, bibles, music, school and college textbooks, children's books, materials for teaching English as a foreign language, business books, dictionaries and reference books, and academic journals.

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