

Language Certificates: All you need to know

The Various Tests Available:

TOEFL as you probably know is an American assessment test and is very academic rather than business-like. To get into an American university and other English speaking universities, you often need a TOEFL score.

TOEIC which is basically an assessment test for in-work candidates gives you a level score which is valid for 2 years, but is not a qualification. The format is multiple-choice.

Then there is **IELTS** which is also valid for 2 years, is available in general or academic test types and is more varied in the tasks than TOEIC which is only multiple choice. IELTS scores cover the B1 – C2 bandwidth although there are other assessment levels.

Then there are the **LCCI** exams - on 5 levels with the last level equivalent to a degree certificate. These are more business and less specifically language-oriented.

The **Cambridge** exam suite has a large range of general certificates and business certificates: **BEC** (Cambridge Business English Certificate) **Preliminary** =B1, **Vantage** = B2 and **Higher** = C1. This is a recognized qualification with a certificate which is valid for life. It is British-based and generally not accepted for university entrance. For British university entrance, the Cambridge Proficiency exam is often required.

Language Levels

Learner levels based on the Common European Framework (CEFR):

A1 and A2 - Basic Speaker:	A1 beginner, A2 advanced beginner
B1 and B2 - Independent Speaker:	B1 intermediate, B2 upper intermediate
C1 and C2 Proficient Speaker:	C1 advanced, C2 near native speaker

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Tests and Certificates	Test	Levels	Validity
TOEIC Test of English for International Communication	Reading, listening, writing, speaking	A1 – C1	2 years
TOEFL Test of English as a Foreign Language	Reading, listening, writing, speaking Internet-based test	B1 - C1	2 years
IELTS International English Language Testing System	Reading, listening, writing , speaking	Level 1 - Level 9	2 years
LCCI London Chamber of Commerce	PBE: Practical Business English EFB: English for Business A1 - C2 EFC: English for Commerce B1 - C2 SEFIC Spoken English for Industry and Commerce C1/C2	cf. website	All valid for life
Cambridge English	First Certificate: B2 Advanced: C1 Proficiency: C2 Business English Certificates: Preliminary B1 Vantage B2 Higher C1 ILEC: Legal English ICFE: Financial English	cf. website	All valid for life
Cambridge BULATS Assessment test Business Language Testing Service	BULATS	cf. website	No expiry date.