

P3.1b-PP-MGS **Placement Testing Policy and Procedure**

1. **Purpose and Scope**

This policy and procedure details how placement testing in ELICOS operates.

It deals with part of the requirements of:

- National ELICOS Standard P 3: placing students in class
- NESA Guidelines, Requirement 4.1.4: Teaching ELICOS

2. **Responsibilities**

The **Director of Curriculum and Compliance** will be responsible for implementing this policy, disseminating its contents to teachers and other staff members as appropriate, and keeping it updated.

3. **General Considerations**

The overarching consideration is that, in line with industry experience, judgements based on the placement test at the beginning of a student's enrolment is central to the decision on which course and level to place each student in. Any other assessment, including formal exams such as IELTS, should be considered provisional only.

However, in many cases it is useful to have an estimate of a student's level during the application and enrolment process. For example, this information may help in estimating how long the student may need to study English before progressing to their high school course. Anyone making such estimates should be aware that progress varies significantly from individual-to-individual student, and potential students should be advised about this.

4. **Pre-Enrolment Assessment Policy and Procedure**

If potential students are not sure whether their level of English language proficiency is sufficient for a particular course, they will be granted the option of taking a preliminary test in accordance with the requirements below.

It is important that any assessments conducted on behalf of MGS are conducted in a fair, transparent and valid way that ensures as much as possible the integrity, validity and usefulness of the results.

In most cases, the Oxford Online Placement Test (OOPT, successor to the Oxford Quick Placement Test) will be used. This may be supplemented at the Director of Curriculum and Compliance discretion with additional writing and speaking material—the speaking test may be administered using Skype or similar on-line video service, or by Skype audio or ordinary telephone where bandwidth restrictions preclude video). Where on-line access is not feasible at the prospective student's location, a version of the preliminary test can be sent instead. In this event, the answers will be faxed or scanned/emailed back to MGS, where marking will take place. On no account should any answer sheet or marking guide be sent to an agent or any other external party.

Agents who administer tests will be given clear instructions that:

- assessments must be taken in a quiet area where the student cannot be disturbed
- nothing that may aid the student must be allowed in the room with the candidate; this includes but is not limited to: dictionaries, computers with internet access, mobile phones, grammar books, written notes

- candidates taking the test must be clearly identified using photo ID and MUST be the same person as on the application; it is the agent's responsibility to ensure that this is done
- candidates must take the assessment alone; no other person (including agent staff) may assist

The reason for these rules will also be emphasised to agents: to ensure some degree of consistency between assessments conducted anywhere in the world, so that students can be placed in their level as appropriately as possible. Anything that results in the student being placed at the wrong level will only, ultimately, disadvantage the student. It is critical that prospective students not be given unrealistic guidance about how long they are likely to need to study English.

In addition, agents and students will be informed that tests done outside MGS provide interim results only—all students will take a placement test on arrival, the results of which will override all other tests.

Where there is evidence that assessments have been conducted in a way that compromises the validity of the results, this will be considered a serious case of misconduct by the agent as the consequences for the student may be that they are enrolled on a program that is unsuitable. Appropriate action will be taken, possibly involving counselling the agent about the seriousness of the problem and how to avoid it in the future, or cancelling the agreement with the agent in repeated or serious cases— a requirement of the National Code Standard 4.

5. In-School Placement Testing

All students, during the first day of their course, take a placement test (Oxford Online Placement Test, or OOPT), supplemented by a short interview and a piece of writing. This has several purposes:

- To assist in placement in the correct level
- To verify the results of any prior test of language proficiency taken by the learner
- To provide information about the student: the writing task will involve writing about something personal, such as the student's reasons for wanting to study English. This writing will be made available to the teachers.
- To provide a benchmark against which the student's future progress can be judged: the sample of writing and notes about oral responses during the interview will be retained to provide an opportunity to compare future work with this initial sample, in order to identify areas of progress.

The marks from the placement test, together with the written work and record of spoken responses, will be kept in the student's file and a copy provided to the class teacher.

6. Revision history

Version	Date	Description of modifications
1	30 Mar 2015	Original draft
1.1	21 Mar 2016	Roles and Procedures
1.2	18 Mar 2018	Roles and Procedures revised and Acronyms updated
1.3	23 Mar 2023	Reviewed Policy