



CUSTOMER SERVICES

Introduction

- ESB constantly reviews its assessment provision, and monitors its administrative, assessment and management processes for internal and external quality assurance
- ESB monitors and reviews the assessment programme outcomes in all its centres and provides appropriate information and guidance to its users

Assessment Provision

- The English Speaking Board (ESB) operates a team of qualified external visiting assessors for the UK and overseas for all its certificated qualifications in oral communication
- There are specialist teams within the examiner cohort for our Oral Communication Skills (Certificate of Achievement series) qualifications and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
- The external assessment visit takes place on-site at the user centre following each assessment course. The timing of the visit is requested by the centre to fit in with the structure and length of the ESB/parent programme
- ESB issues the name of the visiting assessor in advance of the assessment and asks the centre to get in touch to confirm arrangements and discuss any queries or particular requirements.
- Each candidate is treated as an individual with individual needs. Tutors are strongly recommended to attend the session with the participating group to observe the assessment session. This supports the overall formative nature of the programme, transparency at assessment and indicative evidence for progression
- The assessor provides a specific written report for each candidate, with section and aggregate grades as applicable, normally within five working days in the UK or within two weeks for overseas candidates
- Certificates are issued to all successful candidates approximately six weeks after the publication of results

Support Services

- The main customer service contact point is ESB's head office at Southport with its administrative team led by the Examinations Manager. Staff there can refer centres when appropriate to specialist sector personnel
- The Board provides initial administrative materials, assessment specifications and guidance with an overview Checklist for administrative assessment procedures from booking to assessment
- ESB supplies a current Handbook for Organisers and regular news and updates are available on our website - www.esbuk.org
- There is a referral Helpline, accessed through the office, for specialist syllabus queries and related guidance for centres. The Board also operates an e-mail check for queries
- Information Officers are available to visit new centres to provide initial advice and guidance
- Training workshops and Inset sessions are available on request at competitive prices

Fees and Charges

(Fees & Charges details are given on reverse of Examination Fees list unless otherwise indicated)

- **Centre Registration** – Certificate issued on successful completion of first assessment.
- **Information Visit** – no separate charge to centre for initial visit
- **The Individual Candidate Fee** (*see Examination Fees list*) covers
 - candidate registration
 - information and administration
 - external assessment
 - individual candidate reports and certification
- **Replacement certificates** – replacement fee charged unless error originated by ESB

Enquiries and Appeals Procedures

Assessment:

Any minor queries about the assessment process can normally be resolved by discussion between tutor and assessor during the visit.

Appeals:

The summary appeals procedure is published in the Handbook for Organisers. ESB charges a small administrative fee (see Examination Fees list) to the centre for an appeal, refundable where an appeal is upheld.

- An appeal about the assessment process – which should be endorsed by the tutor if related to an individual candidate – should be made by the Organiser (in writing/by e-mail only) to ESB head office within fourteen days of assessment. (21 days for overseas centres)
- Assessment appeals are referred direct to the Chief Examiner for discussion and arbitration. A response time of fourteen days (21 days for overseas centres) allows for the gathering of any additional evidence if required
- Any further referral goes to ESB's Academic Board and, if necessary, to final Independent Review

Administration: Any complaints related to administration, and any other non-assessment enquiries, should be made to the Office Manager as soon as there is a query. The centre will be asked to put any query in writing if it is at all complex or problematical.

Monitoring and Quality Assurance

- Registered Centres wishing to offer ESB programmes must complete a centre registration form which is monitored by ESB'S Quality Assurance Department
- The Chief Examiner monitors feedback on the assessment process, along with the Moderator Panel and Quality Assurance Department
- Centres are invited to give feedback after each assessment to make suggestions and assist in piloting syllabus development
- This involves completing an Assessment Evaluation Form, as part of quality assurance and monitoring procedures, and for partnership development between ESB and its approved centres
- All ESB examiners undergo annual training, and training for the administrative team includes visits to ESB assessments
- The Board has achieved Investor in People status and undergoes regular assessment to maintain the IIP Standard
- The Board follows the QCA Code of Practice for Awarding Bodies and is a member of the Federation of Awarding Bodies

Malpractice Suspected or proven malpractice by a centre will be investigated. This may delay certificates and could jeopardise the future acceptance of entries – see Appendix on Centre Malpractice.

ESB Performance Measures

Response Times:

Verbal Enquiry: same day, with follow-up referral if appropriate (overseas: 3 days)
Written or e-mail Enquiry: within 7 working days (overseas: 14 days)

Complaints/Appeals

Administrative: Target: 97% satisfaction measured against number of bookings per annum (Examination Reservation Form – ERF)

Assessment:

- i) examiner practice Target: 99% satisfaction measured against number of individual examiner days per annum
- ii) assessment decisions Target: 100% satisfaction with assessment decisions – including appeals – measured against number of individual candidate registrations per annum

Particular Assessment Requirements: Target: 99.9% satisfactory response to requests made in addition to existing provision within Oral Communication Skills (COA) (& falling within parameters of ESB assessment provision for oral communication)

Other Information

Further information and guidance is available as follows

Reasonable Adjustments

A summary of provision for Candidates with Particular Assessment Requirements is printed in most syllabus specification handbooks.

A full separate reference document is also available, *Candidates with Particular Assessment Requirements*, containing the guidance and relevant forms for requesting access arrangements or special consideration. [Under forms in the downloads section of the ESB website – Candidates with Particular Assessment Requirements (Guidelines and Forms)]

Any centre requesting reasonable adjustments for any candidate(s) must complete the necessary form SAR1 for each individual student and return the form with names. It is advised that they should contact the Board initially to discuss requirements.

Centre Registration documentation – for new centres: sent on initial enquiry. It contains

The Centre Registration Process

ESB Registration Centres Commitment

ESB Centre Registration Form - may be used also to update ESB on changes in staffing, etc. [Under forms in the downloads section of the ESB website – Customer Services Statement and Centre Registration Form (PDF)]

Malpractice

See Malpractice annexe. This may also be requested separately.

Replacement Certificate Request

See information on website.

For all queries and guidance related to Customer Service, please contact initially:

The Office Manager English Speaking Board 26a Princes Street PR8 1EQ

Tel: 01704 501 730 e-mail: admin@esbuk.org

CENTRE REGISTRATION PROCESS

ESB Registered Centre Status

An ESB Registered Centre is one accepted by ESB to offer the Board's assessments. It signifies commitment to standards on preparing candidates for assessment, compliance with administrative and regulatory requirements and liaison with the Board as a partnership to enhance quality assurance for all users. All centres offering ESB assessment must hold Registered Centre status.

- New ESB centres must complete and return the Centre Registration Form with any other required documentation and fee. At ESB's discretion they will be visited by a designated ESB Information Officer to give general administrative and assessment advice, or may request such a visit.
- Once a centre applies for Registered Centre Status with ESB, the registration process is as follows:
 1. Centre Registration Form and any other required documentation checked and agreed by Examinations Manager and Quality Assurance Manager. ESB officer visits and reports on centre provision and arrangements.
 2. If negative, the centre will be notified in writing at this point that their application to become an ESB Registered Centre has been unsuccessful.
 3. If ESB visit and report are positive, centre is notified of provisional registration, but may not use ESB name on publicity materials / website etc. A provisionally registered centre may enter candidates, and must do so within 12 months or the provisional registration will lapse and a new application must be made.
 4. First candidates are assessed by ESB visiting assessor(s), who complete Assessment Evaluation report.
 5. Quality Assurance Manager checks report and other documentation. If these are satisfactory, the centre will receive a certificate confirming Registered Centre status. The Centre will be added to the published list of Registered Centres on ESB's website unless they notify ESB in writing to the contrary.
- All centres (including separate departments offering different syllabuses) are required to complete a Centre Registration Form which requests details of centre, staffing, resources, context and timescales for delivery
- The Statement of Commitment summarises the quality assurance principles undertaken by the awarding body and the centre
- ESB centres. All registered centres are required to notify the Quality Assurance Officer at ESB of changes to staffing or syllabus use. Centres returning to ESB assessments following a break or more than a year should consult the Examinations Manager at ESB before returning the form

Monitoring and Review

- On-going monitoring and review is achieved by: centres' annual updating of Registered Centre information where appropriate; external assessment and assessor feedback to the Board; centres' feedback reports following assessment

- The Board reserves the right to make additional visits or seek additional information if deemed necessary
- The Board may remove Registered Centre status at any time, but will endeavour to minimise disadvantage to students affected.

It is strongly recommended that all centres, in particular in the UK, are corporate (or individual) members of ESB.

Members receive the professional journal, *Speaking English*, and the *Newsletter for Members*, are invited to attend the annual AGM conference with its key speakers and workshops and are eligible for discounts and other benefits.

ESB COMMITMENT TO REGISTERED CENTRES

ESB agrees to

- supply an Information Officer to visit all new Centres
- provide appropriate assessment qualifications for consideration and use
- use plain language free from bias and appropriate to the qualification
- offer advice and guidance on qualifications choice and level(s) as required
- provide professional, trained external examiners for centres' on-site ESB assessments
- provide efficient administrative advice and guidance for assessment booking procedures
- provide individual written reports for all candidates
- award certificates in line with results
- provide a Handbook for Organisers, Organisers' Feedback and invitations to available training courses and/or demonstration days

REGISTERED CENTRE COMMITMENT

The Centre agrees to

- provide an Organiser as the point of accountability for the quality assurance and management of the ESB delivery at the centre
- supply information relevant to ESB requirements, updating annually or on request
- give adequate advance notice of preferred and alternative date(s) for ESB assessment(s) – normally three months ahead
- comply with ESB examination booking procedures, notifying the Board as soon as possible of any alterations or queries
- provide all ESB candidates with access to the requirements of the ESB qualification they are taking, with appropriate tuition, information and support
- ensure candidates are aware of ESB's certification timescale and appeals procedures
- report any suspected maladministration or malpractice to the Board
- liaise with the Board's appointed examiner(s) in advance of each assessment to confirm arrangements and discuss any queries
- organise the assessment day(s) in accordance with the Board's requirements, including the presence of the tutor where this is required for the assessment
- provide feedback following each assessment / assessment session by completing and returning the Assessment Evaluation Form to the Board

Record Keeping – the Centre agrees to

- provide the current name of staff member responsible for maintenance of ESB records at the centre (see box on Assessment Evaluation Form)
- retain long-term records of candidate results (six years or more)
- retain a copy of the Examiner report for each candidate in an assessment group for three months following the date of assessment
- Co-operate in providing exemplar video/DVD recording on request for standardisation purposes

These procedures allow for evidence to be available for appeal, standardisation, further scrutiny or for the work of national regulatory bodies.

Centre Malpractice

Malpractice may arise from abuse of registration, assessment or awarding procedures.

All centres are required to report to ESB any suspected or proven malpractice after candidates have been registered.

All ESB examiners/assessors/moderators are required to report to the Board any suspected or proven malpractice that occurs during the assessment process.

Examples of serious malpractice include:

- Candidates being entered for an assessment without having followed a prior programme to work towards the qualification
- Lack of centre verification of candidate identity
- Attempts by a centre to influence the outcome of the external assessment process.

Evidence of malpractice should be reported initially to ESB's Quality Assurance Officer.

The Quality Assurance Officer notifies the Chief Examiner and any other appropriate Officer in the context of the malpractice and instigates the Informal Procedure as follows:

Informal Stage

The Chief Examiner, working through an examiner or moderator known to the Centre if appropriate, informs the ESB Organiser at the Centre of the concerns, seeks further information, and offers positive support to rectify matters. The interests of the candidates should be paramount at this stage and every effort made to resolve matters amicably.

Formal Stage 1

In the event of the Informal Procedure failing to produce satisfactory results, the Chief Examiner will inform the Chief Executive and the Academic Board. The Chief Executive, following consultation with ESB staff involved, will send a letter to the Head of the Centre involved. The letter will detail all the issues of malpractice and state the assistance which has already been offered. The letter will demand a written reply within 10 working days. Depending on the extent and degree of malpractice, the Chief Executive may temporarily suspend the Centre of its status as an ESB Centre. A record of the action will be sent to the Academic Board.

Formal Stage 2

Failure to respond or conform to the Chief Executive's letter in Stage 1, or evidence of serious malpractice, will result in a registered letter from the Chief Executive to the Head of the Centre. This Stage 2 letter will

- detail the issues of malpractice
- specify an action plan which must be completed within an appropriate time scale.
- state clearly that ESB intends to inspect the Centre to see evidence confirming compliance against the action plan.

The centre must agree to this in writing and the Academic Board informed of the agreement. If a centre completes the action plan and rectifies the problems and undertakes to avoid malpractice in the future, the Chief Examiner will remove any temporary suspension.

Stage 3

Failure to comply at Stage 2 will result in the centre being referred to the Academic Board with a recommendation of removal from ESB's list of Registered centres. The Academic Board will meet within 15 working days, consider the evidence and either remove the centre or order elements of Stage 2 to be repeated. The ESB Board of Trustees will be informed.

Appeal

A centre may appeal against the decision of the Academic Board by notification in writing within 15 working days of receipt of the decision. The appeal will be considered by the ESB Board of Trustees, whose decision is final.

Very Serious Malpractice

Where investigation reveals very significant examples of proven malpractice, the Chief Executive may by-pass one or both stages above. This will result in immediate suspension of the centre's registered status and referral to the regulatory authorities for agreed remedial action.

Please note that centre malpractice may result in certificates being delayed or their issue put at risk, and could jeopardise the future acceptance of entries. Malpractice may also trigger a complaints or appeals process. Having regard to the impact on candidates, the Board will endeavour to mitigate the effects of a centre's suspension by transferring candidates where possible to another centre.

This document clarifies the policy for candidates requiring special consideration, often caused by a temporary health or other problem. A summary policy statement is included in our document for Candidates with Particular Assessment Requirements.

Policies on candidates with PAR are currently published in assessment handbooks and Guidelines for Examiners / Guidelines for Organisers. All individual requests including special requirements are dealt with case by case please contact ESB.

Policy

Organisers are asked to notify the Board immediately of any candidate who has been registered but who is suffering from (temporary) illness, injury or indisposition at the time of assessment. Every effort will be made either to accommodate the situation on the day - without compromising the assessment requirements – or to offer an alternative assessment date where feasible.

Procedure

- If this problem is known before the assessment, the ESB Organiser at the centre should determine in advance with the candidate (and parents or guardian where that candidate is a minor) whether the candidate will take the assessment
- Where the centre agrees that the candidate should still be presented, the Organiser should contact the Examinations Manager at ESB HQ immediately to agree any special arrangements. The Board will notify the appointed examiner in advance of the assessment
- It is the responsibility of the Organiser to confirm the latest situation with the appointed examiner when making contact before the assessment, to discuss the nature of the problem and any agreed adjustments

Special arrangements might include e.g. the candidate attending assessment to present own sections and to fulfil the requirement to contribute as a member of the audience but leaving before the full session is over; or an additional member of staff might sit in to monitor any health / trauma concerns.

- Any emergency situation in the context of special considerations which arises on the day of the assessment or during the session itself will be agreed by the centre with the examiner in the best interests of the candidate. The assessor's feedback report to the Board will make note of the situation and the action taken

In all the contexts noted above, all who are involved should be aware that it is important that while appropriate support should be offered to the candidate requiring special consideration, this should not affect the integrity of the assessment either for the candidate concerned or for other candidates taking the assessment in the same session.

- If the candidate is unable to take the assessment on the date booked, the Board will make every effort

Either to accommodate the candidate at a later date within the same centre if there is a comparable or suitable assessment planned within a realistic timescale

Or to offer a place at an alternative local centre taking a similar assessment

There will be no extra charge for the transfer where a candidate's fees have been paid.

In these circumstances the Board will offer a credit note against the candidate's fee if the withdrawal is accompanied by a doctor's certificate.

APPLICATION FOR ESB CENTRE REGISTRATION

Contact Details

Name of Centre			
Address of Centre			
E-mail address			Website address
Telephone			Fax
Type & Size of Centre			
Head/Principal/Director			
ESB Organiser (Name & Position) & email address			
Additional ESB Contact (Name & Position) & email address			
Contact details of person responsible for accepting delivery of secure material e.g. Written exam papers			
Contact details of person responsible for Fraud Prevention			

Centre Details

Staffing for ESB (names) if additional to above (Please give BRIEF summary of qualifications & experience for all ESB staff – on separate sheet if appropriate)	
New Centre?	YES / NO
If previously Registered as an ESB centre, please give (approximate) date of last registration.	
<u>ALL CENTRES:</u> How did you first hear of ESB?	

Course & Teaching Details	
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Start and finish dates of planned ESB course	
Estimated guided learning hours per ESB course	
Context for ESB teaching (please tick one or more as appropriate)	
a) specialist ESB course	_____
b) part of English/Communications course	_____
c) key skills course	_____
d) integrated with other course(s) (specify)	_____
e) Other (please specify)	_____
Resources (please tick all those which are A) available for ESB use and B) regularly used on ESB course. If any are non-applicable, state n/a	
	A
General classroom/office	_____
Specialist room: e.g. salon, restaurant	_____
Language Laboratory	_____
Library	_____
Audio Tape Recorder	_____
TV	_____
VCR	_____
DVD Player	_____
Video camera	_____
Computer	_____
Computer Assisted Language Learning	_____
Other (specify)	_____

Please complete this section if you plan to offer ESOL with Citizenship or ESOL for Work courses

This centre plans to offer :	
ESOL SfL with Citizenship	YES / NO
ESOL for Work	YES / NO
Is the centre familiar with the following?	
1. www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/applying/nationality/knowledge-of-life-in-the-uk	YES / NO
2. ESOL and Citizenship. A teacher's guide. Chris Taylor. NIACE publication from www.niace.org.uk	YES / NO
3. Citizenship Materials for ESOL learners. See www.esolcitizenship.org.uk	YES / NO
4. New ESOL Teacher Qualification Requirements www.lifelonglearninguk.org	YES / NO

What measures are used at your centre to prevent identity fraud? Please continue on separate sheet if appropriate.

Any other information

Other Information

This Centre is already a Corporate/Individual Member of ESB **YES / NO**
This Centre is applying for Corporate/Individual Membership **YES / NO**

Visit to new/prospective centre: requested date, and alternative date, for visit by ESB Information Officer: _____ or _____

ALL CENTRES: I accept the conditions of the Statement of Commitment

Organiser's signature: _____

Date:

ESB Office use only

Approved by

Position

Date

Any conditions imposed

Thank you for supplying this information. Please keep a copy of this form, and retain the Statement of Commitment. Information on individual centres and staff will be kept confidential to ESB but may be supplied in an aggregate form where required for national statistical purposes. Unless you let us know otherwise, we shall send all ESB forms and information to the named Organiser.

Please return the completed form to:

The Examinations Manager, ESB, 26a Princes Street, Southport. PR8 1EQ.