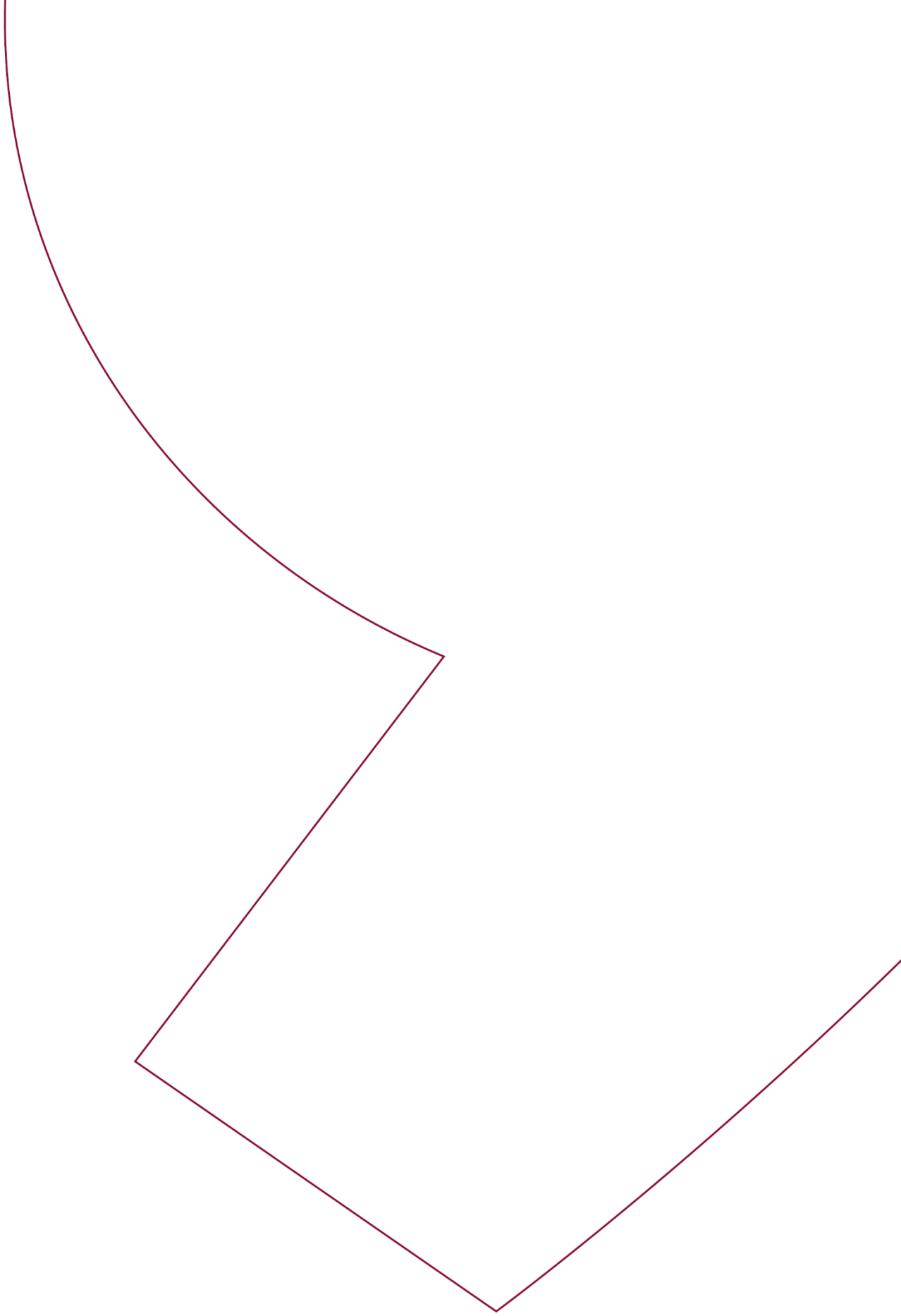**LANGUAGE TESTS STANDARD
CODE OF CONDUCT HIGHER EDUCATION**

ORGANIZATIONAL AND PROCESS
REQUIREMENTS
PRODUCT REQUIREMENTS

**NATIONAL COMMISSION
NRTO
THE NETHERLANDS ASSOCIATION OF
UNIVERSITIES OF APPLIED SCIENCES**

LANGUAGE TESTS STANDARD CODE OF CONDUCT HIGHER EDUCATION

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NATIONAL COMMISSION
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UNIVERSITIES OF THE NETHERLANDS

Hobéon Management Consult
Date
1 November 2023
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CONTENTS

1.   BASIC DATA

Standard	Language tests standard Code of Conduct HE
Commissioning Parties	National Commission NRTO The Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences Universities of the Netherlands
Version	1.3
Date	1 November 2023
Contact persons	Jolanda van den Bosch, secretary National Commission. Invoice address: Dienst Uitvoering Onderwijs, c/o Landelijke Commissie, PO Box 30155, 9700 LG Groningen, the Netherlands. Email: jolanda.vandenbosch@duo.nl Emiel de Groot, policy consultant of The Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences Invoice address: Vereniging Hogescholen, PO Box 123, 2501 CC Den Haag, the Netherlands. Cost centre: TBD. Email: groot@vh,nl. Bart Pierik, team leader international domain, Universities of the Netherlands. Invoice address: UNL, PO Box 13739, 2501 ES Den Haag, the Netherlands. Cost centre: TBD. Email: pierik@unl.nl Alain Hofman, policy consultant of NRTO. Invoice address: NRTO, Papiermolen 34, 3994 DK Houten, the Netherlands. Cost centre: TBD. Email: alainhofman@nrto.nl

2.   INTRODUCTION

2.1.   Aim of the standard

Article 5.1 of the Code of Conduct International Student in Dutch Higher Education obliges a prospective international student to submit a language test certificate. The authorized tests and the scores needed to qualify for the certificate are listed in the language table as mentioned in Article 5.2. The language table was revised in 2023. The revision was prompted by various signals from the educational sector about possible fraud with language test certificates and the requests from the market to increase the number of providers of language tests. The National Commission Code of Conduct Higher Education (hereafter: NC) would like to meet these requests.

The standard specifies the requirements for the language test that an international student must have completed successfully to take part in a degree programme of Dutch higher education and the requirements for the organizations that develop and administer language tests.

In drafting this standard, consideration was given to the ALTE standards and the ILTA Code of Ethics.

2.2.   Approach and assessment procedure

The language test provider must assign a validating authority to perform a quality assessment if it wants to be included in the language table of the Code of Conduct International Student in Dutch Higher Education. With a mandate by the umbrella organizations, the language test assessment committee has designated Hobéon as the preferred supplier. If a language test provider wishes to use another validating authority, the language test assessment committee must consent to that validating authority. The validating authorities have demonstrated that they, and the experts they deploy, meet the basic requirements described in the Process Description Assessment of Language Tests, which is part of this standard.

The validating authority performs the quality assessment with a test expert and a content expert. It will be done with tools developed by Hobéon, which detail the scope and requirements described in this standard.

The assessment cycle consists of an organizational and a product audit. Both audits include a document analysis, and the organizational audit includes interviews with various discussion partners.

The findings of the audits will be given in a draft report, which will also include advice for including the language test in the language table. The draft report will be submitted to the commissioning party to check for factual inaccuracies, after which the final report will be delivered. The final report will then be presented to the language test assessment committee , which has a mandate from the umbrella organizations. The language test assessment committee assesses the report, makes a decision for inclusion in the language table and informs the NC of its decision. The NC then communicates the decision to the provider and the validating authority.

This procedure takes 12 weeks on average. If the validation examination results in an improvement plan, the procedure can be extended by at least six weeks.

2.3.   Notes to the standard

The standard aims to clarify which quality requirements are prerequisites for language test providers and language tests to be able to use the results of these language tests for admission of international students to higher education (HE) in the Netherlands. In addition to the educational institution's need for a reliable and valid assessment to make a realistic assessment of the student's study success, the outcome of the language test also has an impact on obtaining a residence permit in the Netherlands (the latter insofar as it concerns a student who is obliged to obtain a residence permit). This standard,

therefore, clarifies the conditions and the criteria under which a language test provider can be included in the Code of Conduct. By operationalizing these criteria, it is possible to test them and provide a rationale for why specific language testing organizations are included in the language table of the Code of Conduct or not.

The standard consists of the following three components:
1. Product requirements: Requirements for the test tool.
2. Process requirements: Requirements for the procedure (processes) in which language tests are developed and administered.
3. Organizational requirements: Requirements of the organizational setup of the agency that develops test tools.

2.4.   Application of the standard

The umbrella organizations (the Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences, NRTO and UNL) manage the Code of Conduct. They have joined and are represented by the NC. The educational umbrella organizations own the standard, and the Commission is the supervisor. A language test assessment committee consisting of representatives of the UNL, the Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences and NRTO manages the standard. Hobéon performs technical maintenance of the standard under the instruction of the NC and the umbrella organizations.

The steering committee provides accountability through an annual report showing the number of assessment processes and their results.

The language test providers currently included in the language table will have an additional quality test on prerequisite aspects. The material aspects of tests already included in the language table have been sufficiently assessed, underpinned and recorded via Ofqual. The procedure of the additional quality assessment is included in the process description that is part of this standard. In doing so, these providers will also be tested based on Dutch principles, and no distinction will be made between the various language test providers. Exemptions for testing to the standard do not apply.

Educational institutions must include at least three language tests in the language table.

Providers of online tests must also be certified for information security (ISO 27001). Online tests will only be allowed if exceptional circumstances (a conflict, a pandemic, an unsafe situation) prevent on-site testing.

Inclusion in the language table is for six years. It aligns with the period in which the NC assesses whether an educational institution still fulfils the Code of Conduct. A condition for inclusion is also that the language test provider shall have clear contingency regulations, as described in sections 3 and 4 of this standard and detailed in the assessment tools that are part of the standard.

3.   PROCESS REQUIREMENTS

The process requirements are requirements for the method (processes) in which a test tool is developed and administered. It concerns the procedure of the agency that develops and administers language tests. The agency shows in a description of several processes that the quality of its procedures is secured and that these processes are applied in practice.

3.1. Test construction

1. An established process for constructing and setting language tests is available. The procedure is known to and observed by all persons involved.
2. A description of how the separation between constructor and setter is secured and organized is available, including a division of tasks between the two.
3. A procedure secures the independence and separation of the test constructor and setter. This procedure will be complied with in practice.
4. A description exists of how constructors and setters are being informed of the requirements placed on them.
5. A description of which quality criteria are being used and how these are applied in constructing questions and assignments, answers and assessment criteria, and the pass mark is available.
6. A procedure secures the development of assessment tools. The guideline is an appropriate relation between the required level (in the range B1 to C1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, hereafter: CEFR), the phrasing of the question or assignment, and the answer options or assessment criteria. The procedure is known to and observed by all persons involved.

3.2. Administering tests and logistics

1. Administering tests in the test centres is secured in clear, transparent, and definite procedures. These procedures are known to and observed by all persons involved. For this purpose, test centres have access to regulations.
2. A procedure secures the candidates' identity check. The procedure is known to and observed by all persons involved. If salient issues arise in this area, a clearly described repertoire of actions is available.
3. A course of action prevents irregularities when administering tests. In the case of irregularities, appropriate procedures are available on how to act. These procedures are known to and observed by all relevant persons involved.
4. A log of incidents is kept, and incidents will be examined. Where necessary, measures will be taken to prevent repetition. In the case of incidents, the NC can decide which research agency will be appointed to investigate the incident in question further.
5. The test provider/owner must notify incidents. Evidence of notifications of incidents will be secured in the incidents' log.
6. The security of transportation of tests to the test centres is secured in a procedure. The procedure is known to and observed by all persons involved.
7. The information security is secured in procedures. These procedures are known to and observed by all persons involved. Considering the established information security objectives, the organization should conduct security risk assessments at planned intervals or when significant changes are proposed or occur. The organization must keep documented information to evidence the results of the information security risk assessments.
8. Secrecy and confidentiality of results, certificates and related data are secured in procedures in line with the applicable privacy legislation. These procedures are known to and observed by all persons involved. The candidates will be informed of their rights to access the data.
9. The logistics of administering tests are described in a procedure. The procedure is known to and observed by all persons involved. It must be made clear that all test documents will be processed in a secured and verifiable manner and that the confidentiality of all procedures can be safeguarded.
10. The verification of awarding the results by the administering agencies is secured in a procedure. The procedure is known to and observed by all persons involved. Documentation and evidence are available to show how the reliability of assessments is judged and how the data regarding the performance of the assessors of written and oral tests will be collocated and analysed.
11. The safeguarding against unauthorized release, loss, use and change of data is secured in a procedure. The procedure is known to and observed by all persons involved.

12. A procedure secures the communication to candidates about the context, aim and use of the test, its content and the reliability of the test results. The procedure is known to and observed by all persons involved.
13. The available information is described to help those concerned interpret and correctly use the test results.
14. The candidates for the language tests receive appropriate support, for instance, a telephone helpdesk, web services, practice material, etc.
15. There are facilities for candidates with special requirements. The application of such facilities has been laid down in a procedure. The procedure is known to and observed by all persons involved.

4. ORGANIZATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Organizational requirements are requirements for the organizational setup of the agency developing the language test. The following organizational requirements must be fulfilled:

1. Relevant documentation and data will be managed in an orderly manner and, upon request of the NC, made available.
2. The test provider will record the number of tests administered and their location scope.
3. A procedure secures how the agency ensures knowledge of current legislation and regulations. There is also a procedure to assess and implement the consequences of any changes in legislation and regulations in the agency's processes. These procedures are known to and observed by all persons involved.
4. There is a description of which criteria secure the expertise of the persons constructing and setting the language tests.
5. The test provider must facilitate knowledge development appropriately and demonstrably.
6. The demands an agency places on the persons constructing and setting the language tests must be demonstrably traced. It must also be demonstrated that persons deployed in constructing or setting the language tests meet the demands.
7. An agency must show that it can develop and deliver tests and award certificates efficiently.
8. It has a proper quality assurance system that will be evaluated annually and, if necessary, adjusted.
9. The agency will perform an annual internal quality audit involving candidates, assessors and developers. It is visible which points of improvement were identified and how they have been implemented (and which effect they had). All of this has been documented.
10. The agency applies for certification or recertification once every six years unless incidents indicate fraud or suspicions of fraud. In the case of such an incident, the language test assessment committee , with a mandate from the NC, will perform a risk analysis. Based on this, the NC may have an investigation started, which may lead to a new validation.
11. A procedure safeguards against unauthorized release, loss, use and change of data. The procedure is known to and observed by all persons involved.
12. The agency will do its best to prevent irregularities in developing, delivering and administering tests. In the case of irregularities, appropriate procedures are available on how to act. These procedures are known to and observed by all relevant persons involved.
13. A log of incidents is kept, and incidents will be examined. Where necessary, measures will be taken to prevent repetition.
14. There is an obligation to notify the test provider of incidents. The test provider, in turn, will decide whether the nature and frequency of incidents will affect the information, safety or the test result. In such cases, the test provider will notify the National Commission. Evidence of notifications of incidents will be secured in the incidents' log.
15. Tests will be analysed to demonstrate that the test results were not influenced by factors such as native language, country of origin, sex, age or ethnicity.
16. In an appropriate sample of candidates, data will be collected at the item and task levels (for instance, to assess the level of difficulty, distinguishing power, reliability, and standard error of the test). The sample results will be secured in documentation, and any actions will be demonstrably followed up.
17. If third parties are used for sampling, clear agreements must be made on the guidelines to be followed during sampling. The expertise of the sampling agency should be up to date, and

prompt action must be taken if third parties appear to pose a risk. The cooperation is documented in writing and must be enforceable or verifiable.

18. A complaints procedure is published and demonstrably followed. Part of the complaints procedure is keeping an overview of complaints.
19. Test results must be verifiable online.
20. The information on the certificates issued meets the requirements. It means that at least the following data will be included on the issued certificate:
    a. Full name of the organization issuing the certificate
    b. Mention of ISO 27001 in the case of an online test
    c. The candidate's personal data (full name, birth date and birthplace)
    d. A unique reference or QR code to trace the person in the test provider's database for verification
    e. Subject area
    f. Test name
    g. Level attained
    h. Total scores and sub-scores attained
    i. Date of testing
    j. Test location or unique reference to the testing centre
    k. Date of issue
    l. Term of validity
    m. Signature of the issuing organization

5. PRODUCT REQUIREMENTS

The product requirements are requirements set to a test tool. A test tool must also meet the ALTE criteria and the ILTE principles, and the test level must be B1 to C1. The standard presented here is congruent with this context. The product requirements from the standard apply to language tests that test English language skills to assess whether international students are admissible to study in Dutch higher education. Successful completion of a language test is also a condition for granting a residence permit. The main components of the standard's product requirements are: general, alignment with qualification requirements, assessment, pass mark and information.

5.1. General

Before zooming in on specific requirements regarding the test tool, the following general requirements apply to the test tool:
1. It must be made clear that the language test addresses the level range B1 – C1 (CEFR), aimed at language skills needed to study at this level. The scores will be related to the levels B1 – C1 of the CEFR.
2. It has been made clear that the tool uses set test assignments to test the various language skills.
3. Language tests are demonstrably academically based and validated.

5.2. Alignment with the qualification requirements

1. The language test is aligned with the required level and the target group.
2. The candidate will be tested at the required level in the range B1 – C1, as stated in the CEFR. It is substantiated with evidence, for instance, in the test matrix or a comparable table.
3. The language test covers the following skills:
    a. Oral skills
    b. Writing skills
    c. Listening skills
    d. Reading skills

4. If the test tool consists of one or more components, each component's scope fits the importance of the qualification requirements.
5. The form of the test is aligned with the content.
6. The content of the test tool is open to only one interpretation.
7. If skills are tested integrated, how the relationship with the CEFR is designed should be made clear.
8. Parallel tests are comparable over several moments of administering tests in terms of content, stability, consistency and pass mark.

5.3. Assessment

1. Each test has an assessment tool.
2. The assessment tool contains assessment instructions for the assessor.
3. The assessment tool enables a valid, objective and unambiguous assessment of the candidate's performance. It must show that the candidate masters the envisaged level.
4. The test tool has guidelines that lead to an independent assessment.
5. The assessment criteria are unambiguous and complete.
6. There is an appropriate relation between the required level in the range B1 – C1, as stated in the CEFR, the questions or assignments, the answer options and the assessment criteria.
7. The test tool has a scoring model that clearly sets out how the candidate's performance is evaluated.
8. The scoring model has a balanced distribution of points across the questions or tasks.
9. The test tool indicates the maximum and possible partial score per item or partial question.
10. The assessor can substantiate their assessment in line with the assessment rules in a traceable manner.

5.4.   Pass mark

1. The underlying methodology for determining the pass mark is transparent.
2. The pass mark has been set so that the candidate's performance meets the minimum level.
3. There is a balanced weighing of the test tool or parts of the test tool that reflects the interest of the relevant qualification requirements.

5.5.   Information

1. Each language test has information about the test format, links, pass marks, conditions for administering the test, resources allowed, and the assessment result timeframe.
2. The information about the assessment process tool is demonstrably included and clearly described as part of the test tool.
3. The information about the instructions and background information for the <u>candidate</u> is demonstrably included and clearly described as part of the test tool.
4. The information for <u>those administering and assessing tests</u> is demonstrably included and clearly described as part of the test tool: instructions and background information for the assessor. The instruction for administrators and assessors covers matters such as general guidelines on how to assess candidates' performance, whether or not to give instructions to the candidate during the administration, ending an examination prematurely, and arriving at an unambiguous assessment in the case of two or more assessors.

APPENDIX 1 ALTE MINIMUM STANDARDS

Test Construction
1. You can describe the purpose and context of use of the examination, and the population for which the examination is appropriate.
2. The examination is based on a theoretical construct, e.g. on a model of communicative competence.
3. You provide criteria for selection and training of constructors, expert judges and consultants in test development and construction.
4. Parallel examinations are comparable across different administrations in terms of content, stability, consistency and grade boundaries.
5. If you make a claim that the examination is linked to an external reference system (e.g. Common European Framework), then you can provide evidence of alignment to this system.

Administration & logistics
6. All centres are selected to administer your examination according to clear, transparent, established procedures, and have access to regulations about how to do so.
7. Examination papers are delivered in excellent condition and by secure means of transport to the authorized examination centres, your examination administration system provides for secure and traceable handling of all examination documents, and confidentiality of all system procedures can be guaranteed.
8. The examination administration system has appropriate support systems (e.g. phone hotline, web services etc).
9. You adequately protect the security and confidentiality of results and certificates, and data relating to them, in line with current data protection legislation, and candidates are informed of their rights to access this data.
10. The examination system provides support for candidates with special needs.

Marking & grading
11. Marking is sufficiently accurate and reliable for purpose and type of examination.
12. You can document and explain how reliability is estimated for rating, and how data regarding achievement of raters of writing and speaking performances is collected and analysed.

Test analysis
13. You collect and analyse data on an adequate and representative sample of candidates and can be confident that their achievement is a result of the skills measured in the examination and not influenced by factors like L1, country of origin, gender, age and ethnic origin.
14. Item-level and task-level data (e.g. for computing the difficulty, discrimination, reliability and standard errors of measurement of the examination) is collected from an adequate sample of candidates and analysed.

Communication with stakeholders
15. The examination administration system communicates the results of the examinations to candidates and to examination centres (e.g. schools) promptly and clearly.
16. You provide information to stakeholders on the appropriate context, purpose and use of the examination, on its content, and on the overall reliability of the results of the examination.
17. You provide suitable information to stakeholders to help them interpret results and use them appropriately.

APPENDIX 2 CODE OF ETHICS

Code of Ethics

(Adopted at the annual meeting of ILTA held in Vancouver, March 2000).
(Minor corrections approved by the ILTA Executive Committee, January 2018)

This, the first Code of Ethics prepared by the International Language Testing Association (ILTA), is a set of principles which draws upon moral philosophy and serves to guide good professional conduct. It is neither a statute nor a regulation and it does not provide guidelines for practice, but it is intended to offer a benchmark of satisfactory ethical behaviour by all language testers. It is associated with a separate Guidelines for Practice (available on the ILTA website). The Code of Ethics is based on a blend of the principles of beneficence, non-maleficence, justice, a respect for autonomy and for civil society.

This Code of Ethics identifies 9 fundamental principles, each elaborated on by a series of annotations which generally clarify the nature of the principles; they prescribe what ILTA members ought to do or not do, or more generally how they ought to comport themselves or what they, or the profession, ought to aspire to; and they identify the difficulties and exceptions inherent in the application of the principles. The Annotations further elaborate the Code's sanctions, making clear that failure to uphold the Code may have serious penalties, such as withdrawal of ILTA membership on the advice of the ILTA Ethics Committee. Although this Code derives from other similar ethical codes (stretching back into history), it does endeavour to reflect the ever changing balance of societal and cultural values across the world, and for that reason should be interpreted by language testers in conjunction with the associated Guidelines for Practice.

All professional codes should inform professional conscience and judgement. This ILTA Code of Ethics does not release language testers from the obligations and responsibilities laid on them by other Codes to which they have subscribed or from their duties under the legal codes, both national and international, to which they may be subject.

Language testers are independent moral agents and sometimes they may have a personal moral stance which conflicts with participation in certain procedures. They are morally entitled to refuse to participate in procedures which would violate personal moral belief. Language testers accepting employment positions where they foresee they may be called on to be involved in situations at variance with their beliefs have a responsibility to acquaint their employer or prospective employer with this fact. Employers and colleagues have a responsibility to ensure that such language testers are not discriminated against in their workplace.

The Code of Ethics is instantiated by the Guidelines for Practice (available on the ILTA website). While the Code of Ethics focuses on the morals and ideals of the profession, the Guidelines for Practice identifies the minimum requirements for practice in the profession and focuses on the clarification of professional misconduct and unprofessional conduct.

Both the Code of Ethics and the Guidelines for Practice need to be responsive to the needs and changes within the profession and, in time, these Codes will require revision in response to changes in language testing and in society. The Code of Ethics will be reviewed within five years, or earlier if necessary.

PRINCIPLE 1

Language testers shall have respect for the humanity and dignity of each of their test takers. They shall provide them with the best possible professional consideration and shall respect all persons' needs, values and cultures in the provision of their language testing service.

Annotation

- Language testers shall not discriminate against nor exploit their test takers on grounds of age, gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, language background, creed, political affiliations or religion, nor knowingly impose their own values (for example social, spiritual, political and ideological), to the extent that they are aware of them.
- Language testers shall never exploit their clients nor try to influence them in ways that are not related to the aims of the service they are providing or the investigation they are mounting.
- Sexual relations between language testers and their test takers are always unethical.
- Teaching and researching language testing involving the use of test takers (including students) requires their consent; it also requires respect for their dignity and privacy. Those involved should be informed that their refusal to participate will not affect the quality of the language tester's service (in teaching, in research, in development, in administration). The use of all forms of media (paper, electronic, video, audio) involving test takers requires informed consent before being used for secondary purposes.
- Language testers shall endeavour to communicate the information they produce to all relevant stakeholders in as meaningful a way as possible.
- Where possible, test takers should be consulted on all matters concerning their interests.

PRINCIPLE 2

Language testers shall hold all information obtained in their professional capacity about their test takers in confidence and they shall use professional judgement in sharing such information.

Annotation

- In the face of the widespread use of photocopied materials and facsimile, computerized test records and data banks, the increased demand for accountability from various sources and the personal nature of the information obtained from test takers, language testers are obliged to respect test takers' right to confidentiality and to safeguard all information associated with the tester-test taker relationship.
- Confidentiality cannot be absolute, especially where the records concern students who may be competing for admissions and appointments. A careful balance must be maintained between preserving confidentiality as a fundamental aspect of the language tester's professional duty and the wider responsibility the tester has to society.
- Similarly, in appropriate cases, the language tester's professional colleagues also have a right to access data of test takers other than their own in order to improve the service the profession offers. In such cases, those given access to data should agree to maintain confidentiality.
- Test taker data collected from sources other than the test taker directly (for example from teachers of students under test) are subject to the same principles of confidentiality.

- There may be statutory requirements on disclosure, for example where the language tester is called as an expert witness in a law court or tribunal. In such circumstances, the language tester is released from his/her professional duty to confidentiality.

PRINCIPLE 3

Language testers should adhere to all relevant ethical principles embodied in national and international guidelines when undertaking any trial, experiment, treatment or other research activity.

Annotation

- Language testing progress depends on research, which necessarily involves the participation of human subjects. This research shall conform to generally accepted principles of academic inquiry, be based on a thorough knowledge of the professional literature; and be planned and executed according to the highest standards.
- All research must be justified; that is proposed studies shall be reasonably expected to provide answers to questions posed.
- The human rights of the research subject shall always take precedence over the interests of science or society.
- Where there are likely discomforts or risks to the research subject, the benefits of that research should be taken into account but must not be used in themselves to justify such discomforts or risks. If unforeseeable harmful effects occur, the research should always be stopped or modified.
- An independent Ethics Committee should evaluate all research proposals in order to ensure that studies conform to the highest scientific and ethical standards.
- Relevant information about the aims, methods, risks and discomforts of the research shall be given to the subject in advance. The information shall be conveyed in such a way that it is fully understood. Consent shall be free, without pressure, coercion or duress.
- The subject shall be free to refuse to participate in or to withdraw from, the research at any time prior to publication of research results. Such refusal shall not jeopardise the subject's treatment.
- Special care shall be taken with regard to obtaining prior consent in the case of subjects who are in dependent relationships (for example, students, the elderly, proficiency challenged learners).
- In the case of a minor, consent shall be obtained from a parent or guardian but also from the child if he is of sufficient maturity and understanding.
- Confidential information obtained in research shall not be used for purposes other than those specified in the approved research protocol.
- Publication of research results shall be truthful and accurate.
- Publication of research reports shall not permit identification of the subjects who have been involved.

PRINCIPLE 4

Language testers shall not allow the misuse of their professional knowledge or skills, in so far as they are able.

Annotation

- Language testers shall not knowingly use their professional knowledge or skills to advance purposes inimical to their test takers' interests. When the progress of the

tester's intervention is not directly to the benefit of the test takers (for example when they are asked to act as trial subjects for a proficiency test designed for some other situation), its nature shall be made absolutely clear.

- Non-conformity with a society's prevailing moral, religious etc values, or status as an unwelcome migrant, shall not be the determining factor in assessing language ability.
- Whatever the legal circumstances, language testers shall not participate, either directly or indirectly in the practice of torture or other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment (see Declaration of Tokyo 1975).

PRINCIPLE 5

Language testers shall continue to develop their professional knowledge, sharing this knowledge with colleagues and other language professionals.

Annotation

- Continued learning and advancing one's knowledge are fundamental to the professional role; failure to do so constitutes a disservice to test takers.
- Language testers shall make use of the various methods of continuing education that are available to them. These may involve participation in continuing language testing programmes and professional conferences, and the regular reading of relevant professional publications.
- Language testers shall take the opportunity to interact with colleagues and other relevant language professionals as an important means of developing their professional knowledge.
- Language testers shall share new knowledge with colleagues by publication in recognized professional journals or at meetings.
- Language testers shall be expected to contribute to the education and professional development of language testers in training and to the drawing up of guidelines for the core requirements of that training.
- Language testers shall be prepared to contribute to the education of students in the wider language professions.

PRINCIPLE 6

Language testers shall share the responsibility of upholding the integrity of the language testing profession.

Annotation

- Language testers shall promote and enhance the integrity of their profession by fostering a sense of trust and mutual responsibility among colleagues. In the event of differences of opinion, viewpoints should be expressed with candour and respect rather than by mutual denigration.
- Language testers develop and exercise norms on behalf of society. As such theirs is a privileged position which brings with it an obligation to maintain appropriate personal and moral standards in their professional practice, and in those aspects of their personal life which may reflect upon the integrity of that practice.
- Language testers who become aware of unprofessional conduct by a colleague shall take appropriate action; this may include a report to the relevant authorities.
- Failure to uphold this Code of Ethics will be regarded with the utmost seriousness and could lead to severe penalties including withdrawal of ILTA membership.

PRINCIPLE 7

Language testers in their societal roles shall strive to improve the quality of language testing, assessment and teaching services, promote the just allocation of those services and contribute to the education of society regarding language learning and language proficiency.

Annotation

- Language testers have a particular duty to promote the improvement of language testing provision/services in that many of their test takers are disenfranchised and lack power on account of their non-native speaker status.
- Language testers shall be prepared by virtue of their knowledge and experience to advise those responsible for the provision of language testing services.
- Language testers shall be prepared to act as advocates and join with others in ensuring that language testing test takers have available to them the best possible language testing service.
- Language testers shall be prepared to work with advisory, statutory, voluntary and commercial bodies that have a role in the provision of language testing services.
- Language testers shall take appropriate action if services, by reason of fiscal restriction or otherwise, fall below minimal standards. Exceptionally, language testers may have to dissociate themselves from such services provided that this is not harmful to their test takers.
- Language testers shall be prepared to interpret and disseminate relevant scientific information and established professional opinions to society. In so doing, language testers shall clarify their status as either spokespersons for a recognised professional body or not. If the views expressed are contrary to those generally held, they shall so indicate.
- It is reasonable for language testers to make scientifically substantiated contributions to public debate on sensitive socio-political issues, such as race, disadvantage and child rearing.
- Language testers shall differentiate between their role as educators based on professional knowledge and their role as citizens.
- In fulfilling their responsibilities under this principle, language testers shall take care to avoid self-promotion and the denigration of colleagues.
- Language testers shall make clear that they do not claim (and are not seen to claim) that they alone possess all the relevant knowledge.

PRINCIPLE 8

Language testers shall be mindful of their obligations to the society within which they work, while recognising that those obligations may on occasion conflict with their responsibilities to their test takers and to other stakeholders.

Annotation

- When test results are obtained on behalf of institutions (government departments, professional bodies, universities, schools, companies) language testers have an obligation to report those results accurately, however unwelcome they may be to the test takers and other stakeholders (families, prospective employers etc).
- As members of the society in which they work, language testers should recognise their obligation to the testing requirements of that society, even when they may not themselves agree with them. Where their disagreement is of sufficient strength to qualify as a conscientious objection, they should have the right to withdraw their professional services.

PRINCIPLE 9

Language testers shall regularly consider the potential effects, both short and long term on all stakeholders of their projects, reserving the right to withhold their professional services on the grounds of conscience.

Annotation

As professionals, language testers have the responsibility to evaluate the ethical consequences of the projects submitted to them. While they cannot consider all possible eventualities, they should engage in a thorough evaluation of the likely consequences and, where those consequences are in their view professionally unacceptable, withdraw their services. In such cases, they should as a matter of course consult with fellow language testers to determine how far their view is shared, always reserving the right, where their colleagues take a different view, to make an individual stand on the grounds of conscience.

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