

# ECL LANGUAGE EXAM REGULATIONS

## Features of the ECL Examination

The ECL language examination is administered by the Foreign Language Centre (Idegen Nyelvi Központ) of the University of Pécs, Hungary (Pécsi Tudományegyetem). The examination is paper-based and measures general foreign language proficiency, focusing on testing candidates' communicative language knowledge.

## Languages

The ECL examination system has 15 examination languages: Bulgarian, Czech, Croatian, English, French, German, Hebrew, Hungarian, Italian, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Slovakian and Spanish. The English, German and Hungarian language exams are accredited in Hungary.

## Levels

The ECL language examination is aligned to the levels of the Common European Framework. The ECL language exam has the following levels: A2 (beginner), B1 (elementary), B2 (intermediate) and C1 (advanced). German and Hungarian have four accredited levels in Hungary, and in English levels B1, B2 and C1 are accredited.

## Parts of the Exam

It is possible to take a complex exam or a partial exam (either written or oral) at the examination sites. The complex ECL language exam has four parts: reading comprehension, written communication, listening comprehension and oral communication. The written part includes the reading comprehension and the written communication sections, and the oral part includes the listening comprehension and oral communication sections.

## Examination Period

The International ECL Examination Centre (hereinafter Examination Centre) has five examination periods annually. The exam months are February, April, June, October and December. The exam times of each language can be seen on the website of the International ECL Examination Centre ([www.ecl.hu](http://www.ecl.hu)).

## Examination Sites

ECL language exams can be taken at examination sites that belong to the ECL examination site network in Hungary or abroad. Candidates can get information about the possible examination sites on the website.

## Application

Individuals turning 14 in the year of application may register for the ECL language exam. An online or paper-based registration form has to be completed for the application. Applicants can register online three weeks before the application deadline. The paper-based application form is available at the examination sites, and it can also be downloaded from the website of the Examination Centre.

Application may be done:

- in person by submitting the application form at the selected examination site,
- by post (the candidate sends the application form to the selected examination site),
- online at the Examination Centre's website with an electronic application form.

Proof of payment of the exam fee has to be attached to the application form, and the application is not valid without this documentation. For online applications, candidates have to send proof of payment to the examination site by e-mail. The deadline of the application closes four weeks before the exam time. An automatic confirmation e-mail about the application and the personal page is sent to each

applicant using the e-mail address provided. Candidates who apply online receive the confirmation immediately, and those who apply with a paper-based application form will receive it by the third workday following the deadline of the application. If they do not receive the confirmation on the third workday following the deadline, they need to contact the selected examination site.

In case of a change in the name, address or any personal data, the candidate needs to inform the examination site in writing (electronically) as soon as possible so the changes can be put in the database. If this is not completed, the certificate will have incorrect data. The fee for reprinting the certificate will be charged to the candidate.

### **Application to More Languages or Levels**

The ECL examination system allows candidates to apply to different languages and levels in the same examination period. However, for administrative reasons candidates cannot apply to the same language at different levels or to different languages at the same level.

### **Late Registration**

Candidates may apply (with an extra fee) after the deadline of the application. The deadline for late registration can be found on the website of the ECL International Examination Centre. Only paper-based application forms can be used for late registration. Its fee is 3,000 HUF, which has to be paid to the examination site. The application form, the proof of payment and the late registration fee have to be submitted at the examination site.

### **Examination Fee**

The examination fee is decided by the International ECL Examination Centre. Information about examination fees can be found on the Centre's website.

### **Payment of Exam Fees**

Once the exam fee has been paid the candidate has the right to take the exam or postpone the exam for the next exam period (an application needs to be completed and an extra fee has to be paid). For paper-based applications, the exam fee has to be paid at the examination site where the candidate wants to take the exam. The payment of the exam may vary according to examination sites. For a paper-based application, payment may be done with a postal check, by bank transfer, or in cash (at some examination sites). The confirmation of the payment has to be attached to the application in all cases.

For online applications, candidates are informed on their own personal pages about the payment options. For online applications, the exam fee has to be transferred or sent with postal check (which is available at examination sites) to the bank account provided. The proof of the transfer can be sent electronically, and the original slip of the postal check can be sent by post or submitted in person at the examination site. The application is valid only after receiving the proof of payment. If the proof of payment does not arrive by the end of the application deadline, the examination site will delete the application.

### **Invoice**

If a candidate needs an invoice, it has to be requested when registering for the exam. The invoice data need to be provided both on the online or paper-based application, and the candidate number and the candidate's name have to be written on the money transfer document. For paper-based registration, the application form has to be handed in on the day of the payment so the invoice data can be entered into the administration system. For a postal check, the candidate number should also be written on the check. If the above data are not available, no invoice will be issued. ECL may issue a certificate that has the data provided at the time of the payment.

**Returning the Exam Fee**

The exam fee cannot be refunded. If the candidate does not appear for the exam, the exam fee will be lost if the candidate does not postpone the exam. Applying for a new exam is only possible by paying the exam fee again. If the candidate cannot take the exam because of an urgent issue, the examination site may return 40% of the exam fee on the basis of a written request and a decision made about the circumstances. This request may be accepted only if it is received at least one day before the day of the exam. The fee for a postponed exam may not be refunded either.

**Informing the Candidates about the Time and Location of the Exam**

Candidates get informed about the time and location of their exams on their personal pages at least 10 days before the exam. This information includes the candidate number generated by the computer, details about the location and time of each part of the exam, and other relevant info (e.g. rules, sanctions, devices allowed, etc.).

**Examination of Candidates with Disabilities**

On the basis of Government Decree 137/2008 V.16. (8.§ f.), the Examination Centre provides an appropriate testing environment for people with disabilities to ensure equal opportunity. People with disabilities who are in possession of the required medical documents are entitled to get specific testing accommodations.

According to point 2 of § 63 of Government Decree 87/2015. (IV. 9.), candidates with special educational needs may take the exam in the framework of a special arrangement provided they request it in writing. As proof of the status of having special educational needs, the documents issued by the following institutes may be accepted: the County Expert Committees, the Eötvös Loránd University National Pedagogical Assessment Service and its legal predecessor, Eötvös Loránd University Special Needs Education and Speech Therapy Service, Expert and Rehabilitation Committee, and Special Education Institute.

The request for testing accommodation by a candidate with disabilities or with special needs has to be sent to the selected examination site by the application deadline. The form for this process is available at the examination sites and also electronically on the website of the Examination Centre. Medical documentation has to be attached to the application in all cases. Testing accommodation may not be requested with medical documentation submitted late. In such circumstances, the candidate may postpone the exam free of charge.

On the basis of the doctor's or expert's opinion, the equal opportunities officer of the Examination Centre makes a decision on whether the special arrangement is allowed or not. The decision is sent to the examination site in question before the deadline for finalizing the exam arrangements. For testing accommodations, there is no change in the content of the exam material. Modification may only be made in the format of the language exams.

**Note:** According to point 3 of § 4 of the Act on National Education, the adaptation, learning and behavioural difficulty does not qualify as special educational needs. While the categories classified under the generic term of special educational needs are categories of impairment and disability (according to point 24 of § 4 of the Act on National Education), the adaptation, learning and behavioural difficulty is neither an impairment nor a disability; therefore, special arrangement may NOT be requested on this basis in higher education or on a language exam

According to § 11 of Decree 15/2013 (II.26.) of the Ministry of Human Resources, the expert opinions on adaptation, learning and behavioural difficulty are issued by the district institutes of the pedagogical assessment services. The expert opinions issued by these institutes cannot be grounds to

offer specific testing accommodations during a language exam because they are not based on any disability.

### **Postponing the Exam**

Candidates can only apply for postponing an exam one time if they were prevented from taking the exam. In such cases, the exam – upon request and through the payment of a deferment fee – can be postponed until the next exam date. Applications for postponing exams can be downloaded from the [www.ecl.hu](http://www.ecl.hu) website.

If the candidate applied for a complex exam, only the full exam can be postponed until the next exam date. Neither the writing nor the oral part, or any of the different skills tested can be postponed separately. The deadline for submitting a Request for Exam Postponement form is the 10th day following an exam at the latest.

### **Changing the Site and Date of the Exam**

The candidate may not change the examination site after the payment has been made and the application has been accepted. Under certain circumstances, the original examination site and the newly chosen examination site may agree about the change by the second day after the application deadline at the latest.

### **Changing the language, level or part of the exam**

Candidates can change the language, level or part of the exam they are taking until the payment of the exam fee has not been made. The candidate has to inform the examination site about this request.

### **Taking the Exam on a Different Day than the Official Time**

Once a year all level B2 exams can be taken on a day other than Saturday. This opportunity is available only in Pécs at the International ECL Examination Centre. The exam can be taken on the Monday following the Saturday exam day.

The application for a Monday exam day may be requested on the grounds of conscience. The request has to be sent to the Head of the Examination Centre at the same time as the application form. Requests sent after the application deadline will not be taken into consideration by the Examination Centre.

### **The Process of the Exam**

The written parts of the exam (reading comprehension, written communication and listening comprehension) start at a unified time at all examination sites on the day the Examination Centre has established. For complex exams, the exam starts with the written parts (reading comprehension and written communication), and the listening comprehension is administered after a break. The oral exam may be conducted within two weeks after the written parts for each exam period. The oral exam takes place based on a schedule set by the examination site.

### **The Oral Part**

The oral exam is conducted by two examiners. The oral exam may only be conducted by examiners who have completed the basic training and the regular professional development trainings for administering oral exams.

Candidates take the exam in pairs. In the case of odd number of candidates the examination sites form groups of three candidates. In *vis major* situations individuals may also be examined alone. Candidates have the opportunity to select partners for the oral communication exam. If they don't name anybody, a partner for the oral exam will be assigned randomly.

No preparation time is allowed for the oral exam. For quality control audio recordings of the oral exam are made. The audio recordings are confidential, and only the Examination Centre and the Accreditation Centre for Foreign Languages of the Educational Authority may use them for purposes of quality assurance.

### **Conflict of Interest**

When creating the Oral Communication examination boards and choosing the invigilators, the examination sites take into consideration any conflict of interest according to the law and the accreditation requirements.

### **Use of Dictionaries**

For the ECL Writing test candidates at all levels may use printed monolingual and bilingual dictionaries that are available in bookstores. Thematic dictionaries cannot be used during the exam. Other assistance (e.g. handwritten notes, list of words) is not allowed. Dictionaries, word lists or other types of assistance are not permitted on the reading comprehension, listening comprehension and oral communication sections.

### **Assistance, Correction of Mistakes**

Notes can only be taken only on the test papers. Correctors and pens with erasers are not allowed. Candidates can make corrections by crossing out their mistakes by pen.

For listening and reading comprehension tasks with questions to answer based on what candidates have heard or read, short and precise answers should be given in a few words instead of using complete sentences. The answers should focus on the questions, and they should not include unnecessary information. If an answer includes details which are not part of the right answer, it is considered incorrect. For the reading tasks, answers that have been lifted from the text and include unnecessary information will also be considered incorrect. Only answers in brackets and crossed out are not considered part of a candidate's final answer.

For tasks where the letter of the correct answer has to be put in an answer grid, the correction can be done by crossing out, and the final answer has to be put in the same cell. Markers do not take into consideration any answers which are not placed in the table. The table for markers must be left empty by candidates.

### **Exam Safety Regulations**

Only trained invigilators can conduct the written exams.

All candidates have to prove their identity with a valid picture ID (i.e. passport, driving license, identity card or residence permit). If a candidate cannot show any of these documents, the examination site must deny entry to the examination.

Candidates may not bring the following items into the examination hall: mobile phones, bags, books, notebooks, recording devices, or any other printed or handwritten material. All drafts have to be done on the test paper in the *Notes* section. Dictionaries may only be used for the writing test.

Final answers should be written in *black* or *blue* ink on the test paper.

No candidate may leave the exam hall before finishing the written parts, except for health reasons.

### **Candidates Arriving Late to the Exam**

If a candidate arrives when the instructions are being given during the reading comprehension and writing section, the candidate can enter the examination room, but no extra time can be provided for

late arrivals. Candidates are not permitted to enter the examination room if they arrive during the listening comprehension section once the recording has begun.

### **Disturbing Events**

If the candidate wants to report any disturbing event during the exam, then it has to be done right after the section of the exam in question. The report has to be in writing, and it has to be submitted to the head of the examination site or his/her deputy immediately after the exam.

### **Cheating and Misbehaviour**

In order to detect candidates hired to take the exam under someone else's name, the ECL examination sites strictly check the identity of the candidates and also compare their ID cards with the tests they submit. In case of a fraud (e.g. hired test taker), a report has to be made and the examination site informs the Examination Centre. Both candidates (the one who was hired and the one who hired) will be disqualified from taking any further ECL exams.

For verified cheating (copying someone else's test, using unpermitted tools, etc.) the candidate's exam will be annulled and the candidate may be disqualified from the possibility of taking future ECL language exam. If it is determined during the rating of the written exam that a candidate plagiarized from the internet or any other source, this is considered exam fraud; therefore, the Examination Centre annuls the score given on this particular task.

Candidates are not allowed to pass information or material to one another during the exam. Candidates are not permitted to copy from one another or from anyone else, or to help one another in any way.

If any misconduct occurs, the invigilator must report the details to the head of the examination site and, if pertinent, may discontinue the exam of the candidate(s) involved. This action is taken if the invigilator finds that disciplinary action is necessary for exam safety and to ensure an ideal environment for all other candidates completing the exam. A report must be made about the incident.

### **Confidentiality**

Everybody taking part in conducting the language exams signs a Declaration of Confidentiality.

### **Copyright**

The test materials are under copyright. It is forbidden for the examination site or others to copy or photocopy any blank or completed test papers.

### **Assessment and Calculation of Results**

For each skill two assessors evaluate candidates' performance. A maximum of 25 points may be given for each skill. The reading and the listening comprehension tasks have 20 items each, and each item is worth 1.25 points. For both the reading and listening comprehension tests there are two tasks for a total of 40 questions.

Analytical assessment scales with five criteria are used for the assessment of the written and the oral communication tasks. The candidate can receive a maximum of five points for each criterion from each rater and for each task on the writing exam. The maximum score on the writing task is 100 points. On the basis of the two raters' points, the software uses the point average to decide the final points.

Two assessors individually grade candidate performance on the oral communication section. The two examiners reach a consensus with regards to the final score after the exam.

The results of the listening and reading comprehension are analysed with the help of statistical

methods at the Examination Centre. Corrections are made when the result of the statistical analysis mandates this process. During the correction, items that did not function well are neutralised and the points for those particular items are awarded to all candidates whether or not they provided the correct answers.

### **Reporting Results**

The Examination Centre announces the results of the exam on its website ([www.ecl.hu](http://www.ecl.hu)) within 30 days from the date of the written exam. Candidates are also notified via email that their results are available on their *candidate's page* online. If a candidate makes a written request to the Examination Centre, he/she can also receive information about the results via mail within the time frame stipulated by the regulations.

### **International and Accredited Certificate**

Candidates may apply to take a complex exam or a written or oral partial exam. Certificates are awarded to those candidates who are successful on a complex or partial exam.

The candidate is successful on an oral partial exam if he/she achieves at least 40% of the total score on both the listening comprehension test and the oral exam, and if the average of the two parts is a minimum of 60%. A written partial exam is successful if the candidate achieves at least 40% of the total score in both the reading comprehension and the writing test, and if the average of the two parts is a minimum of 60%.

If the candidate applied to take a complex exam and achieved a minimum of 40% in each parts of the exam (reading comprehension, written communication, listening comprehension and oral communication), and the average of the four parts of the exam is a minimum of 60%, he/she receives a certificate verifying that they successfully passed the complex exam. At the same time, if the candidate is only successful on the written or oral partial exam, he/she receives a certificate verifying that they have passed a partial exam.

This regulation is valid only from December 2016, and it does not have an impact on test results before this time. The new method for calculating the results may be done only in the case of *complex* exams and in *one* exam time. Written and oral exams taken in different exam times cannot compensate each other.

Language exam certificates are sent from the Examination Centre to those examination sites where the exam was taken. Language exam certificates are sent by the examination sites to the candidates. Candidates who take the exam for the languages accredited in Hungary (English, German, Hungarian) at Hungarian examination sites will get an accredited international certificate. The Examination Centre issues an international certificate in the other languages for candidates who successfully pass the exam. The international certificate is bilingual, and in addition to the target language it provides information about the results in English (or for an English exam, in French).

The international certificates issued in the languages not accredited in Hungary may be nostrified without taking an exam. The nostrification procedure begins upon written request that must be submitted to the Accreditation Centre for Foreign Language Examinations of the Educational Authority via mail or personally at the customer service centre of the Educational Authority

For more about the nostrification, see: [https://nyak.oh.gov.hu/doc/honositas/honositas\\_nyelv.asp](https://nyak.oh.gov.hu/doc/honositas/honositas_nyelv.asp). Upon the request of the candidate the Examination Centre issues a free-of-charge authenticated copy of the language certificate that needs to be attached to the request for nostrification.

**Inspection of Exam Results**

At a date previously agreed upon, the candidate and, in the case of an underage candidate, his/her legal representative may inspect all of their written test results (with the written tasks and the criteria for assessment), their oral exam assessment results, and their monologue recording of the oral exam.

The form necessary for requesting an inspection can be downloaded from [www.ecl.hu](http://www.ecl.hu). The “Request for Inspection” form must be submitted to the head of the Examination Centre within 15 days after the results were made public via email or post. The inspection or hearing must also take place within this timeframe. The inspection, including consultation, may only take place at a previously agreed upon date in the Examination Centre in Pécs. The fee for inspection is 2,000 HUF. The fee may be paid in the Examination Centre on the day of the inspection

45 minutes are available for the inspection. During the inspection hearing the candidate may take handwritten notes about their work and what he/she says during the review. Electronic equipment (photocopier, smartphone, etc.) cannot be used to take notes about the written test or record the oral exam during the meeting

**Review and Re-evaluation**

The review of the exam results is regulated by points (3), (3a) and (3b) of § 4 of Government Decree 137/2008. (V. 16.). Candidates may request a review within 15 days after the results were made public. A review may be requested independently from inspecting the test

Candidates have the right to submit two types of requests for review:

1. The candidate may request a review by reference to infringement of the law, or miscalculation of the score. In this case the review is free of charge.
2. The candidate may request the re-evaluation of their written tests and oral exam by a third assessor. This review is subject to a fee. The fee for re-evaluation is 2.500 HUF for each section of the test. Proof of payment must be attached to the request submitted. In absence of proof of payment the Examination Centre does not conduct re-evaluation

The request for review/re-evaluation form can be obtained at the examination sites or can be downloaded from [www.ecl.hu](http://www.ecl.hu). The “Request for Review/Re-evaluation” form must be submitted to the head of the Examination Centre within 15 days after the results were made public. The request must be submitted via email and post. The date of submitting the request is the day it was posted via mail

The head of the Examination Centre makes his/her decision with respect to the request for review/re-evaluation including a detailed professional opinion within 15 days and informs the candidate about the decision in a letter. In the case of a request for review/re-evaluation, the Examination Centre may modify the exam results. If a candidate successfully passes an exam after conducting a review/re-evaluation, the Examination Centre refunds the candidate the fee paid to review the section(s) of the exam in question and issues a language exam certificate

Within 15 days after the decision was made on his/her request for review/re-evaluation, the candidate may submit a complaint to the Educational Authority by reference to infringement of the law, or miscalculation of the score

**Issuing Duplicate Certificates and Correcting Erroneous Certificates**

If a certificate recognized by the state gets destroyed or lost, the Accreditation Centre for Foreign Language Examinations of the Educational Authority issues a duplicate (official verification) upon the request of the candidate. In the process a new certificate is not issued. Further information can be found here: <https://nyak.oh.gov.hu/doc/elveszett.asp>.



If the certificate recognized by the state contains erroneous data, upon the request of the candidate and depending on the nature of the error, the Accreditation Centre for Foreign Language Examinations of the Educational Authority issues a new certificate (e.g. in the case of a misspelled name within one year after the certificate was issued, or for gender and name changes) or an official verification (e.g. lack of second Christian name, wrong place or date of birth). Further information can be found here: <https://nyak.oh.gov.hu/doc/hibajavit.asp>.

If an international ECL certificate gets destroyed or lost, a duplicate certificate can be issued by the Examination Centre. Application for duplicate certificates must be submitted directly to the Examination Centre and a check-stub or a receipt of payment must be attached. The form is available at the examination sites and can be downloaded from [www.ecl.hu](http://www.ecl.hu). If the international certificate contains erroneous data, upon the request of the candidate and depending on the nature of the error, the Examination Centre issues a new international certificate. In case of an erroneous certificate, the cost of issuing the duplicate must be paid by the party who made the mistake

### **Archives**

The assessed tests and the audio materials of the oral communication exam are stored at the Examination Centre for three years.

### **Data safety**

The information on the data protection of the Examination Centre can be found on its website: <https://ecl.hu/wp-content/uploads/Adatvedelmitajekoztato2019.pdf>

The current exam regulations are valid until modified.

**Pécs, 13. 12. 2019.**