POINTS BASED SYSTEM
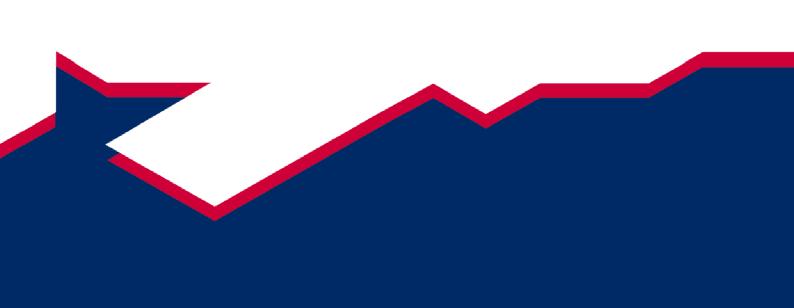## PROCEDURE FOR INCLUSION ON THE LIST OF APPROVED ENGLISH LANGUAGE TESTS

June 2008

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

In 2008, the Points Based System began to operate in the United Kingdom (UK). This will manage the flow of migrants wishing to come to or remain in the UK to work, train or study.

Details of this new Points Based System can be found in the Command Paper, **A Points Based System: Making migration work for Britain** (which can be obtained from our website http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/managingourborders/pbsdocs/).

The Points Based System will be introduced on a phased basis. Tier 1, which aims to attract highly skilled migrants to the UK, was the first phase to be introduced on 29 February 2008.

One of the requirements of the Points Based System will be that, in most cases, migrants coming here to undertake skilled or highly skilled work must provide evidence to demonstrate that they have an acceptable standard of English.

English is the official language of the UK. The ability to speak English to a competent level improves a migrant's potential to succeed in the UK labour market and assists with integration to the UK.

One way in which migrants can demonstrate that they can meet the required standard of English will be by providing evidence that they have passed an English language test.

Only tests that have been assessed as meeting published criteria will be accepted as evidence that the migrant meets this requirement. We will publish a list of these tests so migrants will know whether the test they propose to take will be acceptable.

Organisations are invited to apply for their English language tests to be assessed according to the required standards. This document sets out the criteria and process we will use to assess English language tests.

Once an English language test has been assessed against these requirements, organisations will be notified of the outcome. Details of the tests and organisations which meet the required standard will be published in the Points Based System guidance.

REQUIREMENTS

STANDARD OF ENGLISH

The migrant should have a competent standard of English language. The migrant will be assessed against the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR).

For Tier 1 of the Points Based System, the test will be required to meet **level C1** on the CEFR.

For Tier 2 General, Intra-Company Transfers and Sportspeople, the test will be required to be close to **level A1** on the CEFR. This test should include an ability to understand and use everyday expressions and very basic phrases, to introduce themselves and others and ask and answer questions about basic personal details.

For Tier 2 Ministers of Religion, the test will be required to meet **level B2** on the CEFR.

Before approving an English language test, we will therefore need to know the mark or grade that a candidate would have to reach in that test in order for his or her standard of English to be equivalent to a particular level on the Council of Europe scale.

Further details about the CEFR can be obtained from the Council of Europe's website http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/CADRE_EN.asp.

COMPONENTS

The English language requirement of the Points Based System is to assess a migrant's full range of language skills. Therefore, the test should cover the four language components of listening, speaking, writing and reading.

SECURITY OF TEST

The test should be secure to prevent any possible attempt at deception during test sittings. In particular, organisations will need to take steps to confirm the identity of those sitting tests, in order to avoid impersonation.

SECURITY OF AWARDS OR CERTIFICATES

The test awards should be secure and encompass a number of security features to counteract any attempts to produce fraudulent evidence. This should include minimum requirements of the candidate's name and a unique reference number.

VERIFICATION

The organisation should have a system in place to enable the UK Border Agency to verify test results where there are doubts about the test certificate.

This should be either a website verification service or a telephone or email facility where verification can be obtained within a 24 hour period.

FAST TRACK SERVICE

Preferably the organisation should offer a service where applicants can request the fast-tracking of their test and results. However, this is not an absolute requirement.

INFORMATION TO PROVIDE

Organisations who wish to apply for their English language tests to be considered should provide the following information:

DETAILS OF ORGANISATION

Details of the organisation that administers the test and awards the resulting qualification, including:

- organisation name;
- nature of organisation;
- details of registration/accreditation with other bodies or Government departments or agencies to enable your organisation to award qualifications, for example the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) Register of Education and Training Providers;
- documents to establish your organisation as bona fide, for example annual reports.

CONTACT DETAILS

Contact details for the organisation, including:

- name of contact in the organisation;
- address;
- telephone number;
- fax number;
- email;
- website address.

As details of the organisation will be published in the Points Based System guidance please provide details of information that can be published and separate details for the Agency to contact your organisation, if necessary.

DETAILS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEST

Details of the test, including:

- title of test;
- the mark or grade a candidate taking the test must reach in order to show a level of competence equal to levels A1, B2, and C1 of the CEFR;
- details of how the organisation has mapped their qualification to the CEFR, including any independent accreditation or quality assurance that has been undertaken;
- confirmation that the test covers the four language components of listening, speaking, writing and reading;
- overview, structure and levels of the test;
- how often the test can be sat;
- where the test can be sat;
- whether there are any arrangements for people with special needs (for example, sight or hearing impairment).

RESULTS

Details of the results, including:

- when results are issued;
- any different grading of results;

- whether the test results are valid for a limited period and, if so, what the validity would be.

SECURITY OF TESTS

Details of the security measures in place for the sitting of the test, for example any signatures or photographs taken at test centres, proof of identity requested, test centre room requirements, etc.

Details of the relationship between your organisation and test centres, including information of contracts, quality assurance, to ensure that the standard and integrity of the testing process is maintained.

SECURITY OF AWARDS

Details of the security of awards, including:
- how awards are issued to applicants;
- details of any security features in test certificates, for example fonts, watermarks, formats of words/numbers, etc.

Please provide copies of the certificates.

VERIFICATION

Details of any validation process the organisation can already provide or will be able to provide to the Agency to verify test results within 24 hours.

FAST TRACK SERVICE

Confirmation as to whether the organisation offers a facility for applicants to request the fast-tracking of their test and results. If so, please provide information of the process.

HOW TO APPLY

FORMAT OF INFORMATION

Organisations should submit the information in the format shown in Annex A.

WHERE TO SEND THE INFORMATION

It would be helpful if the information could be sent by email to:

PBSOperationalPolicy@ind.homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk.

Responses can also be sent by post to:

Points Based System Operational Policy Unit
UK Border Agency
PO Box 3468
Sheffield
S3 8WA

Before submitting details of the test, if organisations have any queries or wish to meet with representatives of the Agency to obtain further information they should email or write to us, using the above contact details.

CONFIDENTIALITY

We will treat all information you provide in confidence. However, the information you send us may be passed to colleagues within the Home Office, the Government, related agencies and third party organisations.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

ASSESSMENT OF INFORMATION AND NOTIFICATION OF DECISION

The Agency will assess the information provided. If we require further information we will contact the named person as provided.

If we are satisfied that the information provided meets the above requirements we will write to you to confirm this. We will then publish in the Points Based System guidance, and on our website, details of the tests which are accepted as evidence that the migrant meets the English language requirement. This will include contact details and any fast-track services provided.

If the Agency is not satisfied that the above requirements are met we will write to you setting out the reasons for this. If you wish us to reconsider this decision then please write to us and explain why you consider that the test meets the published requirements and addressing the issues raised in the notification letter.

The Agency reserves the right to contact other authorities in order to verify the information provided to obtain any other information we consider necessary in order to consider your application.

The Agency reserves the right to contact a third party organisation to independently verify and assess your English Language Test.

CHANGE OF CIRCUMSTANCES

Organisations should inform the Agency of any changes to their test that may impact on the acceptability of the test for the Points Based System.

PERIODIC REVIEW

The Agency will undertake periodic reviews of tests that have been accepted as meeting the requirements detailed in this document. We reserve the right to remove tests and organisations from the approved list where it is deemed that they no longer meet the requirements.

ANNEX A

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TESTS

Title of Test	Title of Test
Name of Awarding Body	Name of Awarding Body
Contact details **(for UK Border Agency use only)**	Include: • name of contact in the organisation; • address; • telephone number; • fax number; • email.
Contact details **(for external publication)**	Include: • organisation name; • address; • telephone number; • fax number; • email; • website address.
Equivalency to CEFR	Details of equivalency to the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR) levels A1 to C2.
Components Covered	The test should cover the four language components of listening, speaking, writing and reading.
How often sat	Details of how often the test is sat each year.
Where sat	Details of where (in how many countries) the test is sat.
Details of the qualification	Include the structure and levels of the test.
Special needs	Include whether there are any arrangements for people with special needs (for example, sight or hearing impairment).
Results	Include: • when results are issued; • any different grading of results; • whether the test results are valid for a limited period and, if so, what the validity would be.
Security of test	Details of the security measures in place for the sitting of the test, for example any signatures or photographs taken at test centres, proof of identity requested, test centre room requirements, etc. Also, include details of the relationship between your organisation and test centres, including information of contracts, quality assurance, to ensure that the standard and integrity of the testing process is maintained.
Security of award	This should include minimum requirements of the candidate's name and a unique reference number. Include: • information on how awards are issued to applicants; • details of any security features in test certificates, for example fonts, watermarks, formats of words/numbers, etc.
Verification	Details of any validation process the organisation can already provide or will be able to provide to the UK Border Agency to verify test results. For example, a website verification service or a telephone or email facility where verification can be obtained within a **24 hour** period.
Fast Track Service	Details as to whether the organisation offers a facility for applicants to request the fast-tracking of their test and/or results.

Any additional information should be included as annexes.