



Republic of Türkiye
Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam
University
School of Foreign Languages
Proficiency Exam Policy



PROFICIENCY EXAM POLICY

1. Purpose

The Proficiency Examination is administered to determine whether students have the required English language proficiency to commence their departmental studies. The examination measures whether students have attained the B2 level of proficiency as defined by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, 2020).

The examination is administered twice during the academic year:

- at the beginning of the academic year
- at the midpoint of the academic year.

Students who successfully meet the proficiency requirements are exempt from the Preparatory English Program and are eligible to begin their undergraduate studies in their respective departments. For the second proficiency exam held at the midpoint of the academic year, students who have 70 and above grades from Module 2 are eligible to take the exam.

2. Examination Structure

Session 1: Oral Comprehension (Listening), Reading, Linguistic Competence (Grammar and Vocabulary), and Written Production and Interaction (Writing)

- Scope and order: Oral Comprehension (Listening) (items 1–10; 20 points), Reading (items 11–25; 30 points), Linguistic Competence (Grammar and Vocabulary) (items 26–45; 20 points), and Written Production and Interaction (Writing) (2 tasks; 30 points). Duration: 120 minutes.
- Weighting: 100 points total, contributing 60% of the final proficiency score.
- Progression Criterion: Students must achieve a minimum score of 50 points in Session 1 (Written Examination) to qualify for Session 2 (Speaking Examination). Students scoring below 50 points are deemed unsuccessful and are not admitted to Session 2.

Session 2: Oral Production and Interaction (Speaking)

Scope: Measures communicative competence through face-to-face oral tasks.

- Duration: approximately 8–10 minutes per candidate, including a 1–2-minute unscored warm-up and preparation phase.
- Composition: Speaking 1 (individual presentation) 50 points, Speaking 2 (examiner discussion) 50 points.
- Weighting: 100 points total, contributing 40% of the final proficiency score.
- Evaluation: Conducted using standardized analytical rubrics.

3. Scoring and Passing Criteria

The final proficiency score is calculated by combining the scores obtained in Session 1 and Session 2 according to the institutional weighting approved by the School of Foreign Languages: Final score = (Session 1 score × 0.60) + (Session 2 score × 0.40). Both sessions are scored out of 100.

Students who achieve a final overall score of 70 or above are deemed to have met the institutional English language proficiency requirement and are eligible to register in their academic departments.

Students who do not achieve the required overall score continue their studies in the Preparatory English Program.

4. Assessment Principles

The Proficiency Examination is designed to:

- assess all language skills required at the B2 level;
- align with the learning goals and outcomes of B2 level goals and objectives of the Preparatory English Program;
- ensure fairness, transparency, and consistency in assessment;
- provide reliable and valid evidence of students' language proficiency.

5. Reliability and Validity Measures

To ensure psychometrically sound assessment, the School of Foreign Languages adheres to the following:

Item writing and validity: The purpose of item writing criteria is to ensure that all test items accurately assess the learning outcomes and CEFR B2 descriptors while maintaining appropriate difficulty, clarity, and fairness.

- **Preparation of Test Specifications:** All items are developed according to the approved test specifications and blueprint. The specifications define the skills, level goals, task types, item numbers, and weighting.
- **Validity and Item Writing:** Items are written by instructors of the Measurement and Assessment Unit based on the criteria stated in the Proficiency Exam Item Writing Guideline. Writers use institutional item-writing guidelines that specify: alignment with CEFR B2 descriptors; appropriate language level; clear wording; absence of cultural or linguistic bias; one clearly correct answer (where applicable); authentic texts and contexts.
- **Supporting Materials:** Listening texts, reading passages, writing prompts, and speaking tasks are selected or developed to reflect the intended B2 level and academic context.
- **Item Moderation:** To ensure that every examination version is accurate, fair, and comparable across administrations, after the initial draft is prepared, the examination is reviewed by a moderation committee including a member of the Program and Material Development and the Vice-manager responsible for the Measurement and Assessment Unit. The committee checks:
 - alignment with the test specifications;
 - alignment with CEFR B2 descriptors;
 - coverage of learning outcomes;
 - accuracy of the master answer key;
 - clarity of instructions;
 - appropriateness of timing;
 - consistency of task difficulty;
 - balance of item types;
 - grammatical and typographical accuracy;

After the examination is approved by the Moderation Committee, the final version is formatted; the master answer key and scoring rubrics are verified; and examination materials are securely stored until administration.

Consequently, each item is exposed to three levels of review: (see Appendix 1)

- Item writer self-check (before submission)

- Measurement and Assessment Unit technical review (all items)
- Moderation Committee quality review (sample + critical items)

Reliability: All written and oral assessments are double-marked by independent faculty members, working anonymously from candidate numbers. A third marker is required when the difference between the two independent ratings exceeds 3 points out of 30 for Written Production and Interaction (Writing), or 10 points out of 100 for Session 2. In such cases the final score is the mean of the two closest ratings.

After the examination, to maintain reliability over time:

- item facility (difficulty) is analysed;
- item discrimination indices are reviewed;
- reliability statistics (e.g., Cronbach's alpha) are calculated where appropriate;
- problematic items are discussed by the Measurement and Assessment Unit;
- revisions are made before items are reused.

Standardization: All examiners for Session 2 must undergo an annual training session before the administration to ensure consistent application of the evaluation rubrics. Every Session 2 performance is audio-recorded so that second marking, appeals and examiner standardization can be carried out from the recording.

6. Examination Administration

The examination is administered according to the official academic calendar announced by the School of Foreign Languages.

Candidates must present valid identification before entering the examination.

Candidates are required to comply with all examination regulations. Academic misconduct, including cheating or plagiarism, will be dealt with according to the University's examination regulations. In Session 1, Oral Comprehension (Listening) is administered first and timed centrally, and each listening text is played twice. Candidates record responses to objective items 1–45 on the official answer sheet and complete the two writing tasks in the examination booklet.

7. Announcement of Results

Examination results are announced through the University's official student information system and the institutional website.

Students may submit a written and reasoned appeal to the Directorate of the School of Foreign Languages within five (5) working days of the announcement of results, in accordance with

Article 14 of the KSU School of Foreign Languages Instruction and Examination Directive. Appeals are examined and decided within fifteen (15) working days and the outcome is notified to the student in writing. An appeal may concern the verification of optical reading, the addition of rubric scores and the application of the weighting formula. Where an appeal concerns a rubric-scored task, the script or the Session 2 recording is re-rated by an examiner who did not take part in the original marking. Where a material error is established, the correction is made by the School. The content of test items is not open to challenge.

Absence and deferred sitting: For a candidate who is unable to attend the Proficiency Examination, a deferred examination is not arranged. A candidate absent from Session 2 after qualifying in Session 1 is recorded as absent for the examination as a whole; the Session 1 score is not carried forward to a later administration.

Examiner record: In accordance with Article 14(2) of the KSU School of Foreign Languages Instruction and Examination Directive, an assessment form is completed and signed by the examiners for every candidate in the practical oral examination. The completed and signed Speaking Rubric constitutes that form and is archived with the other assessment records.

8. Examination Security and Data Management

Security: All assessment materials are stored in a secure, locked materials cabinet.

Item bank management: All items are held in the secure institutional item bank with a record of the administration in which each item was used. Items are rotated between administrations so that no candidate meets the same item twice, and no item is reused in two consecutive administrations of the Proficiency Examination. Items identified as weak or poorly functioning in the post-administration analysis are revised or withdrawn before reuse.

Record Storage: Results are recorded in the computer of the Measurement and Assessment Unit and the University's Student Information System (OBS) with restricted administrative access.

The paper-based section of the exam, the Session 2 audio recordings, the completed rubrics and all other assessment files are archived for 5 years in compliance with university quality assurance guidelines.

9. Exemption Policy for External Examinations

Students who provide valid documentation of a score of 75 or above from the YDS (Foreign Language Knowledge Level Determination Exam) or YÖKDİL (Higher Education Institutions Foreign Language Exam), as well as scores from other internationally recognized examinations

with equivalent status as specified in the institutional regulation, are exempt from the proficiency examination and the Preparatory English Program.

The Measurement and Assessment Unit verifies the result, applies the current equivalency table, and prepares a recommendation. The determination and final approval of the exemption are made by the respective Faculty Administrative Board and Departmental Board of the student's enrolled program, in accordance with the Regulation of the School of Foreign Languages. Student Affairs records the exemption only after the relevant board decision.

10. Review of the Policy

This policy is reviewed periodically to ensure continued alignment with institutional learning outcomes, CEFR standards, and quality assurance requirements.

Proficiency Exam Item Writing Guidelines

1. Purpose

These guidelines establish the principles and procedures for developing items for the Proficiency Examination. They aim to ensure that all examination tasks are valid, reliable, fair, and aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) B2 descriptors, the Preparatory English Program learning outcomes, and the approved test specifications.

2. General Principles

All examination items will:

- align with the goals and objectives of B2 level which are consistent with the CEFR (2020) descriptors.
- conform to the approved examination specifications
- use clear, concise, and grammatically accurate language;
- avoid ambiguity and unintended multiple interpretations;
- be free from cultural, gender, religious, political, or socioeconomic bias;
- assess language ability rather than general knowledge;
- represent authentic language use where appropriate.

3. Alignment Requirements

Each item must be linked to:

- Skill area
- Learning outcome(s)
- CEFR B2 descriptor(s)
- Task type
- Correct answer or scoring criteria

4. Item Writing Standards

4.1 Linguistic Competence (Grammar and Vocabulary)

The Linguistic Competence (Grammar and Vocabulary) component assesses candidates' knowledge and control of vocabulary and grammatical structures required for effective communication at the CEFR B2 level. Through multiple-choice tasks, candidates demonstrate their ability to recognize and select appropriate language forms in meaningful contexts.

Candidates are expected to demonstrate the following abilities:

1. Lexical Range and Appropriacy

LC1 Recognize and select appropriate vocabulary to express meaning accurately in a range of general, academic, and everyday contexts.

LC2 Understand the meaning and use of words, phrases, and expressions appropriate to the B2 level.

2. Grammatical Range and Accuracy

LC3 Recognize and select accurate grammatical structures in context.

LC4 Demonstrate understanding of a range of grammatical forms, including complex sentence structures, appropriate tense and aspect use, modality, conditionals, passive structures, and other B2-level grammatical features.

All linguistic competence items should:

- assess language use in meaningful contexts rather than isolated rule knowledge whenever possible;
- align with the CEFR B2 descriptors and the Proficiency Examination Specifications;
- include one clearly correct answer and plausible distractors;
- be reviewed through the item moderation process;
- be mapped to the relevant learning outcome(s) in the test blueprint.

Items should also :

- assess language use in meaningful contexts;
- avoid isolated grammar questions whenever possible;
- include only one indisputably correct answer;
- ensure distractors are plausible and grammatically appropriate;
- avoid clues that reveal the correct answer.

4.2 Reading

Reading texts should:

- represent authentic or authentic-like academic and everyday materials;
- be appropriate for CEFR B2 level
- contain sufficient information for answering all questions;
- avoid unnecessary linguistic complexity unrelated to the construct being assessed.

Reading questions should assess skills which are in alignment with B2 level reading objectives:

- R1 Identify the main idea of a text
- R2 Identify supporting details
- R3 Infer the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary from context
- R4 Identify the writer's purpose or attitude
- R5 Make logical inferences
- R6 Distinguish between fact and opinion
- R7 Identify reference words and cohesive devices
- R8 Understand organizational patterns

4.3 Oral Comprehension (Listening)

Oral comprehension materials should:

- reflect natural spoken English;
- include a variety of speakers where appropriate;
- have clear audio quality;
- contain authentic speech rate suitable for B2 learners.

Oral comprehension questions should assess:

- L1 Identify the main idea of a spoken text.
- L2 Identify specific factual information.
- L3 Understand supporting details.
- L4 Infer the speaker's attitude, opinion, or purpose.
- L5 Draw logical conclusions based on the information heard.
- L6 Infer the meaning of unfamiliar words or expressions from context.
- L7 Follow extended discussions, lectures, or conversations on familiar topics.
- L8 Identify relationships between ideas and supporting evidence.

4.4 Written Production and Interaction (Writing)

Written tasks shall be designed to assess candidates' ability to produce and interact through written communication at the CEFR B2 level. Task developers shall ensure that each writing task aligns with one or more of the approved learning outcomes and provides candidates with sufficient opportunity to demonstrate their language proficiency.

Written Production and Interaction (Writing) questions should assess:

W1 Produce clear, detailed, and well-organized descriptions of real or imaginary events, experiences, situations, or processes using appropriate genre conventions;

W2 Develop coherent and well-supported arguments in essays, reports, or other extended texts by presenting significant points and relevant supporting evidence;

W3 Evaluate different viewpoints or solutions to a problem by discussing advantages and disadvantages and synthesizing information from one or more sources where appropriate;

W4 Compose personal and professional correspondence that communicates information, opinions, requests, or emotions clearly and appropriately;

W5 Select an appropriate register, level of formality, and organizational conventions according to the communicative purpose, audience, and context;

W6 Request, provide, summarize, and forward information effectively while responding appropriately to the ideas or requests of others, including asking for clarification or elaboration when necessary.

All writing tasks will:

- align with the Proficiency Examination Specifications and the CEFR B2 descriptors;
- specify the communicative purpose, audience, and context;
- provide clear task instructions and expected word limits;
- be assessed using the institutional analytic writing rubric;
- be mapped to the relevant learning outcome(s) in the Item Submission Form.

4.5 Oral Production and Interaction (Speaking)

The Oral Production and Interaction (Speaking) component assesses candidates' ability to communicate effectively in spoken English at the CEFR B2 level. Candidates are expected to demonstrate the following abilities:

1. Extended Spoken Communication

OP1 Produce clear, detailed, and well-organized spoken texts on familiar, academic, or professional topics.

OP2 Describe experiences, events, and processes with appropriate detail, fluency, and grammatical control.

2. Argumentation and Presentation Skills

OP3 Present and develop opinions with supporting reasons and examples.

OP4 Explain viewpoints, compare alternatives, and discuss advantages and disadvantages.

OP5 Deliver structured presentations and respond appropriately to follow-up questions.

3. Interactive Communication and Negotiation

OP6 Participate actively in extended conversations and discussions.

OP7 Maintain interaction through effective turn-taking, questioning, clarification, and response strategies.

OP8 Express agreement, disagreement, reservations, and conditions in an appropriate manner.

4. Communicative Appropriateness and Fluency

OP9 Adapt language, register, and tone according to the context and purpose.

OP10 Express attitudes, emotions, and personal significance appropriately.

OP11 Communicate information accurately and effectively in academic and professional situations.

Speaking performances will be assessed using the institutional analytic speaking rubric.

5. Technical Requirements

Item writers shall ensure that:

- instructions are clear and concise;
- numbering is accurate;
- formatting is consistent;
- the single master answer key is complete and accurate;
- scoring rubrics are attached where required.