



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



PLACEMENT EXAM POLICY AND ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish standard, fair, and transparent procedures for the design, administration, scoring, and level placement of students participating in the Compulsory and Voluntary English Preparatory Programs at Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam University School of Foreign Languages (KSU SFL).

This policy applies to all newly enrolled undergraduate students, Measurement and Assessment Unit personnel, academic invigilators, and administrative staff involved in the preparatory program placement process.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND GOVERNANCE

The Placement Exam is designed in strict alignment with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, 2020) across levels A2 to B1+.

Authority and Responsibilities:

- **The Measurement and Assessment Unit (MAU):** Responsible for item writing, test assembly, security, optical scoring, writing evaluation management, and statistical item analysis.
- **Invigilators:** Responsible for maintaining exam security, verifying student identities, and enforcing room rules.
- **Student Information System (SIS) Unit:** Responsible for official roster synchronization and final placement publishing.

EXAM STRUCTURE AND DURATION

The Placement Exam consists of two mandatory sections totaling 100 points:

- Section 1: Receptive Skills and Language Competence (70 points; **90 minutes**)

1. Linguistic Competence: 26 Multiple-Choice Items (26 points)

2. Reading Comprehension: 23 Multiple-Choice Items across 5 texts (23 points)
3. Oral Comprehension: 21 Multiple-Choice Items across 5 audio tracks (21 points)

- Section 2: Written Production (30 points; 40 minutes)
 1. A2 Task: Guided Sentence Mechanics (5 points)
 2. B1 Task: Short Functional Message/Email (50-70 words; 5 points)
 3. B1+ Task: Academic Opinion Essay (150-200 words; 20 points)

Total examination time: 130 minutes (Section 1: 90 minutes + Section 2: 40 minutes), administered in a single continuous session. Section 1 answer papers are collected before Section 2 booklets are distributed.

All Section 1 items are selected-response items and are recorded on an optical answer sheet. No constructed-response format (note-taking, sentence completion, short answer) may be used in Section 1, since the section is optically scored.

All five listening tracks are delivered from a single master audio file containing the instructions, the pauses and the playback sequence; A2 and B1 tracks are played twice and the B1+ track once.

No candidate may leave the examination room for the first 30 minutes or the last 10 minutes of the session.

Late admission: A candidate who arrives after the start of the session may be admitted within the first 30 minutes and is given no additional time. No candidate is admitted after the first 30 minutes; the make-up provisions of this Policy apply.

Early departure: Section 1 and Section 2 constitute a single continuous session. A candidate who completes Section 1 early may not leave the room. A candidate who completes Section 2 may leave once Section 2 has begun and before the final 10 minutes of the session, leaving all examination materials on the desk.

COMPULSORY PARTICIPATION AND ABSENTEEISM

Taking the Placement Exam is mandatory for all newly admitted students in the English Preparatory Program. No pre-registration is required; students are expected to attend on the scheduled date as announced by the School of Foreign Languages. Students who do not sit the Placement Exam are automatically placed into the lowest instructional module (A1 Level). The sole exception applies to students whose absence is supported by an official medical or institutional excuse accepted by the SFL Board. Make-up examinations are granted only under extraordinary circumstances, such as documented medical emergencies or official force

majeure, and require the approval of the SFL Executive Board. Requests must be submitted within two (2) working days following the date of the exam.

PLACEMENT CUT-OFF SCORES AND PLACEMENT WORKFLOW

Student placement into instructional modules is strictly determined by the final overall score (100-point scale) using the following standardized cut-off thresholds:

Overall Score Range	Placed Module	Target Competency Description
0 - 34 Points	A1 Module	Demonstrates insufficient control over basic A2 structures; requires foundational literacy and grammar instruction.
35 - 57 Points	A2 Module	Successfully handles basic A2 daily routines and sentence mechanics; ready for pre-intermediate study.
58 - 81 Points	B1 Module	Demonstrates control over routine grammar, factual texts, and short messaging; ready for intermediate study.
82 - 100 Points	B1+ Module	Demonstrates strong control over complex discourse and structured academic writing; ready for upper-intermediate study.

Placement in the A1 Module is a floor decision, not a measured CEFR level. The Placement Exam samples the A2, B1 and B1+ levels only; a total score below 35 indicates that the candidate did not demonstrate control of the A2 material sampled, rather than that A1 competence has been measured. Candidates who do not sit the examination are likewise placed at A1 as a floor decision.

DERIVATION AND VALIDATION OF THE CUT-OFF SCORES

1. Derivation. The thresholds in the table above were established by the Measurement and Assessment Unit on the basis of the instructional structure of the English Preparatory Program, so that each of the four instructional modules corresponds to a distinct band of the 100-point scale. The bands take account of the level-based weighting of the examination, in which A2 material carries 30 points (Section 1: 25 + Section 2: 5), B1 material 33 points (28 + 5) and B1+ material 37 points (17 + 20). The thresholds applied in the first administration were not derived from a panel-based standard-setting procedure; they are provisional and are subject to the validation programme described below.

2. Validation programme. The thresholds are validated in two stages, following the linking process described in the Council of Europe Manual, Relating Language Examinations to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2009). Stage 1 is an empirical check by contrasting groups, carried out after each administration on the basis of instructor judgements collected at the end of Week 2 of instruction. Stage 2 is a panel-based standard-

setting exercise using a modified Angoff procedure, carried out before the following administration by a panel of at least eight trained instructors. The two estimates are compared for each boundary, and where they differ by more than 5 points the Unit reports both figures with a reasoned proposal.

The detailed procedure for both stages, the analysis and reporting requirements, the records to be archived and the instruments used (Form A-1 instructor judgement form, Form A-2 panellist rating sheet, Form A-3 computation summary and Form A-4 panel decision minutes) are set out in Annex A to this Policy, Cut-Score Validation Protocol. In the event of any inconsistency between this section and Annex A, Annex A prevails.

3. Decision and review. The Measurement and Assessment Unit prepares the recommendation; the SFL Academic Board approves or rejects any change to the cut-off scores. The scores are reviewed annually in the light of the evidence produced by the two stages, the item analysis for the administration and the record of level changes. An approved change takes effect from the following academic year. Thresholds are never altered after an examination has been administered, and never in order to fill available class capacity; where capacity is the constraint, that is an administrative decision of the SFL Directorate and is recorded as such.

The placement process proceeds through three stages:

- ✔ **Administration:** Conducted on-site under standardized conditions overseen by the Measurement and Assessment Unit.
- ✔ **Scoring and Evaluation:** Section 1 is optically evaluated. In Section 2, the A2 guided sentence mechanics task (5 items × 1 point) is scored objectively against an answer key; the B1 and B1+ tasks are scored with the official SFL Written Production Rubric for the Placement Exam. The B1+ essay is additionally double-marked (see Scoring Reliability).
- ✔ **Determination and Notification:** Placement levels are calculated automatically, submitted to the SFL Directorate, and published via the Student Information System (SIS) and official university website.

SCORING RELIABILITY AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF RESULTS

The 20-point B1+ essay is evaluated independently by two trained raters, working anonymously from candidate numbers, using the official SFL Written Production Rubric for the Placement Exam. The A2 task is scored against an answer key and the B1 task is scored by a single trained rater; neither is double-marked. A third trained rater rates the B1+ essay independently when EITHER (a) the difference between the two ratings exceeds 3 points out of 20, OR (b) the two ratings would place the candidate in different instructional modules, that is, the candidate's overall score crosses a cut-off boundary (34/35, 57/58 or 81/82) depending on which rating is used, however small the difference. In both cases the final score for the task is the mean of the

two closest ratings. The 3-point threshold is reviewed after each administration against the observed inter-rater agreement statistics.

Students may submit a written and reasoned appeal to the Directorate of the School of Foreign Languages within five (5) working days following the official 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. Appeals are limited to the verification of optical reading and an administrative re-check of the addition of writing rubric scores. The content of test items is not open to challenge.

Candidates who do not sit the Placement Exam: In accordance with Article 12(2) of the KSU School of Foreign Languages Instruction and Examination Directive, a newly enrolled student who does not sit the Placement Exam is placed directly in the entry-level module. This is an administrative consequence of non-attendance and not a measured level. Such a student may request a review under the Post-Placement Level Adjustment Workflow below.

Announcement of the score ranges: In accordance with Article 12(3) of the Directive, the score ranges showing the module to which candidates will be placed are announced to students through the School website at the beginning of the academic year and before the date of the examination.

POST-PLACEMENT LEVEL ADJUSTMENT WORKFLOW

Because the Placement Exam assesses reading, oral comprehension, linguistic competence, and written production in a paper-based format, institutional speaking and diagnostic controls are embedded in the first two weeks of instruction.

Within the first two (2) weeks of the academic semester, a student's placed level may be adjusted, either upward or downward, through one of two formal paths. The first is student petition: The student submits a formal written request for level re-evaluation to SFL Student Services, after which the Measurement and Assessment Unit and the Academic Board review the student's exam performance and initial coursework. The second is faculty recommendation: A level change may be initiated on the joint recommendation of the student's academic advisor and all instructors currently teaching the student, provided that recommendation is unanimous.

All level adjustment requests, whether initiated by student petition or by faculty recommendation, must be finalized and approved by the SFL Academic Board before the end of Week 2. No level transfers will be permitted after the second week of the semester.

Procedure and documentation. A faculty-initiated request is submitted on the Misplacement Recommendation Form; a student-initiated request is submitted as a written petition. In either case the Measurement and Assessment Unit reviews the student's placement performance and initial coursework and may, where the evidence is inconclusive, administer an additional diagnostic assessment or conduct a short interview before making a recommendation to the SFL Academic Board. All decisions are documented and communicated to the student in writing.

Annual analysis. The Measurement and Assessment Unit analyses misplacement cases annually — their number, direction and distribution across the three cut-off boundaries — to evaluate the effectiveness of the placement system. The findings feed into the annual review of the cut-off scores described above.

EXAMINATION SECURITY, RATER STANDARDIZATION AND RECORD MANAGEMENT

Security of materials. Access to examination materials is restricted to members of the Measurement and Assessment Unit. Electronic files are stored in password-protected institutional systems and printed materials are kept in locked cabinets until administration. All personnel with access to examination materials sign a confidentiality undertaking.

Administration security. Student identities are verified before entry to the examination room. Invigilators receive written instructions covering examination procedures and academic integrity. All examination papers are collected immediately after testing, and unused materials are securely destroyed according to institutional procedures.

Item bank. The item bank is reviewed periodically and items are rotated between administrations to minimise overexposure. Items identified as weak or poorly functioning in the post-administration analysis are revised or withdrawn before reuse.

Rater standardization. Before each administration, all raters of the B1 and B1+ written production tasks attend a norming session in which benchmark scripts are rated and discussed. A moderation meeting is held after marking to review borderline and third-rated scripts. Minutes of both meetings are archived as evidence of inter-rater consistency.

Records and retention. Results are recorded in the University's Student Information System and on institutional servers with restricted administrative access, and are backed up regularly in accordance with the University's Information Security and Data Protection Policy. Examination papers, completed rubrics and marking records, the master audio file, item analysis reports and standard-setting records are archived for 5 years in compliance with university quality assurance guidelines.

ENFORCEMENT AND VALIDITY

This policy takes effect on the date of its approval by the Administrative Board of the School of Foreign Languages, Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam University. Its execution and enforcement are the responsibility of the Director of the School of Foreign Languages.

PLACEMENT EXAM RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

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 (A2, B1 and B1+) 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 Placement Exam Item Writing Guideline. Writers use institutional item-writing guidelines that specify: alignment with CEFR descriptors; appropriate language level; clear wording; absence of cultural or linguistic bias; one clearly correct answer (where applicable); authentic texts and contexts. The Placement Exam Item Writing Guideline is issued as a separate annex to this Policy and is approved by the Administrative Board of the School of Foreign Languages; no item may be submitted for moderation before the Guideline in force has been applied.
- **Supporting Materials:** Listening texts, reading passages, linguistic competence contexts and writing prompts, are selected or developed to reflect the intended CEFR 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 descriptors;
 - coverage of learning outcomes;
 - accuracy of answer keys;
 - 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; answer keys and scoring rubrics are verified; and examination materials are securely stored until administration.

Consequently, each item is exposed to three levels of review

- Item writer self-check (before submission)
- Measurement and Assessment Unit technical review (all items)
- Moderation Committee quality review (sample + critical items)

Reliability: The B1+ written production task is double-marked by independent faculty members working anonymously. Discrepancies exceeding the threshold defined under Scoring Reliability trigger a third rating, and the final score is the mean of the two closest ratings.

After the examination, to maintain reliability over time:

- item facility (difficulty) is analyzed;
- item discrimination indices are reviewed;
- reliability statistics (Cronbach's alpha or KR-20) are calculated after each administration;
- problematic items are discussed by the Measurement and Assessment Unit;
- revisions are made before items are reused.

The Codes of the Skills Derived from the Goals of the Syllabi (A2, B1, B1+)

Oral Comprehension	A2 Level • L-A2.1: Understand the gist and key details of slow, clear conversations and interviews • L-A2.2: Extract essential information from clear, straightforward spoken directives B1 Level • L-B1.1: Follow the main points of extended discussions on familiar topics in standard language • L-B1.2: Understand straightforward factual information and specific details on everyday or job-related topics B1+ Level • L-B1P.1: Follow the main points of extended discussions, identifying general and specific details • L-B1P.2: Distinguish between main ideas and supporting details in standard lectures on familiar subjects
Reading	A2 Level • R-A2.1: Understand descriptions of people, places, and everyday life in simple texts • R-A2.2: Locate and extract specific, predictable information from everyday materials B1 Level • R-B1.1: Scan longer texts to locate and gather desired information to fulfill specific tasks • R-B1.2: Recognize significant points in straightforward news articles and factual texts on familiar subjects B1+ Level • R-B1P.1: Gather information from different parts of a text or multiple texts to fulfill a specific task • R-B1P.2: Understand short texts presenting differing points of view on familiar or current topics
Linguistic Competence	A2 Level

	• LC-A2.1: Use brief, everyday expressions and basic sentence patterns • LC-A2.2: Use simple structures correctly despite systematic basic mistakes B1 Level • LC-B1.1: Express oneself with sufficient vocabulary and circumlocutions on everyday and familiar topics • LC-B1.2: Use reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used routines and patterns B1+ Level • LC-B1P.1: Have sufficient language range to describe unpredictable situations and explain main points with reasonable precision • LC-B1P.2: Communicate with reasonable accuracy in familiar contexts with good overall control
Written Production	A2 Level • W-A2.1: Manage daily logistics and respond to inquiries through short-form text and messaging • W-A2.2: Provide necessary data in standardized written formats • W-A2.3: Construct grammatically accurate simple and compound sentences using basic connectors (sentence-level mechanics) B1 Level • W-B1.1: Produce straightforward connected texts by linking shorter discrete elements into a linear sequence • W-B1.2: Write short, simple essays on topics of interest presenting personal opinions with simple reasoning B1+ Level • W-B1P.1: Produce straightforward connected texts on a range of familiar subjects within a field of interest • W-B1P.2: Summarize, report, and give opinions about accumulated factual information on routine and non-routine matters

Placement Examination Item Submission Checklist

A. Item Identification

- **Exam Component:**
 - ☐ Linguistic Competence
 - ☐ Reading
 - ☐ Oral Comprehension (Listening)
 - ☐ Written Production (Writing)
- **Skill Code(s):**
 - ☐ LC-A2.1 ☐ LC-A2.2 ☐ LC-B1.1 ☐ LC-B1.2 ☐ LC-B1P.1 ☐ LC-B1P.2
 - ☐ R-A2.1 ☐ R-A2.2 ☐ R-B1.1 ☐ R-B1.2 ☐ R-B1P.1 ☐ R-B1P.2
 - ☐ L-A2.1 ☐ L-A2.2 ☐ L-B1.1 ☐ L-B1.2 ☐ L-B1P.1 ☐ L-B1P.2
 - ☐ W-A2.1 ☐ W-A2.2 ☐ W-B1.1 ☐ W-B1.2 ☐ W-B1P.1 ☐ W-B1P.2 ☐ W-A2.3
- **Specific Learning Outcome Code(s):** _____
- **CEFR Level / Descriptor(s) (A2, B1, B1+):** _____
- **Task Type / Format:** _____
- **Item Writer:** _____
- **Date Submitted:** _____

B. Item Writer Self-Review Checklist

Item Writer Self-Review Criteria	Check Yes	Check No	Notes
Item is linked to an appropriate CEFR A2, B1, or B1+ descriptor	☐	☐	
Item is linked to an approved placement learning outcome	☐	☐	
Item follows the approved placement test specification	☐	☐	
Item assesses the intended language skill/construct	☐	☐	
Language is clear, accurate, and appropriate for the target level	☐	☐	
Item instructions are clear and concise	☐	☐	
Item does not require specific background knowledge	☐	☐	
Item represents authentic or appropriate language use	☐	☐	

Item Writer Self-Review Criteria	Check Yes	Check No	Notes
Correct answer/scoring criteria are provided	☐	☐	
Bias and fairness issues have been considered	☐	☐	

C. Additional Checks for Selected Item Types

For Multiple-Choice Items

Multiple-Choice Criteria	Check Yes	Check No
Only one answer is clearly correct	☐	☐
Distractors are plausible and grammatically appropriate	☐	☐
No clues reveal the correct answer	☐	☐

For Writing Tasks

Writing Task Criteria	Check Yes	Check No
Communicative purpose is clearly stated	☐	☐
Audience/context is specified	☐	☐
Word limit and instructions are provided	☐	☐
Task can be assessed using the institutional analytical writing rubric	☐	☐

D. Measurement and Assessment Unit Verification

Measurement and Assessment Unit Criterion	Approved	Revision Required
CEFR level and learning outcome alignment verified	☐	☐
Test specification compliance verified	☐	☐
Language accuracy checked	☐	☐
Answer key / scoring criteria verified	☐	☐
Formatting and technical requirements verified	☐	☐

- **Measurement and Assessment Unit Reviewer:** _____

- **Date:** _____

E. Moderation Committee Decision

- ☐ Approved
- ☐ Approved after minor revision
- ☐ Returned to item writer for revision
- ☐ Rejected

Committee Comments:

- **Moderator:** _____
- **Date:** _____