



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



KSU School of Foreign Language applies a standardized placement procedure designed to assess incoming students' linguistic competence in alignment with the CEFR (2020) proficiency levels. This process ensures that students are placed in an environment that optimally facilitates their language acquisition. At the beginning of each academic year, all newly enrolled students of Compulsory and Voluntary English Preparatory Programs are required to take the School of Foreign Languages Placement Test before the start of instruction. The placement exam consists of two sections:

- Section 1: A paper-based selected-response (optically scorable) block administered in this order: Oral Comprehension (Listening), Reading, and Linguistic Competence (Grammar and Vocabulary) (90 minutes).
- Section 2: A performance-based writing assessment (40 minutes).

1. The Placement Workflow

Pre-registration: Because the Placement Exam is compulsory, students are not required to pre-register. The Measurement and Assessment Unit (MAU) manages administration, scoring, analysis and the preparation of technical recommendations. The School of Foreign Languages Administrative Board (Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu Yönetim Kurulu; SFL Administrative Board) decides exceptional make-up requests, cut-score changes and post-placement level adjustments. Notification is handled by the MAU and the Student Information System (SIS), with results also posted on the School website.

2. Cut Off Scores of the Placement Exam

CEFR Level	Score Range	Placement / Institutional Outcome	Target Student Profile
A1	$0 \leq \text{score} < 30$	A1 Level Module	Demonstrates insufficient mastery of A2 entry items; requires foundational grammar, vocabulary, and basic literacy skills.
A2	$30 \leq \text{score} < 58$	A2 Level Module	Successfully handles basic A2 daily transactions and sentence mechanics; ready for pre-intermediate instruction.
B1	$58 \leq \text{score} < 82$	B1 Level Module	Shows clear control over routine grammar, factual reading/listening, and short functional messaging; ready for intermediate study.
B1+	$82 \leq \text{score} \leq 100$	B1+ Level Module	Demonstrates strong control over complex discourse structures and can construct a multi-paragraph academic essay; 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; an exact total below 30 indicates that the candidate did not demonstrate control of the A2 material sampled, rather than that A1 competence has been measured. No component score, normalized writing score or rater average is rounded during calculation. The exact overall total is used for placement; only after the module is determined is the result displayed to two decimal places. The operational bands are $0 \leq \text{score} < 30$ (A1), $30 \leq \text{score} < 58$ (A2), $58 \leq \text{score} < 82$ (B1), and $82 \leq \text{score} \leq 100$ (B1+). Candidates who do not sit the examination are placed at A1 as a floor decision unless the SFL Administrative Board accepts a documented excuse and authorizes a make-up Placement Exam under the Placement Exam Policy. The Placement Exam does not produce a pass-fail decision. The institutional 70% course-passing criterion is not applied mechanically to the placement total; an exact score of 70 is placed in the B1 Module under the current bands. Level-block performance may be reviewed descriptively during validation but does not automatically replace the total-score decision.

The derivation of these thresholds and the programme for validating them (contrasting-groups validation in the first administration, followed by a modified Angoff panel before the next administration) are set out in the Placement Exam Policy, section “Derivation and Validation of the Cut-Off Scores”.

3. Sectional Level-based Distribution of the Placement Exam

Level Points by CEFR Level

CEFR Level	% of Section 1	Number of questions	Total points
A2	34.3	24	24
B1	41.4	29	29
B1+	24.3	17	17
TOTAL	100	70	70

The percentages in this table are proportions of the 70 points of Section 1. The “Level Weight” column in the table below expresses the same levels as proportions of the total 100 points, in which A2 material carries 30 points, B1 material 33 points and B1+ material 37 points across Sections 1 and 2. The two sets of figures use different bases and are not in conflict. Section 2 (Written Production, 30 points) comprises an A2 task of 5 points, a B1 task of 5 points and a B1+ opinion essay of 20 points.

3.1. Receptive Skills & Linguistic Competence (70 points; 70% weighting, not a pass mark)

CEFR Level	Oral Comprehension (Listening)	Reading	Linguistic Competence (Grammar and Vocabulary)	Section 1 Subtotal	Level Weight
A2 Level	6 items (6 pts / 1 audio file, 2 listening texts) / (two short conversations)	8 items (8 pts / 2 texts) (e.g., emails, notices, scanning data)	10 items (1 pt. each) (e.g., tenses, basic linkers, concrete vocabulary)	24 points	24%
B1 Level	10 items (10 pts / 2 audio files) / (extended interviews and talks)	9 items (9 pts / 2 texts) (e.g., feature articles & narratives)	10 items (1 pt. each) (e.g., perfect tenses, relative clauses, phrasal verbs)	29 points	29%
B1+ Level	5 items (5 pts / 1 audio file) / (formal talk and stance analysis)	6 items (6 pts / 1 text) (e.g., opinion/editorial & sentence insertion)	6 items (1 pt. each) (e.g., complex discourse markers & abstract vocab)	17 points	17%
SECTION 1 TOTALS	21 items (21 pts)	23 items (23 pts)	26 items (26 pts)	70 points	70%

Level Difficulty Parameters

The CEFR (2020) provides no separate B1+ illustrative scale for Reading or for Written Production; the module syllabi therefore use the general B1 scales at B1+ level, as recorded in the syllabus footnote. For these two skills the distinction between a B1 item and a B1+ item is made through the text and task parameters below rather than through a different outcome code. Where a separate B1+ scale does exist — Oral comprehension, General Linguistic Range and Grammatical Accuracy — the outcome code itself carries the distinction, and the parameters below apply in addition.

Parameter	B1 item / task	B1+ item / task
Oral Comprehension (Listening) input	Short talk, announcement or simple recorded material; delivered relatively slowly and clearly.	Extended discussion or standard lecture at natural pace in clear standard language.
Oral Comprehension (Listening) task	Identify the main point; retrieve a specific factual detail.	Distinguish main ideas from supporting details; infer the speaker's attitude or purpose.
Reading text	200–300 words; one factual or informational text; concrete, familiar topic.	300–400 words, or two short linked texts; the writer states a point of view (opinion column, forum contribution, letter to the editor); topic may be semi-abstract or topical.
Reading task	Locate stated information; identify the main idea of a paragraph; resolve reference; understand straightforward instructions.	Identify the writer's viewpoint; distinguish fact from opinion; combine information from separate parts of the text or from two texts; sentence insertion and text organisation.
Linguistic Competence (Grammar and Vocabulary)	High-frequency everyday vocabulary and simple structures in concrete, routine contexts.	Vocabulary for less routine and unpredictable situations and for abstract or cultural topics; more complex structures.
Written Production and Interaction (Writing)	50–70 words; single-paragraph functional message; pass on factual information and give simple reasons.	150–200 words; multi-paragraph essay; state a position, support it with reasons and examples, and summarise or report information.

Item writers record the parameters used for each item on the Item Submission Checklist. The Moderation Committee checks the level claim of every B1+ item against this table.

3.2. Written Production and Interaction (Writing) (30% of the total grade of 100)

CEFR Level	Written Production Task Type	Word Count / Format	Section 2 Points	Level Weight
A2 Level	Guided sentence mechanics	Discrete / sentence-level items	5 points	5%
	(e.g., combining ideas, reordering, gap-fills)	(e.g., no paragraph)		
B1 Level	Short functional message / email	50–70 words short response	5 points	5%
	(e.g., passing on factual info & simple reasons)	(e.g., no formal essay)		
B1+ Level	Academic opinion essay (e.g., structured multi-paragraph reasoning)	150–200 words opinion essay	20 points	20%
SECTION 2 TOTALS	3 tasks	—	30 points	30%

4. Placement Exam Question Distributions and Types

Note: All Section 1 items are selected-response and optically scorable; no constructed-response format is used in Section 1. Every item carries a skill code from the Placement Exam Policy (L-, R-, LC-, W- codes), recorded in the Item Specification Grid. A2 written production is coded W-A2.3 (sentence-level mechanics), added to the Policy code list. The component consists of 4 parts and 21 items, delivered through 4 audio files. Part 1 contains two short conversations; therefore, the examination includes 5 listening texts in total. All 4 audio files, including Part 4 (Track 105), are played twice. The audio sequence is delivered from a single master audio file.

4.1. Section 1 (Duration: 90 minutes; 70 points; 70% weighting, not a pass mark)

4.1.1. 1. Oral Comprehension (Listening) (Questions 1-21; 21 points / 21 items)

Level / Section	Target Syllabus Objectives Mapped	Question / Task Type	Numbers of Questions & Sample Focus / Formats
A2 Level / (6 points)	- Social eavesdropping: Understand gist and key details of slow, clear conversations. - Informational and instructional listening: Extract essential info from directives.	- Short dialogue MCQs (3-option multiple choice) - Multiple matching: Identifying speakers or main locations from short announcements	Audio file 1: two short conversations (3 + 3 items) / 3-option MCQs (main topic, feelings, intentions and specific details)
B1 Level / (10 points)	- Social eavesdropping: Follow main points of extended discussion around familiar topics. - Extracting essential information: Understand news bulletins and simple recorded media.	- Multiple-choice (4-option) on an extended interview or discussion 4-option MCQs based on a short radio bulletin or talk	Audio file 2: extended interview/talk (5 items) Multiple matching / short MCQs (following simple directives, primary focus identification) Audio file 3: extended interview/talk (5 items) / 4-option MCQs (main points, attitudes, feelings, intentions and specific facts)
B1+ Level (5 points)	- Audience comprehension of talks: Distinguish main ideas from supporting details in standard lectures. - Audio media extraction: Understand broadcast content on abstract or current topics.	- MCQs on a short academic lecture or presentation - Speaker stance / opinion matching	Audio file 4: formal talk (5 items) / 4-option MCQs (main ideas, supporting details, abstract arguments and speaker stance)

4.1.2. 2. Reading (Questions 22-44; 23 points / 23 items)

Level / Section	Target Syllabus Objectives Mapped	Question / Task Type	Numbers of Questions & Sample Focus / Formats
A2 Level (8 points)	- Orientation and scanning for data: Locate and extract specific, predictable information. - Reading for Gist: Understand main info in promotional/commercial material.	- Matching notices / short messages to statements - True/False/Not Given or short MCQs based on brief practical texts (e.g., schedules, promotional flyers)	Text 1: Short practical message / email (4 items) - Matching & short MCQs (scanning for time, place, contact details, gist) Text 2: Simple public notice / info text (4 items) - T/F/NG or short MCQs (identifying safety rules, directives, vocabulary in context)
B1 Level (9 points)	- Reading for information and argument: Recognize significant points in news/factual texts. - Orientation and scanning: Gather info from different parts of a text.	4-Option MCQs following a 300–400-word factual article - Paragraph-to-Heading; Main Idea Matching	Text 3: Factual / feature article (300–400 words) (5 items) 4-option MCQs (identifying main ideas, scanning across paragraphs, author's attitude) Text 4: Narrative / sequential text (4 items) Paragraph-to-heading / main idea matching & chronological sequence
B1+ Level (6 points)	- Reading for information and argument: Understand short texts where writers express specific points of view. - Scanning Data: Gather information across multiple complex parts of a text.	- MCQs and stance/opinion identification on an opinion/editorial piece - Gapped text / sentence insertion	Text 5: Opinion / editorial / forum discussion (6 items) - Stance/opinion identification MCQs (distinguishing main arguments from supporting details) - Gapped text / sentence insertion items testing structural cohesion

4.1.3. 3. Linguistic Competence (Grammar and Vocabulary) (Questions 45-70; 26 points / 26 items)

Level / Section	Target Syllabus Objectives Mapped	Question / Task Type	Numbers of Questions & Sample Focus / Formats
A2 Level (10 points)	- Grammatical accuracy: Use simple structures correctly. - Vocabulary range and control: Narrow repertoire dealing with concrete, everyday needs.	- Multiple-choice cloze / sentence completion (grammar: basic tenses, connectors like and, but, because) - Vocabulary matching / gap fill (high-frequency concrete words for daily transactions)	10 Multiple-Choice Items (1 pt each) - Sentence completion items on present/past simple, basic linkers (and, but, because, so), prepositions, basic modals (can, must, have to) - Vocabulary gap fills/matching on everyday concrete topics (hobbies, routines, shopping)
B1 Level (10 points)	- Grammatical accuracy: Reasonably accurate pattern routines in predictable situations. - Vocabulary control: Sufficient vocabulary with circumlocutions on pertinent topics.	- Contextual multiple-choice gap fill (conditionals, present perfect, relative clauses) - Collocation and phrasal verb MCQs (Everyday work/leisure vocabulary)	10 Multiple-Choice Items (1 pt each) - Contextual gap fills on Present Perfect vs. Past Simple, Conditionals (1st/2nd), relative clauses, and passive voice - Collocation & phrasal verb items on topic vocabulary (work, education, travel, tech)
B1+ Level (6 points)	- General linguistic range: Repertoire to describe less routine/unpredictable situations and abstract topics. - Grammatical accuracy: Communication with reasonable accuracy in broader contexts.	- Advanced multiple-choice cloze (discourse markers, contrastive linkers like despite, whereas) - Precision vocabulary / register selection (abstract/cultural context terms)	6 Multiple-Choice Items (1 pt each) - Advanced cloze items testing complex linkers (despite, whereas, consequently) and advanced verb patterns - Precision vocabulary selection for abstract, cultural, and academic collocations

4.2. Section 2 (Duration: 40 minutes; 30% of the total grade of 100)

4.2.1. 4. Written Production and Interaction (Writing)

Level / Section	Target Syllabus Objectives Mapped	Question / Task Type	Task Prompt & Formatting Specifications
A2 Writing Task (5 points)	- Guided sentence mechanics: Construct grammatically correct simple and compound sentences using basic connectors (and, but, because, so). - Practical communication: Respond to short contextual prompts with accurate word order and punctuation.	Guided sentence building / sentence transformation task	Guided sentence construction tasks (5 items x 1 pt) Complete 5 guided sentence-level tasks (e.g., combining simple ideas using basic linkers, reordering scrambled sentence elements, or filling gaps with appropriate connectors/prepositions based on a brief situation).
B1 Writing Task (5 points)	- Routine functional messaging: Produce short, connected functional messages (e.g., informal email/note) passing on factual information. - Linear organization: Link discrete sentences smoothly to explain daily routines, choices, or simple reasons for actions.	Short message / guided email reply	Short guided response (50–70 words) Write a brief functional reply (e.g., responding to a peer's email or note about daily routines/plans). Focus on conveying essential facts and stating simple reasons using connected sentences.
B1+ Writing Task (20 points)	Brief reports and essay writing: Present personal opinions with simple reasoning, summarize factual info, and organize linear sequences.	Short academic / opinion essay	Academic opinion essay (150–200 words) Write an essay responding to a given statement on a university-related or general topic. Express whether you agree or disagree, present simple structured reasoning, and organize your ideas in a clear linear sequence.

5. Placement Exam Summary

Section	Domain / Skills Assessed	Total Items / Tasks	Total Points	Weight
Section 1	Oral Comprehension (Listening), Reading, and Linguistic Competence (Grammar and Vocabulary)	70 Items	70 Points	70%
Section 2	Written Production and Interaction (Writing): A2 sentence task, B1 message, and B1+ essay	3 Tasks	30 Points	30%
TOTAL	All Skills and Levels (A2 - B1+)	73 Items / Tasks	100 Points	100 %