

Language and Integration United Kingdom



In a number of European countries in recent years there has been a shift towards more rigorous conditions for those seeking to apply for citizenship and permanent residence. One of the new conditions for obtaining these is language proficiency. This poster illustrates the situation regarding language and integration in the United Kingdom.

POLICIES

Recent legislation and regulations governing citizenship	
Recent Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Acts	2002 and 2004
Publication of report <i>The New and the Old</i> by independent group chaired by Prof Sir Bernard Crick	September 2003
Applicants for citizenship required to demonstrate knowledge of English	July 2004
Setting up of an independent public advisory board to provide advice to UK Govt on naturalisation and the integration of migrants to the UK (ABNI) and to oversee the progress on developing a curriculum	November 2004
Publication of Handbook for teachers and mentors of immigrants: <i>Life in the UK: A journey to citizenship</i>	December 2004
Development and piloting of Life in the UK test by Ufi/learnirectLtd for Home Office (piloted at 8 test centres)	June 2005
Publication of Handbook for candidates: <i>Life in the UK: A journey to citizenship (2nd edition)</i>	March 2007

Language requirements for those seeking citizenship or permanent residence		
Applicants for British nationality to be tested	since 1 November 2005	Ch 2, 3 & 4 of Handbook at or above ESOL Entry 3
Applicants for UK settlement to be tested	since 2 April 2007	Ch 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6 of new Handbook at or above ESOL Entry 3/B1 of CEFR
Points Based System	starting April 2008	C1 highly skilled migrants B2 skilled migrants
Marriage visas for spouses of British citizens or settled individuals	consultation December 2007 – February 2008	A1 of CEFR prior to entry

Consequences of language testing on residency rights

Pass at Entry Level 3/B1 test from a QCA-accredited examination provider

(UK regulator for exams and qualifications)
Needed for permanent residence and citizenship, or progress from one level to another based on course-based assessment from registered course provider

If a pass at Entry 3/B1:
citizenship and settlement rights

If not a pass:
possibility to retake exam unlimited number of times

Cambridge ESOL's *Skills for Life*:

Pass rates –
October 2007 to September 2008

Entry 3

Reading	83.3%
Writing	87.6%
Speaking/Listening	89.7%

TEACHING AND LEARNING

What courses are available for migrants?

- Part of the UK Government's national strategy for improving adult literacy, numeracy and ESOL skills since 2002
- Based on the Adult ESOL Core Curriculum (DfES 2003)
- A new set of ESOL Skills for Life (SfL) qualifications since August 2004 available at five levels on the UK National Qualifications Framework
- Free language courses available under SfL provision – but funding reduced in 2007
- Life in the UK courses with language component available (teaching language and citizenship content together)

Who are the course providers and participants?

- 7,430 ESOL courses by 622 providers (Directgov website, 15 July 2009)
- including FE colleges, adult education services, private providers, secondary schools, prisons
- course participants: learners whose first language is not English and who are living or trying to settle in England, including:
 - refugees or asylum seekers,
 - migrant workers,
 - people from settled communities,
 - and partners, spouses and children of people who have been settled in the UK for a number of years

LANGUAGE TESTING

What tests are required or accepted for migration purposes?

- UK Home Office criteria for acceptance of language tests for migration purposes (Home Office Oct 2007):
 - Components = four language skills
 - Security of test
 - Security of awards or certificates
 - Verification of test results
 - Fast track service
- Accepted tests include:
 - Skills for Life (SfL) exams commissioned by the UK government
 - other existing tests, such as IELTS
- SfL exams available free for some:
 - three skill modes: Reading Writing and Speaking/Listening available at 5 NQF levels
- Life in the UK test used for both permanent residence and citizenship:
 - multiple choice, on screen test (24 items) with about 73% pass rate on average

Who provides the tests?

- Accredited Skills for Life (SfL) test providers and awarding bodies:
 - Cambridge ESOL (SfL exams launched in March 2005)
 - Others: City and Guilds, EDI/LCCI, Edexcel, Trinity College London, English Speaking Board, OCNW, NOCN
- Test administration:
 - over 450 Cambridge ESOL centres providing SfL exams
- Users of test results:
 - Home Office
 - UK Border Agency

Who are the test takers?

First language	
Polish	22%
Arabic	5%
Farsi	5%
Spanish	4%
Urdu	4%
Somali	4%
French	4%
Portuguese	4%
Bengali	4%
Kurdish	3%

