



UNIVERSITY *of* CAMBRIDGE  
ESOL Examinations

# Cambridge English

# Making an Impact



Specialised and tailored services to assess the impact of English language initiatives for organisations and governments using Cambridge English exams

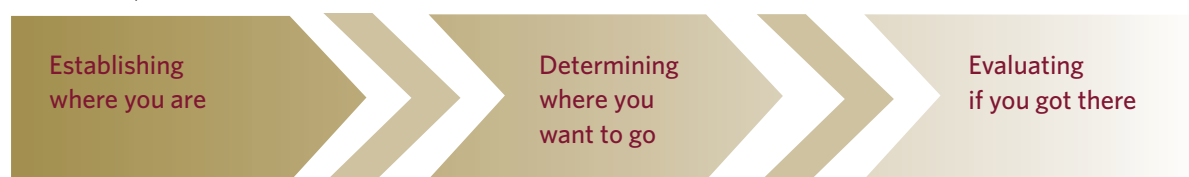
## Cambridge English exams and impact

Cambridge English exams are designed to impact positively on the learning and teaching of English in a wide range of contexts. Determining whether English language initiatives are successful, having the desired outcomes and providing value for money is of key concern to organisations, ministries and regional and national governments around the world. Cambridge ESOL can support this process by assessing whether initiatives are working effectively to achieve the desired outcomes. Recommendations for areas of improvement to ensure educational benefits are sustainable in the long term are also key outcomes of this process.

Cambridge ESOL offers a comprehensive impact service for organisations. This includes:

- Assessing whether education reform is working as intended-  
*Is the reform delivering what you expected when you initiated it?*
- Enhancing and supporting learners' prospects-  
*What is the impact of your programme on learners? Are learners more motivated and is their English language proficiency improving as a result of the programme?*
- Improving standards in teaching-  
*What is the impact of your programme on teachers? In what ways has the programme impacted on teacher motivation, teaching practices, materials and curricula?*
- Using research to inform policy making-  
*To what extent are your policy and reform decisions based on well-grounded research?*
- Monitoring and evaluating standards of language proficiency-  
*Do you know what the current standards are? Do you know whether your programme has improved standards?*

In short, impact is about:



Cambridge ESOL's impact service can be customised and adapted to the specific needs of your organisation, region or country.

**To find out more about these services and how Cambridge ESOL can help your organisation, please contact:**  
[Validation@CambridgeESOL.org](mailto:Validation@CambridgeESOL.org)

## Why carry out an impact study with Cambridge ESOL?

Cambridge English exams are used all over the world and in many different contexts. Understanding the relationship between learning, teaching and assessment is integral to Cambridge ESOL's educational mission. Cambridge ESOL, with more than 150 years' experience in the field of education, strives to ensure that its exams help learners to achieve their life goals and have a positive impact on their learning and professional development. Cambridge ESOL also supports teachers with materials, training and qualifications.

Researching the relationship between learning, teaching and assessment has been a fundamental part of the Cambridge approach ever since the introduction of the first exam - Proficiency - in 1913. The continuous tracking of how exams are used in different contexts is a vitally important way of providing an evidenced-based approach to monitor and improve the exams, their processes and support materials. This research and tracking also helps to ensure that 'impact by design' is integrated into Cambridge ESOL's core exam processes.

If your organisation uses, or intends to use, Cambridge English exams and has responsibility for delivering improvements to language learning and teaching, Cambridge ESOL's approach to impact can benefit you.

A successful impact study will help to ensure that your objectives are being met and will maximise the sustainability of your education initiative. A highly experienced team of research and assessment specialists can work with you to determine whether your language teaching initiative is achieving the benefits you expected.

Whether your requirement is to determine the success of an existing regional or national language learning and teaching strategy, or to develop a programme which maximises the benefits from the outset, Cambridge ESOL has the expertise, experience and resources to provide you with an impact service tailored to your needs.

## Impact services

If you are using Cambridge English exams, or looking to use them as part of your education reform, you can take advantage of the following tailored services:

- ensuring the new education initiative or reform is developed in a way that maximises the benefits from the outset
- an analysis of the baseline, or the starting point, before the education reform or initiative is implemented
- an analysis of the impacts of the education reform or initiative including a close analysis of the impacts on teaching and learning
- monitoring and evaluating standards
- research to feed into policy reform
- a cost-benefit analysis or a return on investment (ROI) analysis.

Cambridge ESOL works with organisations to tailor impact studies, combining different services to suit their needs. The length of an impact study can vary from short-term one-off projects to longer-term iterative projects, depending on the context and the needs of the client.

Working with Cambridge ESOL on an impact study provides the following:

- access to a team of highly trained world-class specialists
- close collaboration to shape the impact study and agree the research questions
- close collaboration to build capacity in the local context
- a range of tailored research methods and instruments including one-to-one interviews, focus group discussions, questionnaires, classroom observations and document review
- monitoring and documenting of progress throughout the study
- reporting on success stories for what is working well and recommendations for areas of improvement.

## Supporting education reform

Education reform can be the key to delivering long-term development and benefits. Cambridge ESOL has worked globally on projects assessing the impact of education reform in language teaching and learning across sectors including primary, secondary, higher and vocational education.

In addition to assessing the impact of reforms, Cambridge ESOL also makes recommendations on possible improvements to ensure benefits are maximised and future learner prospects enhanced.

### Case Study:

#### Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC), United Arab Emirates, 2010-2011

*When the Abu Dhabi Education Council introduced a new bilingual language education programme in the school sector (which had previously been predominantly monolingual), one of their providers, the Centre for British Teachers (CfBT), sought to evaluate the effectiveness of this reform against the strategic objective of improving the quality of teaching and learning. CfBT asked Cambridge ESOL to contribute to this work.*

*Using a range of research methods such as focus group discussions, interviews, questionnaires, observations and document review, Cambridge ESOL conducted an impact study. The report showed a positive picture with success stories including improved English proficiency of learners and an increase in student-centred teaching practices, as well as an increase in collaborative working amongst teachers.*

*Cambridge ESOL was also able to report on areas of the reform that teachers felt could be further improved, such as increased parental involvement in the programme and further self-access learning opportunities for students.*

Find out more:  
Khalifa, H (2011) *The Effectiveness of Bilingual Teaching and Learning, Reading*: CfBT Education Trust. ISBN: 978-1-907496-37-0,  
[www.CfBT.com](http://www.CfBT.com)



## Enhancing and supporting learners' prospects

Language skills are essential in helping learners to achieve their life goals and to enhance their professional development. In today's employment market, foreign language skills can open the door to career opportunities with international organisations both in learners' own countries and abroad.

Regional and national ministries are investing in education reform and using Cambridge English exams to enhance the teaching and learning of English in schools, improving the employment prospects of generations of learners.

Cambridge ESOL can assess whether reforms are working as intended for learners by:

- measuring existing learner language proficiency and motivation levels and monitoring changes over the course of the education reform
- working and talking directly with learners, teachers and other stakeholders to get a more complete picture to better understand and support learners
- providing a detailed analysis and reporting of success stories and areas for improvement.

### Case Study:

#### Asset Languages, England, 2004-2008

*Asset Languages is a multilingual assessment scheme providing assessments with levels linked to the Common European Framework of Reference in 25 languages. Assessments are available in England in primary, secondary and adult education sectors.*

*Cambridge ESOL, responsible for the development and validation of Asset Languages, created a programme of impact studies to assess the effectiveness of the Asset Languages assessment scheme in supporting learners. Using a mixed-methods research approach with triangulation across different data sources, Cambridge ESOL was able to establish that since the introduction of the Asset Languages scheme, there has been an increase in learner motivation as well as more accurate assessment of learner proficiency. Learners were generally more motivated as they received more specific feedback on their ability than with other assessments and could be assessed separately in listening, reading, writing and speaking.*

*Asset Languages also impacted positively on primary school learners with an increase in the range of languages being taught and assessed. Primary school learners were particularly motivated to receive certificates rewarding their achievements.*

*Find out more:*

[www.assetlanguages.org.uk](http://www.assetlanguages.org.uk)

Ashton, K (2008) The Languages Ladder and Asset Languages: a new assessment framework for languages in England, in Kenner, C and Hickey, TM (Eds) *Multilingual Learning Communities across Europe*, Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books, 175-177.



## Improving teaching standards

Teacher training and development are vital to underpin improvements in education standards. Cambridge ESOL has extensive experience of working with ministries and organisations worldwide to assess and enhance the quality of English language teaching.

Cambridge ESOL can help assess whether reforms using Cambridge English exams are working as intended for teachers by:

- measuring existing teacher competencies, methodological and pedagogical skills and monitoring changes over the course of the education reform
- working and talking directly with learners, teachers and other stakeholders to get a more complete picture to better understand and support teachers
- providing a detailed analysis and reporting of success stories and areas for improvement.

### Case Study:

#### Ministry of Education, Italy, 2000

*The Italian Ministry of Education introduced the 'Progetto Lingue 2000' within the state school system with the aim of placing greater emphasis on the development of communicative competence in all grades of the school system. Cambridge ESOL was invited to assess the impact of the programme on teachers, teacher training and curricula.*

*Cambridge ESOL created a tailored case study research design and were able to provide evidence that after the introduction of the programme, English teachers enhanced and broadened their methodological and pedagogical skills using a more communicative approach in their teaching focusing on learner needs. This impacted on both lesson planning and lesson management and these areas were recommended as aspects needing more prominent attention on professional training programmes for language teachers. Students also benefited from the change in teacher practices with increased confidence and proficiency in their spoken English.*

Find out more:

Hawkey, R (2006) *Impact Theory and Practice: Studies of the IELTS test and Progetto Lingue 2000*, Studies in Language Testing, volume 24, Cambridge: UCLES/Cambridge University Press.

Saville, N (2009) *Developing a Model for Investigating the Impact of Language Assessment within Educational Contexts by a Public Examination Provider*, unpublished PhD thesis, Centre for English Language Learning and Assessment, University of Bedfordshire, UK.



## Using research to inform policy making

In order to ensure that education reform and policy making relating to language learning, teaching and assessment has the right impact, it is essential that decisions are based on first-class research, reliable data and expert analysis.

Working with Cambridge ESOL at the development stage of a programme helps to:

- provide a basis of evidence for education reform and changes to policy
- develop policy and reform in a way that maximises the benefits from the outset
- revise education reforms and policies to ensure positive outcomes
- monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of programmes
- report on success stories and areas for improvement.

## Monitoring and evaluating standards of language proficiency

Before new measures or changes to standards are introduced, it is important to know what the current standards are. Similarly, in order to assess the effectiveness of the changes introduced, standards should be monitored on a continuing basis.

Cambridge ESOL has extensive experience in the area of benchmarking which can help to:

- reliably assess current levels of language learners and the performance of systems
- monitor and evaluate levels of language learning and the performance of systems on a regular basis
- report on what is working well and areas needing improvement.

### Case Study:

#### Ministry of Education, Chile 2004, 2008

*Cambridge ESOL was asked by the Chilean Ministry of Education to evaluate the current English language competence of state schools as part of the 'English Opens Doors' project.*

*In 2004, Cambridge ESOL designed a customised diagnostic test to evaluate students' language proficiency levels. In 2008, Cambridge ESOL was asked to do a follow-up study to investigate whether standards had improved over the four year period. The study provided evidence that there was improvement in students' English proficiency and that there were a higher number of learners at A2 and B1 levels of the Common European Framework of Reference than in 2004.*

*The data and results gathered could be used by the Chilean Ministry of Education to monitor student progress as well as to take evidence-based decisions on amendments to policy.*

Find out more:

Khalifa, H, Robinson, M and Harvey, S (2010) Working together: the case of the English Diagnostic Test and the Chilean Ministry of Education, *Research Notes* 40, 22-26.





## Global experience

Cambridge ESOL is highly experienced in delivering language services across a broad range of language and cultural contexts. These are just some examples of the governments and other organisations we have worked with around the globe:



- **Australia:** Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC)
- **Chile:** Ministry of Education/Ministerio de Educación (MINEDUC)
- **China:** People's Government of Beijing Municipality
- **China:** National Education Examinations Authority (NEEA)
- **Colombia:** Ministry of Education/Ministerio de Educación Nacional (MEN)
- **Colombia:** Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism/Ministerio de Comercio, Industria y Turismo (MCIT)
- **Dominican Republic:** Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology/Ministerio de Educación Superior Ciencia y Tecnología (MESCYT)
- **Egypt:** Education Development Fund (EDF)
- **Egypt:** Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE)
- **Europe:** Council of Europe (CoE)
- **Europe:** European Commission (EC)
- **France:** Brittany Regional Council/ Conseil régional de Bretagne
- **France:** Ministry of National Education/Ministère de l'Éducation nationale (MEN)
- **Germany:** State Ministry of Culture and Sport, Sachsen / Sächsisches Staatsministerium für Kultus und Sport (SMK)
- **India:** Tamil Nadu Directorate of Technical Education (TNDTE)
- **India:** State Government of Gujarat
- **Italy:** Ministry for Education, University and Research/Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca (MIUR)
- **Korea:** Korea Institute for Curriculum and Evaluation (KICE)
- **Kosovo:** Kosovo Qualifications Authority (KQA)
- **Mexico:** Secretariat of Education/Secretaría de Educación Pública (SEP)
- **Nigeria:** Rivers State Government (RSG)
- **Spain:** Community of Madrid/Comunidad de Madrid
- **Spain:** Ministry of Education, Training and Employment, Community of Murcia /Consejería de Educación, Formación y Empleo, Región de Murcia (CEFE)
- **Switzerland:** Federal Commission of Vocational Education/ Eidgenössische Berufsmaturitätskommission (EBMK)
- **Thailand:** Ministry of Education (MOE)
- **UAE:** Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC)
- **UAE:** Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA)
- **UK:** Department of Business Innovation and Skills (BIS)
- **UK:** UK Border Agency (UKBA)
- **Vietnam:** Ministry of Education and Training (MOET)
- **Vietnam:** Department of Education and Training, Ho Chi Minh City (DOET)

## About Cambridge ESOL

Cambridge ESOL has extensive resources to support users of the impact service, and can tailor services to meet the specific needs of projects anywhere in the world.

Cambridge ESOL has a highly trained permanent staff of over 400, including a dedicated research team of over 30 specialists in applied linguistics and educational assessment. We work with more than 2,700 authorised examination centres in 130 countries, and have an extensive network of offices around the world providing localised support.

As a not-for-profit department of the University of Cambridge, and a part of the Cambridge Assessment group, Cambridge ESOL seeks to encourage effective language learning and to help organisations, trainers and individuals to realise their life goals. We use robust, scalable processes which are independently accredited to the internationally recognised ISO9001 standard, and publicly documented in our publication 'Principles of Good Practice: quality management and validation in language assessment'. This allows users of the impact service to access high quality, proven systems which are adaptable to meet local needs.

Cambridge ESOL draws on over 150 years' experience in educational assessment and has access to a unique range of expertise and resources. In particular, we work closely with Cambridge University Press (CUP) and are leading in the development of learning-oriented assessment materials and resources that support learners in their language learning and assist both learners and teachers to understand and prepare for the examinations.

Cambridge ESOL also makes significant use of learner data in their work and research. The unique Cambridge Learner Corpus (CLC) is jointly owned by Cambridge ESOL and CUP and currently contains 46 million words of learner data. We are closely involved in the English Profile Programme which is using the corpus as a resource to further develop the Common European Framework of Reference for the English language. We are also collecting both spoken and written English, via a growing network of organisations including schools and universities around the world which will contribute to the new Cambridge English Profile Corpus (CEPC).

**If you would like to become involved in the English Profile Programme you can become an English Profile Network Partner. See [www.englishprofile.org/](http://www.englishprofile.org/) for further details.**



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Cambridge ESOL is a world leader in language assessment and has been providing high-quality English language exams since 1913, backed by one of the largest dedicated language research teams in the world.

Quality is rigorously monitored in all aspects of the assessment process. Specialists in Cambridge ESOL's Research and Validation Group work with colleagues to ensure the highest possible quality of test development, construction, administration, assessment and results processing, and exam review and evaluation. While these processes involve complex research and technology, the underlying philosophy is simple:

- Validity – are our exams an authentic test of real-life English?
- Reliability – do our exams behave consistently and fairly?
- Impact – do our exams have a positive effect on teaching and learning?
- Practicality – do our exams meet users' needs within available resources?
- Quality – how we plan, deliver and check that we provide excellence in all of these fields.

Results of Cambridge ESOL's academic and practical research are publicly available in a wide range of publications including quarterly Research Notes, Studies in Language Testing – a series of academic volumes published by Cambridge University Press – and a large number of refereed academic journals and conference presentations.

All of these factors help to ensure that users of Cambridge ESOL's impact service have access to tests, systems and evaluation and reporting of the highest quality, readily adaptable to local needs to ensure that services are fit for purpose.



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