

CEFR services

How we can help

The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) is an international standard for defining and describing language proficiency. We can draw on our experience in the development of the CEFR to provide guidance on its effective use, ensuring alignment of curricula and assessments or supporting the adaptation and validation of the CEFR for a local context of use. Curricula and assessments that are aligned to the CEFR are a sign of quality, indicating that language provision meets international standards.

What we offer

There are four main services which may be delivered as stand-alone activities or as part of a larger education reform programme:

Alignment

We can provide a detailed analysis of existing curricula or assessments to review and support alignment with the CEFR.

Training workshops

We can present ways in which the CEFR can be used as a tool to inform learning, teaching and assessment or in the planning and implementation of educational reforms at an institutional or a national level.

Workshops are designed to focus on familiarising language professionals with CEFR descriptors and how these can be used in teaching, curricula development, learning material selection, assessment and measuring learning outcomes. They can be tailored to your needs and aims, such as building capacity through a top-down information-sharing model (train the trainer), or application to a specific area of assessment.

Adaptation

We can support you in adapting the CEFR for a specific local context of use through any or all of the following:

- training on how to modify or adapt the CEFR
- project plans or methodology
- needs analysis to inform the modification of descriptors
- review of your existing modified CEFR descriptors
- modification or development of CEFR descriptors
- report creation, documenting the adaptation project.

Validation

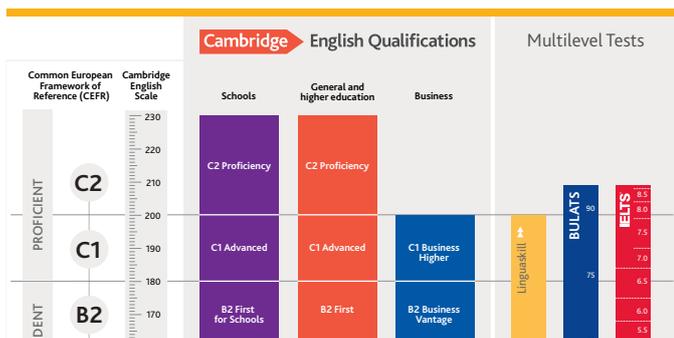
Further to the adaptation offering, we can validate your adapted CEFR descriptors to ensure alignment. Validation can be achieved through any or all of the following:

- instrument development or guidance on developing instruments for validation
- data analysis or guidance on data analysis
- report creation, documenting the validation project and results
- Cambridge Assessment English endorsement of the localised CEFR.

Key benefits for you

- We work with you to develop capacity by transferring our expert knowledge and skills and adapting to your context
- As part of the University of Cambridge, we provide the advantage of a reputable, objective evaluation as well as effective and standardised use of the CEFR in language learning, teaching and assessment
- Quality assurance and official endorsement from Cambridge Assessment English

Case studies



Collaboration on the development of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)

Aligning a curriculum, learning materials and national assessments to the CEFR

Council of Europe	Global context
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Ministry of Education	Malaysia
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The CEFR defines levels of language proficiency in speaking, reading, writing and listening, and provides the basis for many language syllabuses and curricula around the world. Language ability is described across a 6-level scale from A1 (basic) up to C2 (proficient). As well as common reference levels, the CEFR provides definitions, categories and examples that language professionals can use to better understand and communicate their aims and objectives. These are called 'illustrative descriptors' and are presented as a series of scales with Can Do statements.

We started working with the Ministry in 2013 on a baseline study to evaluate the learning, teaching and assessment of English in schools in Malaysia. This evidence-based study provided the baseline data so that the Ministry had a clear picture of how the Malaysian English language education system was performing against the CEFR. We also recommended next steps required to implement the integrated solution needed to reform English language nationwide, which resulted in our 5-year collaboration programme, helping the Ministry drive forward their reform agenda.

The CEFR comprehensively describes the abilities, skills and knowledge language learners need to acquire to communicate and act effectively. It also defines levels of proficiency, allowing progress to be measured in stages and on a life-long basis. This enhanced transparency thereby promotes international co-operation in the field of modern languages.

We started by working with the Ministry at policy level to help them set realistic and achievable targets for the future. We have since moved on to aligning their curricula, learning materials and national assessments to the CEFR using an integrated approach to ensure coherence across the education system. This includes reforming in-service, as well as pre-service teacher education to ensure teachers are able to support their learners and excel in this new CEFR-aligned system.

The CEFR was developed between 1993 and 1996 by a Council of Europe international working party with involvement from Cambridge Assessment English and its partners in the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE). First published in English and French in 2001, it has since been published in over 40 languages and has become a globally accepted benchmark for language. We continue to work towards its future development through projects such as SurveyLang and English Profile.

We support the Ministry in numerous ways, from monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the new curricula in the classrooms to training over 600 master trainers who then cascade their training on the reforms to teachers nationwide. The programme is already starting to have a positive effect and we will continue to evaluate and carry out impact measurement to monitor progress of the nation against their targets.

We also played a key role in the development of the *CEFR Companion Volume* (2018), making the CEFR more comprehensive and accessible to support the development of inclusive quality education.

For more information on our English language consultancy, visit:

Contact the team at:

cambridgeenglish.org/consultancy

consultancy@cambridgeenglish.org