



IH London widens testing opportunities with Linguaskill



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Katarzyna Douglas, Project Co-ordinator, International House London Assessment and Exams Centre

As a large test centre and strong partner of Cambridge Assessment English, IH London is continually developing its offering to meet the needs of its own students and external clients, from businesses to language schools and individuals. Introducing Linguaskill has enabled it to provide fast, online placement tests for its customers, who benefit from simpler administration and quicker results, graded against the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) standard.

IH London – continually looking to the future

For over 65 years International House (IH) London has been committed to international communication and building communities through language teaching. It has always had a strong focus on both quality and innovation, pioneering the move to conversation-based teaching. Demonstrating its strong partnership with the University of Cambridge, it also introduced the first language teacher training qualification in 1962, now known as CELTA and provided by Cambridge Assessment English. Alongside this, IH London offers a full range of qualifications and tests from Cambridge.

IH's assessment and exams centre is responsible for all the tests that IH London delivers, both to its own students and to external candidates. As part of its commitment to students, the centre is always looking to introduce new ideas and diversify, and saw the need for a faster, more flexible placement test to complement its other offerings.

Transforming with technology to benefit students

'Many placement tests work to predefined timetables, meaning candidates may have to wait a long time before their test is scheduled. They are often paper-based, which requires more administration and space within our testing centre – and finally, results take a while to arrive,' says Katarzyna Douglas, Project Co-ordinator, International House London Assessment and Exams Centre. 'We wanted to introduce a more flexible option that met the needs of candidates and organisations who wanted a faster, simpler experience when assessing their English language skills.'

In February 2019 IH London adopted Linguaskill. An online, on-demand test, it assesses all four key language skills (reading, listening, speaking and writing), delivering fast results graded against the CEFR standard. Using artificial intelligence, Linguaskill adapts its questions to the individual user's level, improving the experience and delivering swifter testing.

About International House London

International House (IH) London is the number one language school in Central London, judged by British Council inspections. It is part of the IH network, which has over 150 schools in 50 countries. As well as teaching, it is one of the largest language testing centres in Europe, working with its own students, external organisations and individuals.

ihlondon.com

About Linguaskill

Linguaskill is a quick and convenient online test to help higher education institutions and employers check the English levels of individuals and groups of candidates. Supported by artificial intelligence technology, it provides fast, accurate results and clear individual and group reports. Results are aligned to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), the international standard for describing language ability.

cambridgeenglish.org/linguaskill

About Cambridge Assessment English

Cambridge Assessment English is a not-for-profit department of the University of Cambridge. It produces the world's leading range of qualifications and tests for learners and teachers of English, including Cambridge English Qualifications, Linguaskill and IELTS. Taken by over 5 million people every year, these exams are backed by the work of the largest dedicated research team of any English language test provider.

cambridgeenglish.org

'There are many online placement tests in the market, but our requirements were clear,' says Katarzyna. 'Linguaskill is a quality, recognised product backed by Cambridge Assessment English's reputation that delivers fast results and is simple to administer. It has a wide range of uses, and is also applicable to the corporate market through its business module.'

Delivering fast, flexible testing to customers

As an agent, IH London provides tests directly to candidates and to other organisations, such as language schools, colleges, companies and individual language teachers. Feedback from these customers has been extremely positive, with Linguaskill's ease of use, lack of special IT requirements and ability to deliver results within 48 hours all seen as real benefits.

'Our experience of Linguaskill as an agent is that it is designed with simplicity in mind,' adds Katarzyna. 'We find it easy to administer, with comprehensive in-built support and guidance to help set up tests. Our customers don't need to type in lots of information on candidates to run tests, and with results delivered through a self-service portal direct to candidates the whole process is straightforward and fast.'

Meeting the full range of testing needs

IH London candidates and customers are now using Linguaskill to meet a variety of English testing needs:

- UK language schools use it as a placement test with new students to ensure they are on the right course for their ability.
- Students from overseas schools take Linguaskill before coming to the UK in order to understand their level, allowing them to choose the right location and course for the best experience.
- Companies use it to assess the English level of both current staff and new hires. This ensures employees have the right abilities for their role, such as dealing with customers or providing specific information to colleagues. As Linguaskill provides detailed results, it is easy to spot areas for improvement.
- Consultancies and recruitment agencies use it to check language needs ahead of putting forward candidates for jobs.
- Those seeking proof of their language ability for a course or employment can take Linguaskill at a time to suit them, without having to wait for predefined test schedules.
- Individual language teachers can easily check the level of their students.

'Our candidates and customers like the flexibility that Linguaskill brings,' concludes Katarzyna. 'They can choose which modules to complete, and taking all four only requires 2–3 hours, with the knowledge that results will be available quickly. An added benefit is that it supports our objective of being greener as it removes paper from the assessment process.'