



## Paraná Speaks English accelerates internationalisation with Linguaskill



**'I'm convinced that Linguaskill is one of the best English language tests we can have for the Paraná Speaks English programme. Working with Cambridge Assessment English helps us achieve our internationalisation objectives.'**



Professor Eliane Segati Rios Registro, Head of the International Office, Universidade Estadual do Norte do Paraná and State Co-ordinator, Paraná Speaks Languages/English

**English is increasingly key to international collaboration and communication within higher education. Consequently, a growing number of countries and universities are looking at internationalisation programmes to develop their capacity and the skills of their students, teachers and support staff. The Paraná Speaks English programme is using Linguaskill to ensure it supports its staff who teach in English, by measuring their level of English and monitoring their progression. This helps it to achieve its internationalisation goals.**

### Supporting internationalisation in higher education

Encouraging internationalisation is a key aim for universities around the world, as they look to increase opportunities for their students, academic staff and the wider community. To support this goal the Brazilian state of Paraná created the Paraná Speaks English programme in 2014, part of the broader Paraná Speaks Languages project. This aims to boost the English language skills of students, teaching and support staff in order to attract international students, enable collaboration and increase publication of research papers in English-language journals.

Paraná Speaks English spans all seven state universities, and is co-ordinated by Professor Eliane Segati Rios Registro, Head of the International Office at the Universidade Estadual do Norte do Paraná (UENP).

'We want our universities to be recognised internationally. The university community in Paraná therefore understands the importance of English, particularly in areas such as Science. Our programme aims to support the entire community in all areas of knowledge, from teachers and support staff, to students looking to improve their English language skills, benefiting both individuals and institutions alike,' commented Professor Segati Rios.

### Personalised testing across all four language skills

As part of Paraná Speaks English, the programme runs an English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) course for professors at all state universities teaching international classes in the English language. Being able to test their level of English, in all four language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking), before they began the course was key to delivering targeted support to help them improve.

## About Paraná Speaks Languages/English

The Paraná Speaks English programme, promoted by the Secretariat of Science, Technology and Higher Education (Seti), in partnership with the state universities in Paraná, Brazil, is part of the broader Paraná Speaks Languages project. It provides opportunities for teachers, students and staff to improve their English skills. This is part of the state's push to support the internationalisation of its universities.

[seti.pr.gov.br](http://seti.pr.gov.br)

## 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](http://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](http://cambridgeenglish.org)

Previously the programme had used paper-based placement tests. However, these did not measure speaking skills, meaning candidates had to travel to certified centres, often a great distance from their university campus. Additionally, professors had a wide range of backgrounds and different levels of English. Testing them using a 'one size fits all' approach was therefore time-consuming and did not deliver personalised results.

These concerns led the Paraná Speaks English programme to Linguaskill from Cambridge English. Linguaskill is a modular, online test which assesses all four language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. What differentiates Linguaskill is it has been developed by a dedicated team of experts and is supported by artificial intelligence. The Reading and Listening module is adaptive so it delivers a personalised experience for each candidate, along with detailed scores based on the CEFR. Each question the candidate answers helps the computer to understand their level better. The test finishes when the candidate has answered enough questions for Linguaskill to identify their level accurately.

'Linguaskill caught my attention as it is multi-level and adaptive, which means it respects the knowledge of every participant and gives them their own path through the test. This not only helps give us a more detailed picture of skills but improves the experience for those being tested by tailoring the process to their knowledge,' added Professor Segati Rios.

26 teaching staff have now been assessed using Linguaskill, prior to beginning their EMI courses. This has enabled targeted support to be put in place for each of them, based on their results in the four key skills, as well as their overall CEFR score. For example, some may need additional help in a skill such as writing, which can be identified easily with Linguaskill. All of the participants felt that the testing gave an accurate and reliable view of their skills – personalised to their levels.

## Simple and straightforward online testing

The online nature of Linguaskill makes testing easier for both teaching staff and administrators. Paraná is a large state, with an area of 200,000 square kilometres, and the seven state universities are spread across it. Rather than having to travel to certified centres, candidates can take Linguaskill in the language labs at their home university, fitting it around their teaching and other work commitments – maximising use of their time. When it comes to administration it can all be controlled and checked remotely, as Professor Segati Rios notes: 'As the State Co-ordinator I could follow the process from my desk and easily manage all the details, from scheduling to arranging invigilators quickly and easily. In two days all the tests were organised!'

Now the first EMI course has been completed, the Paraná Speaks English programme is looking at further ways to use Linguaskill to support its internationalisation push. These include using Linguaskill to test the language levels of students on both admission and completion of subject-specific English courses. This ultimately helps them make better informed decisions about their learning.