

Information on the placement test for English

General information

In order to study at the Department for Translation Studies, a level of B2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR / GERS) is required for English and German as a foreign language and B1 for French, Italian and Spanish. Russian is the only language which can be studied (as a 2nd foreign language) without having any prior knowledge of the language.

Applicants are required to take a placement test in order to verify that they possess the required language skills. Candidates must achieve a minimum score of 50% in this placement test in order to gain admission to the language courses. Those who pass the placement test will be allocated a place on a course in English level I.

Procedure

ALL candidates MUST REGISTER for the test by submitting their registration form to the secretary's office at the Department of Translation Studies (contact Ms. Sandra Reiter). Candidates who provide one of the following certificates will gain exemption from the placement test:

- an official school leaving certificate (i.e. Austrian SRP [Matura]) that specifies the required level, and is not older than one year
- an official language certificate (i.e. Cambridge, TOEFL or equivalent) at B2 level or higher that is not older than 2 years.

Candidates who possess a certificate at level C1 or C2 may, upon request, take a test to be placed in English level 2. If you wish to take this test, please specify this on your registration form and submit your relevant language certificate. Admission to level 2 courses is subject to availability.

Course registration

All candidates are required to sign up online for language courses at the Department of Translation Studies during the official registration period even though the placement test usually takes place after the registration period is over. The responsible teachers will update your registration information accordingly.

Enquiries

Please direct all your enquiries concerning course registration, the placement test or allocation of places on courses to our coordinator for English, Dr. Katharina Walter: Katharina.Walter@uibk.ac.at.

Format of the placement test

The placement test follows the format of modern standardized language tests. Below is an outline of the parts of the test and the tasks involved:

Part 1 – Listening comprehension

One listening comprehension task (approx. 4 minutes, which you will hear twice) with comprehension question types such as: inferring information/meaning, multiple choice, multiple matching, gap filling, true/false justification, brief answers, etc.

Part 2 – Reading comprehension

One reading comprehension exercise (a 400-500 word text) with comprehension question types such as: multiple choice, true/false justification, brief answers, etc.

Part 3 – Use of language in context (grammar and vocabulary based)

Two text tasks (gap filling, multiple choice, sentence matching, etc.). Emphasis here is placed aspects of language such as: tenses, articles, adverbs, modal verbs, comparison of adjectives, auxiliaries, conjunctions, relative clauses, if clauses, gerunds and infinitives, prepositions, word order, etc.

Part 4 – Writing

Candidates are required to write a text of approx. 250-300 words in response to a prompt (i.e. email, letter of complaint/introduction/enquiry, short essay, etc.).

Evaluation criteria

Evaluation of the placement test is approximately weighted as follows, and may vary according to task type and difficulty level:

- Listening comprehension 20%
- Reading comprehension 20%
- Use of language in context 30%
- Writing 30%

Preparation tips

Revise school English, read English books, newspapers and magazines, listen to English-speaking radio, watch English-speaking TV/films (also available online), use Internet sites such as YouTube, TED talks, TIME video player.

Recommended books: *English Vocabulary in Use* – upper-intermediate level (Cambridge University Press), *Longman Advanced Learner's Grammar* – Mark Foley/Diane Hall (Longman).

The International Language Centre (ISI) at the University of Innsbruck also offers preparation courses for the placement test (<https://www.uibk.ac.at/isi/index.html.de>).