

What is Pretesting?

Testing materials before they are used in live examinations allows us to make certain our exams are accurate, fair and reliable. As part of Cambridge English Language Assessment's commitment to quality, we submit all the material in our exams to a number of procedures, including pretesting, to ensure there are no questions likely to test anything but a candidate's language ability. The data produced by pretesting is then analysed in detail so that exam papers are constructed with the assurance they are equivalent in difficulty and content to their predecessors.

Before any questions are considered for inclusion in a Cambridge English examination, they are first pretested on groups of students. Usually these students are enrolled for the exam in which they are being pretested. A sample of a variety of first languages and backgrounds take each pretest and approximately 250,000 pretests are despatched worldwide each year.

Cambridge English: Key, Cambridge English: Preliminary and Cambridge English: First, (including Cambridge English: Key for Schools and Cambridge English: Preliminary for Schools), Cambridge English: Business Certificates and IELTS are available in sessions at certain times of the year, please consult the [Pretesting calendar](#) for more information.

BULATS, TKT (Teaching Knowledge Test) Modules 1 - 3, TKT: CLIL (Content and Learning Integrated Language), TKT: Young Learners are available on demand.

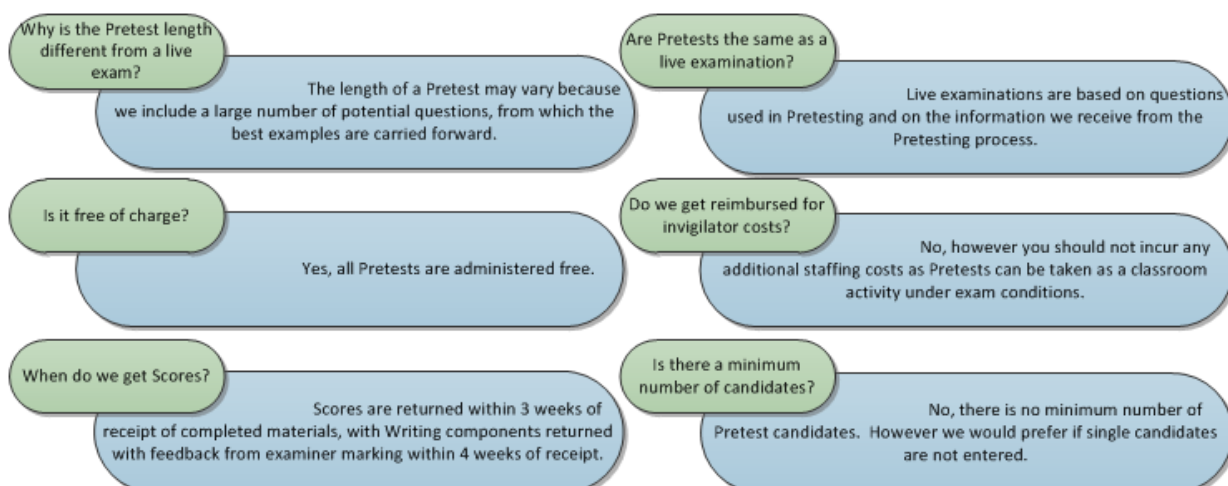
Cambridge English: Proficiency and Cambridge English: Business Higher can usually be taken 'on demand' at almost any time, subject to availability and time to process and despatch the materials. (20 working days minimum).

To take part in pretesting, your school must either be a Cambridge English Language Assessment test centre or be a 'Pretest Approved Institution'.

If your school is not yet approved you will need to complete an online [Pretesting Institution Approval Form](#). Once the form is returned to Cambridge English Language Assessment and has been checked, a referee will be approached for your application to be endorsed. Once approved, your school may then be invited to participate in pretesting one or more of the Cambridge English exams that your students sit.

We hope that you will find it beneficial for your students and that through your feedback you will take the opportunity to influence the design and content of the examinations we produce.

Frequently Asked Questions



Partake in Pretesting

Pretesting is a vital element in the development process of Cambridge English examinations. Pretesting ensures that each individual item in a live examination is pitched at the right level and that the content is appropriate. It also ensures that people from different countries and cultures do not widely differ in the way they perform on a test, or that neither male nor female candidates are disadvantaged.

We do this by carefully measuring the responses of candidates in pretests using complex benchmarking processes, and by collecting and acting on feedback from both candidates and teachers.

Benefits for Candidates and Students

Many centres find Pretesting a rewarding process, with the benefits including:

- Pretesting gives learners a chance to practise taking a Cambridge English exam using genuine questions under exam conditions. This experience gives candidates the opportunity to practise their exam technique therefore building their confidence through familiarising themselves with the examination process. This will make candidates feel more relaxed and better prepared when they do their live exams.
- After taking the Reading, Listening and Use of English papers, the pretesting papers are marked in Cambridge and scores returned to the centres within three weeks. Writing papers are marked by trained Cambridge English examiners and candidates receive feedback about how they performed in the writing test within four weeks.
- Pretesting helps learners find out which areas they need most practice in and for teachers, it highlights areas where their learners need more help and shows the overall level of students in relation to the exam. This is also an opportunity for teachers to influence the design and content of exams by feeding back to us their thoughts on the tested material.
- Pretesting is FREE. All test papers and despatch costs are paid for by Cambridge English Language Assessment.
- Centres and teachers taking part in pretesting can develop their knowledge of assessment issues and show that they are committed to excellence by being an active part of Cambridge English's world renowned programme of research.

We value the feedback and contribution of our centres to the Pretesting process.

Pretesting information

<https://support.cambridgeenglish.org/hc/en-gb/articles/211312823-Pretesting-Information>