

**CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF
LINGUISTS**

IoL EDUCATIONAL TRUST

**CERTIFICATE IN BILINGUAL
SKILLS**



CHIEF MODERATOR'S REPORT

2008

IoL EDUCATION TRUST (IoLET)

CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF LINGUISTS

CERTIFICATE IN BILINGUAL SKILLS (CBS)

CHIEF MODERATOR'S REPORT 2008

1. Matters arising from 2007 Moderator's Report

1.1. Candidate numbers

Predictions made last year about the low number of candidates and centres were proved to be incorrect. There was a 100% increase. The reason for this increase cannot be specifically put down to one cause only but it is hoped that the upward trend will continue. The Examination Manager noted that one new centre with a large group registered this year. It was also said that unitising the paper may have contributed to the increase.

Although the number of candidates doubled, the proposal of looking into a new niche area for the CBS exam should not be discarded.

1.2. Examiner and Tape Sampler Training

The implementation of a joint training/re-training session for oral examiners and tape samplers did not take place this year due to a change of staff (Examiner Manager and Assistant) at a crucial time. There will be a meeting to discuss the training format. One suggestion was to create a real examination situation; however it could be problematic to involve real candidates. Instead volunteers (e.g. work placement interns from LSL) could participate in a mock exam.

1.3. Replacement of Translation task

Last year, the possibility of replacing the translation task with another paper to test candidates' writing skills was considered. It was agreed that at this level the candidate would not become a professional translator and a translation exercise may therefore not be the best way to assess candidates for CBS.

A summary of text was proposed but this would require additional skills which could be too advanced for CBS candidates who do not necessarily have an academic background. This could also pose difficulties when marking.

A change like this would need to be agreed by the QCA and the format of any new task would therefore have to be considered carefully. If any change were to be introduced, this would come into effect in 2010.

1.4. Resitting only part of a unit

It is no longer necessary to re-take a whole oral or written unit for a failed task; candidates can now re-sit individual tasks. Consequently the results look better. It may be possible to offer autumn re-sits for written papers in the future.

- 1.5. Financial Sponsorship
Obtaining sponsorship for courses such as CBS was difficult as money is given to new and innovative projects. Sponsorship can be made available to 'interested groups of people'. For example last year a group of Chinese delegates visited the Institute and showed an interest in the CBS examination. This would have guaranteed a large entry group but unfortunately they did not get the funding expected.
- 1.6. Sector-specific CBS examination
CBS is responding to demand. At the moment it is aimed at the Public Sector but new CBS could have a general, topic-specific (tourism/travel/health...) paper which can be designed in order to meet demand.
- 1.7. The London Olympics
No provisions have been made for the Olympics as organisers will only know their needs for languages in 2010.
- 1.8. Media Attention
In terms of media attention CBS received publicity on the CILT website (<http://www.cilt.org.uk/14to19/fe/class.htm>) at no cost. CBS is also being advertised in schools and Adult Education Centres.

2. 2008 Examination

2.1 Profile of candidates and languages

58 candidates sat the 2008 examination, a 107% increase on the number of candidates entered for the 2007 examination, which brings the candidate numbers almost back to the 2005 level. This is a substantial growth in candidature which the Chief Moderator warmly welcomes.

In addition to the languages examined in 2007 (Arabic, French, Italian, Panjabi, Polish and Urdu) Cantonese, Gujarati, Portuguese, Russian, Slovak, Somali and Spanish were also examined this year, thus doubling the number of languages covered. Kurdish (Sorani) examined in 2007 was not requested in 2008.

The numbers of candidates in descending order, by language were:

Language	Candidate Numbers
Polish	18
Gujarati	11
French	5
Panjabi	5
Spanish	5
Slovak	3
Arabic	2
Cantonese	2
Russian	2
Somali	2
Italian	1
Portuguese (European)	1
Urdu	1

Polish has therefore continued to attract the largest number of candidates for the second year in a row, followed fairly closely by Gujarati. As noted in the 2007 Moderator's Report, a minimal number of candidates entered for Urdu (alongside this year Italian and Portuguese)

Four centres entered candidates, plus the Institute's own London Centre. A new centre entered 29 candidates for the first time, which accounted largely for the rise in candidate numbers. It is to be hoped that this centre will be encouraged to continue entering candidates in the same number, and that other new centres will follow suit.

2.2 Examination results

Comparative Statistics: 2002 – 2008

Exam Session	Number of			%ages						
	Centres	Langs.	Cands.	Dist.	Merit	Pass	LCo	LcW	LC*)	Fail
2002	14	14	152	0	0	30	29	8	n/a	32
2003	10	11	104	0	0	34	39	5	n/a	22
2004	8	16	86	0	1.3	29.5	28.3	7.7	n/a	33.3
2005	9	14	59	0	3.6	33.9	25	0	n/a	37.5
2006	4	13	52	0	4.1	14.3	32.7	2.0	n/a	46.9
2007	4	7	29	0	0	17.9	50	7.1	n/a	25
2008	5	12	58	0	0	39.7	31.0	5.2	17.2	6.9

LC*): Please note that from 2008 a 'Letter of Credit' has been introduced for individual tasks that are passed within either Oral or Written units.

The overall exam appeared to go very well. However the letter writing task might have been too complicated in its format, the density of the information to be considered by the candidate in the time allowed and in some of the vocabulary used. All of these aspects were taken into consideration by the markers and the Moderator to ensure that candidates were fairly assessed, but this task should be simplified for next year.

2.3 Marking the examination

Reporting for the examiners in languages with single entry figures is difficult: generalisations cannot be drawn. Although the Moderator is able to see a wider picture it does place a greater need in order to ensure the sensitivity of the reporting as the candidates in such cases can identify themselves.

3. Awards

The prize for the best centre for the 2008 CBS examination goes to Community Learning and Skills, Chestnuts House, Walthamstow.

The prize for the best candidate goes to a candidate sitting the examination in Polish at Bradford College.

The Moderator thanks the CBS Examination Manager at the Institute of Linguists, Ulrike Heinze and her staff, and the Director of Examinations, Hilary Maxell-Hyslop for their invaluable support.

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Recommendations to Candidates

1. Dictionaries

Be careful of “false friends”. If you look up a word, do not use the first equivalent you find in the dictionary. Do a reverse check in the other language to see if the word you have found is actually used in the context you require. Many errors can be avoided if you know how to use your dictionary. Do not guess the meaning, take time to check, but check carefully.

2. Word bank

Candidates should try and build up in the course of the year a word bank of their own for phrases and words used in public service documents/conversations.

3. Read the paper through

It is very important to read through the paper before commencing the task. You need the overall view of what you are to achieve before starting to answer be it the written or the oral test.

4. Be careful of time

Time yourself so that you are sure to complete all the tasks. It is no good having a perfect letter if you have not been able to complete the translation. You should also ideally have time to re-read your text before handing in your paper.

5. Legibility/Audibility

Write legibly, speak clearly and distinctly.

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Recommendations to Centres

1. As always, please ensure candidates are given LINED paper, with MARGINS for the written examinations
2. Tape recording quality varies. Centres must ensure that the tape recorder is handled correctly, and that tapes are clearly marked with the candidate number and language.
3. Some markers felt that centres should teach candidates better translation techniques. They must know to read the WHOLE text to get the meaning and context clear in their mind before starting to translate. This will help to avoid inaccuracies and “word for word” renderings.
4. Letter writing conventions must be taught – setting out the address, date, correct opening and closing statements, and the usual letter writing conventions.
5. Centres should encourage candidates to read in English and the Other Language as much as possible – providing newspapers, magazines, texts, not only in class but for use at home. Even films, television recordings or radio tapes can also be useful. Nowadays many overseas newspapers print extracts if not the whole paper on the internet, so that accessing such material should not prove difficult.
6. A “mock” examination helps candidates plan their time, and realise what they have to achieve. It can also enable lecturers to pin-point problem areas and give advice before the actual examination.