

**CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF  
LINGUISTS**

**IoL EDUCATIONAL TRUST**

**CERTIFICATE IN BILINGUAL  
SKILLS**



**CHIEF MODERATOR'S REPORT**

**2010**

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# **IoL EDUCATIONAL TRUST (IoLET)**

## **CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF LINGUISTS**

### **CERTIFICATE IN BILINGUAL SKILLS (CBS)**

#### **CHIEF MODERATOR'S REPORT 2010**

##### **1. Matters arising from 2009 Moderator's Report**

###### **1.1. Candidate Numbers**

The numbers sitting the 2010 CBS examination were disappointingly very low. There was only one outside Centre in addition to the London Centre.

###### **1.2 Attendance at Awards Meeting**

At the 2009 Awards Meeting it was suggested that setters and markers should discuss specific elements of marking, but in view of the small number of candidates it was felt that this could not be taken forward at the 2010 meeting.

There was only one candidate for Portuguese (Brazilian) and two for Spanish, and whilst the markers for those languages were present, the Polish marker was unable to attend the meeting.

###### **1.3 Replacement of Translation Task**

This has been taken forward since the draft presented at the 2009 Meeting. This matter will be addressed later in the Moderator's Report.

###### **1.4 Resitting only part of the CBS**

Unitisation of the CBS examination is to continue. It means that a candidate will receive a certificate even if only passing one section of the examination, and of course candidates can now proceed to sit the examination in separate units.

###### **1.5 The London Olympics**

Despite the best efforts of IoL it seems that the Olympics Committee have put their head in the sand with regard to adequate training and assessment of interpreters at the Olympic Games in 2012. Strenuous efforts had been made to encourage some positive attitude, but to no avail.

##### **2. 2010 Examination**

###### **2.1. Profile of candidates and languages**

10 candidates sat the 2010 examination in 4 languages. The tabulation for 2010 is as follows:

<b>Language</b>	<b>Candidate Numbers</b>
Polish	6
Cantonese	1
Spanish	2
Portuguese (Brazilian)	1

Centres are finding it increasingly difficult to fund courses. They need both facilities and tutors, and many former funding sources are no longer available. Moreover it is probable that – as a result of the example set by the CBS – many public service departments have set up their own assessment teams.

## 2.2. Examination Results

### Comparative Statistics: 2005 – 2010

Exam Session	Number of			%ages						
	Centres	Langs.	Cands.	Dist.	Merit	Pass	LCo	LcW	LC*)	Fail
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	25.0
2008	5	12	58	0	0	39.7	31.0	5.2	17.2	6.9
2009	3	15	55	0	1.8	38.2	30.9	0.0	21.8	7.3
2010	2	4	10	0	0	50.0	n/a	n/a	50.0	0

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.

There were no problems with the examination procedures. As reported above, there was only one Centre apart from the London Centre, and a very low number of candidates.

Of the ten candidates sitting the examination, there were 5 passes and 5 letters of credit.

## 2.3. Marking the examination

As Chief Moderator I found the marking was precise and helpful in all respects. Detailed comments were given by markers of written tasks, with examples to justify marks given, whilst tape samplers also reported clearly and precisely on any problems.

Hence the moderation of the results – small numbers apart – presented no problems. It was possible to listen to tapes and to check written scripts to finalise any changes made in marks, but these were in fact minor changes of grade rather than any major disagreement with marks awarded.

It was highlighted that one interlocutor gave the candidate too much time in Task 1 to make a complete written transcript of the points to be transferred into another language. This must be discouraged as the point of the Role Play is to relay the information using just a simple, speedy note for reference. There is a requisite time limit of 15-20 minutes to complete the task (with a prior 5 minute period to read the brief) and this must be adhered to. Candidates should be properly trained in the skills required for this Task.

The letter writing tasks were handled well overall.

As usual there were some anomalies in the answers in English, as pointed out by the English examiner. Polish candidates sometimes referred to the child as “it” in Task 3A, (the scenario being that of a woman complaining about being given a parking ticket whilst attending to a baby). Again in Polish the definite or indefinite article was either missed out or used inappropriately, leading to some confusion as in “...I drove a car out of a garage....there was a traffic...”

Generally the advice to candidates is to remember that a good translation is not just about conveying the information – it also needs to read well in the target language, as one marker rightly pointed out.

Another point made was that students should focus on grammar and punctuation to improve the quality of their work.

## **2.4. Change in format of Translation and Letter Tasks**

At the Awards Meeting in July 2009 the Chief Moderator put forward a possible new format – to combine both the translation and letter tasks. The proposed format was that of a REPORT, which is frequently the task required of bi-lingual workers in public services. A stimulus note would be given in one language to lead to writing a report in the other language.

A draft of pro forma tasks was presented at the Awards meeting, with two alternative scenarios for a written task in English with the stimulus note in another language, and two alternative scenarios for a written task in another language with a stimulus note in English. Model answers were provided, to indicate how these might work.

A meeting will be held in September with those schools who have expressed an interest in a Sports & Leisure option of the CBS – of whom there are at present seven. One is from Leicester, from a college which used to run CBS courses, and another with strong interest is from Bristol. Daryl Lucas, the IoL Examiner Manager, has visited both and thinks there is a very real chance of this idea coming to fruition, with a reasonable amount of uptake for the 2011 examination.

Because the Tasks would be within the CBS format, now unitised, candidates could initially just sit this type of written Task and proceed to other elements in the CBS format at a later stage.

The fact that schools are involved presents an advantage, inasmuch as they have the premises and have language teachers (who may have hours available on their time table since youngsters can stop taking a foreign language at age 14 onwards and are no longer required to sit a language examination at GCSE level) and costs can be minimized when compared with Colleges.

The IoL is meanwhile proceeding with formalizing the new CBS examination, and Christina Sidery-Parkes, the IoL Quality Assurance Manager, is preparing all the documentation to present to the QCF. Once this has been sent in a response should be received within a fortnight, so that by September the IoL would have confirmation of acceptance of the proposed changes to format.

The new written Task would mean that the CBS will contain five elements instead of seven, comprising:

- A Role Play with the same format as at present
- Sight Translation from English into Other Language
- Sight Translation from Other Language into English
- Report in English with stimulus note in Other Language
- Report in Other Language with stimulus note in English

The aim is that the new format, whilst at present only in the form of a draft for a possible Language + Sports and Leisure module for 16 – 18 year olds, would also apply to all CBS candidates.

It was felt that, instead of specifying that CBS targeted bilingual workers in public services, it would now be more realistic and useful to specify the examination as being aimed at bilingual employees in the workplace. This would be incorporated in the specifications presented to QCF.

It was stressed that in future all IoL examinations must conform to the nomenclature and specifications set down for the QCF. This will help to attract funding but also ensure the IoL examinations are on the national database.

As always extreme care must be taken to ensure that the examination tasks do not stray above “A” level.

Candidates who successfully pass a CBS examination in a language plus sports and leisure in schools will not – even though it is equivalent to “A” level – be able to use the qualification on any UCCA application form. Nonetheless this could prove a useful additional qualification on a cv in the job market, confirming competence in English and another language.

It was suggested that the Banking and Insurance sector of the City might well be interested in a CBS task specific examination. With globalisation the need to assess language skills in these fields is now important and relevant.

### **Task 1 – Role Play**

The view was expressed at the Awards Meeting that this is a difficult task, requiring the candidate to listen to six different points and only at the end to relay the six pieces of information back in another language. In normal circumstances a bilingual worker would transfer information in short sequences as the information was given.

It was felt consideration could be given to breaking down the elements in Task 1 to facilitate this. Perhaps candidates could transfer back information after just two points at a time? This will be considered as a possible modification.

## **2.5. Centres**

Obviously any Centres (including Schools opting for the CBS in a language + sports and leisure) will be advised in good time of the change in the written task, modification of fees, etc.

It is hoped that some Centres who ceased to present candidates for the CBS examination may be able to resume courses.

## **3. Awards**

Since there was only one Centre apart from the London Centre for the 2010 examination, and with only one candidate, the prize for the best Centre for the 2010 examination will not be awarded.

The prize for the best candidate goes to a Polish candidate sitting the examination at the IoLet Open Centre.

The Moderator wishes to express appreciation and thanks to Ulrike Heinze, the CBS Examinations Manager, and her team, and the Director of Examinations, Hilary Maxwell-Hyslop, for their support. 2010 has been a difficult, transient year, but hopefully the CBS will gather support and go forward again.

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**Recommendations to Candidates**

1. Build up a glossary of useful words. Do not just rely on a dictionary, which may be misleading. The CBS targets specific areas of workplace knowledge and that vocabulary needs to be learned.
2. Cantonese candidates should double check the Chinese characters used in the translated text, and the text should be constructed according to Chinese syntax.
3. Candidates should use their time wisely:
  - Reading through the whole Task before commencing to write
  - Making sure sufficient time is allowed for each component of the Task
  - Allowing time to READ THROUGH the written elements at the end, as one can often then correct minor mistakes of spelling, grammar, etc.
4. Ask your tutor to advise you of any special weaknesses you may have – which will become apparent during the course. You can then pay attention to correcting any specific weakness, be it grammar, spelling, legibility, clearness in speaking, self confidence during the Oral Tasks.
5. Remember at the examination you **MUST** be sure to write on the examination paper your candidate number and the Task number, and you must put the right paper in the correct folder.

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**Recommendations to Centres**

1. Check the potential level of Candidates at enrolment stage
2. Make each candidate aware during the course of any specific lacunae in his/her aptitude, be it spelling, grammar, legibility, confidence in speaking, etc.
3. Hold a mock examination
4. Doing this will help avoid problems which arose in previous examination sessions, with candidates forgetting to put down the Task Number, their Candidate Number, or in some instances putting the wrong written paper in the wrong folder
5. Make sure candidates are given lined paper with a margin – and told NOT to write across the margin
6. Ensure the tape recorder is working correctly – and that the WHOLE of the oral examination is recorded. In one instance in the 2009 examination part of the oral was omitted. This can affect the results because tape sampling is then impossible for that section of the examination
7. Letter writing conventions in English and in the Other Language must be taught. Candidates are penalised if they fail to put a date, use the correct and appropriate salutations, etc.