

English for Business Level 3



Specification

Effective from January 2006

Vision Statement

Our vision is to contribute to the achievements of learners around the world by providing integrated assessment and learning services, adapted to meet both local market and wider occupational needs and delivered to international standards.



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INTRODUCTION

Education Development International (EDI) is a leading international awarding body that was formed through the merger of the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry Examinations Board (LCCIEB) and a leading online assessment provider (GOAL). EDI now delivers LCCI International qualifications (LCCI IQ) through a network of over 4000 registered centres in more than 100 countries worldwide. Our range of business-related qualifications are trusted and valued by employers worldwide and recognised by universities and professional bodies.

English for Business Level 3

This qualification is intended for candidates who have achieved a sound understanding of English in a business context, equivalent to Council of Europe B1 (Threshold) level, gained either through previous learning or employment or both. This qualification is intended for candidates who have reached a standard in English usage which will enable them to write acceptable English without employer embarrassment., and who now wish to

- Gain a recognised English qualification at the equivalent of Council of Europe B2 (Vantage) level
- Progress to LCCI IQ Level 3 in English for Business at the equivalent of Council of Europe C1 (Effective Operational Proficiency) level.

Further progress can be made up to Level 4 of this qualification. Each of these levels builds on the previous one and provides a consistent extension to the levels of skill and knowledge developed at the previous level.

Note: The equivalences shown above are specific to a pass grade at the respective EFB level. A credit or distinction is considered to be equivalent of one Council of Europe Framework (CEF) level higher than that of a pass (eg a level 3 credit / distinction = CEF C1).

Structure of the qualification

This qualification has three parts, one part is compulsory, the other two parts are optional. The LCCI IQ Level 3 Certificate in English for Business will be awarded to candidates who successfully complete the learning outcomes and assessments for the following part:

- Reading and Writing (compulsory)

An additional certificate will be awarded to candidates who successfully complete the learning outcomes and assessments either one or both of the following parts:

- Listening (optional)
- Speaking (optional)

Aims

The aims of this syllabus are to enable candidates to develop the ability to:

- understand and write English used in a variety of ways within a range of business contexts
- employ appropriate business formats and styles to produce a range of business documents for different audiences and purposes
- understand spoken and recorded Business English at the defined level
- participate in conversations and discussions
- make an oral presentation on a business-related topic

Assessment Objectives

The examination will assess the candidate's ability to:

Reading and Writing

- employ techniques for handling, displaying, and interpreting information on a range of common business practices
- display a range of appropriate tones and styles suitable for a variety of common business contexts
- display an advanced ability relative to the:
 - layout of business documentation
 - correctness for a given requirement
 - communicative impact
- assume a business role in a given scenario in order to perform a particular task on behalf of an employer
- transfer and reformulate information based on a given business scenario
- display imagination, originality and knowledge of business issues in fulfilling the role required by the scenario
- employ suitable linguistic forms used for business requirements so as to:
 - be sufficiently accurate in English to understand and express specialised business-related concepts
 - be able to understand and use common idiomatic forms as used in a business context
 - be able to understand subtleties of details and meaning in English material presented to them
 - make limited use of the one dictionary allowed during the examination

- display an awareness of the impact of new technology and innovative business ideas and practices on the nature and forms of communication.

Speaking

- discuss orally, business-related topics

Listening

- understand standard speech encountered in work and everyday situations, including factual information, such as instructions and directions, short talks, announcements, and news bulletins.

Syllabus Topics

Reading and Writing

- 1 Composing a business letter
- 2 Drafting an internal company report
- 3 Business-related text comprehension
- 4 Business-related text and data conversion and reformulation

There will be 4 compulsory questions corresponding to the 4 syllabus topics listed above. Each question carries equal marks. For a full breakdown of these topics, refer to syllabus topics 1 to 4 and the associated learning outcomes that are shown on pages 10 – 13 of this document.

Speaking

The English for Business Speaking Test is a test of English with a commercial and business focus, so candidates will be tested for their competence in English within a general business and/or commercial context. The topics for the oral test are as follows:

- 1 Earning a living
- 2 Production and sale of goods
- 3 Trade
- 4 Money
- 5 Transport
- 6 Communications
- 7 Education
- 8 Travel and tourism

Candidates will be expected to demonstrate a level of linguistic competence as outlined on syllabus topics 5 to 8 and the associated learning outcomes that are shown on pages 14 - 19.

Listening

The English for Business Listening Test is a test of English with a commercial and business focus, so candidates will be tested for their competence in English within a general business and / or commercial context. The topics for the listening test are as follows:

- 1 Personal information
- 2 Travel information
- 3 Work information
- 4 Business transactions
- 5 Instructions
- 6 Arrangements

Candidates will be expected to demonstrate a level of listening competence as outlined in syllabus topic 9 and the associated learning outcomes shown on page 19 of this document.

Assessment

Reading and Writing – compulsory

Candidates will be assessed via a 3-hour examination consisting of 4 questions as follows:

- Question 1 involves the composition of a letter, the stimulus for which will be an incoming letter, or the employer's instructions, or both. The rubric will include data on which a reply might be based and an indication of the tone required
- Question 2 involves the drafting of an internal report based on raw data given in the form of graphs, notes, press cuttings, charts, tables, etc. Candidates will have to understand, select, collate and, if necessary, supplement this data in order to write the report in the light of the instructions given.
- Question 3 involves a comprehension task in which candidates will be asked to show an understanding of information given for a defined purpose. This might be a press article, an extract from a business journal, a company report, a circular letter, a tender, or some other form of business reading matter, with which candidates should be familiar at this stage
- Question 4 is a conversion task involving the reformulation of a message for some defined purpose. Thus candidates may be required to produce a memo from a fax, letter or computer printout; or an abstract from an article; or a summary of a phone call for discussion; or a fax from a company notice, employer's instructions, etc.

Speaking - optional

Candidates will be assessed by a 15 minute examination including 5 minutes preparation time. The examination consists of 2 parts. There are four criteria – fluency, lexis, grammar and pronunciation – and candidates will be assessed on their performance in both parts. The assessment tasks are as follows:

- Part 1 consists of a warm up conversation during which the candidate will be asked about, eg. study, work ambitions for the future,
- Part 2 requires the candidate to participate in a discussion of the topic selected by the examiner

Topics for speaking tests are listed in the *Guidance for Speaking Test Examiners*.

Listening – optional

Candidates will be assessed by a listening test lasting about 25 minutes. The test comprises 30 short listening tasks, each with a multiple-choice question. There is one mark for each question.

There are 2 types of tasks:

Task 1. Candidates listen to a recorded question, which has three recorded responses (A, B, C). Candidates choose the appropriate response.

Task 2. Candidates listen to a short conversation or announcement. They then read a question about the conversation, which has 4 possible written answers (A, B, C, D), and choose the correct answer.

Candidate Answer Guidance

Answer Formats for Reading and Writing Test

This examination will test at a higher level the linguistic skills and business knowledge tested at Level 2. The techniques for handling, displaying, interpreting, transferring and reformulating information already introduced at the previous levels will be invoked for more advanced tasks. It is assumed that there will be no need for as great a level of close supervision and scrutiny as that required at the lower levels, and that successful candidates will, apart from occasional stylistic errors and slips, be able to carry out successfully all the linguistic tasks an employer might set.

In Question 1 the candidate's letter must be 'mailable' and hence must be correctly laid out, linguistically accurate and appropriate in tone and content.

In Question 2 the report must be clear, well-organised and logically paragraphed and – where appropriate – numbered. The language must be correct and stylistically appropriate, so that the report will be fit for internal distribution. The rubric will give guidance on the form and content required.

Question 3 is not only a test of factual understanding but also a test of candidates' understanding of argument, bias, persuasive devices and internal organisation. Their

comprehension should be signalled by the most economic means available, eg incomplete sentences, figures, single words, diagrams, organisation trees, etc.

The task in Question 4 is to ensure that a message received in one form is transmitted in another form. This will involve reducing lengthy messages, expanding fragmentary messages, completing inadequate messages, or selecting from redundant messages. In transferring the data from one form to the other the candidate must adopt the appropriate format and tone.

Candidates' English will be expected to be correct in formal terms in relation to grammar, punctuation and spelling together with the conventions governing general usage. Each question requires an answer that is:

- **correct** in formal terms (unless instructed otherwise) regarding:
 - grammar, punctuation, spelling, layout
 - good non-literary business communication

- **appropriate** in terms of:
 - adopting an imagined business role if requested
 - fitness for the occasion and any social role required
 - displaying firmness, politeness, persuasiveness, tact etc

- **adequate** in practical business terms in the sense that:
 - the purpose of the communication is achieved
 - the task is successfully completed
 - the correct format is chosen
 - essential matters are included
 - irrelevant information is excluded
 - order, clarity, balance and relevance are evident

Marks will be awarded differently for content, tone, style, layout, correctness and communicative impact, according to the nature of the various tasks. Candidates will be assigned an office role within a scenario and provided with ample data on which to base an adequate answer. Nevertheless, there will be scope for the display of imagination, originality and business background in fulfilling the role and developing the scenario.

Candidates' English should be sufficiently accurate, specialised, and idiomatic for them to detect subtleties of detail and meaning in English material presented to them, and to express such subtleties when they write.

Candidates will be required to exercise their judgement on matters of appropriacy and adequacy. They should be able to grasp a total situation from the fragments presented to them and respond linguistically in a way that would benefit their business.

Where possible candidates should avoid copying whole phrases or sentences from the examination paper.

Pass Mark Information and Mark Allocation

Reading and Writing

| | |
|-------------|-----|
| Pass | 50% |
| Credit | 60% |
| Distinction | 75% |

- Percentage allocations in each question are shown in brackets where applicable
- All questions carry equal marks

Question 1 The business letter (25% of total)

- Layout (20)
- Content (40)
- Style and impression (20)
- Mechanical accuracy (20)

Question 2 The report (25% of total)

- Organisation and presentation of content (40)
- Format (20)
- Layout and mechanical accuracy (40)

Question 3 Comprehension task (25% of total)

- Candidates are required to read a passage, adopt a role and answer questions
- An average of 10 questions may be asked, the mark value of which may vary according to depth and difficulty of specific points in the text or gained from information across the text
- Language correctness may not necessarily be a significant factor in answers which may be signalled in incomplete sentences, figures, diagrams, charts etc

Question 4 Conversion task (25% of total)

- Normally this question requires the production of 2 mutually dependent tasks based on the same scenario
- The allocation of marks for both tasks may differ according to the degree of difficulty and the input required for, typically:
 - content (45)
 - language and tone (45)
 - layout (10)

Speaking

Marks are awarded for: fluency, lexis, grammar and pronunciation with 4 possible marks available for each criterion (i.e. 1 = Fail, 2 = Pass, 3 = Credit, 4 = Distinction).

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Fail | two or more criteria scored at fail level. |
| Pass | minimum of three criteria scored at pass level (or higher) but failing to meet credit/distinction requirements. |
| Credit | minimum of three criteria scored at credit level + one at pass (or higher) but failing to meet distinction requirements. |
| Distinction | minimum of three criteria scored at distinction level + one at credit. |

The weighting of marks for a complete oral examination is:

| | |
|----------------------------------|------|
| • fluency | 25% |
| • lexical range and accuracy | 25% |
| • grammatical range and accuracy | 25% |
| • pronunciation | 25% |
| TOTAL | 100% |

Listening

1 mark is awarded for each correct answer.

| | |
|-------------|---------------|
| Pass | 15 – 17 marks |
| Credit | 18 – 22 marks |
| Distinction | 23 > marks |

Task 1 – 10 marks

Task 2 – 20 marks

Varieties of English

The Board will accept any of the main varieties of English (British, North American, Australasian) in candidates' answers as long as candidates are consistent in the variety they use.

Guided Learning Hours

EDI recommends that 140 - 160 Guided Learning Hours (GLHs) provide a suitable course duration for an 'average' candidate at this level. This figure includes direct contact hours as well as other time when candidates' work is being supervised by teachers. Ultimately, however, it is the responsibility of training centres to determine the appropriate course duration based on their candidates' ability and level of existing knowledge. EDI experience indicates that the number of GLHs can vary significantly from one training centre to another.

Recommended Reading List and Support Material

Reading List – Reading and Writing only

| Title | Publisher | ISBN Code | Order Code |
|--|-----------|---------------|------------|
| How to Pass English for Business, Third Level LCCIEB | | 1-86247-098-7 | 0124 ARLA |
| How to Pass English for Business, Third Level Teacher's Guide | LCCIEB | 1-86247-023-5 | ASPB 0110 |

Support Material

Candidates are allowed to take one dictionary into this examination which may be either English or foreign language/English; EDI cannot undertake to advise on which dictionaries to choose and candidates make the choice entirely at their own risk. Poor quality dictionaries may be misleading and candidates will lose time looking up words if they frequently have recourse to them.

For advice on the layout and presentation of the reading and writing test, candidates are recommended to refer to the past question papers and corresponding model answers which are available from EDI. For the listening and speaking tests, candidates are recommended to refer to the Guidance Document for English for Business Optional Tests. Sample items for the listening test and sample topic sheets for the speaking test can be found within the appendices of this document. In addition, a listening test sample CD and a speaking test tutorial CD are available from EDI. The speaking test tutorial CD has been developed to be used in conjunction with the speaking test sample topic sheets.

Syllabus Topic

Learning outcomes

1 Composing a business letter

Candidates must be able to:

The stimulus for the letter will be:

- an incoming letter/employer's instructions or both
- rubric information giving data on which to base the reply
- an indication of the required tone

- 1.1 Compose a letter on the basis of given data with a particular aim or instruction in view
- 1.2 Adopt the correct tone for the particular purpose
- 1.3 Employ consistent business letter conventions regarding:
 - 1.3.1 layout, address, salutation, complimentary close etc
 - 1.3.2 conventions of business letter language
- 1.4 Offer complete language correctness and mechanical accuracy
- 1.5 Display a range and fluency of business vocabulary and structures appropriate to this level
- 1.6 Display coherence and cohesion to ensure fluent reading
- 1.7 Provide adequate paragraphing
- 1.8 Avoid repeated and overt copying of information supplied in the rubric
- 1.9 Ensure the length of the letter is adequate for the stated purpose
- 1.10 Ensure that the finished letter is mailable

2 Drafting an internal company report

- **based on raw data given in the form of graphs, notes, press cuttings, charts, tables etc**
- **requiring the selection and collation of the data**
- **supplementing the given data**
- **in order to conform to the instructions given**

Candidates must be able to:

- 2.1 Demonstrate the purpose of the report by writing in a clear and well-organised manner
- 2.2 Add invented content to the report if required to do so
- 2.3 Organise the report material in an appropriate fashion rather than merely copying from the input
- 2.4 Observe the standard conventions for report writing determined by the purpose of the report and the nature of the information given
- 2.5 Organise the information content in relation to headings, paragraphs and indentation
- 2.6 Number logically the paragraphs and sections of the report
- 2.7 Employ correct and stylistically appropriate, matter-of-fact language which is usually neutral and factual
- 2.8 Meet the requirements of internal distribution of the report within the firm

3 Business-related text comprehension

The candidate will be required to read a passage which might be:

- **a press article or extract from a business journal**
- **a company report or circular letter**
- **some other form of business communication**

Candidates must be able to:

- 3.1 Ensure that the meaning of the passage is fully understood before answering the questions
- 3.2 Demonstrate a factual understanding of the passage
- 3.3 Detect and handle argument, bias and persuasive devices evident
- 3.4 Reply to questions and instructions by employing the most suitable economic means available. This may be in the form of incomplete sentences, figures, single words, diagrams, organisation charts etc
- 3.5 Be aware of the fact that answers may not be found consecutively in the text
- 3.6 Answer questions by seeking information from across the whole text
- 3.7 Avoid lifting the wording of the passage to provide answers, except where this is essential

4 Business-related text and data conversion and reformulation

The candidate is given information input in one form (eg text of a phone call) and has to reformulate this information in, usually, two other forms eg a fax or a company notice.

Candidates must be able to compose:

- 4.1 A *memorandum* from, say, a fax, letter or computer printout
- 4.2 An *abstract* from an article
- 4.3 A *summary* of a phone call or discussion
- 4.4 A *fax* from a company notice or employer's instructions
- 4.5 *Notes* from written or spoken information
- 4.6 A *notice*, correctly presented
- 4.7 *Messages*, suitably styled, for various purposes
- 4.8 A *list* or *guidelines* from a text

The candidate must ensure:

- 4.9 That, in transferring the data, an appropriate format and tone are adopted
- 4.10 That the message received in one form is transmitted in the required form. This may involve:
 - 4.10.1 reducing lengthy messages without loss of information
 - 4.10.2 expanding fragmentary messages
 - 4.10.3 completing inadequate messages
 - 4.10.4 selecting from redundant messages

5 Linguistic competence (structures)

Candidates must be able to use:

- 5.1 Subordinate clauses (eg *The report, as you said, was ...*)
- 5.2 Introductory adverbials expressing:
 - 5.2.1 attitude (eg *frankly, honestly*)
 - 5.2.2 declarative sentences (eg *naturally, obviously*)
 - 5.2.3 defining a viewpoint (eg *theoretically speaking*)
 - 5.2.4 argument structure (eg *nevertheless, otherwise*)
- 5.3 The anaphoric use of pronouns; using pronouns, possessives, pro-adverbials *there, then* and the verb *do* when referring back (eg *His manager lived there long before he did*)

6 Linguistic competence (concepts)

Candidates must be able to express:

- 6.1 (Non) existence (eg *to destroy, to create, to occur, to discover*)
- 6.2 Location:
 - 6.2.1 nouns (eg *place/position*)
 - 6.2.2 verbs (eg *to be situated/arranged*)
 - 6.2.3 relative position – preposition (eg *at the back of*), adverbs *below, at the side*
- 6.3 Distance (eg *remote*)
- 6.4 Motion (eg *to flow, to come along*)

- 6.5 Direction:
 - 6.5.1 destination (eg *is there a direct route?*)
 - 6.5.2 adverbs (eg *backwards/clockwise*)
 - 6.5.3 prepositions (eg *up, down, towards*)
- 6.6 Arrangement (eg *pattern, set*)
- 6.7 Dimension:
 - 6.7.1 size (eg *enormous/tiny*)
 - 6.7.2 verbs (eg *to become, to get bigger*)
 - 6.7.3 weight (eg *load, weigh*)
 - 6.7.4 volume (eg *content, to contain*)
 - 6.7.5 nouns (eg *depth, length*)
- 6.8 Time:
 - 6.8.1 indications (eg *whenever*)
 - 6.8.2 duration:
 - prepositions (eg *throughout*)
 - verbs (eg *to continue*)
 - adverbs (eg *always, for good*)
 - 6.8.3 sequence (eg *next, later on*)
 - 6.8.4 simultaneousness (eg *meanwhile, while + sub-clause*)
 - 6.8.5 future reference (eg *soon*)
 - 6.8.6 past reference (eg *recent(ly)*)
 - 6.8.7 speed (eg *rapid(ly)*)
 - 6.8.8 frequency (eg *occasional(ly), weekly*)
 - 6.8.9 continuity (eg *to carry on*)

6.8.10 performance/intermittence (eg *permanent(ly), sporadic(ally)*)

6.8.11 commencement/end (eg *to begin, finish*)

6.9 Number:

6.9.1 fractions (eg *It's half of what we ordered*)

6.9.2 minus/plus (eg *It's minus 5 degrees*)

6.9.3 negative/positive

6.10 Quantity:

6.10.1 determiners (eg *less, least*)

6.10.2 percent/sum/total

6.10.3 to add/to subtract/to multiply/
to divide

6.11 Degree (eg *somewhat more expensive / hardly a bargain*)

6.12 Quality:

6.12.1 shape:
- adjectives (eg *circular, crooked*)
- nouns (eg *circle, curve*)

6.12.2 visibility:
- nouns (eg *glance, darkness*)
- adjectives (eg *blind, invisible*)

6.12.3 audibility (eg *silence, silent*)

6.12.4 taste (eg *flavour*)

6.12.5 smell (eg *odour, perfume*)

6.12.6 texture (eg *smooth, rough*)

6.12.7 age:
- adjectives (eg *elderly, mature*)
- nouns (*adolescent, maturity*)
- generation (eg *to be under, over age*)

6.12.8 physical condition (eg *in good shape*)

6.12.9 material (eg *aluminium, concrete*)

6.12.10 genuineness (eg *false, imitation*)

6.13 Evaluation:

6.13.1 quality:

- adjectives (eg *perfect, poor, outstanding*)
- verbs (eg *to deteriorate, improve*)
- adverbs (eg *badly, excellently*)

6.13.2 acceptability (eg *it's just/not quite what I wanted*)

also a range of adjectives (eg *(in)correct, (un)successful, (ab)normal, (un)usual, complex, particular, special*)

6.13.3 expressions of opinion (eg *I'm against / I cannot accept... / It's useless*)

7 Linguistic competence (vocabulary)

Candidates must be able to use vocabulary in the following areas:

- 7.1 Identification of people, roles and relationships:
 - 7.1.1 appearance, personality, character and skills of people
 - 7.1.2 group descriptions (eg *work teams and personnel/business networks*)
- 7.2 Personal interests:
 - 7.2.1 hobbies, entertainment, sport, mass media
 - 7.2.2 social discussions on current affairs, books, personal views and preferences
- 7.3 Travel:
 - 7.3.1 types of travel/modes of transport for business and personal use
 - 7.3.2 description/analysis of journeys
- 7.4 Business accommodation - exchanging views on:
 - 7.4.1 types of premises, furnishings, layout/design, running costs
 - 7.4.2 regional analysis of communication facilities for business
- 7.5 Making deals:
 - 7.5.1 prices, payments, exchange rates, discounts, terms and conditions, negotiating prices, quantities
- 7.6 The workplace:
 - 7.6.1 job descriptions, pay, hours of work, holidays, length of notice, task descriptions, routines

- 7.6.2 health, safety, security regulations, accident reports
- 7.6.3 operating instructions for equipment - faults, symptoms, remedies
- 7.6.4 technical assessments and proposals
- 7.6.5 prospects and the social life within the organisation

8 Linguistic competence (functions)

Candidates must be able to express:

- 8.1 Opinions (eg *(personally) I think you should ...*)
- 8.2 (Dis)agreement:
 - strong (eg *exactly/definitely*)
 - reluctant (eg *I suppose so*)
 - with reservation (eg *that may be so/ perhaps so*)
 - strong disagreement (eg *nonsense!*)
 - weak disagreement (eg *I'm not so sure*)
- 8.3 Communication repair:
 - 8.3.1 *Did you mean ...?*
 - 8.3.2 requesting clarification (eg *what is ... (exactly)?*)
 - 8.3.3 correcting (eg *let me start/say that again*)

9 Listening competence

Candidates must be able to demonstrate their ability to:

- 9.1 Understand the main ideas of complex speech on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his / her field of specialism.
- 9.2 Follow extended speech and complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar, and the direction of speech is signposted by explicit markers.
- 9.3 Understand standard spoken English, live or broadcast, on both familiar and

unfamiliar topics normally encountered in personal, social, academic or vocational life.

- 9.4 Understand announcements and messages spoken at normal speed.
- 9.5 Follow the essentials of complex reports and presentations.
- 9.6 Understand recordings in standard dialect likely to be encountered in social, professional or academic life and identify viewpoints and attitudes as well as the information content.



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