



Hearing difficulties

Hearing difficulties may range from a minor condition (where the candidate may need to take the test in a separate room, or use headphones, for example) to total deafness (where they may need a lip-reading version of a hearing test).

1. For the Listening Test

a) If a candidate suffers from partial hearing loss and can hear with the help of headphones or special amplification equipment, the centre may be able to provide this type of equipment. Please note that candidates are not allowed to use a Walkman or similar personal stereo.

b) If candidates need more help, centres can request a lip-reading version of the Listening test (please note that this may not be available for some exams.) The centre supervisor will be instructed to read the Listening texts to the candidate. The candidate will hear each text three times, and the supervisor will make sure they have enough time to read the questions and to write their answers.

- I. The first time, the supervisor will read the text straight through without stopping.
- II. The second time the supervisor will pause while reading the text. This is to give the candidate time to think about the text and questions, and/or write one or more answers.
- III. The third time the supervisor will read the text straight through again so the candidate can check their answers.

It is important that candidates work with past examination material before the test so that they know what to expect.

Cambridge ESOL can provide past tests in order for candidates to practise this type of test with their teacher. Please contact the Hellenic American Union Center for Examinations and Certifications for further information.

2. For the Speaking Test

For KET, PET, FCE, CAE, CPE candidates normally take the Speaking test with a partner.

A candidate with hearing difficulties can apply to:

- have extra time if it takes them longer than usual to say things or to understand other people
- take the test with a partner who is not doing the examination. This may help them to lipread what he or she is saying more easily
- take the test without a partner (i.e. in the parts of the test which usually ask both candidates to talk to each other, the candidate can talk to the examiner instead).

Please note that candidates will not be allowed to use signing in the Speaking test.

3. Endorsed Certificates

If a candidate has severe hearing difficulties and the Special Arrangements described above are not sufficient, for example if the candidate is unable to lip-read, then they can apply for exemption from either the Listening test or the Speaking test in certain exams. Candidates can only be exempt from one paper.

Candidates who take this option will not have to do the Listening test or the Speaking test. If they pass the examination, they will then get a certificate which is endorsed (i.e. it has the following statement printed on it):

'The candidate was exempt from satisfying the full range of assessment objectives in the examination.'

NB: For all ESOL exams, candidates must apply for exemption before taking an examination.

Important notes

Please note that it may not always be possible for a lip-reading version of a particular examination to be prepared.

Cambridge ESOL reserves the right not to approve applications for Special Arrangements.

Adapted from Cambridge ESOL Special Arrangements for candidates.