# 8984 International ESOL - Achiever

Chief Examiner report for 2009/2010

General observations

The candidates at this level have mostly done well. The high Fail rate remarked on last year has decreased dramatically – in fact, it has halved - which is very encouraging. The Pass rate has increased from 50% to 72% which is also a very positive trend. What a shame that the performance record was not sustained at the First Class Pass level, which has fallen from 24%.

IESOL Achiever - B1
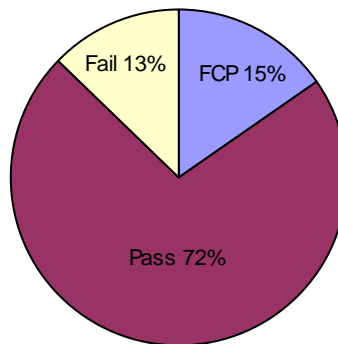
Areas of good performance

Candidates appear generally to be well-prepared for the level and perform fairly consistently across the papers. They continue to perform strongest in the Listening and Reading papers but there have been noted improvements in the Writing.

Areas for development

Writing Part 1 shows up the weaker students who fail to follow the instructions of identifying AND correcting the errors. Listening 3 is a task for which is there is room for improvement in answering within the word limit; this also holds true for Reading 4. For Writing 2 and 3, candidates could improve by covering and expanding on all the content points.

Recommendations

Candidates should practise listening activities, listening both to monologues and dialogues to help them prepare for Listening 2 and 3. The text material should include a range of different voices and accents so that candidates are not thrown when they hear the recordings. Candidates would benefit from further training in grammar and punctuation for Writing Part 1; then practice with sample papers is needed to ensure candidates fulfil the exact requirements of both circling the error and providing the correct version. More extended writing is needed in Writing 2 and 3 to avoid candidates producing simply very brief responses. As the CEFR states, B1 level involves the ability to produce 'simple connected text' and so the candidates need to demonstrate this. More attention to the Writing paper overall would greatly benefit as this tends to be the weakest area.

Tips
- Practise listening to a wide range of material. Specific practice is needed in answering in no more than 3 words for Listening 3.
- Use the sample papers to compare instructions for each task. Analyse the task instructions to highlight the instruction word and the various content points. Attention should be drawn to the different functions involved.
- Candidates need to be reminded of the benefits of reading questions carefully before the listening recording is played and before they answer the reading questions.
- In Writing 1, candidates should keep a tally of the different types of mistakes they've found and check them off as they go along. There are always 3 punctuation errors to find, 3 grammar and 2 spelling (not including the examples).
- Practise neat, legible handwriting.

Additional comments

As candidates appear quite strong in their reading skills, they should use this skill to advantage in the other papers too by reading instructions and questions carefully. There are still basic examination techniques which could be improved, such as using dictionaries to check unknown words, timing themselves to avoid rushing towards the end, writing clearly and making any alterations they might make as clear as possible for the marker. If centres refer to the CEFR descriptors for B1, they need to encourage candidates to demonstrate that their ability is above A2 by producing more extended texts in writing with a higher degree of accuracy. If we are to achieve a higher spread of First Class Passes, then candidates need stretching to their highest ability rather than allowing them to just play safe.