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Extended Certification – Frequently Asked Questions

What is extended certification?

When a test-taker completes an English language assessment and scores within an acceptable range, they may earn a certificate for the CEFR level immediately below the level of the test they took. For instance, if a candidate takes a B2 exam but does not pass with enough points at this level, and yet scores enough points to demonstrate B1 level skills, she/she will earn a B1 certificate.

Extended certification is being implemented with Pearson English International Certificate as of October 2021 with results issued in Nov 2021.

Extended certification is also synonymous with a Fall-Back Grade.

This is a common practice in English language testing and has been used by competitors for several years.

When is extended certification being introduced?

Beginning with October 2021 results, extended certification will be available to all candidates who take a Pearson English International Certificate test at the A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2 level. Results for the October test will be issued in Nov 2021.

Is it possible to earn a certificate above the CEFR level that I took?

Extended certification is not offered above the level of the test that the candidate took. The highest level that a candidate can earn is a Distinction level for the CEFR level test they completed. We may consider making extended certification upward available in the future but at this time, the fall-back grade is the only available option.

Has the exam changed to make extended certification possible?

No, the content of the test has not changed in order to introduce fall back grades.

Which levels offer extended certification?

Any candidates who take Pearson English International Certificate Levels 1-5 (A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2) are eligible for extended certification. It is not offered at the A1 level because there is not a level of CEFR below A1.

Is it still possible to fail the test?

Candidates must be within a small percentage of the pass mark in order to earn the lower-level certificate. It is still possible to fail the test, although most candidates are likely to achieve a pass or a fall-back grade.

What will it say on my certificate about my level? Will it indicate the level of the test I sat or the level that I earned with extended certification?

You will be issued a certificate for the level that you accomplished. If you were registered for and took a B2 test, but achieved a B1 as a fall-back grade, your certificate will indicate that you earned a B1. The B2 will not be referenced on your certificate.

Can I get a new certificate if I took the test before extended certification was offered?

We will not be doing retrospective marking of results. It is not possible to earn a fall-back grade for tests completed prior to Oct 2021.

How does it work?

- A candidate should be registered for the test at the CEFR level they are most likely to pass
- If a candidate achieves 40-49 (50-59 at level 5) points on their test, they will earn a pass at the lower CEFR level*
- If the candidate achieves 39 (49 at level 5) points or fewer, no certificate will be issued
- When grades are issued via EdExcel Online, the test centre will be able to see if a candidate achieved a fall-back grade (extended certification), indicated by 'L' in the final grade column and on the CSPR (candidate statement of provisional results)
- Certificates for fall-back grades will be distributed with all other certificates mailed to the test centre