![Cambridge Assessment English logo]

## Running the Speaking tests

This document gives you an introduction to the quality assurance requirements for Speaking Examiners (SEs) and Team Leaders (TLs). Once approved, we provide centres with more detailed guidance and support for setting up their network of SEs and TLs.

**Your responsibilities as a centre include:**
- establishing and managing a network of SEs. This must be done in accordance with our regulations and includes making sure that all SEs are inducted, trained, certificated and monitored
- engaging enough TLs
- covering all costs relating to the establishment and management of the SEs and TLs

The quality assurance steps for SEs are the responsibility of the CEM in liaison with the TL.

### Key roles:

| | |
|---|---|
| PSL | Professional Support Leader |
| RTL | Regional Team Leader |
| TL | Team Leader |
| SE | Speaking Examiner |

## Team Leader System

The quality assurance of Speaking Examiners is supported through the Team Leader system:
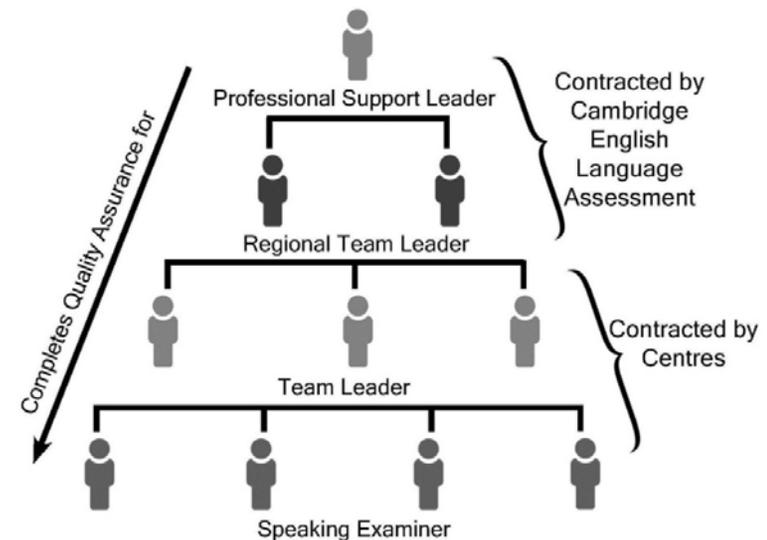


We recruit and manage PSLs and RTLs to provide support and guidance to centres and to monitor their performance. They can advise of local arrangements – such as available TLs or centres that share SEs. They may be able to advise on fees that are charged in the region. However, ultimately it is the responsibility of the centre to ensure it engages enough TLs and SEs.

If you want to ask an RTL or PSL to act as your TL, this is a matter for you to discuss and agree directly with them and you must pay then directly. We cannot guarantee that RTLs or PSLs have the time to take on this role for you, and we are unfortunately unable to provide you with SEs or TLs.

## Speaking Test Endorsement

We carry out a Speaking Test Endorsement (STE) as part of the centre approval process. We will arrange for someone to talk to you about the Team Leader system, explain it further, and answer your questions.

**Before the STE, read through this section carefully and prepare any questions.** Please also arrange for the right people to be part of the conversation – the nominated Centre Exams Manager and any colleagues who will assist them with running the Speaking Examiner network.

As part of the endorsement we will:

- Check if you can access trained Speaking Examiners, or whether you will need to train new ones.
- If you need to train new ones, we'll also check if you have access to people that will meet our requirements.
- Give you guidance on the length of the Speaking tests and quality assurance requirements so that you can use this to help estimate your SE costs.
- Discuss the appointment of a Team Leader for your centre. If there is no TL available locally, it may be necessary to work with a TL who is based in another region, or country.
- Explain any local arrangements. For example, in some regions, all Speaking Examiners are centrally co-ordinated by the PSL/RTL. In other regions, some centres share SEs or some set up their own pool of SEs.
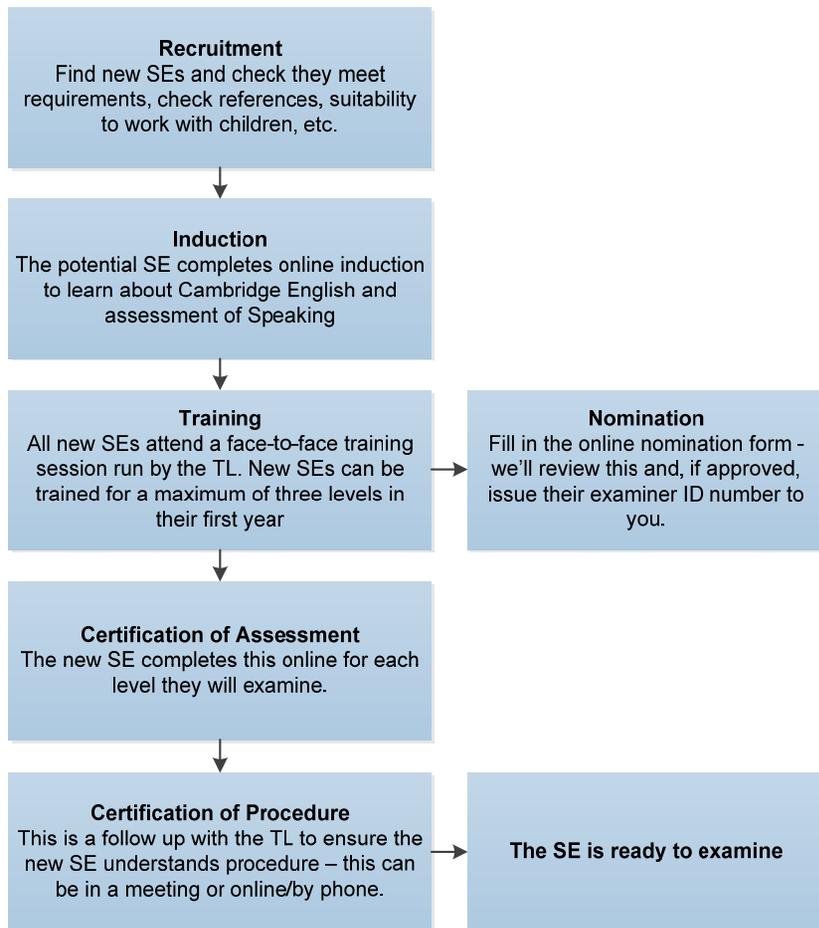
If you wish to share SEs with another centre, talk to the PSL/RTL or your nearest Cambridge English office and follow their guidance. This may involve contacting another Centre Exams Manager (after discussion with the office/PSL/RTL) to discuss your contribution to the costs of establishing and running that network of SEs. The centre may already have paid to train and certificate all the SEs and will expect you to contribute financially. The exact nature of the costs is a matter for you and the other centre to discuss, and can vary by region.

In all cases, it is important that you establish clearly with your SEs and TLs how much you will pay for each activity. For teachers employed at your institution, this work may be integrated into their job or paid separately.
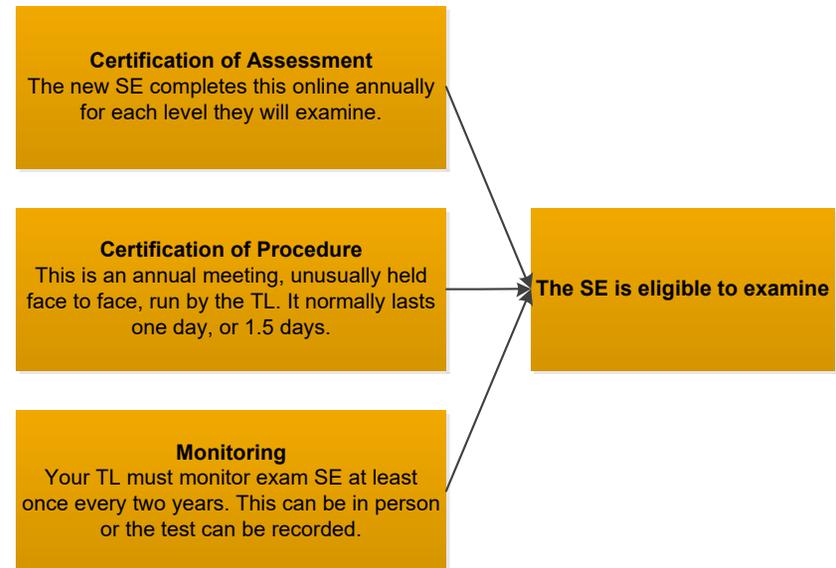
The rates to pay are a matter to be settled locally. You cannot run the exams without SEs and TLs, and therefore it is important to maintain a positive relationship with them and to pay them a suitable rate and on time. Poor payment practices can lead to a centre losing SEs and then you will not be able to run the exams.

# Quality assurance processes

**For new Speaking Examiners:**

**Recruitment**
Find new SEs and check they meet requirements, check references, suitability to work with children, etc.

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**Induction**
The potential SE completes online induction to learn about Cambridge English and assessment of Speaking

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**Training**
All new SEs attend a face-to-face training session run by the TL. New SEs can be trained for a maximum of three levels in their first year

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**Nomination**
Fill in the online nomination form - we'll review this and, if approved, issue their examiner ID number to you.

↓ (from Training)

**Certification of Assessment**
The new SE completes this online for each level they will examine.

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**Certification of Procedure**
This is a follow up with the TL to ensure the new SE understands procedure – this can be in a meeting or online/by phone.

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**The SE is ready to examine**

**Requirements for on-going quality assurance of Speaking Examiners:**

**Certification of Assessment**
The new SE completes this online annually for each level they will examine.

**Certification of Procedure**
This is an annual meeting, unusually held face to face, run by the TL. It normally lasts one day, or 1.5 days.

**Monitoring**
Your TL must monitor exam SE at least once every two years. This can be in person or the test can be recorded.

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**The SE is eligible to examine**

# Quality assurance timetable for new Speaking Examiners

This timetable is a guide and you should discuss the options with your PSL/RTL.

| Quality assurance step | Minimum number of weeks to start process before SE is due to examine | Guidance |
|---|---|---|
| **Recruitment** | 12 | Review number of Speaking Examiners required – your PSL/RTL can help with this. |
| | 10 | Recruit SEs – invite and review applications; ensure they meet our Minimum Professional Requirements. |
| | 9 | Interview prospective SEs – TL carries out interviews. |
| **Induction** | 8 | Prospective SEs are invited to complete induction by the TL. |
| | | Induction results checked by the TL. |
| **Training** | 4 | Training must be completed face-to-face for each exam level. |
| | | Complete the nomination process for prospective SEs so they can get their examiner IDs |
| **Certification** | 3 | Certification must be completed for each CEFR level they will examine.<br><br>There are two elements:<br><br>**1. Certification of Procedure (CofP)**<br>Face-to-face certification meeting for up to 20 SEs or phone/internet meeting.<br><br>**2. Certification of Assessment (CofA)**<br>Done online. |
| | | Certification is checked and if successful, records are updated and SEs are now eligible to examine. |
| **Monitoring** | n/a | All new SEs must be monitored in their first session of examining. |

# Recruitment requirements for Speaking Examiners

You must ensure that all your SEs meet the following **Minimum Professional Requirements.**

The centre must ensure that all applicants meet the **Minimum Professional Requirements** (MPRs) for Speaking Examiners before proceeding to induction:

- education to first degree level or equivalent
- a recognised language teaching qualification
- proof of substantial, relevant, recent teaching experience
- suitable English language competency
- appropriate professional attributes and interpersonal skills
- meet local legislation requirements for working with children (where applicable)

It is your responsibility to ensure that no unsuitable person is appointed as a Speaking Examiner.

An applicant can be exempt either from the formal teaching qualification or from the first degree/equivalent requirement (but not both) in the light of considerable teaching experience supported by positive references. The decision on such cases must be referred to the PSL/RTL.

**Working with children and young people**

If you offer exams to candidates under the age of 16, applicant SEs must have recent experience of dealing with children, either socially or professionally, and must show that they can work with children in line with local legislation. They must also be willing to sign a declaration that they are suitably responsible to conduct exams with children.

**English language competencies:**
- overall language proficiency relevant to the exam level (at least two Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) levels higher than the CEFR level of the exam)
- clear diction including intelligibility outside the region/country where examining takes place
- the ability to assess the accuracy, acceptability and appropriateness of spoken English at the relevant exam level.

**Personal qualities and interpersonal skills: you should ensure that all SEs:**
- are responsible, conscientious, meet deadlines, and have good attention to detail for filling in mark sheets correctly
- accept and follow guidance and feedback
- have access to a PC/laptop and broadband for online certification
- are available to attend annual Certification of Procedure meetings
- are available to examine during a substantial proportion of the examining period
- dress appropriately and are sensitive to local cultural norms and able to interact appropriately so that candidates can provide an adequate sample of English, representative of their speaking ability.

**Choosing Speaking Examiners**

An SE is not allowed to examine any candidate with whom they have any social contact, for example as a relative, friend, etc.
An SE must not examine a candidate they have examined in the previous six weeks or taught within the past three years. For this reason, if your centre is also a teaching institution, we would encourage you to recruit some of your SEs from outside your centre.

# Recruitment requirements for Team Leaders

A TL must:
- meet all the requirements of being an SE
- have at least two years' experience as an SE for Cambridge English exams
- have been monitored in the last two years and have received a satisfactory rating
- have the time to commit to the role

## Number of TLs

You will need at least one TL attached to your centre. As a guide, we recommend approximately 30 Speaking Examiners for each TL. Most TLs can check 30 people in the annual CofA, run two Certification of Procedure (CofP) meetings each year, and monitor 15 people over the course of 12 months. This is a guide and can vary depending on the number of SEs in a region, and the time that a TL can dedicate to the role.

TLs can be responsible for more than 30 SEs, provided they are able to implement all stages of the SE quality assurance cycle.

## The role

The TL role includes inducting, training, certificating and monitoring SEs. A large centre may have more than one TL, or centres may share a TL (and share the associated costs).

## Options for finding a TL include:

- Engage a TL in the region to work with your centre. This may involve sharing costs with other centres that the TL currently works with. This contribution will need to be negotiated directly by you with the centres for whom the TL already works, and new centres must do everything possible to avoid upsetting existing relationships and financial arrangements. In some regions there may not be a TL, or the TL may not have any availability for taking on another centre, in which case you will need to look for an alternative. Your PSL/RTL can advise you of any TLs in your region.
- If no TL in the region is available, you can nominate a TL from among your own staff. In this case, the TL must meet all the requirements (listed above) of a TL. The decision whether to approve a TL rests with Cambridge English.
- Asking an RTL/PSL to cover the role of TL until one can be found and appointed for the centre. This will depend on the RTL/PSL's availability. They will advise you of their rates and payment for any TL work they conduct must be paid directly to them by the centre.

You must agree terms and conditions and payment arrangements with the proposed TL before submitting a *TL Nomination* form.

If you wish to nominate the same person for the role of Team Leader and the role of Centre Exams Manager, please note that a person can only hold both roles for two years, after which a new CEM or TL must be proposed by the centre. This approach can be useful when first setting up a centre, and once established you will need to ensure that two different people take on these roles.

## Financial responsibility of centres for the Team Leader System

**The centre is responsible for all costs relating to the establishment and running of its network of SEs and TLs.**

All SEs outside the UK are managed and employed (or engaged pursuant to some other locally agreed arrangement) directly by centres. Centres must ensure that they have a contract with each Speaking Examiner and Team Leaders that they engage or employ. This may be part of a contract which covers other roles which they carry out for your centre or may be specifically for the SE role.

You can choose to pay the TLs and SEs separately or, in the case of SEs and TLs from inside the centre, you can choose to incorporate these activities into their role as employees. In all cases the matter of payment is an issue for you to manage directly with your SEs and TLs.

All terms and conditions of employment of SEs and TLs should be in line with local legislation and it is the responsibility of the centre to make arrangements for this. We recommend having a written agreement between you and your SEs and TLs.

**SEs are normally paid by centres for:**
- their examining time
- any associated time spent on training, certification and other activities.

**Team Leaders are normally paid by centres for:**
- interviewing potential SEs
- overseeing online induction of SEs
- running training and certification sessions
- supervising the SEs' online standardisation of assessment via PSN
- monitoring SEs
- attending annual TL meetings
- assisting CEMs with administrative tasks such as setting up SE meetings, record-keeping, dealing with nomination forms, etc.

**In addition, any associated expenses for the above activities are also the centre's responsibility**, for example the travel, accommodation and subsistence of the TL for their annual TL meeting (this meeting may be in-country or may involve cross-border travel), travel costs when conducting face-to-face monitoring, etc.

Fees paid can vary widely from one country to another and also within countries, based on the availability of people that meet the requirements and the typical fees for teaching, etc.