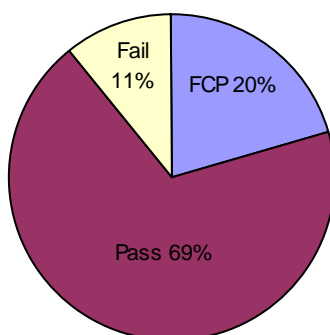


# 8985 International Spoken ESOL – Achiever

## General Observations

This has been a level of mixed fortunes but it is interesting to note that distribution is very close to that found for the IESOL exam and that the comparison with last year also follows the same pattern for both exams ie while the Pass rate has shown a marked increase and the Fail rate shown a very healthy reduction, almost halving, the First Class Pass rate has fallen disappointingly by about a third.

IESOL Achiever - B1



## Areas of good performance

Candidates generally manage well with Part 3, easily understanding the prompts provided and achieving a good level of discussion with the interlocutor, the strong candidates being those who take the initiative and don't continually wait to be prompted for a response. This is very encouraging as this was noted in last year's report as weak area in need of improvement. Part 1 is often also well done, with candidates appearing used to talking on familiar and personal topics. Good use is often made of requests for repetition or clarification.

## Areas for development

Candidates could benefit from focusing on turn-taking so that conversations flow smoothly and natural exchanges are achieved. Some problems are experienced with Part 2 in that candidates do not always appear familiar with the format and what is required – it is not a full role-play in that candidates are never asked to be anyone other than themselves but the interlocutor *will* role-play and may make comments or express emotions which are not genuine but which unnerve the candidate who thinks they're real.

## Recommendations

Practice is needed in speaking for a long turn and responding to associated questions. Candidates should realise that in Part 4, these questions may be related to the topic but broaden out from it. As these questions are pre-set, the interlocutor can have no way of anticipating the candidate's talk so the follow-up questions can move in slightly different directions. Candidates need to think around the topic to anticipate how to respond.

## Tips

- Practise role-plays and simulations. The situations will be familiar, everyday ones which should not

require a high level of specific vocabulary. It is therefore a range of functional language which would be useful and beginning to understand change of register for friends/strangers/teacher-student relationships etc.

- A useful game for Part 4 practice would be to ask the class to each write one everyday object on a piece of paper and put them all in a bag. A student takes one and has to speak for a minute on the given object.
- Using the suggestion above, instead of talking about the object, the class have to find out what's on the paper by asking different questions. This will encourage interaction and questioning techniques. By giving time limits to games such as these, students become familiar with dealing with spontaneity and (slight) pressure.

### **Additional comments**

According to the CEFR, a B1 should be able to 'enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life' and 'connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events'. Although an obvious statement, B1 is between A2 and B2 but from the results, it would seem that some candidates are not really performing above A2 level and need greater preparation to produce better performances.