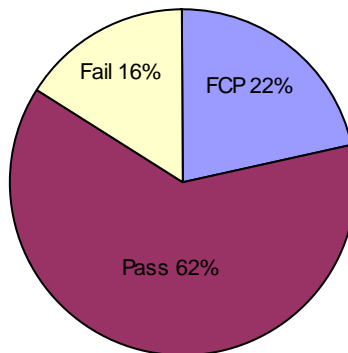


8985 International Spoken ESOL – Preliminary

General Observations

There have been mixed fortunes at this level. Although the Pass rate has increased from 51% to 62%, one cannot be over-encouraged by this as the Fail rate has increased significantly from 9% to 16% and the First Class Pass rate fallen dramatically from 40% to 22%, almost half of what it was last year. Overall, this is disappointing and it is hoped for renewed fortunes next year as it is hoped that candidates performing highly at A1 will be well motivated to proceed with their studies and the higher level exams.

ISESOL Preliminary - A1



Areas of good performance

Part 3 tends to be the strongest in the exam, with candidates obviously well used to using picture prompt material. Good candidates also do well on Part 1, responding well to provide personal information.

Areas for development

Candidates should be encouraged to produce as much (relevant) language as they can. Often in Part 1, their answers tend to be minimal so there is very little evidence of language for the marker to assess. In Part 2, some candidates seem unfamiliar with social conventions related to different types of greetings and situations. Some weaknesses appear in candidates' question formations, in not using question words and auxiliaries accurately and appropriately.

Recommendations

For Part 1, candidates can be encouraged to extend their answers beyond one or two words. They should be reminded that accuracy is not the only assessment criterion and so if they make a mistake, it's not the end of the world. Range, pronunciation and fluency are all being assessed too.

Tips

- Try a quiz or a team game – ask students yes/no questions. The 'winner' is the one who can add on more relevant information eg 'Have you got any brothers and sisters?' 'Yes' (award 1 mark); 'Yes, one brother' (award 2 marks), 'Yes, one brother – his name is Marco – and a baby sister, Maria' (3 or 4 marks).
- Practise a range of simple social situations eg related to birthday greetings, opening doors, meeting strangers, asking for directions etc. A functional approach helps here, over and beyond grammar.

- Practise speaking in a long turn, again using functions appropriately of narrating or describing and responding to follow up questions more fully.

Additional comments

It is hoped that the performance can generally improve at this level for next year as A1 is such a crucial level for future motivation. If candidates are showing they have the necessary language ability to execute Part 3 effectively, there is no reason why this shouldn't extend across the whole exam. Are candidates unnecessarily nervous? Candidates should be set at ease before they enter the exam room, encouraged to enjoy the experience and produce the best language at their disposal. If they over-focus on grammatical accuracy, they may limit their responses which penalises them on the other criteria which could pull up their marks significantly.