



CIOL Working Level Language Framework

What we expect

Translators, interpreters, teachers, academics and other language professionals for whom using two or more languages interchangeably is the core of their job will usually be expected to demonstrate very high and effective professional proficiency (at least C1 in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages or CEFR below).

Some business people, professionals or those working in government - including diplomats and members of the Armed Forces - may require the two highest 'Proficient User' levels of linguistic ability (C1 and C2) particularly the skills of listening, speaking and reading.

However, many people also use languages in a working context, as a part or enabler of their job in business, the professions and government; typically to work/liaise with international partners, stakeholders, customers, subsidiaries etc. For people liaising with international customers, suppliers and officials, supporting inbound and outbound delegations and taking up international assignments or postings (and for whom translation and interpreting is not part of their role) CEFR 'Independent User' can be a useful level of linguistic competence, which will only improve over time and become more valuable and advantageous with use.

Those using languages as part or an enabler of their work, may make significant positive contributions to their organisations as 'career linguists' via regular or periodic interventions. Both individuals and organisations would, therefore, be well advised to recognise and formally capture B1 and B2 level language skills as a linguistic resource which is worth recording, developing and deploying; hence the Chartered Institute of Linguists setting out this framework.

Common European Framework (CEFR)

PROFICIENT USER	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.

INDEPENDENT USER	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.

NATO/STANAG 6001

5 Native/Bilingual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In every respect language use is equivalent to that of a highly articulate, well-educated native speaker
4 Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can understand/produce: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ language appropriate for almost all topics, situations and purposes, e.g. negotiations, lectures/ position papers ○ language adapted to specific audiences ○ precise and efficient language for all professional purposes, for persuasion and for elaborations on highly abstract topics • Demonstrates a vast vocabulary, and the ability to understand/ express subtleties, nuances and culturally appropriate references • Language use reflects the socio-cultural standards of the country or area where the language is natively spoken
3 Professional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can understand/produce: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ formal and informal language for most social and professional situations, e.g. business meetings, conferences, reports on complex issues

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ well-structured language relating to abstract topics and hypotheses, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialization ○ detailed arguments for and against different opinions ○ language to convey implicit information, inferences, and emotional overtones <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Repetition is rarely requested, has a natural flow, without searching for words ● Is easily understood by native speakers.
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United Nations

The United Nations describes their equivalent of NATO/STANAG 6001 Level 3 as below:

UN Level III: Advanced Language Competence - *Use the language efficiently, with fluency and accuracy within the UN, in a variety of contexts and situations, when dealing with a variety of general, personal, public and work-related topics and matters. Show a good command of a range of linguistic, discursive and pragmatic competences and of social language conventions to meet most communication needs. Respond autonomously and sufficiently to most required actions. Use reference resources to confirm and refine interpretation, and to improve communication.*

Reading - Understand most written texts of different genres and of different lengths, identifying essential information, the most relevant details, and the tone and the viewpoints expressed – both implicit and explicit.

Listening - Understand most commonly used idiomatic and figurative language, and explicit sociocultural references. Understand the general meaning and identify essential information, the most relevant details, and the attitudes and viewpoints expressed – both implicit and explicit – in texts delivered clearly at an average to fast rate, in standard varieties, and in moderately demanding contexts or noisy backgrounds. May occasionally require repetition of a word or a phrase.

Speaking - Take part naturally in a variety of interactions, arguing opinions and showing the ability to respond to different viewpoints. Produce clear and well-structured spoken texts of different lengths with adequate detail. Relay and efficiently summarize the main information contained in an oral or written communication.

Writing - Write clear and well-organized texts in different genres. In written exchanges, respond showing the ability to competently match register and style to the communicative situation. Relay and adequately summarize the main information contained in an oral or written communication

Broad read-across to other UK standards

UK Qualification	CEFR	UK RQF Level	NATO/STANAG 6001
Degree	B2+/C1 (depending on degree content)	Level 5/6	Level 3 to 4
Masters	C1/C2 (depending on focus/modality writing/speaking etc)	Level 7	Level 4 to 5

Broad read-across to common English tests

CEFR	IELTS	ESOL (Ofqual)	TOEFL	United Nations/ NATO STANAG 6001
B1	4-5	Entry (3)	45-59	2
B2	5.5-6.5	Level 1	60-93	3
C1	7-8	Level 2	94-114	3+/4
C2	8-9	Level 3	115-120	4/5