

Externally Validated Mapping Between the CEFR and DET subscores

The DET alignment with the CEFR

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is the leading international standard adopted by governments, educational institutions, and assessment providers that describes foreign language proficiency and enables the portability of learning and credentials across borders. It is the standard that Duolingo uses to reference all of our learning and assessment products, including the Duolingo English Test.



The alignment between the **DET overall score and the CEFR** was established empirically in a concordance study and validated externally by ACS Ventures, LLC, an independent psychometric company, with the help of Dr. Anthony Green, Director of the Centre for Research in English Language Learning and Assessment (CRELLA) at the University of Bedfordshire. The methodology of the study was reviewed and validated by the Chartered Institute of Linguists (CIOL), the UK’s Royal Charter body for language practitioners.

CEFR x DET Subscores Mapping for Institutions

The recommended mapping below establishes a single, consistent set of score ranges for the four subscores, facilitating interpretation for institutions. This unified framework allows institutions to efficiently assess a candidate’s abilities at both a holistic and a skill-specific level.

CEFR Level	DET Overall	DET Speaking	DET Writing	DET Reading	DET Listening
B1	60-95	60-95	60-95	60-95	60-95
B2	100-125	100-125	100-125	100-125	100-125
C1	130-150	130-150	130-150	130-150	130-150
C2	155-160	155-160	155-160	155-160	155-160

Development of the CEFR x DET Subscore Mapping for Institutions

Following principles of evidence-centered standard setting ([Kane, 2001](#); [Mislevy & Riconscente, 2011](#)), the DET's institutional recommendation to use the CEFR alignment triangulates results from an external standard-setting study, empirical student performance data, and policy considerations to support meaningful score interpretation. The following evidence was considered to create the recommended subscore mapping:

- External standard-setting study results.** Following the launch of DET Speaking, Writing, Reading, and Listening subscores in 2024, the DET undertook an alignment validation exercise for these subscores. Similar to the overall CEFR alignment, an external standard-setting study was conducted by ACS Ventures, LLC, with the support of Dr. Anthony Green, to align DET subscores to the CEFR. As anticipated, their suggested thresholds were in broad agreement with those of the DET Overall score alignment, with minor deviations that fell within the confidence intervals of the score threshold results, suggesting some flexibility in setting the final threshold values.
- Existing concordance data.** The DET subscore concordance with IELTS is based on data from 3,586 test takers who submitted certified DET and IELTS scores across two studies. For instance, for Reading, DET scores of 100–125 map to IELTS Bands 5.5–6.5, which approximately correspond to CEFR B2 (note that IELTS band scores [do not align exactly with CEFR levels](#)). This provides additional information for interpreting DET scores within the CEFR framework.
- Internal Analyses.** DET test-taker performance data demonstrate that subscores typically differ from the overall score by fewer than 5 points on average. Subscore distributions (e.g., see the [conditional decile chart](#) for the Writing subscore) in the DET test-taker population also suggest that conditional subscore medians are equal to the overall score at relevant score points of DET 60 and above. This consistency supports the application of uniform CEFR-aligned score ranges across skills.

