



Language  
Cert

International ESOL  
**C2 MASTERY LEVEL SYLLABUS**

Skills, Topics, Functions, and Grammar



**C2 – Mastery level requirements  
Skills, Topics, Functions and Grammar**

# **C2 – Mastery level requirements**

## **Skills, Topics, Functions and Grammar**

### **Skills**

#### **Listening**

The candidate will be able to:

- understand virtually everything spoken regardless of the rate of delivery
- follow short conversations both formal and informal in a comprehensive range of situations, understanding gist, context, purpose, function and recognising subtly expressed attitudes, feelings and opinions
- understand sophisticated narratives, sequences, explanations and subtle arguments
- recognise the function of short utterances which may contain idiomatic/colloquial English (see also Grammar and Functions sections)
- follow a discussion which may be academic or professional to identify gist, detail, purposes and key ideas and distinguish between fact and opinion
- extract and reproduce key information from announcements, media broadcasts, presentations and lectures on abstract and concrete topics of general, academic and professional interest
- follow a complex argument even when it is not clearly structured.

#### Phonological features

- consistently recognise how subtle changes of intonation, pitch and/or stress affect meaning
- consistently recognise subtle expressions of feelings, moods, attitudes, important points and opinions expressed through stress, pitch and intonation.

#### Range

- understand ideas, arguments and descriptions regardless of their structure and considerable complexity
- understand a very wide range of vocabulary including terms used in academic and professional discourse.

#### Register

- consistently recognise degrees of subtle distinction used by speakers in different types of utterances.

#### Understanding gist

- consistently understand the main ideas of complex extended discourse even when the topic is unfamiliar.

#### Understanding detail

- consistently extract most points of detail from extended discourse even when the topic is unfamiliar.

## Reading

The candidate will be able to:

- understand with ease virtually all types of authentic written texts of different purposes and style and those dense in complex structures
- understand the main ideas of all forms of written language, including lengthy abstract, structurally or linguistically complex texts or highly idiomatic, literary and non-literary writing on a wide range of professional, academic and social topics
- gather specific information from different parts of a text or from different texts
- understand descriptions and narratives in which language is used to create different sophisticated and subtle effects
- understand lengthy texts containing complex instructions or explanations on specialist subjects
- understand texts concerned with contemporary issues in which the writers adopt particular viewpoints, identifying finer points of attitude and implied opinions, and follow complex lines of reasoning.

Range

- understand a wide range of texts, hardly ever being impeded by any lexical features
- understand almost all grammatical structures and features.

Register

- understand subtleties in the use of register across a wide range of situations, including those involving tact and diplomacy.

Text structure

- recognise how textual features are used to achieve purposes in texts including those containing images, graphical and tabular data
- understand the different ways in which meaning is built up in abstract, structurally or linguistically complex texts
- understand a full range of discourse markers adapted to context and register.

## Writing

The candidate will be able to:

- write well-structured texts on complex or abstract subjects
- write clear, smoothly flowing, complex formal letters, reports or articles in styles fully appropriate to purpose and target readership
- describe or narrate in an assured natural manner consistently maintaining the style appropriate to purpose
- develop cogent and smoothly flowing arguments
- use all punctuation marks accurately and effectively
- spell correctly words used in more specialised contexts such as business, academic and international affairs
- maintain consistent control of complex grammatical structures
- use a very wide range of vocabulary demonstrating ability to distinguish between finer shades of meaning
- use idioms appropriately and naturally

- use a full range of structures to achieve different styles and purposes
- consistently use appropriate register in a wide range of contexts including those requiring sensitive and tactful responses
- use a range of linguistic devices to create coherent and cohesive writing
- structure texts logically using linguistic markers to enable the reader to understand significant points.

The text types candidates at this level will be required to produce are as follows:

- letter
- email message
- article
- report
- description
- narrative
- simple argument

Candidates must demonstrate awareness of and ability to use a variety of registers in a variety of contexts. The extent of each text to be produced by candidates is up to 300 words.

## **Speaking**

The candidate will be able to:

- display a comprehensive and reliable mastery of the language with no sign of having to restrict what is said
- communicate personal information, feelings, ideas and opinions on a very wide range of topics including contemporary issues
- communicate in all situations using a very wide range of language functions
- engage in discussion to express and elicit opinion, defend and justify opinions when challenged, persuade someone to a point of view, try to reach agreement or perform a specific task
- provide sophisticated explanations, descriptions, narratives, account for or report on a complex subject, convey subtleties of meaning, integrate sub-themes and come to an appropriate conclusion.
- articulate correctly and use stress and intonation patterns naturally to highlight, emphasise, and modify meaning.
- maintain consistent grammatical control of complex language.
- display a good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms with awareness of connotative levels of meaning, conveying subtleties by using a wide range of modification devices
- adjust register appropriately across a range of situations unhampered by linguistic limitations.
- produce clearly flowing, well-structured speech with an effective logical management of the discourse, highlighting significant points
- produce coherent and cohesive discourse using a variety of organisational patterns, a wide range of connectors and other cohesive devices and backtracking and reformulating seamlessly
- interact skilfully and confidently with fully natural turn taking, referencing and allusion making.

# Topics

## PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION

- personal details
- occupation
- family
- likes and dislikes
- physical appearance
- first language
- character
- image
- personal learning style

## HOUSE AND HOME & LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

- types of accommodation
- interior design
- local & regional services/amenities
- regional geographical features
- national flora and fauna
- region-specific phenomena
- demographics

## DAILY LIFE

- at home
- at work
- income
- prospects
- stress
- money management
- life plans

## FREE TIME, ENTERTAINMENT

- leisure, hobbies and interests
- TV, radio, cinema, theatre
- computer, internet
- intellectual/artistic pursuits
- sports
- press
- music
- photography
- the written word (reading, letterwriting, diaries etc)
- exhibitions, museums
- leisure/work ratio
- the social importance of leisure

## TRAVEL

- public & private transport
- traffic & traffic control
- 'green' travel
- holidays
- accommodation
- entering and leaving a country
- common currency eg. the euro
- migration
- travel restrictions & border controls

## RELATIONS WITH OTHER PEOPLE

- family relationships
- friendship
- manners
- social conventions
- anti-social behaviour
- tolerance & respect

## SHOPPING

- shopping facilities
- foodstuffs
- clothes, fashion
- household articles
- prices
- ethical shopping
- retail therapy
- consumerism

## FOOD AND DRINK

- eating habits
- sourcing food locally
- fast food
- organic food
- year round availability
- diets
- food fashions
- genetically modified food
- cookery

## SERVICES

- communications
- financial services
- emergency services
- leisure facilities
- care for the elderly
- IT in the community
- diplomatic services
- employment agencies
- government

## **PLACES & LOCATION**

- satellite navigation systems
- World Heritage sites
- locating motorways and airports
- protecting open spaces
- how geography affects people
- alternative places to live eg. underwater, on Mars
- living in hostile environments

## **LANGUAGE**

- foreign language ability
- accents and dialects
- preserving minority languages
- bilingualism
- universal languages eg. Esperanto
- body language
- language and culture

## **WEATHER**

- climate and weather
- weather forecast
- climate change
- extreme weather
- weather and mood
- effect of weather on lifestyle

## **MEASURES AND SHAPES**

- statistics
- processes
- importance of maths in everyday life
- design

## **EDUCATION**

- schooling
- subjects
- qualifications and examinations
- education systems
- teaching and learning
- knowledge versus skills
- a basic human right

## **THE ENVIRONMENT**

- recycling
- pollution
- global warming
- endangered species
- future of the planet
- individual's/society's responsibilities

## **BELIEFS**

- the paranormal & supernatural
- superstitions
- unexplained phenomena eg. UFOs, coincidences etc.

## **ARTS**

- modern art, theatre, architecture
- classical art, theatre, architecture
- literature
- popular culture
- youth culture

## **SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

- scientific development
- space exploration
- power of the computer
- important inventions
- genetic modification
- ethics
- animal testing
- the limits of human endeavour

## **SOCIETY**

- individual rights
- family life
- parental responsibilities
- social responsibilities
- equal opportunities
- human rights
- citizenship
- the global village
- world events
- world economy



# Functions

## PERSONAL ENVIRONMENT

- asking for and giving personal information
- describing where one lives (accommodation, area etc)
- asking and answering questions for confirmation, information, identification
- describing people, places, things
- correcting information
- explaining routines
- narrating and describing past, present and future events
- comparing things, people
- reporting facts, actions
- stating facts, actions
- giving descriptions and specifications.

## EXPRESSING THOUGHTS, FEELINGS AND ATTITUDES

- expressing and asking about agreement or disagreement
- denying something
- expressing agreement reluctantly or with reservations
- conceding, demurring
- expressing views and feelings with reasons
- asserting and asking about knowledge or ignorance of something or someone
- stating whether a person, thing or action is remembered or forgotten
- enquiring of someone else whether a person, thing or action is remembered or forgotten
- stating and asking about degrees of probability
- expressing, denying or asking about necessity (including logical deduction)
- stating and asking about one's certainty or uncertainty of something
- reminding someone to do something
- expressing doubt, incredulity, bewilderment
- hypothesising
- speculating
- stating and asking about one's ability or inability to do something

- stating and enquiring about one's obligation (or lack of) to do something
- seeking, granting or denying permission
- stating and asking about the permissibility of doing something
- expressing and asking about wishes, hopes, expectations
- expressing and asking about wants, desires, needs
- stating and asking about intention
- stating, responding to and asking about preference
- expressing and asking about likes and dislikes, with reasons
- expressing and asking about (dis) pleasure, (un)happiness
- expressing and asking about satisfaction or dissatisfaction
- expressing disappointment
- expressing gratitude
- expressing and asking about interest or lack of it
- expressing surprise or lack of it
- expressing and asking about fear, anxiety
- giving reassurance
- expressing regret, sympathy, condolence
- expressing fellow-feeling, empathy
- expressing and asking about pain, anguish, suffering
- expressing relief
- expressing indifference
- expressing fatigue, resignation
- offering and accepting an apology
- granting forgiveness
- expressing and asking about approval, appreciation or disapproval
- expressing moral obligation
- expressing regret
- accepting, attaching or denying blame for something.

## MAKING THINGS HAPPEN

- responding to a request
- requesting something, or requesting someone to do something
- inviting someone to do something
- accepting or declining an offer or invitation
- giving instructions or orders

- giving and asking for advice
- responding to or rejecting advice, with reasons
- warning others to be careful or to stop doing something
- offering and requesting assistance
- insisting politely
- persuading someone to do something
- suggesting a course of action
- asking for, responding to, agreeing to or rejecting suggestions with reason/alternative
- making and agreeing plans and arrangements
- encouraging someone to do something
- reaching a compromise
- negotiating a result
- prohibiting someone from doing something
- making a complaint
- refusing to do something, expressing defiance
- pleading with someone to do something.
- confirming one's own or another's understanding
- asking someone to repeat all or part of something
- asking someone to speak more slowly
- asking for help in finding words or phrases
- asking for and giving the spelling and meaning of words
- counting and using numbers
- asking for and telling people the time, day, date
- interrupting politely
- objecting, protesting
- exemplifying or emphasising a point
- classifying, generalising, defining something
- encouraging another speaker to continue
- indicating a wish to continue or finish speaking
- summing up
- taking leave
- observing telephone conventions
- observing letter-writing conventions.

## **SOCIAL CONTACT**

- getting someone's attention
- greeting people and responding to greetings
- expressing thanks
- addressing somebody
- making and responding to formal and informal introductions
- opening, closing a formal or informal conversation
- congratulating someone
- praising someone
- paying someone a compliment
- asking someone's opinion
- making someone feel welcome
- giving and responding to constructive criticism
- indicating lack of understanding
- giving and asking for clarification, explanation or definition of something

## Grammar

Please note that:

- Candidates are required to possess all structures described in the level(s) below them

	<b>Communicator</b> as Achiever and <b>in addition</b>	<b>Expert</b> as Communicator and <b>in addition</b>	<b>Mastery</b> as Expert and <b>in addition</b>
<b>Simple, compound and complex sentences with subordinate clauses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• word order in sentences with more than one subordinate clause</li> <li>• <i>there had been</i></li> <li>• use of common conjunctions expressing contrast, purpose, consequence, condition, concession</li> <li>• non-defining relative clauses</li> <li>• defining relative clauses with <i>where, whose, when</i></li> <li>• defining relative clauses without relative pronouns</li> <li>• participial clauses describing action with <i>-ing</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• word order in complex sentences, including order selected for emphasis</li> <li>• <i>there could be/would be/should be</i></li> <li>• <i>could have/would have/should have</i></li> <li>• wider range of conjunctions including <i>on condition that, provided that</i></li> <li>• comparative clauses</li> <li>• more complex participial clauses describing action with <i>-ed</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• full range of conjunctions</li> </ul>

## Verb forms

	<b>Communicator</b> as Achiever and <b>in addition</b>	<b>Expert</b> as Communicator and <b>in addition</b>	<b>Mastery</b> as Expert and <b>in addition</b>
<b>Verb forms</b>	<p><b>Present/Past reference:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>present perfect continuous</li> </ul> <p><b>Past reference:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>past perfect</li> </ul> <p><b>Other:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>simple passive</li> <li>use of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> conditional</li> <li>verbs + (object) + gerund or infinitive such as <i>would like someone to do something</i>, + <i>suggest doing something</i></li> <li>causative use of <i>have</i> and <i>get</i></li> <li>reported speech with a range of tenses</li> <li>wider range of phrasal verbs such as <i>give up</i>, <i>hold out</i></li> <li>reported requests and instructions</li> <li>question tags using tenses appropriate to this level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>all verb forms active and passive</li> </ul> <p><b>Other:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>would</i> expressing habit in the past</li> <li>mixed conditionals</li> <li>reported speech with full range of tenses and introductory verbs</li> <li>extended phrasal verbs such as <i>get round to</i>, <i>carry on with</i></li> <li>question tags using all tenses</li> <li>imperative + question tag</li> <li>contracted forms appropriate to this level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>as Expert</li> </ul>

## Modals, nouns, prepositions

	<b>Communicator</b> as Achiever and <b>in addition</b>	<b>Expert</b> as Communicator and <b>in addition</b>	<b>Mastery</b> as Expert and <b>in addition</b>
<b>Modals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>ought to</i> (obligation)</li> <li>• negative of <i>need</i> and <i>have to</i> to express absence of obligation</li> <li>• <i>must/can't</i> (deduction)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>should have/might have/may have/could have/must have</i> and negative forms of these</li> <li>• <i>can't have, needn't have</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• as Expert</li> </ul>
<b>Nouns</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• wider range of noun phrases with pre- and post-modification</li> <li>• word order of determiners, eg <i>all my books</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• extended range of complex noun phrases</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• as Expert</li> </ul>
<b>Prepositions and prepositional phrases</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• wider range of prepositions including <i>despite, in spite of</i></li> <li>• collocations of verbs/nouns + prepositions such as <i>point at, have an interest in</i></li> <li>• preposition + <i>-ing</i> form such as <i>after leaving</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• preposition + having + past participle such as <i>having eaten</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• as Expert</li> </ul>

## Articles, determiners, adjectives, adverbs, intensifiers

	<b>Communicator</b> as Achiever and <b>in addition</b>	<b>Expert</b> as Communicator and <b>in addition</b>	<b>Mastery</b> as Expert and <b>in addition</b>
<b>Articles</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>definite, indefinite and zero article with both countable and uncountable nouns in a range of uses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>as Communicator</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>as Expert</li> </ul>
<b>Adjectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>comparisons with <i>fewer</i> and <i>less</i></li> <li>collocation of adjective + preposition such as <i>responsible for</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>as Communicator</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>as Expert</li> </ul>
<b>Adverbs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>adverbial phrases of degree, extent, probability</li> <li>comparative and superlative of adverbs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>as Communicator</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>as Expert</li> </ul>
<b>Intensifiers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>wide range, including <i>extremely</i>, <i>much</i>, <i>too</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>collocation of intensifiers with absolute and relative adjectives such as <i>absolutely gorgeous</i>, <i>very pretty</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>as Expert</li> </ul>

## Punctuation and spelling

	<b>Communicator</b> as Achiever and <b>in addition</b>	<b>Expert</b> as Communicator and <b>in addition</b>	<b>Mastery</b> as Expert and <b>in addition</b>
<b>Articles</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>multiple uses of commas</li> <li>use of apostrophes for possession and omission</li> <li>use of other punctuation to enhance meaning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>accurate use of all punctuation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>as Expert</li> </ul>
<b>Adjectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the correct spelling of words used in work, studies and daily life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the correct spelling of words used in work, studies and daily life including familiar technical words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the correct spelling of words used in more specialized contexts (<i>such as business, academia, international affairs</i>)</li> </ul>

22

## Discourse

	<b>Communicator</b> as Achiever and <b>in addition</b>	<b>Expert</b> as Communicator and <b>in addition</b>	<b>Mastery</b> as Expert and <b>in addition</b>
<b>Discourse</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a range of discourse markers expressing addition, cause and effect, contrast (<i>however</i>), sequence and time (<i>at a later date</i>)</li> <li>markers to structure spoken discourse (<i>as I was saying</i>)</li> <li>use of ellipsis in informal speech and writing (<i>sounds good</i>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a range of logical markers (<i>in this respect, accordingly</i>)</li> <li>sequence markers (<i>subsequently</i>)</li> <li>a wider range of discourse markers to structure formal and informal speech (<i>can we now turn to</i>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a full range of discourse markers adapted to context and register</li> </ul>

