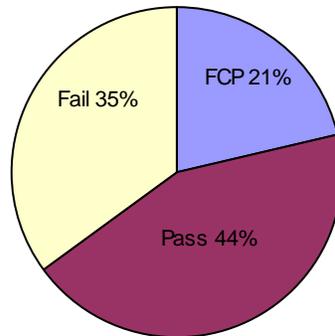


8985 International Spoken ESOL – Mastery

General Observations

Very few candidates are entered at this level and so it is difficult to make judgements based on statistics related to a small sample. While the overall pass rate of 65% is fair, the Fail rate is higher than would be hoped. It is questionable whether candidates are being entered appropriately for this high level.

ISESOL Mastery - C2



Areas of good performance

Candidates who do well at this level are familiar with a wide range of situations and topics, are confident of interacting with the interlocutor, challenging if necessary and asking for justification and clarification. They employ useful linguistic strategies, such as fillers and questioning techniques and expand fully on their responses. They also take the initiative so that the exchanges become highly realistic and energised conversations and discussions.

Areas for development

Poor pronunciation is hampering the marker's ability to make a true assessment of candidate performance. Accuracy and range are also often not what they should be for this level. The appropriate register is not always evident and weaker candidates play safe, as they think, by producing limited, simplistic responses.

Recommendations

Are candidates fully aware of the assessment criteria? Accuracy, range, pronunciation and fluency are all being considered and all within the C2 context. So the candidate who produces a brief, accurate (because it's too simplistic, below the language of C2) response will score poorly and should be encouraged to extend the range, attempt more complex utterances which, provided clear meaning is conveyed, will be rewarded possibly for 3 out of the 4 criteria.

Tips

- Students need to be prepared with a fully rounded language experience which extends beyond the classroom. Access English-speaking satellite channels, the BBC world service, online British newspapers in order to become familiar with a range of issues on which to practise formulating opinions.

- Classroom debates are useful practice for Part 3 and students should try to challenge their opponents in an appropriate manner.
- Students recording themselves and listening to recordings of each other is a salutary lesson in raising awareness of one's own pronunciation and style of delivery.

Additional comments

Of course this is a high level exam and candidates who are not up to the level cannot hope to do justice to the material provided. They can no longer operate within the realms of the purely personal and familiar but have views on social and international issues and be able to express those views while interacting with another speaker. They need to be able to conceptualise abstract matters and discuss objectively. Taking key words from the CEFR, there should be ease, fluency and precision, 'differentiating finer shade of meaning even in more complex situations'.