



Guidance for Interlocutors (Classic IESOL)

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Other relevant documents:	Gatehouse Awards Regulations for Conducting Controlled Examinations Gatehouse Awards Malpractice and Maladministration Policy & Procedure Gatehouse Awards Candidate Access Policy & Procedure Gatehouse Awards Centre Handbook

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1. Purpose & Scope

This booklet contains regulations for the delivery of Gatehouse Awards IESOL Speaking examinations.

Interlocutor – an interlocutor is a member of staff, either at Gatehouse Awards or an Approved Centre, who is responsible for the delivery of Speaking examinations. Interlocutors are not responsible for making assessment decisions.

2. The Role of the Interlocutor

The Interlocutor is responsible for the delivery of Speaking examinations. The only other persons permitted in the room during spoken examination are Gatehouse Awards Examination Observers, members of the internal or external quality assurance team or trainee Interlocutors.

The main role of the Interlocutor is to give Candidates the opportunity to complete the Speaking Tasks to the best of their ability. They are also responsible for eliciting appropriate samples of the Candidates' language for a Marker to arrive at a valid and reliable assessment decision.

This can be achieved by:

- ensuring that the examination room meets the required standards.
- ensuring that the examination is recorded properly.
- following the instructions set out in the *Interlocutor Booklet*.
- ensuring that the Candidates are given adequate opportunities to speak.
- keeping to the time limits set out in the *Interlocutor Booklet*.

3. The Examination Room

When conducting a spoken examination, the room used for delivery:

- must be free of all items that could be used by the Candidates as prompts, such as posters and notices in English (except for safety notices).
- should be in a quiet room free from any noise which could affect Candidates' performance.
- should have notices outside the room requesting that a quiet environment is maintained, that mobile telephones are switched off and that no one should enter.
- must contain a suitable desk, arranged so that the Interlocutor and the Candidates are sitting facing each other and not side-by-side.

4. Examination Equipment

Before the examination begins, the Interlocutor must check that they have:

- a digital audio recorder
- a video recorder and a stand
- pens for the Candidates to make notes
- a desk, clipboard or other means to allow the candidate to make notes

- a silent clock or stopwatch for the Interlocutor to monitor the Candidates' adherence to the guideline times
- a copy of the Gatehouse Awards *Prepared Speaking Tasks*

5. Commencement of Examinations

At the beginning of each assessment, the Interlocutor must check each Candidate's ID and ensure that it is shown to the visual recording device.

Once the ID checks have been completed, the Interlocutor should:

- ask the candidates to place their belongings at the back of the room away from the examination area.
- inform the candidates that mobile phones and other electronic devices must be switched off.
- inform the candidates that they must place their ID on the desk.
- inform the candidates that no study notes, electronic devices or other resources are allowed in the examination area, including dictionaries.
- if the Candidate wishes to have a relative or friend present in the examination room during the examination, inform them politely that this is not allowed.
- welcome them to the session and provide instructions on health and safety as necessary (for example, what to do in the event of a fire alarm sounding).
- explain that the examination will be recorded and it should be completed in one continuous session.
- if not already completed as part of an invigilated examination, have the Candidates read the *Instructions to Candidates* and complete the declaration stating that they agree to abide by them.

6. During the Examination

The Interlocutor script and instructions are found in the *Interlocutor Booklet*. Interlocutors must ensure that each Candidate completes all Speaking Tasks.

- All Speaking examination activity should be recorded on the digital voice recorder and, when requested, video recorded.
- The recording should be continuous – no breaks or pauses are allowed between the Tasks.
- The digital voice recorder should be switched on throughout the examination, and placed to ensure a good quality recording of both Candidates.
- In the case of fire or other alarm, all materials, coats, etc., must be left in the room, and both the Candidates and the Interlocutor should leave in accordance with the instructions of the staff responsible for the building and/or the instructions posted in the building. Once an all clear is received, the Candidates should (if it is practical) be allowed to resume the examination. This should be recorded in the *Exam Report Form*.

7. General Guidance for Interlocutors

- The Interlocutor should read the *Interlocutor Booklet* before the start of the examination to ensure that they are familiar with the script, as well as the time limits for each task.
- The Interlocutor should ensure that the Candidates adhere to the guideline times by monitoring this using a silent clock or stopwatch. If a Candidate significantly exceeds the stated time, the Interlocutor should prompt them gently and politely to move onto the next question /task.
- Where the *Interlocutor Booklet* dictates the exact words to be read aloud to the Candidates, the Interlocutor must not deviate from the script.
- Where the *Interlocutor Booklet* allows deviation from the script, the Interlocutor should ensure that the language used is at a level appropriate to the examination being conducted.
- The Interlocutor should keep in mind the language level of the candidates and use delivery appropriate to the level:
 - at levels A1 and A2, the interlocutor should speak slowly and clearly in short sentences emphasising key words.
 - at levels B1 and B2, the interlocutor should speak clearly at natural speed, as appropriate when speaking to a stranger who may not speak your language fluently.
 - at levels C1 and C2, the interlocutor should speak in a completely natural way making no concessions to the fact that the Candidates are not native speakers.

Interlocutor DOs

The Interlocutor should:

- ✓ maintain a friendly and relaxed approach, to allow the Candidates to perform to the best of their ability.
- ✓ maintain reasonable eye contact with the Candidates, except during preparation times.
- ✓ use hand gestures to improve communication – for example by pointing to the appropriate section of the Candidate materials.
- ✓ use nods and phatic phrases to indicate that you are listening and interested in the Candidates' output, for example: 'ah-hah', 'yes', 'OK', 'right', 'I see' etc.
- ✓ use a lively, rising intonation to invite contributions.
- ✓ use downward intonation to indicate that a particular element of the assessment is coming to an end.
- ✓ speak clearly and with confidence and use Candidates' names at regular intervals throughout the assessment. This is very important to allow the Markers to correctly identify who is speaking when the recording is being marked.
- ✓ keep their own input to a minimum.
- ✓ clearly guide the Candidates through all the elements of the assessment.

Interlocutor DON'Ts

Interlocutors should not:

- ✘ echo or rephrase Candidates' answers.
- ✘ correct Candidates' errors.
- ✘ suggest answers, provide vocabulary or expand on Candidates' responses for them. If a Candidate is struggling to find the right word, encourage them to give a definition, description or an explanation instead.
- ✘ give any indication of a Candidate's performance, for example 'fine', 'good' or 'that's great'. 'Thank you' is the preferred response.
- ✘ Allow the conversation to lapse into complete silence for more than several seconds where the Candidates might be gathering their thoughts before answering a question or making further contributions.
- ✘ Speak too much – the Interlocutor's contributions should be brief, even those made to elicit further contributions from the Candidates or help the Candidates relax.

For further examination-specific interlocutor guidance, please refer to the *Interlocutor Booklet*.

8. At the end of the Examination

When the Speaking Tasks are finished the Interlocutor:

- should politely thank the candidates for their contribution.
- not give any indication as to the Candidates' performance.
- ensure that as the Candidates leave the examination room, they do not get an opportunity to confer with other Candidates who might still be waiting to take the examination.

9. 'Dummy' Candidates

Gatehouse Awards IESOL Speaking exams are intended for 2 Candidates. However, there may be circumstances where this is not possible.

If there is an odd number of Candidates, the Interlocutor should ask a strong candidate to take the examination again and act as a 'dummy candidate'. The Interlocutor must clearly state that in this exam, that person is the dummy candidate.

It is possible for a member of staff from the institution to act as a dummy candidate. This is undesirable as members of staff often have a level of English above that being tested. If a member of staff is to be used, the Interlocutor must clearly inform them of their role as the dummy candidate and the level of language to employ.

The dummy candidate does not have to take part in Task 1. The dummy candidate needs to ask and answer questions in Task 2, give an appropriate presentation from the Prepared Tasks List and participate in Task 3.

If there is no one else available to act as dummy candidate, it is possible for the Interlocutor to take the role of the dummy candidate. This is not desirable and should only be done when there is no other option.

The Interlocutor does not have to ask themselves the questions in Task 1. The questions are asked only to the real Candidate. In Task 2, the Interlocutor should ask the Candidate **twice** the number of questions about their topic. The Interlocutor must then give a presentation and the Candidate must ask questions about the presentation. In Task 3, the Interlocutor must engage in the discussion with the Candidate at a level appropriate to the examination level.

10. Further information for Interlocutors about the GA IESOL Speaking examination

What if a Candidate attempts to read notes or appears to be accessing some other source?

Part of the role of the Interlocutor is to assist in the prevention of malpractice (cheating) by Candidates.

The Interlocutor should remind the Candidate that this is not permitted and remove the notes from the Candidate or inform the Candidate to turn off any device they are accessing. If the Candidate persists or refuses, then the Interlocutor should inform the Candidate that they are liable to be disqualified from the exam.

The Candidate's actions should be noted in the *Exam Report Form*.

What if a Candidate has memorised (rote-learned) their presentation?

The Candidates are still complying with the exam instructions and the exam will be marked accordingly.

What if a Candidate attempts to write their presentation while they should be listening to the other Candidate's presentation?

The Interlocutor should remind the Candidate that they have to ask the other Candidate questions.

The Candidate's actions should be noted in the *Exam Report Form*.

What if a Candidate gives a presentation that is not on the list of Prepared Speaking Tasks?

The Interlocutor should check the list of *Prepared Speaking Tasks* and if the presentation is not there, inform the Candidate, show them the topic list and allow them to start again. Inform the Candidate that if the presentation is not on the list, they will receive zero marks for the Task.

This must be reported in the *Exam Report Form*.

What if a Candidate has not prepared Task 2?

The Interlocutor should present them with the list of *Prepared Speaking Tasks* and inform the Candidate that they can speak without preparing. The interlocutor should not allow time for preparation.

What if the Candidate has no questions to ask at the end of the other Candidate's presentation?

The Interlocutor should remind the Candidate that this is part of the assessment and if the Candidate does not ask any questions, their marks will be reduced. To ensure that the other Candidate has sufficient opportunity to answer questions, the Interlocutor should ask additional questions.

What if the candidates are not interacting in Task 3?

The interlocutor should remind the Candidates that the Task requires them to interact with each other. If the Candidates still do not interact with each other, they should also inform the Candidates that they will lose marks if they do not interact.

What if the Candidates appear to be reciting a pre-set script in Task 3?

If the Candidates have a pre-set script, this is evidence of malpractice and the Interlocutor must assist in preventing it. In this case, the role of the Interlocutor is to intervene and ask relevant questions about the topic so that the Candidates cannot continue with a pre-set script.

This must be reported in the *Exam Report Form*.

What if a candidate doesn't understand or misunderstands one or more of my questions?

If a candidate is struggling to understand one of the questions in ST1 (or a follow-up question in ST2), the interlocutor should rephrase that question to give the candidate every chance to respond. This does not include explaining the question or prompting the candidate with possible responses – these would still not be appropriate.

If a candidate misunderstands a question and begins giving an irrelevant response, the interlocutor can interrupt the candidate and repeat and/or rephrase the question for the candidate. An irrelevant response will cost the candidate marks, so stopping them and rephrasing or repeating the question can give them the chance to avoid this.

What if a candidate doesn't understand a particular word or phrase in the ST1 questions?

If a candidate is stuck on a word within a question, the interlocutor can use a synonym for the word or a very brief description of the word to give the candidate a chance to respond.