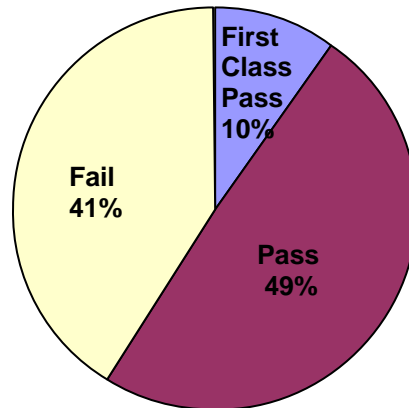


8984 International ESOL - Expert

General observations

Comparing the results with last year, there has been an increase in the number of Fails which is always disappointing to see and the proportion, compared to the overall number of Passes, very high. It would appear that some candidates are simply not at the required level for the examination and are closer to B2 in their capabilities.

C1



Areas of good performance

Those candidates who are at the level enjoy the challenge and reach a good standard. Where they are well-prepared for the examination, they show evidence of being effective communicators. There was a marked improvement in the handling of Reading Part 4 and Part 3 was generally well-executed too.

Areas for development

The general language level in many cases falls below the C1 standard. In Writing, most marks were lost in Accuracy and Range – the CEFR expects a broad range and a consistently high degree of grammatical accuracy. Where complex structures are attempted, candidates are clearly not confident about them and end up conveying a confused message. Insufficient familiarity with differences of register and format is also in evidence. Listening Part 3 also provided difficulties for candidates.

Recommendations

More practice is needed in listening to extract specific detail. Work on higher accuracy levels is needed, with the use of idiomatic expressions. Candidates need to be more confident about expressing points of view and supporting an argument or a standpoint with exemplification or justification. It might be the case that more attention is currently being given to writing at the micro level, using set phrases for example, rather than extending to the macro level of all that is involved in the production of well-structured lengthy stretches of writing required at this level.

Tips

- Access as much authentic material as possible by reading English language newspapers and academic/general interest journals, listening to radio and TV programmes and internet recordings.
- Try transcribing a recording of a debate – note the main argument and see how participants offer

a point of view and substantiate it with reasons, challenged by an opposing view. This will give good ideas on how to structure an argument in writing.

Additional comments

Those preparing candidates for this level need to ensure that the learning experience is as broad as possible. In-depth work on language, through a variety of sources which cover a range of topics, across the sciences and the arts, is essential if candidates are to cope with the demands of this level of examination.