

BALEAP Testing Officer Report AGM 2021

Actions from last 12 Months (March 2020-April 2021)

The BALEAP TESTING GUIDELINES

The main focus as the Testing Officer's responsibilities over the past 12 months has been the further development and revisions to the BALEAP Testing Guidelines. The guidelines have been extended to 72 pages and information about the following tests have been added to the document: *The Kaplan International Pathways, LanguageCert, Duolingo, Aptis, Linguaskill, The English Language Competency Assessment (IELCA), and The Bright Test*. The information includes a short evaluation of each of these tests based on my experience and expertise and any evaluation should be considered in this light. Importantly, perhaps as a result of the impact of COVID 19, three of these tests (Duolingo, Linguaskill and Bright) are delivered online; the Bright test can be delivered live as well.

It should be remembered that the aim of the Testing Guidelines is to help inform institutions, admissions staff, course directors, teachers (especially those with testing and assessment responsibilities), students, and any other interested stakeholders. They are not based on either primary or secondary research. Readers wishing to get more in depth information should bear this in mind.

As mentioned in the 2020 report, with the increasing need for valid and reliable online language testing, in particular with the current COVID19 crisis as a motivator for immediate and future developments, it is anticipated that information and recommendations in this area will also be included in this working document guidelines as more information arises.

TAFSIG

The Testing and Feedback Special Interest Group has continued to thrive since its creation early in 2020, which is a great credit to the six people who are responsible for its activities. A number of webinars have been held, and blogs are regularly produced. A successful addition to the activities has been the introduction of 'Friday afternoon coffee' meetings, which provide an informal opportunity to discuss a range of assessment issues. BALEAP members are strongly encouraged to register for these events when they are advertised. They provide a platform to discuss issues such as feedback, relationships with other language testing groups and any area of language testing and assessment suggested by members. It also provides an opportunity to make contact with testing and assessment experts for further support and advice.

Contact with other organisations

Since March 2020, I have been in regular communication with Executive Committee members of The UK Association for Language Testing and Assessment (UKALTA). This has been extremely useful in forging links with this highly regarded Testing Organisation and the TAFSIFG executive and the BALEAP Executive Committee are keen to establish a strong working relationship with UKALTA.

BAAL SIG January 2021

On 14/03/21, I chaired a session of the British Association of Applied Linguistics (BAAL) SIG on 'Teaching and Assessment and Feedback' hosted by Coventry University. It is anticipated that there will be further collaboration with this organisation to the benefit of both BALEAP and BAAL.

Language Testing Roadshows

I have now reached the end of my tenure as the BALEAP Testing Officer and due to the pandemic unfortunately there have been very limited opportunities to continue with the testing roadshows, especially because of the nature of the face-to-face events. However, I am in regular contact with Fiona Orel, who will be the new Testing Officer from the beginning of April, and we are hoping to jointly host an online roadshow sometime in the late Spring/early Summer. We have scheduled a meeting to this effect for 26 March for forward planning.

Finally, I would like to say thank you to all those people that I have met and communicated with over the past 6 years. I've had a long association with BALEAP beginning some 20 plus years ago as an ordinary member, then as a leader of the BALEAP Can Do Project, later as member of the Testing Working Party, before finally becoming the Testing Officer. I intend to keep up my membership and will look forward to many further exchanges of information and comment.

Report submitted by Prof John Slaght (outgoing BALEAP Testing Officer)