

The ALTE Code of Practice

As providers of language examinations, the members of ALTE wish to adopt a Code of Practice in order to make explicit the standards they aim to meet, and to acknowledge the obligations under which they operate.

In formulating and adhering to a Code of Practice, it is necessary to distinguish between the various roles of those who have an interest in the issue of setting and maintaining standards in language examinations. These are: examination developers, examination users and examination takers.

Examination developers are people who actually construct and administer examinations as well as those who set policies for particular testing programmes.

Examination users may select examinations, commission examination development services or make decisions which affect the educational possibilities and careers of others on the basis of examination results.

Examination takers, or candidates, are those who, either by choice or because they are required to do so by examination users, take examinations.

The roles of examination developers and users may of course overlap, as when a state education agency commissions examination development services, sets policies that control the development process, and makes decisions on the basis of the results. Members of ALTE are primarily concerned with the development and administration of examinations. As such, they have a duty towards examination users and ultimately to examination takers. The decisions made by examination users have a direct effect on examination takers or candidates; for that reason, the obligations of examination users are also dealt with in this Code of Practice.

Members of ALTE undertake to safeguard the rights of examination takers by striving to meet the standards of a Code of Practice in four areas:

- Developing Examinations;
- Interpreting Examination Results;
- Striving for Fairness;
- Informing Examination Takers.

The Code of Practice is divided into two parts. Part One focuses on the responsibilities of ALTE members and Part Two on the responsibilities of examination users.