

Languages Canada 2026



Benchmarks or buzzwords? English Language Literacy as a Foundation for Ethical Admissions and Student Success



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What is ELSAA, and why?

ELSAA is the new, independent, not-for-profit global,
English Language Standard Advisory Authority

Our mission is to fill a critical gap in the sector by providing impartial, expert-led insight into the quality and integrity of English language tests used worldwide. We are internationally recognized experts, with a combined 100+ years of experience in applied linguistics and language assessment.

What is Language Assessment Literacy (LAL)?

LAL is the knowledge, skills, and principles required by stakeholders (teachers, administrators) to design, develop, maintain, and evaluate language assessments effectively.

It involves understanding assessment purposes, ensuring validity and reliability, and making informed decisions using data to improve learning.

But: “I don’t have time to understand tests!”

What are the ingredients of a “fit-for-purpose” test?

- Access
- Cost
- Fairness
- Reliability
- Security, including verification of results
- Validity
- An understanding of how the four skills are tested, integrated or separately
- Independent verification of purported claims to equivalency
- Alignment to international benchmarks, including the CLB

ELSAA's 6 key questions for institutions to ask

1. Is your test aligned with international academic outcomes?
2. How do you ensure fairness across diverse student profiles?
3. What's your approach to test security and fraud prevention?
4. How do you support student readiness beyond scores?
5. Can you demonstrate transparency in scoring and validation?
6. What research do you have to back up the test claims?



Discussion & questions



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