



Network of University Language Testers
in Europe



MEMORANDUM OF COOPERATION

between

ACERT (PL)

CertAcles (ES)

CLES (FR)

UNicert® (DE)

UNicert®LUCE (SK/CZ)

UNILANG (GB/IE)

under the umbrella of

CercleS

Poznań, September 7th, 2018

The Parties to the Memorandum of Cooperation are:

ACERT (PL)

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Poland

represented by: Kinga Studzińska-Pasieka (President of SERMO)



CertAcles® (ES)

Universitat Politècnica de València, Language Centre, Building 4P, Camino de Vera 14, 46022
València, Spain

represented by: Cristina Pérez Guillot (President of ACLES)



CLES (FR)

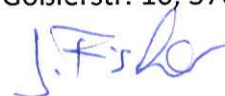
Université Grenoble Alpes, 1141 Avenue Centrale, 38400 Saint-Martin-d'Hères, France
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UNicert® (DE)

Arbeitsstelle UNicert®, c/o Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, Goßlerstr. 10, 37073
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represented by: Johann Fischer (Chair of UNicert® Committee)



UNicert®LUCE (SK/CZ)

UNicert®LUCE, c/o University of Economics, Dolnozemská cesta 1, 852 35 Bratislava, Slovak
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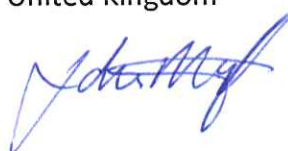
represented by: Helena Šajgalíková (Chair of UNicert®LUCE)



UNILANG (GB/IE)

University Language Centre, School of Arts, Languages and Cultures, University of
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represented by: John Morley (President of AULC)



CercleS

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represented by: Liliana Szczuka-Dorna (President of CercleS)



Memorandum of Co-operation – NULTE

Over the past 25 years university language centres and national institutions have developed language certificates that certify language skills with a specific focus on the linguistic requirements of university students and graduates. Their aim has been to provide students with the language skills they might need during their studies, in their research, in the workplace and in their future career, to offer them a reliable and transparent certificate and to facilitate mobility during their studies and in the workplace. Although the need for certificates varies from one educational context to another, all university language testers feel the need for non-commercial certification systems focussing on language competence in the context of Higher Education.

By developing university-specific language certification systems ACERT (PL), CertAcles® (ES), CLES (FR), UNICert® (DE), UNICert®LUCE (SK/CZ), UNILANG (GB/IE) aim at enhancing the quality of teaching & learning, and testing & assessing modern language skills in Higher Education (HE), based on up-to-date research on teaching and assessment in applied linguistics and the longstanding experience of CercleS, the European network of language teaching and testing professionals in HE.

The above-mentioned certification systems acknowledge that they represent a diversity of HEI (Higher Education Institutions), and thus there is diversity amongst the certification systems they represent. University certification systems are created in specific contexts and to answer the demands of tertiary education in those contexts. However, there is a mutual understanding of the implementation of the CEFR, which shall act as a unifying measure of language competence across countries, languages and education systems.

They all declare their joint intent to establish a Network of University Language Testers under the umbrella of CercleS, as *Network of University Language Testers in Europe (NULTE)*.

The aim of the *Network of University Language Testers in Europe (NULTE)* is to provide a forum for the identification and pursuit of interests common to university language testers and to identify the conditions under which they could operate to facilitate recognition.

1. Purpose of the co-operation

By developing their language certification systems for the university context the individual associations aim at enhancing the quality of teaching & learning and testing & assessing modern language skills in HE. Furthermore, as HEI, they agree that their certification systems have two main objectives: facilitating university admissions and student exchanges, and increasing the employability of graduates.

ACERT, CertAcles®, CLES, UNICert®, UNICert®LUCE and UNILANG, hereinafter also referred to as “Parties”, believe that collaboration between non-commercial university language testers will contribute to their shared goals of quality improvement, i.e.

- a. developing common standards in language education & practice and in language testing & assessment in HE,
- b. ensuring quality in the provision of language teaching and testing services,
- c. setting standards in recognising equivalence in qualifications,
- d. contributing to language assessment literacy and to the expertise in developing tests,
- e. contributing to the improvement of language teaching and learning.

In order to reach their common goals, the Parties will meet at least once a year.

Therefore, the Parties hereby agree as follows:

2. *This Agreement:*

- a. establishes mutually acceptable standards for practice and professionalism, including expertise, autonomy, commitment and accountability,
- b. promotes the standardisation of language proficiency levels and the assessment systems of such levels, in compliance with the guidelines issued by the Council of Europe,
- c. establishes a system of governance to serve the Agreement that enables it to effectively monitor performance, facilitate implementation, including the audit of academic standards and systems of continuing professional development,
- d. promotes the learning and teaching of modern languages in the field of HE,
- e. promotes multilingualism, as indicated by the relevant agencies at European level,
- f. develops a model for future international mutual recognition agreements for other certification systems wishing to join.

Each Association guarantees the certification of exam levels in accordance with the principles of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR).

3. *Areas of collaboration*

Parties will

- a. collaborate with each other to support university language testing initiatives;
- b. collaborate in the creation and implementation of a common framework for university language testing & assessment, including a code of ethics;
- c. establish mutually acceptable standards for practice and professionalism, including expertise, autonomy, commitment and accountability;
- d. promote the standardisation of language proficiency levels and the assessment systems of such levels, in compliance with the guidelines issued by the Council of Europe;
- e. establish a system of governance to serve the agreement that enables it to effectively monitor performance, facilitate implementation, including the audit of academic standards and systems of continuing professional development;
- f. promote the learning and teaching of modern languages in the field of Higher Education;
- g. promote multilingualism, as indicated by the relevant agencies at European level;
- h. facilitate student mobility and exchange programmes between universities;
- i. provide and share expertise in the development of university testing systems to non-NULTE HEI.

Members of each Party may be invited to participate in meetings organised by another part.

4. *Collaborative activities*

Any collaborative activity as outlined above shall be subject to the availability of sufficient financial and human resources for that purpose as well as each Party's programme for work, priority activities, internal rules, regulations, policies, administrative procedures and practices. Each collaborative activity shall thus be agreed upon on a case-by-case basis, subject to separate exchange of letters of agreement.

5. Recognition of certificates

University language certificates have become essential in a variety of contexts, e.g.

- as entrance requirements to Master's (or Bachelor's) programmes,
- as a proof of language proficiency when changing university
- as a proof of language proficiency to continue language learning in a different setting
- as a proof of language proficiency on the labour market

Each Party guarantees the certification of exam levels in accordance with the principles of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)*.

The language competence stated on the certificates issued by all the institutions of the network shall be mutually recognised as being equally valid. This may imply the exemption from certain requirements in other institutions of the network.

Further collaborative activities will define the contexts of recognition between national certification systems. Individual parties may reach bilateral agreements on specific contexts that transcend the letter of this agreement.

Each Party promotes the common agreement at national level in order to reach equal recognition of all member certificates.

In order to achieve these goals, this memorandum includes a framework of best practices for examinations based on EALTA's guidelines and on the organisations' own contexts (Appendix 1); the two documents form an indissoluble whole. The framework specifies the general guiding principles to which the Parties agree to facilitate recognition amongst the examinations offered by each association, provide transparency and offer visibility.

All Parties agree to share the required information concerning their university language certification system in Appendix 1 to facilitate transparency and exemplify compliance to the principles of quality assessment proposed in this memorandum.

6. Confidentiality

Except as explicitly provided in this memorandum of cooperation, each Party takes all reasonable measures to keep confidential any information specifically marked "confidential". However, there shall be no obligation of confidentiality where: (i) the information is publicly available or becomes publicly available, otherwise than by action or omission of the receiving party, or (ii) the information was already known to the receiving party (as evidenced by its written records) prior to its receipt; or (iii) the information was received from a third party not in breach of an obligation of confidentiality owed to the other party. In the event that a party is in possession of special confidential information, which is proprietary to it or to third parties collaborating with it, that party may require the conclusion of a separate confidential disclosure agreement for the sharing of such information with the other party.

7. Publication

Subject to each Party's proprietary rights and/or proprietary rights of others, and without prejudice to obligations of confidentiality, the results, if any collaborative activity under this agreement, may be published by either party. The parties are encouraged to publish the results of their joint work in a collaborative fashion. In regard to separate publications, it is agreed that in order to avoid prejudice to proprietary rights and the confidentiality of information, the publishing party shall transmit for review to other parties the material intended to be published at least 14 (fourteen) days before a proposed publication is submitted to any editor, publisher, referee or meeting organiser. In the absence of any objection by the other parties within that 14-day period concerning prejudice to

proprietary rights or confidentiality of information, the publication may proceed. Any publication as referred to above shall duly acknowledge each party. In addition to review the content of publications as referred above, each party shall have the right to review acknowledgments and request reasonable changes to the use of its name, or request that its name be deleted altogether.

Copyright in any jointly prepared publication resulting from or in relation to any of the collaborative activities under this agreement shall be vested jointly. Each party shall independently and severally be entitled to exploit such copyright in any manner and for any purpose as each in their sole discretion shall deem appropriate, except that no use shall be made of such publications for or in conjunction with commercial purposes.

Copyright of any publication resulting from or in relation to any of the collaborative activities under this agreement, and prepared by one of the parties on its own, shall be vested in that party, provided however, that any such publications shall be submitted to the other parties for review and comments in accordance with the paragraph above.

8. Liability

Each Party shall be solely responsible for the manner in which it carries out its part of the collaborative activities under this agreement. Thus, a party shall not be responsible for any loss, accident, damage or injury suffered or caused by the other party, or that other party's staff or subcontractors, in connection with, or as a result of, the collaboration under this agreement.

The parties shall make appropriate arrangements to cover liability risks for any collaborative activities involving assessment development.

9. Use of the Parties' names

Except as explicitly provided in this agreement, no party shall, in any statement or material of a promotional nature, refer to the relationship with the other parties to the collaboration pursuant to this agreement, or otherwise use the other parties' name, acronym and/or emblem, without the prior written consent of the other parties.

10. Relationship of the Parties

For the purpose of this agreement, each Party is an independent contractor and not the joint venturer, agent or franchisee of the other parties. No party shall have authority to make any statements, representations, or commitments of any kind, or take any action which shall be binding on the other parties, except as may be explicitly provided for in this agreement or authorised in writing by the other parties.

11. Admission of new members

This memorandum intends to be inclusive in nature to encourage further cooperation amongst certifications systems operating within CercleS. Therefore, the admission of new members is not only accepted but encouraged as long as they agree in writing to be bound by the terms of this agreement. HEI Certification systems operating within CercleS and wishing to be admitted will be included in a supplement to this agreement signed by all parties involved.

12. Revision of agreement

The agreement contained in this Memorandum of Cooperation is subject to ongoing review by the Parties.



13. Withdrawal

Any Party may withdraw from this agreement at any time, subject to six months advance written notice to the other Parties. Notwithstanding the foregoing, it is agreed that any withdrawal from this agreement shall be without prejudice to (i) the orderly completion of any ongoing collaborative activity; and (ii) any other rights and obligations of the Parties accrued prior to the date of withdrawal.

14. Amendments

This Memorandum of Cooperation may only be amended in writing by mutual consent of the Parties.

15. Settlement of disputes

Any dispute in relation to the interpretation or execution of this agreement, or any subsequent exchange of letters of agreement with respect to individual collaborative activities shall, unless amicably settled, be subject to conciliation. In the event of failure of the latter, the dispute shall be settled by arbitration. The arbitration shall be conducted in accordance with the modalities to be agreed upon by the Parties.

APPENDIX 1

A. Quality assessment principles for mutual recognition of certifications

Each certification system has developed their own quality assurance procedures and commits to abide by them. (Appendix 2 provides a description of the different certification systems). Testing the productive skills is a particular strength of NULTE testing systems and is of utmost importance for successful communication in international contexts.

The following principles represent the core aspects of NULTE, and each Party agrees to commit to the following checklist of minimum standards concerning both exam content and the procedures followed by each university prior to issuing the certificates.

1. Test purpose and specifications

The purpose of the examination proposed by each Party should be defined and public so that they are transparent to all stakeholders involved.

Language certification systems should be university-based and framed within the context of HEI.

Furthermore, they must be linked to the CEFR to facilitate comparison across languages and certification systems.

Specifications must be clearly articulated to include a description of:

- the context and the test taker,
- the construct of the exam and its tasks,
- the type of tasks,
- the rating criteria and examples of performances.

2. Test design and item writing

The test development and accreditation processes must be carried out by experts in teaching and experts in testing in HEI.

It is agreed that:

- tests must be context sensitive;
- the four skills (listening and reading, writing and speaking) must be tested, but skills may be tested in an integrated approach, it is recommended to test all modes of communication (reception, interaction, production, mediation) where possible.

Standard setting procedures focusing on language competences needed in a university context must be implemented depending on the nature of the test.

3. Quality control and test analyses

Each certification has been developed according to the latest research in the field, depending on the nature of the test.

University language test providers need to implement standard procedures of validation and quality assurance. These include auditing systems with internal and/or external auditors at different steps of the process.

Evidence of reliability shall be presented according to state-of-the-art research findings depending on the nature of the test.

Raters shall be trained for each administration and marking should be monitored according to pre-determined procedures.

4. Test administration

Procedures for test administration should be clear and administration should be carried out by HEIs.

Grading systems need to be transparent to candidates and so should complaint processes according to the regulations put in place by each HEI.

5. Washback effect and impact

A desirable effect of university language testing should be a positive washback effect on language teaching, learning and assessment in HEI. Depending on the nature of the test, each certification system will strive to contribute to the expertise of test developers, raters & markers and teachers. The NULTE group hopes for a positive impact on language learners and other stakeholders, e.g. employers, policy makers.

6. Certificates

A certificate will only be awarded if the required level is satisfied.

The certificates must be issued by a HEI and endorsed by each certification system.

Certificates issued translate test takers' outcomes in terms of the CEFR, mention the corresponding CEFR level and include a description of the competences achieved.

A CEFR level can only be certified if the level has been achieved in each skill assessed (listening and reading, writing and speaking). The certificates take into account the different modes of communication (reception, interaction, production, mediation) when possible.

B. Optional features

The NULTE certification systems all focus on communicative competence, may or may not be task- / scenario-based.

Each system may be linked to curricula or be independent from language teaching.

Each system may focus on general and / or academic language skills, with the possibility of including language for specific purposes.

APPENDIX 2: Description of certification systems within NULTE

Criteria	UNicert®	UNicert®LUCE	CLES	ACERT	CertAcles®	UNILANG
Difference between your test and a commercial test	Exclusively based at HEIs; certification and teaching are inseparably linked; addresses students and university staff members; task-based exam.	Tailor-made to university studies in general and specific fields of studies; addressing the needs of tertiary level of education and specific professions.	Task-based approach / scenario-based integrated approach to testing, i.e. all activities and tasks are linked; competency-based approach, can be used as achievement test (end-of-course exam).	National academic language test; certifies academic and general language ability; correlated with CEFR scales; recognized by universities associated in SERMO.	Developed within universities in accordance with ACLES guidelines and with a vocation of service to our surrounding community; responds to the needs of the university community.	Assessment is designed by universities to match specific learning outcomes which in turn correspond to a specific provision. UNILANG certificates of recognition are free.
Responsibility for the tests	Decentralised system – accredited institution and its teachers are responsible for the tests; accreditation: UNicert® Executive Committee – staff members from various language centres; under the auspices of AKS.	Development team at Language Centre; accreditation board: language teachers representing member universities; CASALC (Czech and Slovak Association of Language Centres and Language Teachers at Universities).	The Executive Committee (Coordination Nationale CLES).	Association of Academic Foreign Languages Centres (SERMO).	Development team at Language Centre; responsibility with university to which the Language Centre belongs. ACLES is in charge of auditing and accrediting member institutions.	Decentralised system. Participating universities appoint external examiners who are UNILANG approved.

Criteria	UNICert®	UNICert®LUCE	CLES	ACERT	CertAcles®	UNILANG
Central layer of quality assurance	<p>Yes;</p> <p>Under constant revision; through auditing and accreditation procedure, close cooperation, professional development activities (workshops, regional meetings, conferences), substantial material and guidelines available.</p>	<p>Yes;</p> <p>UNICert®LUCE involved in setting standards for the language teaching programmes as well as testing including quality assurance; results permanently discussed with the institutions involved in the UNICert®LUCE system. Currently, a manual on testing is being prepared to be disseminated among the member institutions.</p>	<p>Yes;</p> <p>Coordination: procedures are functioning well at national level; Responsibility for the quality of the content of the exams: deputy directors and validation committee.</p>	<p>Every test is sent to the accreditation board who analyse it and verify the quality of exam tasks and the appropriacy of the language level. If test meets the requirements of CEFR level and is of the adequate quality, the accreditation is prolonged.</p>	<p>Centres need to accredit themselves to administer CertAcles exams every two years by submitting extensive information on their specifications, scales, rating, statistical analysis of past exams, information on the validity of their construct, professional expertise of developing team, etc.</p>	<p>Quality assurance is provided by university's own mechanisms (assessment and validation processes). To be a UNILANG approved external examiner, candidates need to demonstrate a minimum of five years of CEFR related work, be supported by a senior colleague and application needs to be approved by two members of UNILANG executive committee.</p>

Criteria	UNICert®	UNICert®LUCE	CLES	ACERT	CertAcles®	UNILANG
Accreditation of institutions and/or programmes	Accreditation of institution, specifying accredited programmes (i.e. languages and levels). Each institution has its own external advisor (a member of the UNICert® Executive Committee). They have to submit Examination Regulations, sample UNICert® certificates, descriptions of the course contents / course programme, sample exam papers and a self-assessment report.	Document stating that the course as a whole or substantial part of it is part of curriculum, detailed documentation including objectives, syllabus, methodology, study material, level, nr. of min. contact lessons for individual levels must be respected, examination regulations corresponding to the regulations, structure of examination, and weighting of individual parts – must be coherent with the objectives declared.	Universities are accredited by the ministry (proposal of the academic director).	The university needs to adopt the structure, administration procedures and scoring system of the exam accredited by SERMO. The system does not require the accreditation of programmes. Study programmes are regulated by National Qualification Framework for higher education in Poland.	Accreditation commission accredits language centres to administer CertAcles exams at no cost; external institutions to be included in a table of accredited examinations; used by universities in Spain and by some governmental institutions to determine the validity of an examination or certificate for academic, professional or other high stakes purposes.	Language programmes which offer UNILANG certificates of recognition are accredited by their university.
Requirements for the accreditation of institutions and/or programmes:	Institutions must meet the minimum requirements stated in the framework.	Teachers involved in teaching and testing must be members of CASALC, minimum requirements must be met.	Language policy based on task-based approach; Interest in CLES; Minimum requirements concerning logistics & personnel must be met.	The accredited examination centre has to be an academic foreign languages centre based at a university.	As specified above and generally, compliance with the language testing principles upheld by EALTA and the CEFR manuals.	Accreditation of programmes may vary between universities but would require, as a minimum, to be approved by a Board of Studies.

Criteria	UNicert®	UNicert®LUCE	CLES	ACERT	CertAcles®	UNILANG
Recognition of your certification (within the individual institution, at regional / national level, at international level)	Certificates are recognised by all UNicert® members. Limited impact on recognition by external decision-makers and stakeholders.	Certificates are recognised by all UNicert® members. Limited impact on recognition by external decision-makers and stakeholders.	National recognition (accreditation by ministry), certification is not known very well at this moment.	At national level: recognized by universities associated in SERMO.	The certification is recognised nationally by all ACLES member institutions (62 universities in Spain) and by most regional governments in Spain (Spain is decentralised in matters of education).	To date (March 2018), recognised by 11 universities.
Please explain to what extent innovation and revision are important elements of your system	Innovation and revision are an integral part of the UNicert® approach; UNicert® does not use standardised testlets and tests; exam papers are based on authentic and current topics and texts are newly developed for each session.	UNicert®LUCE spent several years developing the content and the structure of the language programmes to make it flexible and allow institutions to be autonomous, but still follow standardized procedures.	Fundamental aspect for certification, establishment of a scientific committee for future development of the certification programme.	Task analysis is carried out after each exam edition; Subjective tasks are analysed; scoring grids are improved through text correcting workshops; Samples of past candidate performances are collected in writing and speaking in order to standardise assessment.	Auditing systems are put in place; the guidelines are revised every 2 years; exams are consequently revised appropriately.	UNILANG is still in its development stage and awareness raising remains a priority.

Criteria	UNicert®	UNicert®LUCE	CLES	ACERT	CertAcles®	UNILANG
<p>How and why the system was developed</p>	<p>The UNicert® system is based on a policy document agreed by leading German univ.; roots go back to 1992. The system helps to develop modern language course programmes appropriate for and specific to univ. education. It initially aimed to standardise the levels of competence certified by individual language certification systems existent at the time. It aims: to promote comparability between university language course programmes, to introduce a certificate which is valid and acceptable also beyond the university context, to certify hands-on foreign language skills as needed by academically trained personnel.</p>	<p>The system was actually implemented in cooperation with the UNicert® board and is still considered to be a very useful and unique system fitting the requirements of HEI.</p>	<p>CLES was founded alongside the CERCL in 2001; it was very innovative at this time, Claude Springer had considerable influence on development of CLES.</p>	<p>The system was developed as a means for enhancing the quality of foreign language teaching and assessment within academic context. It addresses the need for a national system of exam recognition and certification.</p>	<p>The system was developed to encourage standardisation of language accreditation in Spain.</p>	<p>UNILANG has been developed in order to help UK university students articulate and translate what their language learning outcomes mean in terms of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).</p>

Criteria	UNicert®	UNicert®LUCE	CLES	ACERT	CertAcles®	UNILANG
Influencing factors (design / development of the system)	<p>- In the past foreign language certification systems and training programmes tended to reflect the idiosyncracies of the institution concerned;</p> <p>- UNicert® wanted to promote a university-specific modern languages certification system which is valid across different languages and institutions.</p>	<p>"Franchise" agreement between UNicert® and UNicert®LUCE; format given by UNicert®.</p>	<p>European framework, Springer.</p>	<p>Student mobility; the need to unify programmes and requirements in universities of the same type</p> <p>diploma recognition; SERMO cooperation.</p>	<p>Devised by universities and with the needs of university communities in mind;</p> <p>- intention to offer standardised, comparable and recognisable certificates within higher education institutions.</p>	<p>CEFR.</p>
Elements	<p>Teaching, learning, testing.</p>	<p>Teaching, learning, testing.</p>	<p>No direct studying for exams, just elements of the system: teaching, learning.</p>	<p>Teaching, learning, testing.</p>	<p>Testing;</p> <p>Positive washback is reinforced in the development of the exams – teaching and testing kept separately.</p> <p>- Classroom assessment is separated from standardised assessment.</p>	<p>External examining, mapping of learning outcomes on the CEFR; agreement of pass mark for a particular CEFR level.</p>

Criteria	UNicert®	UNicert®LUCE	CLES	ACERT	CertAcles®	UNILANG
Entry procedures/ requirements for candidates enrolling for the examination	Candidates need to be students of the accredited institutions (exceptions possible), then they need to pass the teaching programme. Only after successful completion of the required teaching programme, they can enrol for the exam.	Candidates need to be students of the accredited institutions (exceptions possible), then they need to pass the teaching programme. Only after successful completion of the required teaching programme, they can enrol for the exam.	Enrolment at a centre.	Students enrol on the exam due to the programme of their studies. External candidates follow the information presented on the centre website.	Over 16 or 18 years of age, depending on the institution, no other requirement is implemented although candidates can consult the profile of the candidature in the specifications of the exam made public by each university on their webpage.	That of university providing courses.
Description of who is providing the competences/ skills	Admission to the test requires successful completion of teaching programmes. Teaching programmes cater for the needs of the individual academic disciplines (e.g. LSP courses). Different models of teaching possible: in-class teaching with teacher, blended learning, integrated and supported self-study programmes, tandem programmes with language counselling etc.	Admission to the test requires successful completion of the teaching programme. Teaching programmes cater for the needs of the individual academic disciplines (LSP programmes).	Competencies in the five language communication activities.	The exam tasks are based on the syllabus which in turn is devised in cooperation with the faculties at the university.	Candidates come from different backgrounds and may have acquired the skills in centres other than the university language centres administering the exam. Nevertheless, language centres offer language courses that comply with the competences and skills required for the exam.	Language teaching and learning specialists recruited by universities.

Criteria	UNlcert®	UNlcert®LUCE	CLES	ACERT	CertAcles®	UNILANG
Covering features (overall proficiency/ academic language/ language for specific purposes)	Input material, tasks and context taken from an academic and/or professional background. Items focus on both general and detailed understanding and passing on of information as well as use of academic and linguistic tools.	There are descriptors used by individual universities, usually the language for specific purposes is used and one examination committee board member comes from the field speaking the language in question.	B1 and B2: academic language; C1: LSP.	ACERT originally is an achievement test which completes a foreign language course within academic context. Thus, its tasks are related to the field of study.	CertAcles exams are exams of overall proficiency and do not cover specific purposes as it is currently not the need of the university system in Spain, which is the basis of the model.	University-wide language programmes.
Covering features (sociolinguistic aspects/ intercultural issues)	Task are embedded in a specific context, production always as an audience for being able to assess sociolinguistic appropriateness.	See above. Mostly the expert from the field guarantees that the dimensions of the occupational subculture in question are respected.	The linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic components are very important.	Sociolinguistic aspects are present in several tasks in the exam. However, they are assessed explicitly in writing and speaking tasks. Intercultural communicative ability is not overtly assessed.	The guidelines provided to centres include aspects regarding authenticity of materials and of communicative purposes which necessarily include these aspects.	Tend to be embedded in teaching.

Criteria	UNICert®	UNICert®LUCE	CLES	ACERT	CertAcles®	UNILANG
Purpose(s) of examination	UNICert® addresses future academics. Examinations test linguistic competence in academic and professional contexts; certificates certify language proficiency acquired and are used for admission to postgraduate study programmes. Certificates also inform employers in detail about the competences students have acquired.	The examination should prove competences representing part of the overall graduate's profile and the certificate with the description of communicative skills should serve various purposes, such as mobility programmes, application for a job, etc.	Mainly European mobility.	The main purpose is to prepare students for studying in multilingual environment, for student mobility and for the requirements of their future professions.	Academic purposes (graduation requirements and academic exchange), professional purposes (employability).	Recognition of language learning as non-specialist students. International mobility.
Target groups addressed by examination	Students (although the main advantage is employability, i.e. after completion of studies).	Students.	Since the decree in 2016, the certification is now open to all, it was aimed at students previously.	Students, academics.	Students, adults.	Students (in most cases non language specialists).

Criteria	UNicert®	UNicert®LUCE	CLES	ACERT	CertAcles®	UNILANG
University-specific extent of the exam	Language is taught in an academic context. Topics, input material and tasks are oriented at this context.	Language is taught in an academic context. Topics, input material and tasks are oriented at this context.	This is no longer the case now (open to public).	The examination is an achievement test which completes a language course at a university. There are some differences among universities as far as foreign language syllabi are concerned. This stems from the fact there requirements vary from one university to another. Some programmes are closely linked to candidate's fields of study others are academic. Nevertheless, ACERT examination is related to CEFR levels.	The exams are university specific in the sense that they have university needs in mind as regards social responsibility, encouragement of positive washback, language assessment literacy for stakeholders and impact.	Assessment is designed by individual universities.

Criteria	UNlcert®	UNlcert®LUCE	CLES	ACERT	CertAcles®	UNILANG
To what extent are the tasks used in the exam authentic?	The productive tasks are reflect or simulate real life situations. The receptive tasks are based on authentic texts but the tasks could be more authentic, they focus on the needs of students.	The universities with certified programmes are encouraged to use authentic materials.	Authentic documents (written, audio, video); Authentic approach (integrated skills).	The exam tasks are based on the syllabus which in turn has been tailored to the needs of each faculty. Hence, they reflect the teaching objectives at the university. Furthermore, the sources of texts are current journals, magazines, news and professional source materials.	Tasks used in the exams are authentic in the sense that they use authentic input and attempt to obtain authentic communicative responses. However, practicality and reliability issues need also be taken into consideration.	This will vary between universities but there tends to be a strong emphasis on communication and use of authentic material.
Academic tasks	Yes, Tasks are based on needs analysis, teachers cooperate with specialists in the fields – all institutions try to produce tasks as authentic as possible.	Yes, Tasks are based on needs analysis, teachers cooperate with specialists in the fields – all institutions try to produce tasks as authentic as possible.	Yes.	Yes.	No.	Some universities might opt for this approach for higher levels.

Criteria	UNicert®	UNicert®LUCE	CLES	ACERT	CertAcles®	UNILANG
Reflection of tasks for the students' / future academic / professional needs / linguistic situations	Tasks are based on needs analysis, teachers cooperate with specialists in the fields – all institutions try to produce tasks as authentic as possible.	It depends, in some case, e.g. Faculty of Arts, introduces purely academic tasks because of the heterogeneity of their study groups.	Current situation: up to now CLES B is oriented towards the use of language in the university environment. Future developments: Open to all → professional use is also targeted.	The tasks aim at assessing field specific vocabulary, the ability to read professional literature, the ability to understand academic and scientific listening texts, the ability to describe processes, appliances, systems, trends, to analyse and draw conclusions, to persuade in writing and in speaking, etc.	The tasks are aligned to the CEFR and in this sense they reflect the contexts of use specified in table 5 of the framework.	The tasks are often aligned to the CEFR.



Criteria	UNICert®	UNicert®LUCE	CLES	ACERT	CertAcles®	UNILANG
Role of LSP / academic content	Academic content is the core idea of the system, LSP is an important part, particularly with faculty-specific programmes. General academic language and genres are taught in programmes where the learners come from different disciplines.	Academic content is the core idea of the system, LSP is an important part, LSP is taught at the faculties, where the groups of learners are homogenous coming from one field, however, the academic language and genres are taught at the same time. Purely general academic language and genres are taught in the cases where the learners come from different disciplines.	Medical, law, and scientific.	See above.	LSP is not assessed.	Some universities offer LSP type of programmes and UNILANG would be suitable.
Role of content in the exam in general	The content is inseparable part, the language level cannot be free from the content. They are closely interlinked. Discrete item testing is not supported.	The content is inseparable part, the language level cannot be free from the content. They are closely interlinked. Discrete item testing is not supported.	?	This depends on the university programme and to what extent the exam is Language for Specific Purposes oriented. Generally, content plays a significant role.	As content is key for validity purposes, it plays a central role. However if content is here understood as TBA, this is not the method used in CertAcles exams.	The content is inseparable part, the language level cannot be free from the content.

Criteria	UNICert®	UNICert®LUCE	CLFS	ACERT	CertAcles®	UNILANG
Source material for exams	The sources differ from level to level, language and institution to institution. Authentic material (media, scientific journals...) is preferred. Board members consult the materials with the examination bodies in question and push forward the use of authentic materials from the field.	The sources differ from level to level, language and institution to institution. Authentic material (media, scientific journals...) is preferred. Board members consult the materials with the examination bodies in question and push forward the use of authentic materials from the field.	Mainly print media, recorded sound material, scientific/academic articles.	Academic articles, professional textbooks public domain texts from the internet and dictionaries.	Authentic material from different sources.	Assessment tends to be based on the same type of materials used for teaching.

Criteria	UNICert®	UNICert®LUCE	CLES	ACERT	CertAcles®	UNILANG
Standardised exam?	<p>There is no centralised examination at national level as individual academic / scientific disciplines require different task types and language skills. Examination system is open to all languages taught at university language centres (> 25 languages). Standardisation to specific guidelines at national level and standardised approach at institution level.</p>	<p>The structure is standardized, i.e. the composition of tasks measuring individual communicative skills. Otherwise, the universities are free to decide what tasks to use within the given format.</p>	<p>See above.</p>	<p>Yes; Relating the exams to CEFR scales, formal and informal questionnaires, collecting and standardising candidate performance samples statistical analyses carried out locally by the centres.</p>	<p>Yes (explained above).</p>	<p>There is no centralised examination at national level. Standardisation of external examining is ensured by university procedures.</p>

Criteria	UNICert®	UNICert®LUCE	CLES	ACERT	CertAcles®	UNILANG
Task-based exam?	Yes.	Not the routine for UNICert®LUCE.	See above.	Yes; Candidates are asked to describe a graph, compare trends & draw conclusions, describe a process or the operation of a device, make a conversation during which they present an opinion and try to persuade the interlocutor. The scoring grid also takes into account task achievement to a large extent.	No.	This will depend on each university.
Reference to an official source in establishing the content of the examination (national curriculum guidelines)	No, universities are autonomous, but univ. management, accreditation agencies, the DAAD, gvmt authorities & other external stakeholders challenge the system and the exams on regular basis; But: UNICert® guidelines.	No, universities are autonomous.	Certification ultimately under the control of MNESER.	Yes. ACERT examination refers to National Qualification Framework, which specifies the content area and proficiency level of language courses within academic curricula.	Acles guidelines, CEFR.	No, universities are autonomous.



Criteria	UNICert®	UNICert®LUCE	CLES	ACERT	CertAcles®	UNILANG
Use of university / academic language specific descriptors (skills and sub-skills)	Yes, underlying principle of UNICert®.	Yes, underlying principle of UNICert®.	Yes (examples online).	Yes.	No.	Yes.
Constructs underlying the skills tested based on a theoretical model	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes. Increasingly based on CEFR.
Routine procedures used to ensure the appropriateness of the examination for the intended candidates	Candidates must have attended the accredited language programme; Procedures may differ from institution to institution; recommended procedure: Task development based on teaching syllabus and needs analysis, elements of pretesting and peer review, feedback from students and post testing analysis; exchange with external advisor and other UNICert® member institutions.	See above.	Test tasks are developed so as to meet the requirements of the faculties and the required CEFR level. The examinations are analysed by the external (outside the examination centre) scientific accreditation board.	Benchmarking sessions are put into place at universities, the accreditation commission revises these procedures and these are again checked during audits of exam papers by testing experts external to the university.	Students are informed which modules are UNILANG assessed prior taking the assessment.	

Criteria	UNicert®	UNicert®LUCE	CLES	ACERT	CertAcles®	UNILANG
Procedure of how examination tasks are revised to avoid potentially insensitive content or language	See above; validation committees at institutional level.	See above; validation committees at institutional level.	It is the task of the validation committees to ensure it.	The examination board in each centre reviews several times every examination before it is administered to eliminate potential socially and culturally sensitive content.	ACLES guidelines include recommendations and audits are instructed to check for such contents.	See above; validation committees at institutional level.
Procedures that help to ensure that differences in performance are related to the skills under assessment rather than irrelevant factors	See above; Rater training and benchmarking sessions.	See above; UNicert®LUCE Guidelines.	It is the result of the whole quality process: accreditation of centres, validation committees of subjects, training of concept developers and examiners.	considerable attention is paid to ensure equal testing environment for all the candidates (examination rooms, equipment, time). Test tasks are reviewed so that they concentrate on the skills which are to be measured. Interlocutors are trained how to use scoring grids so that subjective tasks are scored most objectively.	Statistical analysis is carried out of the piloting stages and administration stages, guidelines regarding reliability aspects need to be complied with to be accredited as a centre (administration, scales, rating procedures, etc).	Quality assurance internally and through external examining.

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<p>Process of test development</p>	<p>See above.</p>	<p>See above.</p>	<p>One or two colleagues design subjects based on authentic documents and are accompanied by members of the validation committee throughout the process. When the subject is judged "ready" it passes to validation committee is validated or modifications are made. As a result the exam paper is entered into the database and may be broadcast to the centers after a test phase.</p>	<p>Examination board comprises six teams, each responsible for the tasks that test listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary. The teams develop task specifications and tasks. Then the tasks are pre-tested by all members of examination board and revised. Then the exam is printed by administration staff supervised by examination board. After the infrastructure has been organised (rooms, exam committees, equipment), the test is administered. Afterwards the test is scored, certificates issued and the exam and its task results are analysed.</p>	<p>Planning: needs analysis, determining purpose and intended consequences, analysis of resources, training of specialists; Design: drafting guidelines & specifications, item writing, defining administration processes; Pre-testing: pilot testing, main trials, test analysis, quality control; Administration: Drafting & distributing administration guides, preparation of exams materials, managing exam administration, exam security; Analysis of results: scoring processes, analysis of results, analysis of stakeholders feedback, implementation of improvements; Informing stakeholders: actors in public institutions, educational actors, social actors.</p>	<p>This will depend on each university.</p>

Criteria	UNICert®	UNICert®LUCE	CLES	ACERT	CertAcles®	UNILANG
Ability to measure the reliability of the tests on a routine basis	Institutions have their own individual procedures to ensure reliability; feedback by test takers is also taken into account; further development needed	NA – relevant at the level of university, faculty, department, institute, etc.	Stats show that around 40 % of candidates succeed nationally. It's the case every year, which validates a posteriori the whole process.	Yes.	Yes, statistical analysis of each administration is required.	Universities have their own individual procedures to ensure reliability.
Text types to be produced	Depends on the exam, focus of the exam, academic discipline etc.	NA – relevant at the level of university, faculty, department, institute, etc. The newly developed manual on examinations by UNICert® LUCE explicitly describes approach.	B1 letter; B2 report, article (250-300 words); C1 Note, report (600 words).	For instance, graph description and analysis, description of a process, system or device operation.	The texts required comply with those specified in the CEFR for each level.	This will vary depending on learning outcomes being assessed.
Origin of tasks: What sources do you use? How are they developed? To what extent are they authentic?	It depends on the exam, the level of competence, the language and the academic specialisation of the exam. Teachers developing the exam try to make it as authentic as possible but authenticity for an exam A1.1. Standard Arabic is sth. different from authenticity for a C1 Business English exam.	See above.	All skills are related, the test is scenario-based, all documents are relevant to a topic from the beginning to the end oral production task. Questionnaires are specific to oral and written comprehension (B1 B2).	Task content is syllabus-based. Prompts, such as diagrams or graphs are taken from textbooks or on-line sources.	Explained above in authenticity of materials and response.	Task content is syllabus-based. They are often the result of team-teaching and, in some cases, are vetted by external examiner.

Criteria	UNlcert®	UNlcert®LUCE	CLES	ACERT	CertAcles®	UNILANG
Origin of tasks: What sources / material do you use? How are they developed? To what extent are they authentic?	Based on results of needs analysis (needs of specialists in specific academic fields).	See above.	They correspond to genres pertaining to the contemporary academic or professional world (reports, articles...).	The sources are textbooks, articles and internet and the content is related to the course syllabus.	Newspapers, blogs, magazine articles, etc.	See above.
Procedures used to establish pass marks and / or grades. Standard set and maintained?	Developed by individual member institution, improvement needed.	See above.	No marks exist for the CLES (production). Certain number of criteria have to be fulfilled (criterion-based assessment).	See above (grading system).	See above.	Developed by individual university.
Procedures used to mark examination papers	Two examiners are required to mark exams leading to a certification, normally one of them is the teacher of student group in question.	See above.	No specific procedure, examiners mark papers and evaluate candidates during the production sessions.	The examination papers are marked by all examiners in a marking session on the premises of the centre. Speaking exam is conducted by two examiners (examiner and invigilator) and assessed directly after the test.	Rater training is compulsory and double marking is recommended. Post analysis is also recommended by the association.	According to university quality assurance procedures. Often have some form of double-marking in place.

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Procedures used to ensure that marking is carried out accurately	Institutions are asked to monitor and train their staff (e.g. rater training, benchmarking sessions). Marking is regularly controlled and discussed during accreditation processes.	See above.	Examiners are language professionals working in Higher Education Institutions. They all must attend a training session explaining what the CLES is, how the grids work. There is now a national process to train examiners and define an accrediting process.	Examination board members supervise the marking session. They also take part in analyses of results and discussions. They are also responsible for improving assessment grids and guidelines. Already marked tests are checked randomly by experienced examiners and exam board members.	Recruitment process is different for each university; training is also carried out by each university independently but usually involves CEFR familiarisation activities, scale and task familiarisation activities, discussion of common rater errors, individual rating of pre-selected productions, open discussion of individual ratings and use of gold standards per level. Raters are monitored differently by each institution, procedures may include: analysis of intra-inter rater reliability, use of anchor productions, open discussions, individual interviews with raters, etc.	See above.

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