

5 steps to assess candidates' English language skills

Increase your organization's chances of reaching business goals by **63%** with a skills-based hiring approach.¹

As **85%** of global employees believe that English will remain the dominant business language, assessing English proficiency is a crucial component of any successful skills-based hiring strategy.²

“

Objectively measuring the level of English for candidates in global companies is crucial for ensuring effective communication, collaboration, and overall performance in a diverse, international workplace.

Berenice López
Global ELL HR Director at Pearson

”

Step 1

Benchmark English language skills for roles

- ✓ Identify role-specific English language requirements for almost 1,400 occupations using Pearson's [Global Scale of English Job Profiles](#).
- ✓ Alternatively, create bespoke benchmarks using Pearson's workplace-relevant language skills framework, [Global Scale of English \(GSE\): Professional Learning Objectives](#).

Top tip: Use reliable data from standardized language assessments to inform your benchmarks.

Step 2

Administer language assessments at the right time

- ✓ For roles where language proficiency is critical, assess candidates' language skills early in the recruitment process.
- ✓ Where language proficiency is less critical, assessing finalists' language skills can speed up onboarding and accelerate workforce integration.

¹ Navigating the tech talent shortage | Deloitte Insights

² Pearson, 2024, How English empowers your tomorrow

Step 3

Assess language skills effectively

- ✓ Use standardized, trusted, AI-based language tests to avoid bias, such as [Versant by Pearson Tests](#).

Top tip: Administer assessments consistently across candidates, using a central dashboard to monitor and compare results.

- ✓ If necessary, incorporate additional assessment methods to complement language testing, such as interviews.

Step 4

Interpret test results

- ✓ Review candidates' language assessment scores against role benchmarks and job requirements, aligned with hiring managers.
- ✓ For borderline cases, consider candidates' potential for growth, a skills-development plan, or further assessment.

Step 5

Leverage test scores for talent and business growth

- ✓ Use language assessment results to inform your new hires' language learning and development plan.
- ✓ Provide resources and take action to support and inspire your candidates' ongoing language skill development, such as:
 - Offering language learning to build skills and confidence.
 - Encouraging language development through classes, cultural programs, or language exchanges.
 - Regularly sharing useful language learning articles and videos to maintain employee motivation.
 - Illustrate the impact of language learning with case studies and success stories.
- ✓ Prove business results by monitoring KPIs, such as employee and customer satisfaction rates.

Additional resources for recruiters and talent acquisition professionals:

- [Language proficiency tests for businesses.](#)
- [Articles, reports and guides: The latest expert thinking on how language skills can drive business success.](#)
- [Webinars: The power of language learning for businesses.](#)

For more support and guidance on integrating language assessment into your hiring process, explore [Pearson Language Solutions for Work](#) or get in touch with our experts [here](#).