The Language Centre of Masaryk University (LC) in Brno provides LSP and LAP courses for all MU students. These courses target B1, B2 and C1 levels of the Common European Framework for Languages and are completed with pro-achievement, end-of-course tests at corresponding CEFR levels.

Relating these LC tests to an external standard resulted in their standardisation in two aspects: the implementation of good practice in test development and the harmonisation of key features of end-of-course tests across the LC departments.
Assessing language skills of Masaryk University students

The harmonisation of key features of end-of-course tests consists of:

• incorporating all four skills and a grammatical-lexical subtest in every end-of-course test
• setting a number of points at 100
• equal weighting across languages at a given level and faculty department
• scoring listening, reading and grammatical-lexical test items right or wrong (0 or 1 point)
• assessing writing and speaking analytically

Good practice lies in applying a standard cycle of test development and includes:

• writing test specification
• item writing
• individual and group moderation
• piloting on target test population
• statistical analysis of pilot testing
• revision and re-moderation of test items and specifications
• going live

Specifics of testing situations of individual language departments are reflected in:

• the choice of task types
• weighting of individual subtests
• setting a minimum acceptable level of performance for productive skills at a given level
• setting a minimum cut-off score for receptive skills and grammatical-lexical subtest

### Weighting of subtests across LC departments in percentage terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty of</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Listening</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Grammar and vocabulary</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Speaking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>C1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies / Arts Medicine</td>
<td>B2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>B2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>B2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>B2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports Studies</td>
<td>B2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informatics</td>
<td>B2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LISTENING

Tested sub-skills:
a global and detailed comprehension of a specialised/academic spoken text

Types of texts used:
- monologue
- dialogue
- interview
- short message
- news
- expert programme
- educational programme
- lecture

Number of tasks:
B1 2 tasks
B2 1 or 2 tasks
C1 3 tasks

Testing techniques:
- open-ended questions
- MCQs (4 options)
- T/F
- sentence completion
- gap-fill
- information transfer

Example of a test task
B2 level, English, Faculty of Medicine

Open-ended questions
You will hear a recording about Dengue fever. Answer the questions below using 1-3 words.
You will hear the recording twice:
What stage of development are the existing vaccines of Dengue fever in?
They are used for _________________________________.

Multiple-choice questions
You will hear a radio programme about lymphomas. For each item below, choose the best answer (A, B, C or D). You will hear the recording twice:
The main cause of lymphomas
A. are genetic factors.
B. has not been revealed yet.
C. was discovered in patients with mononucleosis or HIV.
D. is a weakened immune system and exposure to carcinogens.
Tested sub-skills:
understanding gist and main points, looking for detail and specific information, comprehension of opinions and attitudes, deducing meaning

Types of texts used:
• scientific text
• journal article
• paper abstract
• review
• informative text
• blurb
• flyer
• advert

Number of tasks:
B1 2 tasks
B2 2 or 3 tasks
C1 3 tasks

Testing techniques:
• multiple-choice questions and statements
• T/F, T/F/NM, T/F and justify
• gap-fill or MCQ gap-fill
• cloze
• matching

Example of a test task
B2 level, English, Faculty of Arts & Faculty of Social Studies

Complete each of the unfinished sentences in the text with the missing part from the list below. Fill in the letter in the text; do not rewrite the sentences. One of them will not be used. There is only one possible answer for each gap.

We Americans have long thought of ourselves as unburdened by class distinctions. We have no hereditary aristocracy or landed gentry, and even the poorest among us feel (1.) ______. And yet social class remains a powerful force in American life. In Class Matters, a team of New York Times reporters explores the ways in which class, defined as a combination of income, education, wealth, and occupation, influences destiny in a society that likes (2.) ______. We meet individuals in Kentucky and Chicago who have used education to lift themselves out of poverty and others in Virginia and Washington (3.) ______.

A. that they can become rich through education or hard work
B. with a deep understanding of our nation’s past
C. whose lack of education holds them back
D. to think of itself as a land of opportunity

1A, 2D, 3C
GRAMMAR AND VOCABULARY

Represents the achievement part of the pro-achievement test battery:
• correspondence with curricula and course syllabi
• tested also within assessing productive skills

Types of texts used:
• text-based items
• de-contextualized items

Most frequent testing techniques:
• MCQ
• gap-fill
• sentence transformation
• word formation

Less frequent testing techniques:
• open cloze
• matching
• question formation
• translation of isolated lexical items

Example of a test task
B2 level, English, Faculty of Informatics

Sentence transformations
Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning as the first sentence. Use the word given and do not change it. Use between 2-5 words, including the word given. Contractions count as separate words.

1. I still find it difficult to back up my data regularly. USED
   I still haven’t ____________ my data regularly.

2. I can’t wait to watch gaming tournaments. FORWARD
   I’m really ____________ gaming tournaments.

3. “Do not open any attachments from an unknown source!” he said. ADVISED
   He ____________ any attachments from an unknown source.

4. Although I can make calls, I have difficulty sending text messages. ABLE
   Despite ____________ calls, I have difficulty sending text messages.

5. Interrupt me only if it is important. DISTURB
   Don’t ____________ it is important.

1. got used to backing up
2. looking forward to watching
3. advised us/me not to open
4. being able to make
5. disturb me unless
WRITING

Tested sub-skills:

B1  the ability to ask, explain, describe events, apologise, arrange a consultation or accommodation

B2  the ability to express student’s opinions and thoughts, to describe experience; the ability to explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving advantages and disadvantages of various issues; the ability to write a formal letter using formal language and appropriate phrases; the ability to describe information given in graphical form

C1  the ability to describe trends and projections; the ability to describe advantages and disadvantages of a proposed solution and to give recommendations; the ability to write clear, well-structured texts on topics related to social sciences and economy; the ability to express opinions giving arguments for and against and examples

Genre:

B1  formal email, reaction to a question
B2  report, formal letter, argumentative essay, specialised written discourse
C1  graph description, argumentative essay, problem-solution essay

Register:

B1  semi-formal
B2  formal
C1  formal

Word limit per task:

B1  170 words maximum
B2  250 words maximum
C1  300 words maximum

Assessment:

• analytic rating scales
• criteria: task completion, text organisation, vocabulary, grammar

Example of a test task

B2 level, English, Faculty of Education

Express your view in 160 - 180 words.

“What areas of classroom management do you consider most challenging for inexperienced teachers - time management, discipline, lesson planning or any other? Why?”

Structure your thoughts appropriately and apply the question to your fields of study, if possible.
SPEAKING

Tested sub-skills:
• ability to present a specific topic
• involvement in a discussion
• fluency of discourse
• coherence of speech
• language functions of description, argumentation, comparison, evaluation, persuasion, analysis, synthesis

Formats used:
• monologic discourse
• teacher-student interview pattern
• peer-to-peer discussion
• presentation of a specific topic

Roles of examiners:
• interlocutor-assessor in one person testing one student
• the role of rater and interlocutor split, two teachers – two students format
• interlocutor-rater in one person testing paired students

Assessment:
• analytic rating scales
• assessment criteria: task completion, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation

Example of a test task
C1 level, English, Faculty of Economics and Administration

Choose ONE of the following questions and answer it. You have 2 minutes to prepare before you start. To fulfil the task, you are supposed to talk for 2 minutes:

1. The importance of diversifying investment
2. Ways of raising capital for further growth

Role-play the following situation using the guidelines below. You have 2 minutes to prepare before you start. The length of your role-play should be 3 - 4 minutes:

A company is considering investing a percentage of last year’s net profit in order to generate returns for future expansion. Discuss the situation with your partner and decide
• where the company should invest the money
• what returns might be expected
• the risk involved in the selected options
A university-wide institute providing education in foreign languages and testing language proficiency at all individual faculties of Masaryk University

- founded in 1971
- the biggest university language centre in the Czech Republic
- branches at nine faculties of Masaryk University
- 9,000 students per semester
- 100 employees
- own research activities and educational projects
- seven languages: