

Assessing language proficiency: comparing internal exams with international certifications

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The aim of this presentation is to illustrate the results of an investigation into the extent to which the CEF level awarded to students who had taken an in-house exam at the Language Center of the University of Calabria correlates with the level awarded to these same students by Cambridge ESOL. The participants of this study had just completed an EFL course at the University Language Center as part of a language project funded by Regione Calabria (Progetto ClaC). The ClaC courses are offered to undergraduate and graduate students as well as primary and secondary school teachers, and range from an A1 to a C1 level in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference. The aim of the project is to help participants improve their linguistic competences while becoming more familiar with the specialized language typical of their field of study and/or work.

The presentation will begin by illustrating the content and format of the in-house final exams administered at the end of the ClaC courses as well as the rationale for choosing the types of items included. The final exams, which consist of both a written and an oral component, are graded so as to allow examiners to evaluate each student's abilities and award an appropriate CEF level. Priority is given to integrative testing, including reading comprehension, text analysis, note taking and the writing of short texts (essays, letters, emails).

The core of the presentation will illustrate the results of the quantitative analyses conducted to determine whether there was a significant positive correlation between the results of the in-house ClaC exams and the external

certifications. In particular, the ClaC exams were compared to the PET, FCE, CAE and IELTS.