

## Research Language Skills Assessment (RLSA)

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### 1. What is the Research Language Skills Assessment (RLSA)?

The **Research Language Skills Assessment (RLSA)** is designed to measure how well research students can speak and write in academic and research-related contexts. The test requires that students write an academic text and deliver an academic presentation.

Starting from the 2018/19 academic year, all research students are required to take two mandatory English subjects, ELC6001 (*Presentation Skills for Research Students*) and ELC6002 (*Thesis Writing for Research Students*) before their thesis submission. Those who are very confident about their research language skills and want to be exempted from one of the subjects (or both subjects) can take the RLSA.

#### 2. How do students to register for the RLSA?

Online registration will be available by end of January. Students can go here (to be confirmed) to register for the test.

#### 3. When should students take the test?

It is highly recommended that students take the test as early as possible if they consider being exempted from either ELC6001 or ELC6002. The earlier they take the test, the sooner they can register for the two subjects which are important for their studies in the University.

#### 4. What is the test format?

The two components of the RLSA are as follows.

##### **Writing Test (1 hour)**

Candidates are required to write an academic text of 400-450 words on a given topic. The text should be based on four given academic sources (four extracts in the assessment paper) and their general understanding of the topic.

### **Speaking Test (5-6 minutes)**

Candidates are required to deliver an academic presentation on a given topic related to research contexts.

Candidates will be given an information sheet that outlines the assessment requirements when attending the test.

At the time of the speaking assessment, candidates need to report to the Centre for Independent Language Learning (CILL) in A305. They could bring one or two of their friends as audience. The presentation will be video-recorded for grading.

## **5. What are the assessment criteria?**

### Writing:

**Content (20%):** task fulfilment; relevance and comprehensiveness of information provided about topic; logic and justification of arguments; word length

**Organisation (20%):** cohesion and coherence; overall structure; sequence and presentation of ideas; format and layout

**Language (35%):** academic style and tone; accuracy and range of vocabulary; accuracy and appropriateness of grammatical structures

**Referencing (25%):** acknowledgement of sources in appropriate referencing style; integration of citations in text

### Speaking:

**Content (15%):** task fulfilment; relevance and comprehensiveness of information provided about topic; logic and justification of arguments; showing thorough research; use of authoritative and up-to-date sources; timing

**Delivery (35%):** cohesion and coherence; overall structure; sequence and presentation of ideas; interaction with audience and fellow presenter using a variety of verbal and non-verbal techniques; integration of citations into presentation

**Language (20%):** academic style and tone; accuracy and range of vocabulary; accuracy and appropriateness of grammatical structures

**Pronunciation and fluency (30%):** accurate pronunciation and fluent speech

**6. What is the grading scale for the test?**

Scores for candidates are given according to a performance band from 1 (highest) to 4 (lowest). There is no “pass” or “fail” score. Students will be required to take ELC6001 if they score 3 or above on the speaking test and ELC6002 if they score 3 or above on the writing test.

**7. When can students expect the results of the RLSA?**

Students can expect to receive the results from the ELC in about four weeks after the test.

**8. Can students take the RLSA if they intend to take ELC6001 and ELC6002?**

No. The test is only for those who want to be exempted from both or either of the two subjects.

**9. Can students take only the speaking or writing part of the RLSA?**

Yes. Students can take one part (either speaking or writing) or both parts of the test. For example, if a student wants to be exempted from ELC6001, s/he only needs to take the speaking part of the test.

**10. How many times can students take the test?**

Once only.

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The English Language Centre