

**C**ertAcles DIGITAL

powered by Cambridge

**CertAcles Digital**

Integrating Mediation into University  
Language Assessment



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# What is ACLES and the CertAcles Examination?

## ACLES

Stands for *Asociación de Centros de Lenguas en la Enseñanza Superior* (Association of Language Centres in Higher Education). It is the primary body representing university language centres in Spain.

## The CertAcles Model

A highly respected, university-specific language proficiency certification. Its primary goal is to assess and accredit the general English proficiency of university students and staff across public, academic, and professional domains.

## The University Context

CertAcles was built on the premise that university test-takers need to prove they can use language in ways that are directly relevant to academic life and their future careers, not just in generic contexts.

# The Evolution: From Paper-Based to Digital



## CertAcles Paper Based



Independent tasks based on common models



Decentralized marking at each university



Differing scales



Local training for item writers and raters

## CertAcles Digital powered by Cambridge

- ✓ Fully integrated tasks
- ✓ Agreed-upon specifications
- ✓ Unified marking scales
- ✓ Centralized marking
- ✓ Stable inter-university development team

**Higher Reliability, Validated Constructs, and Optimized Resources.**

# Our challenge: positive washback on teaching and learning

**Spanish university students want certificates, not learning opportunities**

Exam preparation courses:

- left curricular alignment aside
- focused on test wiseness skills
- were hindering language learning

**lower exit language levels**

work with the  
system, not against  
it

**Create an exam that generates positive washback in the classrooms – promote curriculum alignment**

Goals:

- Students can use the language in the real world
- They can produce language and mediate contents
- They learn to think critically

**Exam preparation courses will improve the language level of the students**

# Focus on the Companion Volume paradigm shift



## Beyond the 4 Skills

The CEFR Companion Volume shifts language education away from the traditional model of four isolated skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing).



## The New Modes of Communication

It introduces a more dynamic and realistic model based on Reception, Production, Interaction, and **Mediation**.



## Action-Oriented Approach

It promotes a "proficiency" perspective, focusing on what learners can actively *do* with the language in real-world tasks rather than just complete examination tasks.

# The Paradigm Shift: The User as a Social Agent

Based on the CEFR Companion Volume's action-oriented approach, language users are no longer viewed as isolated communicators.



The learner is a social agent who mobilizes competences to build bridges, construct meaning, and navigate complex social and academic spaces.

# Moving to Integrated Tasks

## 1 Why Integrated Tasks?

Real-world university and professional life rarely asks us to use skills in isolation. We read to write an essay; we listen to a lecture to discuss it.

## 2 Cognitive Validity

CertAcles Digital tasks cover the full spectrum of cognitive processes, from basic input decoding and lexical search to complex discourse construction and building mental models.

## 3 Mediation at the Centre

By moving from isolated tasks to integrated tasks (e.g., "Reading into Writing"), mediation is placed at the **absolute core** of the assessment.

# Test design

We designed the test in two complementary stages to balance measurement precision and authentic language use.

## Computer adaptative Reading & Listening (Objective items)

Purpose: measurement stability

Objectively scored items increase scoring reliability and comparability.

They allow us to sample comprehension broadly across texts and situations.

Results provide a stable measurement base of receptive competence.

## Bi-level Writing & Speaking (Integrated tasks)

Purpose: capture communicative competence

Integrated tasks reflect real academic language use.

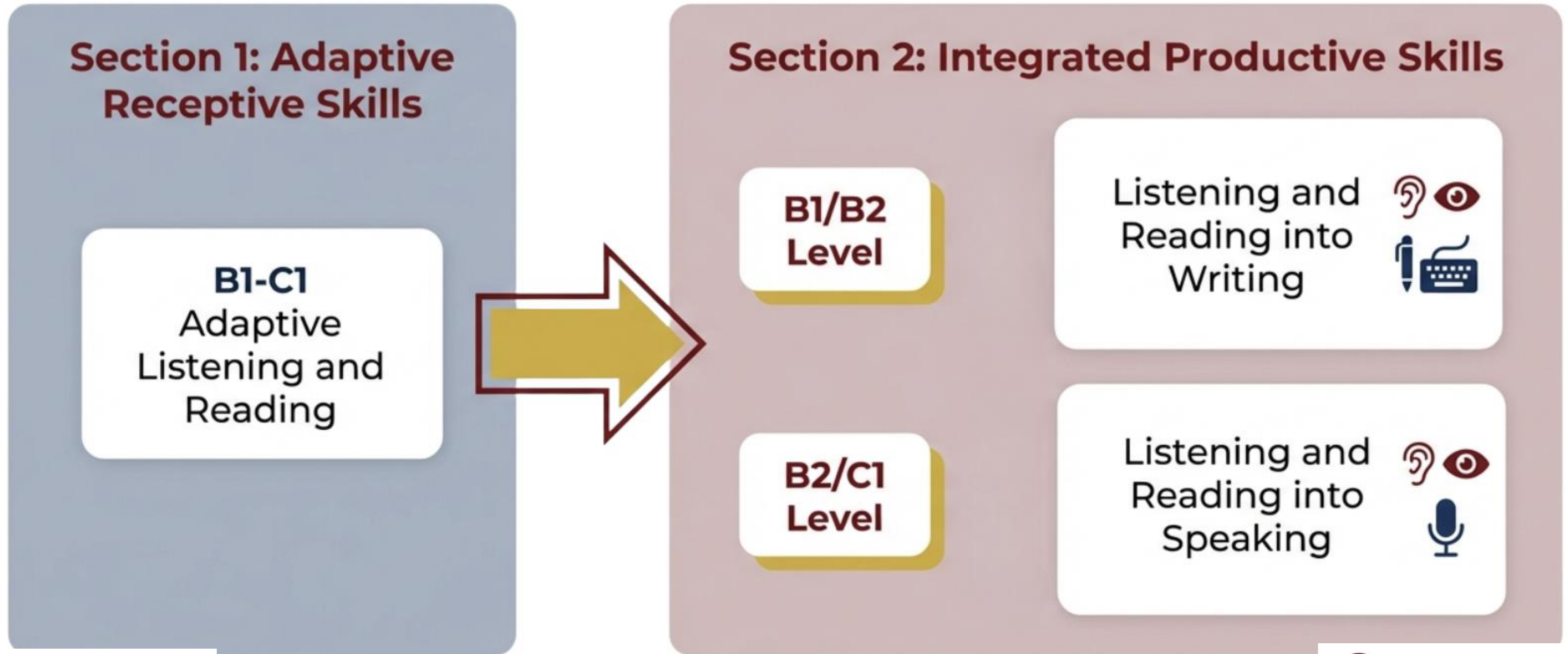
Candidates process input and produce language, as they do in university contexts.

Performances reveal how candidates transform information into meaningful communication.

The test combines objectively scored receptive tasks, which maximise scoring reliability, with integrated productive tasks that reflect target language use in academic contexts and allow observation of communicative competence.

A test design that combines measurement reliability with authentic performance evidence.

# An Overview of the CertAcles Digital Examination



# Test construct and suitability

## Reading comprehension

Task type	Task description	Testing focus	Cognitive processes & CEFR Level
<b>Open cloze</b>	A text with 5 gaps, each to be filled with a single grammatical word. The length of the text may range between 60 and 150 words depending on the level.	This task is designed to test grammatical knowledge.	Reporting B1-C1 syntactic parsing establishing propositional meaning at sentence level
<b>Multiple-choice cloze</b>	A text with 5 gaps each with 3 or 4 multiple-choice options (3 at B1, 4 at B2 and above). The length of the text may range between 60 and 150 depending on the level.	This task is designed to test knowledge of lexis/lexico-grammar.	Reporting B1-C1 word recognition & lexical access syntactic parsing establishing propositional meaning at sentence level inferencing B2-C1: building a mental model
<b>Discrete cloze</b>	A gapped sentence task with a single 3- or 4-option multiple-choice item.	This task is designed to test lexical and lexico-grammatical knowledge.	Reporting B1-C1 word recognition & lexical access syntactic parsing
<b>Reading Discrete with a graphic</b>	Candidates read a short text e.g. a notice or a message and answer a single 3-option multiple-choice question.	The main testing aim of this task is for candidates to interpret language found in short texts (signs / notices / emails, etc.)	B1-B2 word recognition & lexical access syntactic parsing inferencing B2: building a mental model
<b>Gapped text, sentences</b>	Candidates read a long text with five gaps representing extracted sentences. Candidates match the extracted sentences to the gaps, selecting from a set of eight options, five of which are keys while three are distractors.	This task is designed to test careful reading at a global level, testing the candidate's ability to understand text.	B1-C1: word recognition & lexical access syntactic parsing establishing propositional meaning at sentence level

# Test construct and suitability

## Listening comprehension

Task type	Task description	Testing focus	Cognitive processes & CEFR level	CEFR scales B2-C1
<b>5-item comprehension</b>	Five multiple choice questions, each with four written options based on a script read by one, two, or occasionally three actors. The script is between 400 and 750 words depending on the level.	To test ability to understand and extract information from extended monologues, prompted monologues, or dialogues in a range of settings. Items might focus on detail, inference, constructing meaning within longer turns, constructing meaning between turns, feeling, attitude etc.	B1-C1 input decoding lexical search parsing meaning construction B2-C1 discourse construction	Overall listening comprehension
<b>2-item comprehension</b>	Two multiple choice questions, each with three written options based on a script read by one or two actors. The script is between 160 and 300 words depending on the level.	To test ability to understand and extract information from extended monologues, prompted monologues, or dialogues in a range of settings. Items might focus on detail, inference, constructing meaning within longer turns, constructing meaning between turns, feeling, attitude etc. One of the questions will require candidates to construct a 'global' meaning by combining information from non- consecutive parts of the script.	B2-C1 input decoding lexical search parsing meaning construction B1-C1 discourse construction	Understanding conversation between other speakers  Understanding audio media and recordings
<b>1-item comprehension</b>	One multiple choice question with three written options, or three images, based on a script read by one or two actors. The script is between 120 and 150 words depending on the level.	To test ability to understand and extract information from short monologues, prompted monologues, or dialogues in a range of settings. Items might focus on detail, inference, constructing meaning across longer turns, feeling, attitude etc.	B1-C1 input decoding lexical search parsing meaning construction B1-C1 discourse construction	Identifying cues and inferring
<b>Note completion</b>	A title and five gapped sentences summarising key points from a monologue. The monologue is 300 to 400 words depending on the level. Each gap can be completed with up to three words heard in the script and be no longer than 24 characters.	To test ability to understand and extract specific factual, information and stated opinion from a monologue.	C1 input decoding lexical search parsing meaning construction	Overall oral comprehension Understanding as a member of a live audience note-taking (lectures, seminars, meetings, etc.)
<b>Listening into writing</b>	The test-taker listens to an audio text (or several short audio texts) and writes a response based on the content.	This task is designed to test the integration of listening comprehension and written production, as well as mediation aspects, including the ability to extract key points, organise content logically, and express ideas using appropriate language.	identifying main ideas and supporting details interpreting speaker intent and attitude (B2/C1) paraphrasing and summarising structuring and producing written discourse	
<b>Reading into writing</b>	The test-taker reads one or more texts and/or infographics and writes a text based on the input.	This task is designed to test the integration of reading comprehension and written production, as well as mediation aspects, including the ability to synthesise, evaluate, and reformulate information.	selecting relevant information interpreting argument structure and tone (B2/C1) reformulating and summarising producing coherent and cohesive written output	

# Test construct and suitability

## Integrated writing and mediation

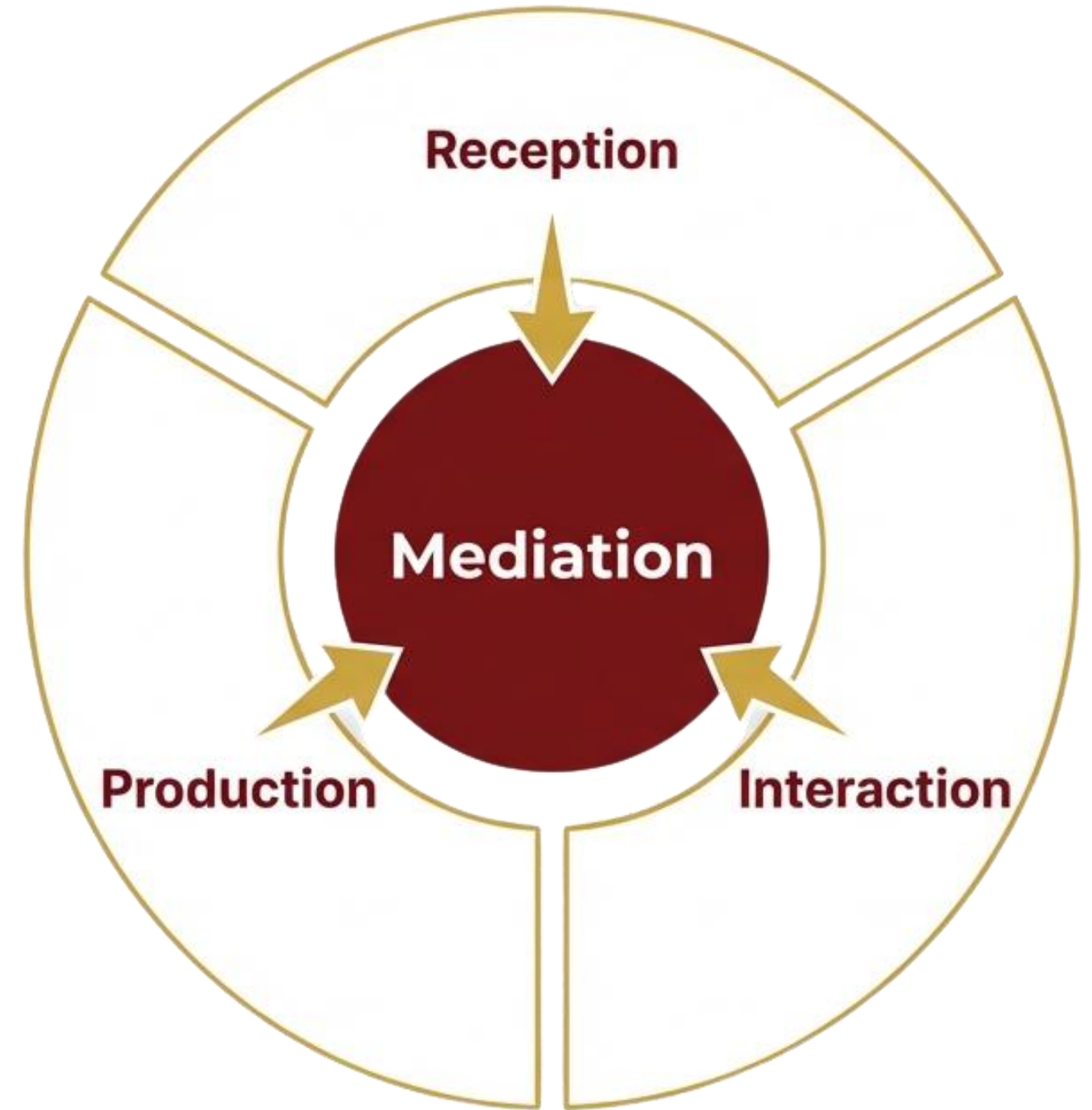
Task type	Task description	Testing focus	Cognitive processes & CEFR Level
<b>Integrated writing and mediation</b>	The test-taker listens to several short audio texts and writes a response based on the content.	This task is designed to test the integration of listening comprehension and written production, as well as mediation aspects, including the ability to extract key points, organise content logically, and express ideas using appropriate language.	identifying main ideas and supporting details interpreting speaker intent and attitude (B2/C1) paraphrasing and summarising structuring and producing written discourse
<b>Integrated writing and mediation</b>	The test-taker reads one or more texts and/or infographics and writes a text based on the input.	This task is designed to test the integration of reading comprehension and written production, as well as mediation aspects, including the ability to synthesise, evaluate, and reformulate information.	selecting relevant information interpreting argument structure and tone (B2/C1) reformulating and summarising producing coherent and cohesive written output

## Integrated speaking and mediation

Task type	Task description	Testing focus	Cognitive processes & CEFR Level
<b>Listening into writing</b>	The test-taker listens to several short audio texts and writes a response based on the content.	This task is designed to test the integration of listening comprehension and written production, as well as mediation aspects, including the ability to extract key points, organise content logically, and express ideas using appropriate language.	identifying main ideas and supporting details interpreting speaker intent and attitude (B2/C1) paraphrasing and summarising structuring and producing written discourse
<b>Reading into writing</b>	The test-taker reads one or more texts and/or infographics and writes a text based on the input.	This task is designed to test the integration of reading comprehension and written production, as well as mediation aspects, including the ability to synthesise, evaluate, and reformulate information.	selecting relevant information interpreting argument structure and tone (B2/C1) reformulating and summarising producing coherent and cohesive written output

# Mediation at the Core of CertAcles Digital

CertAcles Digital abandons the concept of isolated skills. Mediation is the central engine of the exam. Candidates do not just produce language in a vacuum; they must process existing authentic texts, evaluate them, and transform that information to accomplish specific, goal-oriented tasks.



# Written Communication and Mediation

The Task Construct: The Writing module tests the integration of receptive comprehension and written production. Candidates act as social agents to bridge sources and recontextualize them for a target audience.

## Listening into Writing

- **Input:** The candidate listens to authentic audio materials (2–4 minutes) such as a podcast, interview, or lecture.
- **Output:** They must write a response (e.g., a forum post, motivation letter, or report) that summarises the audio, integrates the themes, and provides a personal, reasoned opinion.
- **Length:** 180–200 words (B1/B2) or 200–250 words (B2/C1).

- You are going to listen to two extracts about the transformation of education and the workplace.
- You will hear the recording twice.
- While you are listening, you should take notes using the paper provided, as you will have to do the writing task based on the information in the extracts.
- Read the instructions carefully, and then press **Play**.
- Once you start the recording, it cannot be stopped.
- There will be a 30-second pause between each recording.








You are a member of the International Union of Students and have attended a conference at your university called 'The Connected Age: Transforming Education and the Workplace' about how studies and work are changing. You would like to write a blog entry for the students' union website based on the ideas the two speakers have shared. Write a blog entry in which you:

- summarise the changes mentioned in the audios,
- explain the benefits of the changes at work and education, and
- give your opinion about the challenges students may find in the future.



Write about 180-200 words.  
You must base your blog entry on both audio extracts. You should use your own words.

Save and Exit   00:00:21   

Candidates engage with authentic spoken input before producing a structured written response

# Written Communication and Mediation

- You are going to read two extracts about Food Waste.
- Read the instructions carefully, you will have to do the writing task based on the information in the extracts.

- You have been assigned a group project on food waste.
- Your group is a mixture of local and Erasmus students, so you have decided that the project and the group communication will be in English.
- Now it is time to start writing the assignment and you have decided to write an email to your group mates.

## INPUT 1 (extract from an article)

In this exploratory study, researchers conducted a content analysis of reflective essays to investigate how college students perceive food waste, its underlying causes, and possible solutions. The participants, who were enrolled in a non-major nutrition course, completed a module on food safety and sustainability before writing their essays. These reflections combined course concepts with personal observations of food waste in both retail settings and their own households. Two main themes emerged from the analysis: the causes of food waste and strategies for reducing it. Students described a range of environments where waste occurs, including grocery stores, restaurants, catered events, and homes. They identified consumer behaviors such as rejecting slightly damaged produce and relying heavily on expiration dates as significant contributors. Waste generated by restaurant staff and patrons was also frequently mentioned. To address these issues, students proposed several solutions. These included serving smaller portions at home and in dining establishments, providing education on effective food purchasing, storage, and preparation, and promoting food donation as a way to reduce unnecessary waste.

## INPUT 2 (extract from an article)

Current food systems face significant inefficiencies, with over one-third of all food produced being lost or wasted. Food loss typically occurs during production and processing, often due to outdated or ineffective practices that result in edible food not being preserved or utilized. Innovative food processing technologies and advanced packaging solutions play a crucial role in enhancing the efficiency and resilience of food supply chains. Aseptic processing, for example, helps extend the shelf life of perishable products by maintaining their safety and quality without the need for refrigeration. In parallel, aseptic paper-based carton packaging helps reduce food waste by protecting food and beverages from physical damage, temperature fluctuations, light exposure, and microbial contamination. Our continued development of high-performance processing and packaging systems contributes directly to minimizing food loss and food waste.

## INPUT 3 (email from group mate)

Hi, everybody,  
I found this graph which I think might be really useful!



Alex Vracis

Write an email in which you:  
-suggest key points for your assignment based on the information found, and  
-argue why you should include the graph and how it can be integrated.

Save and Exit



00:01:00



ACLES

CERTACLES DIGITAL B2-C1

## Reading into Writing

- **Input:** Candidates read multiple short texts, emails, or visual data such as graphs and infographics (approx. 200–350 words total).
- **Output:** They compose an email or online post synthesising the information, evaluating the arguments, and reformulating the message without copying the original texts.
- **Length:** 100–120 words (B1/B2) or 120–140 words (B2/C1).

Candidates synthesise information from multiple sources — including visual data — into a coherent written output.

# Spoken Communication and Mediation

## The Task Construct

The speaking tasks are individual, computer-recorded responses. They elicit spontaneous oral production, requiring candidates to interpret spoken or written input, summarize content, and justify viewpoints.

## Reading into Speaking

**Input:** Candidates are given reading materials (texts, graphs, posters).

**Output:** They answer recorded questions. They must present a reasoned position (B2) and, at C1 level, assess the repercussions or provide recommendations based on the text.

**Timing:** 15 minutes preparation; 4-5 minutes of speaking.

• You are a member of the University's International Environmental Committee at your university, who has organised a climate change protest.  
• You are going to receive a call from an international climate organisation interested in the event and you will be asked two questions.  
• To prepare for the call, you have five minutes to read all the information and take notes.  
• You should use the information provided in your own words to answer the questions.

**1. Poster**



**2. Students' demands**

**Climate Action Protest**  
**Students' demands**

As Environmental Studies students, we want a world where both our economy and environment can prosper.

We demand that the government take strong action to solve the climate crisis by:

- Transitioning to 100% renewable energy by 2035.
- Investing in public transport and cycling.
- Protecting biodiversity and natural habitats.
- Increasing climate education in schools.

This is our promise to fight for a better future. We will not be silent. We will make our voices heard.

**Question 1**  
Hi, I'm Fiona Gallagher. I work for 'Save the planet', an international climate organisation in Ireland. Thanks for accepting our call. I have two questions for you. My first question is: Can you give me some information about the event and what the students want?  
(You have about two minutes to answer this question)

**Start recording 1**

**Question 2**  
Thank you for the information. My second question for you is: which of the students' demands is the most important for you and why?  
(You have about three minutes to answer this question)

**Start recording 2**



# Spoken Communication and Mediation

## Listening into Speaking

**Input:** Candidates are given listening materials (opinions, information, etc.).

**Output:** They answer recorded questions. They must present a reasoned position (B2) and, at C1 level, assess the repercussions or provide recommendations based on the recordingd.

**Timing:** 15 minutes preparation; 4-5 minutes of speaking.

- You are going to hear two extracts about the Impact of Social Media at the Workplace; you will hear them twice.
- Please read the instructions carefully and take notes while you are listening.
- You will need to use your notes for your production.
- You will have two minutes after the audio extracts to organise your ideas and then you should start speaking.

- You have been invited to participate in an international round table on the Impact of Social Media at the Workplace.
- To prepare the talk you listen to two recordings on the topic and you decide that your contribution to the round table will be based on those ideas.
- In your contribution, you should:
  - give your opinion about the impact of social media on job interviews, and
  - comment on how to use social media strategically for professional growth.

- Read the instructions carefully, and then press **Play**.
- Once you start the recording, it cannot be stopped.



(You have about six minutes to complete the speaking task)

Start recording 

Save and Exit



00:00:19



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# Authenticity and University Relevance



## Genuine Input

The exam relies exclusively on authentic or genuine input. Candidates interact with materials they will actually encounter: academic articles, university counseling blogs, lectures, professional emails, and data graphs.



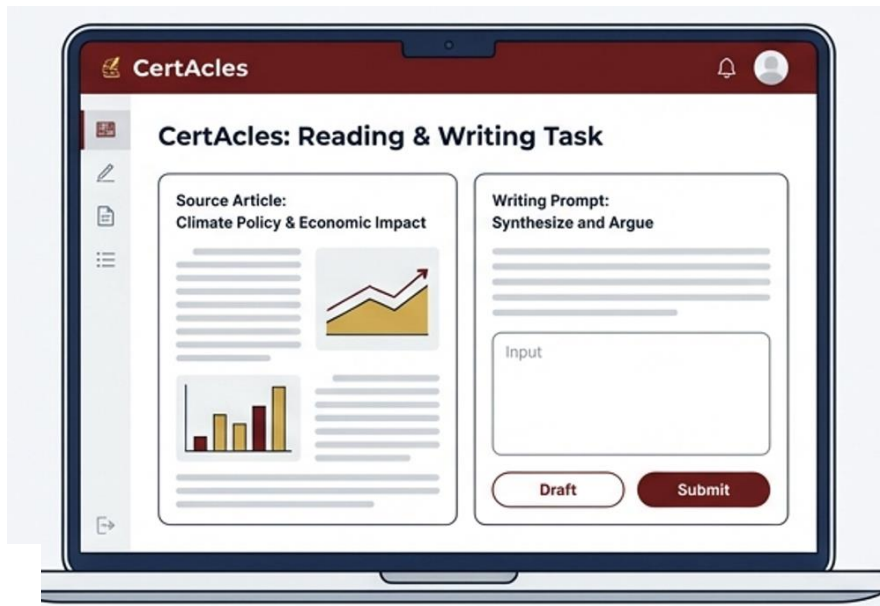
## Relevant Domains

Every scenario is firmly rooted in academic, professional, or public domains (e.g., student wellbeing campaigns, workplace social media usage, housing abroad).



## Real-World Application

Test-takers are required to perform tasks that replicate real university life—such as taking notes during a lecture or collaborating via email on a group project.



# Rating Scales for Mediation Tasks

## Centralized & Unified

Unlike the paper-based test, CertAcles Digital uses unified scales and a centralized double-marking system (a third rater intervenes if there is a discrepancy) to ensure maximum reliability.

## CEFR-Aligned Criteria

Productive and mediation skills are assessed based on:

- 1 Task Fulfillment**  
Evaluates how well the candidate mediated the information—were the sources accurately synthesized? Was the register appropriate for the audience?
- 2 Discourse Characteristics**  
Evaluates coherence, cohesion, and logical structure.
- 3 Linguistic Characteristics**  
Evaluates grammatical and lexical range and accuracy (plus pronunciation and intonation for speaking).

# Rating Scales for writing communication and mediation

## WRITTEN COMMUNICATION AND MEDIATION B1-B2-C1

Level	Scenario Completion - Scenario Fulfillments (text type/discourse and objectives and register) - Mediation (understanding, relevance, reorganisation/transformation and reformulation of ideas from the input)	Discourse Features - Text structure - Coherence and cohesion / Punctuation	Linguistic Features - Grammar range and accuracy - Lexical range and accuracy / Spelling
<b>Above C1</b>			
<b>C1+</b>	<p>Uses the required text type, and the content fully meets the purpose of the scenario. Provides detailed information, arguments, and opinions with precision. Register is consistently appropriate.</p> <p>Shows full understanding of the input. All ideas from the input are relevant, fully developed and reorganized into a logically connected pattern, creating a smooth flow. Reformulation is consistently skilful and facilitates understanding of the ideas from the input.</p>	<p>Organizational patterns (e.g., thematic progression, back referencing, cause and effect, framing) are used with precision, and the overall text structure creates a smooth and natural flow of ideas. Paragraphs are clearly signposted with topic sentences, enhancing clarity. Arguments are logically developed and rounded off seamlessly, holding the reader's attention throughout.</p> <p>Cohesion is sophisticated, with ideas clearly sequenced and connected seamlessly. Punctuation is consistent and supports readability.</p>	<p>Shows varied complex grammatical structures, consistently used accurately and appropriately. Errors are extremely rare and difficult to spot.</p> <p>Vocabulary is rich and nuanced, effectively adapted to the scenario. Less common synonyms and idiomatic language are used appropriately and naturally. Lexical errors are very rare and spelling is accurate, with only occasional slips.</p>
<b>C1</b>	<p>Uses an appropriate text type, completing all objectives thoroughly and effectively, with register adapted to context and only rare minor lapses.</p> <p>Demonstrates deep understanding of the input. All selected ideas from the input are relevant and mostly precise. Reorganises and transforms content from the input into logically connected patterns; repetition occurs only to reinforce key points. Reformulation is natural, clear, accurate, and purpose-driven.</p>	<p>Organizational patterns are used effectively, and the overall text structure supports a clear flow of ideas. Paragraphs are well constructed and enhance clarity, while arguments are thoughtfully developed, expanding key points and rounding off appropriately, though transitions are not always seamless.</p> <p>Cohesive devices are used flexibly and effectively at both sentence and paragraph level. Ideas are clearly connected, and punctuation is consistent and aids readability, with only minor errors that do not affect clarity.</p>	<p>Shows a variety of complex grammatical structures and consistently maintains a high level of accuracy, with only minor errors that do not impede communication.</p> <p>Vocabulary is rich and adequate. Uses synonyms and some idiomatic language appropriately, with some slips. Spelling is mostly accurate.</p>
<b>B2+</b>	<p>Uses the appropriate text type and completes all the objectives successfully register is appropriate with occasional lapses.</p> <p>Shows solid understanding of the input, though minor omissions or misunderstandings may occur. Selected ideas from the input are relevant and reorganised effectively to avoid unnecessary repetition. Reformulation is generally clear and natural, with occasional awkwardness.</p>	<p>There is evidence of effective organizational patterns, and the text is clear and mostly natural. Logical paragraphs create a coherent and easy-to-follow structure, while arguments highlight significant points with relevant supporting detail and are rounded off, though not always smoothly.</p> <p>Cohesive devices are used appropriately, so ideas are generally well connected and flow logically, though some repetition may occur. Punctuation is mostly accurate, and errors do not disrupt clarity or rhythm.</p>	<p>Uses different grammatical structures correctly. Errors mainly arise from attempts to use more advanced language and rarely cause confusion.</p> <p>Vocabulary is varied. Uses different formulations to avoid repetition, but not always successfully or appropriately, yet meaning remains clear. Spelling is generally accurate.</p>
<b>B2</b>	<p>Uses the adequate text type and completes the objectives properly; register is generally appropriate with some inconsistencies.</p> <p>Understands the input but with some gaps. Most ideas from the input are relevant, though some may be missing or irrelevant. Related ideas from the input are mostly merged and reorganised logically. Reformulation is evident but includes some reliance on original wording and structures.</p>	<p>The text structure is generally clear and effective, showing some organizational patterns. Arguments are presented with clarity, with attempts to highlight and support key ideas, though conclusions may be only partially rounded off.</p> <p>Cohesive devices are used to connect ideas, though not always appropriately, making the text generally easy to follow despite occasional rough or simplistic transitions. Punctuation is reasonably accurate, and errors rarely interfere with the flow of the text.</p>	<p>Uses simple grammatical structures correctly and some complex ones, which may be inaccurate but generally do not hinder understanding.</p> <p>Uses both common and some less frequent vocabulary confidently. Varies formulations to reduce repetition, though lexical gaps may lead to circumlocution. Lexical accuracy is generally high, with occasional confusion or incorrect word choice that does not impede communication. Spelling is reasonably accurate.</p>
<b>B1+</b>	<p>Uses the adequate text type with some minor flaws and completes the objectives of the scenario adequately, attempts to adapt register, though occasional major mismatches.</p> <p>Understands the gist and some main ideas, but misunderstandings and omissions are evident. Most ideas are taken from the input and relevant, though some irrelevancies appear. Ideas from the input are not successfully reorganised to suit the scenario. Reformulation is limited, with frequent lifting from the source.</p>	<p>The text structure is clear, and ideas are developed, though the flow is uneven. Transitions between points may be basic, yet the overall organization maintains clarity. Arguments are sufficiently developed to be followed most of the time, with attempts at rounding off ideas but not always successful.</p> <p>Common cohesive devices are used, though sometimes inaccurately. Relationships between ideas are generally clear and logically sequenced, with attempts to group related points. Punctuation is sufficiently accurate to ensure the text can be followed.</p>	<p>Shows a generally reliable control of simple grammatical structures, while attempts at complex ones are limited or often flawed.</p> <p>Uses both common and frequent vocabulary correctly but lacks precision and variety. Attempts to avoid repetition are evident, though frequent repetition remains. Errors may require re-reading, but spelling is generally accurate and rarely causes confusion.</p>
<b>B1</b>	<p>Text type with noticeable flaws or not completely appropriate; completes some of the main objectives of the scenario sufficiently, but some elements may be missing. Register is mainly neutral but may be inconsistent.</p> <p>Understands the gist and a few main ideas, but evident misunderstandings and omissions occur. Only some ideas from the input are relevant <b>and/or</b> drawn from the input. Shows little evidence of reorganisation of ideas from the input. Text relies heavily on lifted wording and structures.</p>	<p>The text consists of shorter, discrete elements arranged into a connected, linear sequence of points. Simple, logical paragraph breaks are made, but they may not fully support the development of ideas, and arguments can appear repetitive or disjointed, with limited success in rounding off.</p> <p>Longer sentences are formed and connected with a limited range of cohesive devices. Paragraphing and punctuation are generally accurate and easy to follow, though occasional errors may disrupt the flow of ideas.</p>	<p>Uses the most frequent routines and patterns, but control of simple grammatical structures is uneven, and complex forms are rare or largely unsuccessful.</p> <p>Uses common vocabulary, though limitations lead to repetition and difficulty with formulation. Major errors occur when expressing more complex thoughts. Spelling is accurate enough to be understood most of the time.</p>
<b>A2+</b>	<p>Uses the required text type only partially, and the communicative purpose of the scenario is generally recognisable. Register is neutral and limited to the simplest common expressions of politeness.</p> <p>Shows limited understanding of the gist of the input with major omissions. Most ideas are irrelevant to the task. Relies almost entirely on the structures and wording of the inputs.</p>	<p>The text structure is linear and does not fully support the development of ideas. At times, the text may seem repetitive or loosely connected, and paragraphing is inconsistent or absent.</p> <p>Connectors are limited to the most common types, used to link simple sentences or introduce examples. Their use may be repetitive or restricted. Punctuation errors are frequent and may disrupt the overall flow of the text.</p>	<p>Shows a limited range and some control of simple grammatical structures. Errors in basic grammar (e.g. verb tense, agreement) are systematic, but the intended meaning is usually clear.</p> <p>Has a sufficient range of everyday vocabulary, but the message is simplistic and reflects lexical limitations. Spelling errors are frequent and may disrupt the text.</p>
<b>A2 or below</b>			

# Rating Scales for speaking communication and mediation

## SPOKEN COMMUNICATION AND MEDIATION B1-B2-C1

Level	Scenario Completion - Scenario Fulfillments (discourse type/discourse and objectives and register) - Mediation (understanding, relevance, reorganisation/transformation and reformulation of ideas from the input)	Discourse Features - Discourse structure, coherence and cohesion - Fluency, intonation and pronunciation	Linguistic Features - Grammar range and accuracy - Lexical range and accuracy
<b>Above C1</b>			
<b>C1+</b>	Content fully meets the communicative purpose of the scenario, provides detailed information, arguments and opinions clearly and conveys finer degrees of intention with precision. Register is consistently appropriate.  There is evidence of full understanding of the input. All ideas from the input are relevant, fully developed and reorganised to present them in a logically connected pattern, with a smooth flow of ideas. Reformulation is consistently skilful and facilitates understanding of the ideas from the input presented.	Organizational patterns (e.g., thematic progression, back referencing, cause and effect, framing) are used with precision, and the overall discourse structure creates a smooth and natural flow of ideas. Discourse is clearly signposted with topic sentences, enhancing clarity. Cohesion is sophisticated, with ideas clearly sequenced and connected through a wide range of cohesive devices. Arguments are logically developed and rounded off seamlessly, holding the listener's attention throughout.  Expresses themselves with a natural, effortless, unhesitating flow, pausing only to refine their thoughts with precision. Produces smooth, intelligible, and effective spoken discourse, skilfully using stress, rhythm, and intonation to highlight and clarify the finer points of their message.	Shows varied complex grammatical structures, consistently used accurately and appropriately. Errors are extremely rare and difficult to spot.  Vocabulary is rich, nuanced, and used effectively. Less common synonyms and idiomatic language are used appropriately and naturally. Lexical errors very rare, with only occasional slips.
<b>C1</b>	Uses the appropriate discourse, completing all objectives thoroughly and effectively, with register adapted to context and only rare minor lapses.  Demonstrates deep understanding of the input. All selected ideas from the input are relevant and mostly precise. Reorganises and transforms content from the input into logically connected patterns; repetition occurs only to reinforce key points. Reformulation is natural, clear, accurate, and purpose-driven.	Organizational patterns are used effectively, and the overall discourse structure supports a clear flow of ideas. Discourse is well constructed using a wide variety of cohesive devices are used flexibly and effectively. Ideas are clearly connected to enhance clarity, while arguments are thoughtfully developed, expanding key points and rounding off appropriately, though transitions are not always seamless.  Expresses themselves fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Uses varied intonation for precision, with only complex topics briefly affecting flow. Occasional lapses in sound, stress, or rhythm occur but never hinder clarity.	Shows a variety of complex grammatical structures and consistently maintains a high level of accuracy, with only minor errors that do not impede communication.  Vocabulary is rich and adequate. Uses synonyms and some idiomatic language appropriately, with some slips.
<b>B2+</b>	Uses the appropriate discourse and completes all the objectives successfully register is appropriate with occasional lapses.  Shows solid understanding of the input, though minor omissions or misunderstandings may occur. Selected ideas from the input are relevant and reorganised effectively to avoid unnecessary repetition. Reformulation is generally clear and natural, with occasional awkwardness.	There is evidence of effective organizational patterns, and the discourse is clear and mostly natural. A range of cohesive devices is used appropriately, so ideas are generally well connected and flow logically, though some repetition may occur. Logical discourse creates a coherent and easy-to-follow structure, while arguments highlight significant points with relevant supporting detail and are rounded off, though not always smoothly.  Communicates fluently and with ease, maintaining a mostly smooth flow even on complex topics. Speech is clear and natural, with stress, rhythm, and intonation used to highlight meaning. Minor lapses in pronunciation or delivery occur but do not compromise intelligibility.	Uses different grammatical structures correctly. Errors mainly arise from attempts to use more advanced language and rarely cause confusion.  Vocabulary is varied, with different formulations used to avoid repetition. This is generally successful, though not always accurate, yet meaning remains clear.
<b>B2</b>	Uses the adequate discourse and completes the objectives properly; register is generally appropriate with some inconsistencies.  Understands the input but with some gaps. Most ideas from the input are relevant, though some may be missing or irrelevant. Related ideas from the input are mostly merged and reorganised logically. Reformulation is evident but includes some reliance on original wording and structures.	The discourse structure is generally clear and effective, showing some organizational patterns. Cohesive devices are used to connect ideas, though not always appropriately, making the discourse generally easy to follow despite occasional rough or simplistic transitions. Arguments are presented with clarity, with attempts to highlight and support key ideas, though conclusions may be only partially rounded off.  Communicates with a degree of fluency and spontaneity, delivering clear speech with some hesitation on complex ideas. Attempts to use intonation and stress to convey meaning, though control may be uneven with occasional mispronunciations or rhythm lapses do not affect seriously intelligibility.	Uses simple grammatical structures correctly and some complex ones, which may be inaccurate but generally do not hinder understanding.  Uses both common and some less frequent vocabulary confidently. Varies formulations to reduce repetition, though lexical gaps may lead to circumlocution. Lexical accuracy is generally high, with occasional confusion or incorrect word choice that does not impede communication.
<b>B1+</b>	Uses the adequate discourse with some minor flaws and completes the objectives of the scenario adequately, attempts to adapt register, though occasional major mismatches.  Understands the gist and some main ideas, but misunderstandings and omissions are evident. Most ideas are taken from the input and relevant, though some irrelevancies appear. Ideas from the input are not successfully reorganised to suit the scenario. Reformulation is limited, with frequent lifting from the source.	The discourse structure is clear, and ideas are developed, though the flow is uneven. Relationships between ideas are generally clear and logically sequenced, with attempts to group related points. Common cohesive devices are used to connect ideas, though sometimes inaccurately. Arguments are sufficiently developed to be followed most of the time, with attempts at rounding off ideas that are not always successful.  Communicates with relative ease and keeps going effectively despite occasional pauses or formulation issues. Pronunciation is generally clear, and while some sounds or word stress may still be incorrect, the speaker can usually be understood.	Shows a generally reliable control of simple grammatical structures, while attempts at complex ones are limited or often flawed.  Uses both common and frequent vocabulary correctly but lacks precision and variety. Attempts to avoid repetition are evident, though frequent repetition remains. Errors may cause confusion.
<b>B1</b>	Discourse with noticeable flaws or not completely appropriate; completes some of the main objectives of the scenario sufficiently, but some elements may be missing. Register is mainly neutral but may be inconsistent.  Understands the gist and a few main ideas, but evident misunderstandings and omissions occur. Only some ideas from the are relevant <b>and/or</b> drawn from the input. Shows little evidence of reorganisation of ideas from the input. Discourse relies heavily on lifted wording and structures.	The discourse consists of shorter, discrete elements arranged into a connected, linear sequence of points., Discourse is connected with a limited range of cohesive devices and arguments can appear repetitive or disjointed, with limited success in rounding off.  Maintains comprehensible speech despite pauses for planning, with generally clear pronunciation. Pronunciation is generally intelligible, despite regular mispronunciations of sounds or less familiar words may cause occasional strain.	Uses the most frequent routines and patterns, but control of simple grammatical structures is uneven, and complex forms are rare or largely unsuccessful.  Uses common vocabulary, though limitations lead to repetition and difficulty with formulation. Major errors occur when expressing more complex thoughts.
<b>A2+</b>	The communicative purpose of the scenario is generally recognisable, with no attempts to convey any finer degrees of intentions. Register is neutral and limited to the simplest common expressions of politeness.  Shows limited understanding of the gist of the input but there are major misunderstandings or omissions. Most ideas from the input are irrelevant. Relies completely on the structures and wording of the input.	Discourse is linear. Ideas are developed as a short series of simple phrases and sentences linked into a list. Uses the most frequently occurring connectors to link simple sentences and introduce examples, though these may be applied in a repetitive or limited way. Discourse may be inconsistent or incoherent at times.  Makes themselves understood in short contributions despite frequent pauses, false starts and reformulations. Pronunciation is generally intelligible, though systematic errors and strong influence from other languages may require listener effort.	Shows a limited range and some control of simple grammatical structures. Errors in basic grammar (e.g. verb tense, agreement) are systematic, but the intended meaning is usually clear.  Has a sufficient range of everyday vocabulary to deal with the context but the message is simplistic, reflecting lexical limitations.

# The Catalyst for Curriculum Alignment

## Planning Backwards

Syllabus Design

Action-Oriented Scenarios

Real-world Needs

### Positive Washback on Teaching:

CertAcles Digital forces a structural shift in syllabus design.

Because the exam integrates skills, teachers can no longer teach grammar in hermetically sealed silos.

### The Teacher's New Role:

Educators transition from lecturers of linguistic rules to facilitators of action-oriented, collaborative mini-projects.

### Result:

Curricula are rebuilt around real-world communicative needs rather than a linear progression of vocabulary lists.

# Pre-testing results

- The levels obtained by candidates in CertAcles Digital are internally coherent and differentiated by skill.
- Cambridge Reading tends to place candidates at slightly higher levels than those obtained in writing and speaking, which is compatible with the nature of the skills being assessed.
- Cambridge Listening shows levels comparable to those of the productive skills, with no systematic bias.
- There is no evidence of serious misalignment or inappropriate overlap between constructs.
- Interrater reliability is good, although analysis of the ratings encouraged some changes to the scale
- Candidate experience was positive “*I would take this exam again*” “*it was natural*” “*I wouldn’t need special preparation*” “*I found the topics relevant to university students*”

# Conclusion

## A Paradigm Shift

CertAcles Digital manages to operationalize mediation into a practical, highly reliable exam.

## Empowering the Student

By moving to active, integrated tasks, the exam truly treats the university student as a "social agent." and puts them at the centre of their own learning process.

## A Robust Future

With adaptive technology, centralized grading, and authentic university-focused tasks, CertAcles Digital will be able to provide a valid, accessible, and rigorous assessment for Spanish higher education. **But most importantly, it has been developed by a group of experts from different universities in Spain**

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# Questions? Comments?

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