

Department of Language Teaching and Continuing Qualification / DLTCQ/  
at "St. Kliment Ohridski" University – Sofia, Bulgaria

The Department for Language Teaching and Continuing Qualification / DLTCQ/ at "St. Kliment Ohridski" University, Sofia, is a successor of the former Institute for Foreign Students.

The main activities of the department include:

- offering a foundation year for foreign students
- organizing courses in Bulgarian as a foreign language at The International School for Bulgarian Language and Culture
- organizing foreign language courses
- offering Bulgarian and mathematics courses for high school and university candidates

During the foundation year, foreign students are taught Bulgarian and English as well as science, mathematics, geography, and economics. The Department has adopted the vitally important role to disseminate the Bulgarian language and culture around the world, which in turn would facilitate the country's integration within the multicultural European context. DLTCQ works to harmonize the educational standards of teaching Bulgarian as a foreign language with the ones applied in teaching other languages, especially the standards, developed by The Council of Europe. As a result, The Department has become Bulgaria's only educational institution to be granted membership in the Association of the European Language Testing Centres (ALTE). DLTCQ carries out examinations for proficiency in Bulgarian as a foreign language and issues the respective certificates. There are no fixed examination sessions. Examinees normally take the test individually, at a time which suits them best, in front of a panel of two examiners.

We currently teach Bulgarian to people who temporarily reside in the country or to *Bulgarian citizenship candidates* in specialized courses, at the International School for Bulgarian Language and Culture and in a variety of workshops.

Since 1976, as part of the educational institution, a Centre for Foreign Language Teaching has been in place, where Bulgarian citizens receive tuition in English, French, German, Spanish, Italian.

The Department is a licensed national testing centre for the following languages:

- French: TCF, CENTRE INTERNATIONAL D'ETUDES PEDAGOGIQUES with The French Ministry of Education
- Greek: CENTRE FOR THE GREEK LANGUAGE (KEG) with The Ministry of Education of The Republic of Greece

For the above-mentioned tests, we offer licensed preparatory courses.

At DLTCQ we constantly modernize our foreign language teaching methods and resources. The Department is equipped with four computer multimedia labs, science labs, and a library. There is a bookshop on the premises, which offers all the necessary textbooks and teaching materials.

## Standardized Test of Bulgarian as a Foreign Language

The Department for Language Teaching and Continuing Qualification (DLTCQ) has been a member of the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) - a non-governmental organization working with the Council of Europe and a UN consultant on language policies, since 2007.

Between 2007-2020 the Standardized test of Bulgarian as a foreign language passed three consecutive ALTE audits successfully, as a result of which it was awarded ALTE Quality Mark (Q-mark) three times. This mark is a recognition and guarantee that the Standardized test of Bulgarian, and all the procedures related to its development, administration and assessment meet the requirements stated in the ALTE quality standards and are equivalent with tests of one of the biggest test centers in Europe - Cambridge English Assessment (Great Britain), Goethe Institute (Germany) and CIEP (France), which have the same mark.

So far nearly 1900 citizens from more than 45 countries have passed the test successfully.

The alignment of Standardized Test of Bulgarian as a Foreign Language to the CEFR could be described as follows:

1. Test levels coincide with the levels, defined in CEFR, i.e. A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2.
2. The test is intended for general purposes, thus the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), defined in the CEFR, are equally assessed. The test is entirely independent from any syllabi or textbooks.
3. The test content, number of tasks and items, their format, text types and scope, topics and language-related situations correspond to CEFR requirements for the different language levels. Three of the main domains (personal, social and educational) are covered.
4. Each candidate's test results are evaluated quantitatively (number grade) as well as qualitatively (verbal grade), describing the communicative skills in terms of Can - Do Statements of the CEFR.

5. Standardization: Language tests at DLTIS are strictly in line with the recommendations and requirements of the Manual for Relating Language Examinations to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (2003). Standardizing procedures involve pre- and post-testing, thorough psychometric analysis, bias study, reliability and fairness of assessment analysis.

6. Validation: Test validation is conducted by a panel of experts, including at least two language experts holding academic degrees, as well as representatives of the stakeholders, if necessary.

7. Test administration: Language proficiency examinations are conducted according to Test Administration Codex, adopted by the Examination Board. The examination consists of oral and written part, evaluated separately. The oral part is audio-recorded. The examination team consists of a certified examiner, a certified rater and a supervisor. Test materials are kept for five years.

Each candidate has to register at the following site [www.bg.e-learning-deo.uni-sofia.bg](http://www.bg.e-learning-deo.uni-sofia.bg) before taking the exam in Bulgarian. Before the exam it is also necessary for candidates to do the diagnostic tests, which are on the same site (under the heading Test your knowledge of Bulgarian as a foreign language). There you can find sample standardized tests, which inform candidates about the test format.

In April 2017 the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Sofia University "St Kliment Ohridski" signed an agreement, which states that the distance exams in Bulgarian language in all the Bulgarian Sunday schools abroad will be conducted by the Department for Language Teaching and Continuing Qualification (DLTCQ) at Sofia University.

As of now, examination centres of Sofia University "St Kliment Ohridski" abroad are universities and Bulgarian schools.

Director of DLTCQ  
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