

# Oral Placement Interview Questions

**The interview should take a maximum of 10 minutes.**

- The questions are organised by topic.
- The first instruction or question is a general one which more advanced candidates should be able to answer.
- The further prompts should be used when the candidate does not answer fully or does not understand the question or is at a low level.
- Try to ensure a smooth progression through the topics - do not jump randomly from topic to topic.
- Choose appropriate topics i.e. do not ask a teenager if they are married.
- Use the CEFR information on pages 2 and 3 to help you place the student.

- Procedure**
1. Start the interview by **welcoming** the candidate and asking for their name.
  2. Choose from the topics below as appropriate.
  3. Finish the interview by **thanking** the candidate.
  4. Make a note of the candidate's level in speaking.

## Topics and questions

Topic	Main instruction/ question	Further prompts
Your work	Tell me something about your job	What do you do? Where do you work? Do you enjoy it? What do you like best about your job?
Your family	Tell me something about your family	Are you married? Do you have any children? Do you come from a large family? Do you have any brothers or sisters?
Where you live	Tell me something about where you live	Where do you live? Is it a nice place to live? What do you like about living there? If you could live anywhere, where would you like to live? Why?
Your interests	Tell me something about your interests	Do you have a hobby? Do you do any sports? What do you do in your free time? What kind of music do you like? Can you play a musical instrument? Do you have a pet?
Your plans for the future	What are your plans for the future?	Do you have any plans for the weekend? What would you like to do in the future? Where would you like to work in the future? Why? Which country would you like to visit in the future? Why?
The past	Tell me something about your last holiday.	Where did you go for your last holiday/vacation? Was it a good holiday? Did you go with family or friends? What do you remember most?
English	Why are you learning English?	How long have you been learning English? Where have you been learning English? What coursebook have you used? Do you enjoy it? Do you like learning English? Why do you think using English is important?
Hypothetically speaking		What would you do if you won a million dollars? If you could change anything in your life, what would it be?

<b>ALTE</b>	<b>Council of Europe</b>	<b>Listening/Speaking</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>C2</b>	Can advise on or talk about about complex or sensitive issues, understanding colloquial references and dealing confidently with hostile questions.
<b>4</b>	<b>C1</b>	Can contribute effectively to meetings and seminars within own area of work or keep up a casual conversation with a good degree of fluency, coping with abstract expressions.
<b>3</b>	<b>B2</b>	Can follow or give a talk on a familiar topic or keep up a conversation on a fairly wide range of topics.
<b>2</b>	<b>B1</b>	Can express opinions on abstract/cultural matters in a limited way or offer advice within a known area, and understand instructions or public announcements.
<b>1</b>	<b>A2</b>	Can express simple opinions or requirements in a familiar context.
<b>0</b>	<b>A1</b>	Can understand basic instructions or take part in a basic factual conversation on a predictable topic.

# Common Reference Global Scales

In these global scales there are three levels: basic user (A,) independent user (B), and proficient user (C), and these are further divided into two.

## **Proficient User C2**

Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.

## **Proficient User C1**

Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.

## **Independent User B2**

Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

## **Independent User B1**

Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.

## **Basic User A2**

Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.

## **Basic User A1**

Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

**Source:** The Council of Europe © Council of Europe