

BULATS - The Tests

1. The BULATS Standard Test (110 minutes)

The BULATS Standard Test is a pencil-and-paper test. It assesses the ability to understand spoken and written language, and knowledge of language systems. It consists of three types of assessment: Listening, Reading and Language Ability. The tasks are based on the kinds of skills and activities needed in the workplace. For example;

- Taking down a phone message
- Understanding notices and short extracts
- Understanding longer texts
- Correcting errors in a text

2. The BULATS Computer Test (75 minutes)

The BULATS Computer Test is a highly sophisticated, computer-based system, covering the same range of skills as the standard test. It pinpoints ability and accurately by using 'adaptive' testing techniques. Candidates start at the same level, irrespective of their ability. As the candidate progresses through the test, the computer selects the next question on the basis of the previous answers, becoming progressively easier or more difficult until a consistent level of ability is achieved.

- No specialist supervision is needed to run the test
- The program draws on an extensive bank of questions during each test.
- Questions are presented in the language being tested.
- The test lasts up to 75 minutes and results are generated immediately.

3. The BULATS Speaking Test (12 minutes)

The Speaking Test assesses speaking skills in relation to the workplace, and takes about 12 minutes. The test is conducted and assessed by a trained oral examiner, and is recorded and marked by another assessor. Assessment is based on a range of factors, including;

- Accuracy and appropriateness of language use
- Development of a conversation and organisation of ideas
- Fluency and pronunciation
- Contribution to a conversation

The BULATS Speaking Test is made up of three parts: a face to face interview, a short presentation and an information exchange and discussion with the examiner.

4. The BULATS Writing Test (45 minutes)

The Writing Test assesses writing skills in relation to the workplace. Two trained language specialists evaluate:

- Accuracy and appropriateness of language use
- Organisation of ideas
- How effectively the piece of writing achieves its purpose

The BULATS Writing Test lasts 45 minutes and is made up of two parts. Candidates write a short memo or note and then a longer report.