

Q: What is TOLES exam?

A: TOLES means Test of Legal English Skills. It is a series of specialist English language examinations for lawyers and other legal professionals, such as law students, and legal translators, whose first language is not English. TOLES can give working lawyers the skills, accuracy and confidence they need when using English at work.

Q: Why should I take TOLES exam?

A: Law firms and EU departments usually require an exam that will test legal English skills and not just general English skills. The legal skills include understanding a contract, amending a contract or writing a formal legal letter. The vocabulary and style of writing required are quite different and accuracy is of absolute importance.

Q: How many TOLES exams are there?

A: There are 3 TOLES exams - Foundation, Higher and Advanced.

Q: What level of general English do students need to take the TOLES exams?

A: The exam series is designed to allow every student of legal English to make a start at gaining a certificate. The Foundation exam is a huge support towards learning legal vocabulary and students can do well in the exam even if they are just at the stage of learning basic grammar structures. The Higher exam requires at least an intermediate level of general English and the Advanced exam requires high intermediate to advanced general English.

Q: Is it necessary to take all 3 exams?

A: No. Students can start at any level. Our school offers a course for Advanced level. However, our exam centre offers all three levels.

Q: Must students complete Foundation level before progressing?

A: There is no obligation for a student to progress through all 3 levels of the exam. However, it is strongly recommend that they do so. Students who are familiar with the many fluency based English tests on the market may dismiss Foundation as 'too easy' upon first sight and not realise that this is an accuracy based exam. Learners who already have very advanced certificates from other exams and courses have been very surprised by the demands of TOLES Foundation once they try a range of testing material. However, all of the exams are designed to be beneficial in their own right.

Q: Where do the exams fit on the Common European Framework?

A: As programme and exams are something very unique for lawyers and have a very high legal content, it is almost impossible to place them in the Common European Framework for languages as a result.

Q: Why is there no speaking element to the TOLES exams?

A: This is because of advice from employers, whose overwhelming priority is strong and accurate writing skills. They can test English speaking skills at interview and, very importantly, that a lawyer can make mistakes when speaking which would be unforgivable mistakes during the process of legal drafting.

Q: Does the TOLES exam certificate 'expire' after a certain period of time?

A: No. Your TOLES certificate is valid for life.