

ALTE framework - overall Welsh language skill levels

The FSA in Wales uses an ALTE (Association of Language Testers in Europe) framework to assess Welsh language skills internally.

A key tool for Welsh language skills recruitment, an ALTE framework is a way of measuring language skills according to the types of communication tasks that a person can achieve in speaking, listening, reading and writing.

This framework is commonly adapted by public sector organisations in Wales and is a widely recognised skills framework. It's based on recognition of what individuals can achieve linguistically (in Welsh in this context) and provides a good reference point for employers.

Description of overall Welsh language skill levels

Level 0 – Awareness

You can:

Recognise some short, simple words as being Welsh and even guess the meaning of some words when read or heard, provided the person is talking very slowly or the words are read in an explanatory context. Upon hearing simple words numerous times, you can repeat them and can also even write some short words. Although you may not consider these skills to be of much use in the workplace, the language is far from being alien to you and you have a firm grounding from which you can develop your skills.

More importantly, you have a strong awareness and understanding of the bilingual environment in which the Food Standards Agency in Wales operates, the need to treat both languages equally, and you demonstrate sensitivity towards the needs of Welsh speakers. You are aware of what you can do to ensure both languages are treated equally and to meet the linguistic needs of all stakeholders, for example, use of appropriate translation services, making use of colleagues' language skills.

Level 1 – Entry

You can:

Understand and use familiar everyday expressions if the speaker is talking slowly and clearly and is prepared to help. Introduce yourself and others and can ask and answer questions about basic personal details, for example, where someone lives, works, what they like doing, things they have and what they did. Understand very short texts where people are giving basic information about themselves or others, for example, on forms. Pass on a simple message or make a simple request, for example, by e-mail.

Level 2 – Foundation

You can:

Understand sentences when people talk slowly about everyday situations, for example, basic personal and family information, shopping, local area, employment, and what they have done or would do. Hold a basic conversation with someone else on a common everyday topic, for example, work, hobbies, preferences, things which have happened or future plans. Understand messages about everyday things and basic letters/emails. Write short notes to friends/colleagues, for example, to pass on a message.

Level 3 – Intermediate

You can:

Understand the main points when someone talks about common or everyday topics, or when things to do with work are discussed, for example, in conversation, or in a small group meeting. Hold an extended conversation with a fluent speaker on a familiar topic to do with everyday life, for example, hobbies, travel or immediate work-related topics. Describe experiences and events, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. Understand straightforward short articles or emails on everyday topics to do with work. Write a letter/email on most topics, asking for things, giving information, inviting someone or organising an event.

Level 4 – Advanced

You can:

Usually follow most conversations or discussions, even on topics you're not familiar with, unless someone is speaking with a strong unfamiliar accent, for example, in a conference. Talk confidently with fluent speakers on familiar topics related to everyday life or work, and can express your views, engage in discussion, and speak at length about general topics, for example, in a meeting, or in a one- to-one situation. Understand most correspondence, newspaper articles and reports aimed at fluent Welsh speakers with the aid of a dictionary, and scan through long texts to find detail. Write short articles, reviews or reports on a variety of subjects of a general nature, or which are work-related, and respond accurately to most types of correspondence from internal or external sources.

Level 5 – Proficiency

You can:

Understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Speak at length about complex issues, present arguments, and lead discussions. Summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Express yourself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, adapting your style according to the audience, for example, in an informal or formal context.