

From: Jon Bryant
Sent: 21 November 2018 11:22
To: Gallacher, Simon
Subject: RE: English testing

Hi Simon

We have been running the Versant system for over 2 years now.

I've found it to be an effective way of assessing English speaking ability of applicants. When we bought it in it only applied to new applicants not retrospectively to existing drivers but amended the policy to give the Sub Committee the ability to require a current driver to take the test if particular concerns were raised.

With new applicants it initially reduced the volume of applications although this has now started to rise again but it has meant that the overall standard of English speaking amongst the drivers has improved.

We require a pass mark on Versant of 55 which is the equivalent to CEFR B2. If an applicant can produce an exam certificate GCSE (or O Level in my case) in English Grade c or above then they do not have to take the exam. We also accept NVQ and other English qualifications as long as they are equivalent to B2 and in an English related subject. The exam has to be taken by all applicants regardless of their place of birth if they are unable to produce the required qualification.

I have found that lots of applicants have had a B1 qualification which they need for their nationality tests but as it does not meet our policy have to take the Versant test which they struggle with.

The test is taken at the council offices over the phone with an officer present. The score report is available straight after the test.

If you need anything further drop me an email or call.

Hope the above assists.

Kind regards

Jon

Jon Bryant
Taxi Licensing Officer
Mid Sussex District Council
Environmental Health

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From: Steve Ricketts
Sent: 21 November 2018 08:10
To: Gallacher, Simon
Cc:
Subject: RE: English Language Test - East Dorset

Hi Simon,

We use the Versant test in East Dorset and find that it creates an objective judgement as opposed to us possibly being seen to be judgemental etc.

We do make everybody take it and we have set the pass mark very high. However the system is robust and we have never had a problem with it

I would recommend it as a very useful tool and at the end of the day you can set the pass mark to what you want

Hope this helps a bit but there used to be free demos on the system which is good to play around with

Steve Ricketts

Team Leader (Community Protection)
Christchurch and East Dorset Councils