

## INFORMATION FOR LEARNERS Applying for Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR)?

### Here's what you need to know about your English language test and what's changing

**Do I need a special English test for ILR?** Yes. To apply for ILR, you must pass a government-approved English language test called a Secure English Language Test (SELT). Your ESOL course certificate is not enough on its own — you must book and pass a SELT separately.

**What level do I need?** If you are applying for ILR **before 26 March 2027**, you need to pass at **B1 level**. If you are applying **on or after 26 March 2027**, you will need to pass at **B2 level**.

B1 is an intermediate level, equivalent to ESOL Entry Level 3. B2 is an upper-intermediate level similar to mid ESOL Level 1.

**What does the test involve?** The current ILR test covers **speaking and listening only** — you do not need to sit a reading or writing paper.

**Which tests are accepted?** Only tests from approved providers are accepted. Currently these are:

- ✓ **Trinity College London** — GESE Grade 5
- ✓ **IELTS** — IELTS Life Skills B1
- ✓ **Pearson** — PTE Home B1
- ✓ **LanguageCert** — International ESOL SELT

**⚠ Important:** You must book the correct test and the correct level. If you book the wrong one, your ILR application could be refused.

**How much does it cost?** Tests cost approximately £150–£180 depending on the provider and test centre.

**What is changing in 2027?** From 26 March 2027, the required level for ILR is rising from B1 to B2. If you think you will be applying for ILR after this date, speak to an ESOL teacher or advisor now so you have time to prepare for the higher level. It's not yet clear which exams will be accepted, so keep an eye out for any news on this.

**How long does it take to get to B2 from B1?** For most learners, it takes approximately 200 'guided learning hours' – a combination of tuition and self-study – to move up from B1 to B2. You may need fewer or more depending on the course, the materials you're using and your own aptitude and motivations. It's important to plan ahead.



**Where can I find out more? Visit: [gov.uk/guidance/prove-your-english-language-abilities-with-a-secure-english-language-test-selt](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/prove-your-english-language-abilities-with-a-secure-english-language-test-selt)**

Or speak to your ESOL teacher or course advisor — they can help you understand which test is right for you and when you should book it.

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*This information was correct as of March 2026. Requirements may change — always check the latest guidance on GOV.UK before booking your test.*

