

# LANGUAGE LEARNING FRAMEWORK

## VERSION 1 NOVEMBER 2017

The accompanying tables detail current guidance on best practice for design of language learning programmes to allow learners to progress through CEFR levels by undertaking language learning courses through an Institution-Wide Language programme in a UK Higher Education institution.

These tables have been developed through consultations and discussions with 43 individuals in 19 Universities and are presented here as a reference guide. It is also hoped that this will stimulate further discussion amongst practitioners.

### Basic Assumptions

1. This guidance offers recommendations to facilitate course design and to manage learner expectations for the 10 most popular languages being studied in the UK at Higher Education institutions.
2. This guidance is intended to act as a reference of best practice in course design. This allows course providers and course designers to access such best practice and manage learner expectations as regards to study requirements linked to progression. The guidance does not seek to act in any way as a requirement.
3. This guidance provides recommendations for courses of:
  - a. different durations (full academic year, single semester, and short intensive formats), and
  - b. different intensities (variations in hours per week, as may be found between modules and evening courses).
4. This guidance does not indicate the input study hours that an individual will require to undertake to achieve a particular level of ability as described by a given CEFR band. It offers recommendations on input study hours, within and outside the classroom, for a course that is designed to help diverse groups of learners to study aspects of language relevant to each CEFR band. There will of course be differences in attainment between individual learners.
5. This guidance is not intended to imply that a learner can reach C1 from Beginner level in a given time period. It is intended to facilitate design of courses at different levels of the CEFR. Individual learners might require more time to progress through levels according to breaks in study etc.
6. This guidance understands that CEFR is not the only external framework that can or should be used for all languages (i.e. Arabic, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean). However it is for the time being used in the UK as a common benchmark.
7. This guidance reflects common current practice in UK Higher Education in terms of duration and format of learning opportunities. These assume a “generic” learner of conventional background for whom courses are generally being designed.
8. This guidance has been conceived based both in reference to other available research, and on professional opinion of current practitioners.
9. There are differences in rates of progression by language. This does not imply that one language is easier or harder to learn than another language. It simply reflects the situation

that it generally takes longer for native English speakers to learn languages, to similar levels of competence, with non-Roman scripts.

10. The balance between contact time with a teacher/tutor and self-study is a recommendation only. If a given course has a different pattern this may be entirely appropriate for a given institution, according to a range of prevailing factors. However this guidance will support teachers on courses in advising learners of study requirements to progress their language competence. In other words, if a learner wishes to progress from one CEFR level to the next, they should expect to need to undertake study commensurate with this guidance.
11. This guidance does not seek to dictate course design in any way. Individual institutions will still design courses according to local conditions. This guidance also does not look to make recommendations on curriculum design, nor the type of self-study recommended. This will always be to the professional discretion of the teacher concerned.
12. This guidance recognises that the duration of a given course, the intensity of that course (e.g. hours of study per week), and breaks in study, will all effect progress. This guidance seeks to reflect the impact of duration and intensity on learning, but cannot pretend to take into account breaks in study and the impact on knowledge retention.
13. This guidance does not at this time take into account the faster progression that is possible for students who are either studying cognate languages (e.g. Portuguese for speakers of Spanish, Japanese for speakers of Chinese), or for learners who are already proficient students of language (e.g. who already speak 3-4 languages). This will be taken into consideration in subsequent versions of this guidance.
14. This guidance does not at this time take into account the faster progression on specialist degree courses where the impact on learning of concurrent immersion in the target language through content (e.g. literature, cinema) has an as yet unquantified impact.
15. This guidance assumes study through a course delivered at a UK Higher Education institution. It does not take into account any impact as a result of immersion, Study Abroad, nor courses taken “in-country”.
16. This guidance acknowledges that there are differences in progress, for example, between French and Spanish, or between Chinese and Japanese. However this guidance also recognises that most Universities currently design courses for these languages according to the same criteria in terms of study hours, and as such the grouping of languages is considered to be appropriate.

## Summary of Recommendations

(overall input study hours by CEFR band)

	Beg-A1	A1-A2	A2-B1	B1-B2	B2-C1	
Arabic	180	260	360	450	560	<i>in-depth</i>
	220	320	400	540	680	<i>easy-paced</i>
East Asian	200	300	330	360	450	<i>in-depth</i>
	270	400	450	500	660	<i>easy-paced</i>
German	150	150	180	270	270	<i>in-depth</i>
	160	160	200	300	300	<i>easy-paced</i>
Romance	150	150	200	240	240	<i>in-depth</i>
	160	160	250	300	300	<i>easy-paced</i>
Russian	150	150	350	450	300	<i>in-depth</i>
	160	160	400	500	350	<i>easy-paced</i>

## Contributors

Samantha Austen	University of Worcester (now Open University)	Anne-Catherine Mechler	University of Bath
Judy Barker	University of Worcester	Ana de Medeiros	King's College London
Ulrike Bavendiek	University of Liverpool	Franck Michel	Newcastle University
Alexander Burdumy	Durham University	Marina Micke	University of Manchester
Caroline Campbell	University of Leeds	Amira Mills	King's College London
Catherine Chabert	Cardiff University	John Morley	University of Manchester
Mercedes Coca	London School of Economics & Political Sciences	Katsuko Nagata	University of Warwick
Mark Critchley	Durham University	Marina Rábadan Gómez	University of Liverpool
Mohammed Dayoub	University of Warwick	Nebošja Radić	University of Cambridge
Sol Escobar	University of Essex (now Cambridge International exams)	Jörg Seifert	University of Warwick
Khalil Estaytieh	University of Bath	Jane Sherwood	University of Oxford
Mary Fender	Durham University	Thomas Smith	Queen's University Belfast
Dorrit Fellner	University of Manchester	Rasha Soliman	University of Leeds
Ian Foster	University of Bristol	Alison Standing	London School of Economics & Political Sciences
Saadia Gamir	Leeds Beckett University	Isabella Stefanutti	University of Bath
Zhiyan Guo	University of Warwick	Evan Stewart	University of Warwick
John Hankinson	University of Worcester	Claude Tregoat	University of Warwick
Alexandra Kulikova	University of Warwick	Martina Wallner	University of Keele
Loiana Leal	Newcastle University	Liang Wang	Queen's University Belfast
Tanya Lineker	King's College London	Catherine Xiang	London School of Economics & Political Sciences
Yang Lu	University of Nottingham	Hongfen Zhou	King's College London
Neil McLean	London School of Economics & Political Sciences		