

The whys and wherefores of national oriented university certifications

The Italian and European perspectives

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ABSTRACT: In recent years, language testing in the academic environment has started to see a shift from internal language tests to external language certifications in order to address the requirements set by greater student mobility abroad. The use of international tests is meant to ensure standardisation in language assessment. Their use is also connected to calls for greater academic transparency as well as the need to reduce workloads given that test-production is very work intensive. However, in addition to the extra cost incurred by students who are required to take international certifications, these tests may not always reflect the teaching approach adopted in the classroom and the learning objectives required by academic and professional contexts. Based on these premises, some European national associations of University Language Centres have set up collaborations among universities with the aim to develop a language assessment tool to be used in the national context and, possibly, a transnational one. This article discusses issues that should be considered when developing national oriented certifications, the *raison d'être* behind this concept, and the challenges to be met from the perspective of people actively involved in the project.

Keywords: European Language Centres, National Associations, University certifications, CEFR, Construct, Format.

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