

Lárionad na Gaeilge: Taighde, Teagasc agus Tástáil
Ollscoil Mhá Nuad



Ardleibhéal 1 (C1)
Information and guidelines for
candidates



1. Purpose

Scrúdú Ardleibhéal 1 (C1) is a general proficiency examination of Irish. It is aimed primarily at adult learners of Irish. It is suitable for people in Ireland or abroad who are studying Irish at night classes or attending other similar courses and who would like a qualification to attest to their ability in Irish.

The examination tests knowledge not only as described in the syllabus for this level but also that included in the syllabi for all the other TEG levels (Bonnleibhéal 1 – Meánleibhéal 2). Some candidates who undertake *Scrúdú Ardleibhéal 1 (C1)* have already passed the examination at Meánleibhéal 2 (B2). The syllabus which forms the basis for *Scrúdú Ardleibhéal 1(C1)* is broadly based on the descriptors for level C1 of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (2001). It is estimated that learners who have successfully completed *Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 2 (B2)* would need to complete approximately one thousand additional hours of study before attempting the exam at this level. Various factors need to be considered and prospective candidates are advised to study the sample papers and consult with a teacher when making a decision when it is appropriate for them to present for this examination. It should be noted that the examination itself is not, however, tied to any particular course of study.

This qualification is widely recognized as evidence of advanced language skills and each year people of various backgrounds present for the examination, for example, teachers, university tutors, journalists, translators and lawyers.

In approving funding for institutions under the Advanced Irish Language Skills Initiative, the Higher Education Authority and the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht stipulated that students must undertake *Scrúdú Ardleibhéal 1(C1)* TEG examination as a course exit requirement. For more details see [here](#).

In this document you will find:

General information regarding the standard expected of candidates at Ardleibhéal 1(C1)
Guidelines for *Scrúdú Ardleibhéal 1 (C1)*

2. General information

Our understanding is that the majority of candidates who take the examination at this level study under the direction of a teacher or attend a preparatory course. In that context, comprehensive information on the language requirements of this level, as well as guidance for teachers, is provided in the document *Ardleibhéal 1 (C1): Siollabas agus treoir do mhúinteoirí*. Unlike TEG syllabi to date, this document does not provide comprehensive lists of themes, functions, vocabulary or grammar to be taught. The needs of learners at this level are too broad and too diverse for such a prescriptive approach to be of any benefit. Rather, this is a descriptive syllabus that describes the strengths and weaknesses of candidates in the various skills at this level. The necessary level of ability is illustrated by sample texts and recordings and accompanying commentary.

Below is a brief description of what candidates at Ardleibhéal 1 are expected to be able to do.

2.1 Listening comprehension

General

Candidates at this level can understand long turns without much difficulty, including advertisements, messages, recorded instructions, lectures, debates, the majority of radio/television programmes and other material common in the social, academic and professional spheres. Able to understand conversation and discussion between third parties as long as it is not overly dialectal, specific, technical or speedy.

To what standard?

Able to understand a long turn even if it is not obviously structured or when certain points are made indirectly or subtly. Able to understand speech that is complex linguistically or in terms of the arguments presented, on abstract or concrete topics even if these are unfamiliar. Able to understand a wide range of idioms and locutions and to appreciate variations in register.

May need to request clarification when encountering unusual idioms, or rapid or very dialectal speech, or indistinct enunciation. Comprehension will be limited if there is much background noise and if speech is unstructured. Poor sound quality in public in recorded materials may lead to comprehension difficulties. It is not expected that every word will be understood in technical discourse or in conversation about subjects of which the candidate has no specialist knowledge (for example, legal, IT or religious jargon). However, the general thrust of the conversation will be understood and candidates will be able to use the context to guess the meaning of new or partially familiar words and phrases.

2.2 Speaking

General

Candidates will be able to take an active part in everyday conversations or in more formal discourse (for example, presentations). Able to discuss complex, abstract topics with others, including native speakers, as long as the discussion is not overly dialectal, specific, technical or speedy. Able to advance and defend opinions and ideas and to respond to other people's points/arguments.

The candidate at this level should be accurate and **consistent** in their use of their chosen dialect although, on occasion, there may be some confusion resulting from overgeneralization and hypercorrection.

The candidate at this level is able to handle a wide range of functions that have not been contained in any previous syllabus, such as hypothesizing, prioritizing, summarizing and persuading. Other functions important at this level include negotiating and separating major and minor points of argument. All of these are challenging functions that reflect the language development required at Ardleibhéal 1 (C1).

To what standard?

Able to talk about a wide range of topics accurately, fluently and spontaneously, in a way that makes few demands of the listener. Some influence of the mother tongue will be detected with regard to pronunciation and speech rhythm. Some grammatical mistakes will be made in speech, especially when the speaker is under pressure, or speaking quickly or in an animated manner. Not all rules relating to complicated aspects of grammar are observed, for example aspiration, weak plurals, relative clauses etc. Occasionally, words and phrases will be used with the incorrect meaning. Some inaccuracies could be very basic, for example 'Tá an charr páirceáilte ag barr an tsráid'. But such slips are due to pressure or inattention. They are not systematic errors arising out of lexical inadequacy or ignorance of basic grammatical structures in Irish.

The speech of a candidate at this level will almost always be understood by native speakers and other educated speakers. The candidate can use an appropriate tone to express feelings and thoughts, for example surprise, sympathy, deprecation, irony etc. Speech is rarely hesitant and the candidate rarely gives the impression that s/he is searching for the appropriate word or phrase. He/she has strategies for requesting clarification of meaning and handling interruptions. Able to talk at length in formal and informal contexts. Able to depart spontaneously from a text or prepared notes and to develop points of interest that arise during a conversation.

2.3 Reading comprehension

General

Candidates at this level can deal with everyday modern Irish texts about social, professional and academic matters (e.g. correspondence, instructions, articles, reports, etc.), as long as they are not overly dialectal, specific, or technical. These texts can be long, complex or abstract. As well as a wide vocabulary, the following skills will be required:

- Ability to skim long, complex texts and extract relevant points/information.
- Ability to adapt reading speed and style to different objectives and text types, for example, skimming for information points or scanning a literary or other complex text to obtain the total meaning.

To what standard?

Able to understand almost every modern Irish text, as long as there is an opportunity to reread difficult passages. Difficulties will arise with highly dialectal forms, with unfamiliar terms, with unusual idioms and with 'archaic' or older language. Even in this case, however, a good understanding of the text will be possible. Difficulties might arise with highly abstract or metaphorical language and with unusual cultural references, for example, literary or historical characters. The candidate will have a wide reading vocabulary, and a thorough knowledge of syntax. Able to understand subtle or aesthetic prose as well as explicit or literal language. Able to recognise ideas and implications even when they are not stated overtly

2.4 Writing

General

Candidates at this level will be able to produce a wide range of text types, including those mentioned at Meánleibhéal 2 level. Writing skills will be more developed, however. Topics will not have to be predictable or relating to the candidate's life or areas of expertise. Candidates will be flexible and creative enough to write about topics that are not very familiar, as long as those topics are not too specific or technical.

The texts that candidates produce will be clear and well-structured. They will be able to underline salient issues and will be able to expand and support points of view at some length, making subsidiary points, giving reasons and providing an appropriate conclusion. Candidates at this level will show a good command of a broad range of language that will allow them to express themselves clearly and in an appropriate style on a wide range of topics.

To what standard?

Candidates will be comfortable using a wide range of expressions, idioms, connectors and common terms. They will be able to exploit various grammatical structures and syntactic devices to avoid ambiguity, lack of clarity or repetition. The writing will be coherent, rich, and natural. The influence of the mother tongue will be evident at times but will rarely be such as to make comprehension difficult. Grammar and spelling will be largely accurate. Some inaccuracies specified under **11.2 Struchtúir ar leith** and **8.5 Mílitriú** may persist. A lack of certainty may exist with regard to dialectal versus standard forms. See **8.8 Caighdeán vs canúint**. More information regarding these matters are to be found in *Ardleibhéal 1 (C1): Siollabas agus treoir do mhúinteoirí*.

Some Ardlleibhéal 1 (C1) functions are already mentioned in other TEG syllabi, such as comparing / contrasting, complaining and expressing opinions or views. Candidates at Ardlleibhéal 1 (C1) will be expected to handle functions mentioned in syllabi from Bonnleibhéal 1 to Meánleibhéal 2 at a higher level than previously in terms of vocabulary, grammatical accuracy and so on. The syllabus contains other functions not previously mentioned, such as hypothesis, prioritizing, summarizing, separating major and minor points of argument, giving indirect clues and expressing subtle meanings, such as irony and sarcasm. These are functions that are essential in writing tasks carried out in academic and professional domains.

An appreciation of the appropriate register for the genre and social context will be demonstrated. The candidate's writing will be creative and subtle where appropriate and expressive language will be used as well as explicit or literal language, for example puns, euphemisms, catchphrases, metaphors etc.

2.5 Irish culture

Candidates should have a good knowledge of various aspects of Irish culture, especially those relating to the Irish language and the Gaeltacht, for example, place names, major festivals, Gaelic games, the Irish language media, modern terminology, immersion and Irish

medium education, the status of Irish in Europe etc. While cultural knowledge is not directly tested in the examination, aspects of Irish culture are likely to arise in themes and subjects which appear in examination materials.

3. Guidelines for Scrúdú Ardleibhéal 1 (C1)

3.1 General information

- The examination for full accreditation is held twice a year, usually in January and August in Maynooth University. Contact Lárionad na Gaeilge if your organisation requires information about partial accreditation at other times of the year.
- All current information relating to dates, examination centres, application forms, etc is available on this website.
- Candidates should use the sample papers to familiarize themselves with the layout of the different components and the question types.
- Candidates may not use dictionaries or any other reference materials during the exam.
- It is important that candidates be aware of the examination's layout and the type of questions in each component.
- In addition to the information in this document, candidates are strongly advised to study the following documents, which are available on www.teg.ie:

Ardleibhéal 1 (C1): Siollabas agus treoir do mhúinteoirí
Scrúduithe Samplacha Ardleibhéal 1 (C1)
Tuairisc an Phríomhscrúdaitheora do Scrúdú Ardleibhéal 1 (C1)

3.2 Information about the examination

The table below shows the various components of the exam, the percentage of marks for each component, the minimum required for a pass in each component, the overall pass mark for the examination and the duration of each component.

Scrúdú Ardleibhéal 1 (C1)			
	<i>% of examination</i>	<i>Minimum required for pass in component</i>	<i>Duration</i>
Listening comprehension	20%	10%	50 minutes
Reading comprehension	20%	10%	60 minutes
Writing	20%	10%	75 minutes
Use of Irish	20%	10%	45 minutes
Speaking	20%	10%	20 minutes + 30 minutes preparation
Overall pass mark for exam: 60%			
Pass with distinction: 80%			

- Note that a candidate will not receive a pass with distinction unless he or she reaches the minimum in each component.

- Note that, to achieve a pass in the overall exam, it is not enough to reach the minimum mark in all of the components.
- If a candidate fails in **one of the exam components**, but receives over 60% overall, he or she can resit that component in the following year's exam.

3.3 Listening comprehension

- There are 4 questions in this part of the examination.
- Ensure that your exam number is on every page.
- This part of the examination lasts for **50 minutes**.
- The materials will mostly be authentic materials from radio, television and from the Internet. A variety of dialects will be used.
- Limits are placed on the amount of time permitted for each question.
- Where there is a need for written answers, candidates' answers must be in Irish. Marks will not be deducted for misspelling or grammatical inaccuracy, as long as what it written is comprehensible. There is no need to write complete sentences.
- The invigilator will give you a blank page on which to write notes while you listen to the comprehension test items.

Question 1

Text type	An excerpt from a talk, lecture or presentation.
Task	Candidates must answer one or two multiple choice questions.
Focus	Candidates must listen to the complete item to understand the gist or general sense of the piece. Candidates are not expected to understand everything in the item but are expected to be able to use appropriate strategies to understand the general sense.
Method	The invigilator gives the page containing the question to the candidate. The candidates then have 60 seconds in which to read the question before the item is played. The item is played once. When the candidates have heard the item they should answer the question(s). The invigilator will then collect the page from each candidate.
Marks	10

Question 2

Text type	An excerpt from a lecture or presentation. The same text that was used for Question 1 will be used for Question 2.
Task	There are 6 questions, a mixture of short questions, true/false/unsaid questions and multiple choice.
Focus	The candidates must listen carefully to the item to extract specific information and to identify opinions and views, even if these are expressed indirectly.

Method	<p>The invigilator will give the page containing the question to each candidate.</p> <p>They will have one minute in which to read the questions on the page.</p> <p>The item will be played once.</p> <p>Candidates should answer the questions while listening to the item.</p> <p>When the candidates have heard the item, they will have two additional minutes in which to check their answers.</p> <p>The invigilator will then collect the page from each candidate.</p>
Marks	12

Question 3

Text type	An interview or excerpt from an interview.
Task	There are 6 questions, a mixture of short questions, true/false/unsaid questions and multiple choice.
Focus	Candidates must listen in order to identify main points, information or particular details and to recognise the opinions and attitude of the speakers. Candidates should be able to do so even if the information is expressed indirectly.
Method	<p>The item will be played once.</p> <p>Then the invigilator will give the page containing the questions to each candidate.</p> <p>The candidates will then have one minute in which to read the questions on the page.</p> <p>The item will then be played once more.</p> <p>Candidates should answer the questions while listening to the item.</p> <p>When the candidates have heard the item, they will have two additional minutes in which to check their answers.</p> <p>The invigilator will then collect the page from each candidate.</p>
Marks	12

Question 4

Text type	An item from a news programme or current affairs programme.
Task	There are 6 questions, a mixture of short questions, true/false/unsaid questions and multiple choice.
Focus	The candidates must listen to the item in order to understand information and relevant detail.
Method	<p>The item will be played once.</p> <p>Then the invigilator will give the page containing the questions to each candidate. The candidates will then have one minute in which to read the questions on the page.</p> <p>The item will then be played once more.</p> <p>Candidates should answer the questions while listening to the item.</p> <p>When the candidates have heard the item, they will have two additional minutes in which to check their answers.</p> <p>The invigilator will then collect the page from each candidate.</p>

Marks	12
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3.4 Reading comprehension

- There are 4 questions in this part of the examination.
- Ensure that your exam number is on every page.
- Use of dictionaries is not allowed.
- Limits are placed on the amount of time permitted for each question.
- Where there is a need for written answers, candidates' answers must be in Irish. Marks will not be deducted for misspelling or grammatical inaccuracy, as long as what it written is comprehensible.
- This part of the examination lasts for **60 minutes**.

Question 1

Text type	An current affairs article or excerpt from a newspaper, a magazine or a periodical.
Task	Candidates must answer one or two multiple choice questions.
Focus	To identify the gist, the dominant opinion or stance expressed in the article. Candidates may not have to read the entire article or need to understand everything in it but they should be able to use appropriate strategies to understand the general sense of the text.
Method	The invigilator will give the page containing the question to each candidate. The candidates will then have one minute in which to read the question. Then the invigilator will give the text to each candidate. Candidates then have 5 minutes in which to read and answer the question. When the 5 minutes are up, the invigilator will collect the question page from each candidate.
Marks	10

Question 2

Text type	The text that was used for Question 1 and Question 2 will be used again for this question.
Task	The candidates are given 8 sentences which they must match with the sections of the text which contain the relevant information.
Focus	This question tests the candidates' detailed knowledge of the text and their ability to identify and locate arguments/information.
Method	The candidates have 15 minutes in which to read the text and answer the question. When the 15 minutes are up, the invigilator will collect the page from each candidate.
Marks	16

There are 40 minutes in which to complete Question 3 and Question 4.

Question 3

Text type	An article or extract from a book, from an Internet page or from a brochure.
Task	Candidates must choose the correct sentence to place in gaps in the text.
Focus	Candidates must demonstrate their knowledge of how texts are structured and how texts and ideas are developed.
Method	Candidates should read the question of the exam paper and the text on the next page. Then, candidates must choose which sentence (1–10) to insert in each of the gaps in the text. There are two sentences which will not be used. The number of the correct sentence should be written into the gap in the text.
Marks	16

Question 4

Text type	A letter or formal email message.
Task	There are two tasks in this question.
Task A	A mixture of short questions, true/false/unsaid questions and multiple choice. In the case of the true/false/unsaid questions, candidates must supply evidence from the text to support their chosen answer – that is, if they choose ‘true’ or ‘false’. In such a case, one mark is awarded for making the correct choice and an additional mark for providing correct evidence.
Focus	The question tests the candidates’ ability to identify and locate subtly or indirectly expressed information or opinions.
Marks	12
Task B	Candidates are given four definitions and must find the corresponding word in the text.
Method	This question tests candidates’ vocabulary.
Marks	4

3.5 Writing

- This part of the examination lasts for 75 minutes.
- Candidates are not allowed to use dictionaries or any other sources of reference.
- Candidates must demonstrate that they can maintain a high degree of grammatical accuracy and that they can cope with the wide range of structures, vocabulary and functions required at this level. See the examples for writing in *Ardleibhéal 1 (C1): Siollabas agus treoir do mhúinteoirí*. Candidates should be able to organise whatever text they are writing in an appropriate way, with consideration for the target reader(s).

- Marks will be lost if candidates don't adhere to the word count for each question.
- Candidates are asked to be careful in their handwriting.
- Candidates are advised to spend some time planning and laying out what they intend to write and later to edit and revise what they have written.
- Paper will be made available for making rough notes.
- There are two questions in this component.

Question 1

- Candidates must write a letter, a review, a report, a reference/testimonial, an email, an application or an article. There is a choice between three questions.
- Information will be given about the purpose of the text and its target readership. Candidates will have to address certain points in their response.
- Assessment will be based on the following: grammatical accuracy and range of structures used, range of vocabulary, content and register appropriate for the task, completion of task, i.e. all the points addressed.
- Candidates should write approximately **200–250 words** in the space provided.
- Marks: 30.

Question 2

- Candidates will have a choice between 3 questions. They will read a statement and write an essay or article expressing their view on the statement. The article or essay should be suitable for a newspaper or magazine.
- No direction is given to candidates on what they should write. They must demonstrate that they are capable of organizing and developing their arguments in a meaningful, coherent manner.
- Assessment will be based on the following: grammatical accuracy and range of structures used, range of vocabulary, content and register appropriate for the task, coherency and the organization of the content.
- Candidates should write approximately **550–580 words** in the space provided.
- Marks: 50.

3.6 Use of Irish

- This part of the examination will last for 45 minutes.
- Candidates are not allowed to use dictionaries or any other sources of reference.
- Candidates are advised to give attention to spelling and grammatical accuracy.
- There are five questions in this component.

Question 1

Candidates must read the text and place an appropriate word in each gap. They should not write more than **one word** in each gap. The text has 20 gaps. For full marks to be awarded, the word chosen must be suitable as regards both meaning and grammatical accuracy. Mark: 2 marks for each word (40 marks).

Question 2

Five sentences to be translated into Irish.

Mark: 5 marks for each sentence (25 marks).

Questions 3 & 4 & 5

These questions focus on various aspects of grammar. See *Meánleibhéal 2 (B2): Syllabus and guidelines for candidates* and *Ardleibhéal 1 (C1): Siollabas agus treoir do mhúinteoirí* for a description of the grammatical areas prescribed for this level. Candidates must rewrite sentences, connect parts of sentences and so on. The aspects of grammar tested in this part of the examination may change from year to year.

Mark: 20 for each question.

3.7 The Oral examination

- Only one candidate is examined at any one time.
- The examination is carried out by two examiners. One of the examiners will ask questions and direct the interview and the assessment. The other will concentrate exclusively on assessment throughout the examination and will not take part in the conversation.
- Every oral examination is recorded.
- There are three parts in the oral examination.
- The assessment is based on the following: grammatical accuracy, vocabulary, pronunciation, communication and how the communication is managed. No mark is assigned to any of these specifically. Rather, candidates are assessed on their overall performance in the oral examination.

Part 1 (Presentation)

- Candidates will receive a list of three topics seven days before the date of the examination. Each candidate will receive the same list. Candidates are advised to prepare the topics (related vocabulary, for example). On the day of the examination, candidates will be expected to speak about a question/statement related to one of the topics. The candidate will be informed on the day of the examination what his or her topic will be.
- On the day of the examination, candidates should be in the room **35 minutes** before the beginning of the exam. There he or she will be given a page containing the topic of the presentation along with a question or statement that will be addressed during the presentation. Then, the candidate will have **30 minutes** to prepare the presentation. Each candidate will be given cards on which they jot down bullet points to direct them through the presentation. While preparing, candidates are not allowed to use dictionaries or any other source of reference.
- When the candidate enters the examination room, he or she will be asked some general questions to begin. Then, he or she will be invited to give the presentation, which will last for 5 minutes. The examiner will inform the candidate when only one minute remains. Candidates are strongly advised to observe time limits.
- When the presentation is finished, the examiner will ask the candidate some questions relating to the subject. He or she may be asked to develop certain points,

to defend some others, to give examples and so on. This part of the examination will last no longer than **3 minutes**.

- The candidates are not expected to have any specialist knowledge of the subject of the presentation but they are expected to stay on topic and to make relevant points and provide relevant examples.
- Candidates will be expected to present their opinions, thoughts and arguments in an organized, clear and consistent manner.

Part 2 (General questions)

- This part of the examination will be general conversation between the candidate and the examiner.
- Among the subjects which could arise are the candidate's own life and circumstances, for example work, travel or more abstract subjects such as the media, social and legal questions, politics and current affairs.
- The candidates must express, develop and defend their opinions as necessary in addition to prioritising and summarising points.
- This part of the examination will last **10 minutes**.

Part 3 (Speaking about pictures)

- The examiner will give the candidate a sheet containing three pictures and a question relating to the pictures on the sheet.
- Candidates will have **one minute** to look at the pictures and consider the question.
- When answering the question, candidates must talk about two of the pictures on the sheet. The intention is not for the candidate to give a mechanical description of the details in the picture but, for example, to compare, to express opinions, to hypothesize about the people in the pictures and the activities they are engaged in.
- The candidate will have **2 minutes** to speak about the pictures and to answer any questions asked by the examiner.