



IIHF English Language Expectations and Assessment for Game Officials

The language of international hockey is English.

As such, it is imperative that all people involved in supporting the game can read, speak and understand English at a level that allows them to perform all tasks associated with his or her respective role. For game officials licensed by the IIHF, being able to communicate with all people around the game, most importantly their teammates, is a mandatory requirement.

Beginning with the 2024-25 championship season, the IIHF began assessing its licensed game officials on their English proficiency with the goal of understanding the skills of assigned game officials.

For the 2026-27 season, this process will continue with assessments that ensure every IIHF licensed game official is able to meet a minimum standard. Much like the previous two seasons, this assessment will involve a test provided by Education First (EF) with the results being a part of the official's IIHF record.

Information on the **EF SET TEST** can be found here: <https://www.ef.com/wwen/english-tests/efset/>

Each licensed game official will complete an assessment during his or her assigned championship. This assessment will take approximately 50 minutes. Upon completion of the assessment EF will provide the official with a score and certificate.

The scoring scale is as follows:

- Pre-A1
- A1 Beginner
- A2 Elementary
- B1 Intermediate
- B2 Upper Intermediate
- C1 Advanced
- C2 Proficient

Should an official score at the level of Pre-A1 or A1 Beginner, he or she will be able to finish their assigned championship and will NOT sent home. However, the official will not be licensed in the future without proof that steps have been taken to improve their English language skills and a re-assessment with a score of B1 Intermediate or higher. Note: The IIHF will work with the official and his or her Referee-In-Chief to establish guidelines to receive another license.

Should an official score at A1 Beginner the official will finish their assigned championship. Then, the official will be placed on probation and expected to provide, through their Referee-In-Chief, a plan for improvement. At the next subsequent assignment that the specific official receives, another assessment will be administered. Should the official fail to improve, no further assignments will be awarded without a score of B1 Intermediate or higher being achieved in a non-IIHF championship setting.

Should an officials score B1 Intermediate or higher, no further assessments will be necessary.

Beyond this season, every official who receives their first assignment will be assessed. At the beginning of every Olympic cycle (2030-31 next) the process will restart with all officials being reassessed.

It should be noted that during the previous assessments over the last two seasons less than 5% of assigned officials scored below a level of B1 Intermediate. The IIHF wants to emphasize that this assessment is not meant to find or exclude officials that struggle in English. Rather, it is meant to ensure that the officials can work together and communicate in the IIHF's official language to best provide world championships with the best possible officiating.

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