

Spoken English Proficiency Test for Teachers (SEPTT) Policy

ELT Council

February 2017 (Updated September 2022)

In an effort to ensure high levels of spoken English proficiency amongst English Language Teaching (ELT) practitioners, L.N. 221 (2015) specifies that it is a legal requirement for teachers applying for an ELT permit in Malta to obtain a pass in the Spoken English Proficiency Test for Teachers (SEPTT).

Applicants for an ELT permit need to have a minimum of a Band 3 in SEPTT. Candidates attaining Band 3 are obliged to retake SEPTT after a four-year period. Those attaining Band 4 are exempt from retaking SEPTT.

Given that SEPTT is tailor-made for the needs of ELT practitioners, passes and scores in general English language proficiency tests (e.g. CPE and IELTS) are not considered comparable to SEPTT bands.

The Centre for English Language Proficiency (CELP) at the University of Malta was commissioned to develop SEPTT and conduct monthly test sessions. More regular test sessions may be held in the peak season.

Test results are processed within 6 working days. The ELT Council handles the processing of applications, while CELP and the ELT Council issue certification jointly. The test fee (€45) needs to be paid upon application.

Applicants will need to have successfully completed a methodology course (e.g. TEFL Cert.) before they sit for the test.

All candidates must note that SEPTT sessions are audio recorded and these recordings are used for research and training purposes.

A two-tier appeal process is in place. Candidates can either ask for: a brief report confirming or otherwise the Band assigned; or a detailed report confirming or otherwise the Band assigned. The relevant fee (€20 for the brief report and €45 for the detailed report) needs to be paid upon lodging an appeal. Candidates are sent a report within a maximum of 21 days.

Prospective teachers in possession of an international diploma at National Qualifications Framework level 7 or a higher qualification in ELT of a recognised university or institution plus a minimum of 1,000 contact ELT hours will not have to sit for SEPTT. A regular ELT permit will be issued provided that all other requirements are met.

All other prospective teachers in possession of all ELT permit requirements as per legal notice applying for a new permit, will be granted a temporary teaching permit valid for

three months. Holders of this temporary permit will have three months to achieve a pass in SEPTT to be awarded a regular ELT permit. The temporary permit cannot be extended and no teacher in possession of the temporary permit is allowed to teach past the permit letter validity date until a pass in SEPTT and the regular ELT permit are obtained.