



**Cambridge Assessment  
English**

**Cambridge**

English Teaching

# **Certificate in EMI Skills**

English as a Medium of Instruction

**Course guide**

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# 1. Overview

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The Cambridge Certificate in EMI Skills is designed for lecturers and other professionals working in an EMI (English as a Medium of Instruction) context such as a university, college or institute of higher education.

The course aims to help participants to:

- communicate more effectively in English with students and colleagues
- use a range of language in different situations, from lectures and tutorials to conferences and online discussions
- increase familiarity with a range of skills for delivering instruction in English.

## 1.1 Online course content

The Certificate in EMI Skills is a 40-hour online learning course, comprising eight online modules of approximately 5 hours each. The eight modules can be taken in any order and combined to suit the needs of participants in specific educational contexts. Individual modules can be selected for identified professional development needs or for participants to revise or refresh their language knowledge.

The modules provide:

- useful language for participants in all subject areas, which focuses on improving communication and student interaction
- engaging content with authentic examples of language use, including Cambridge University video footage
- a range of interactive activities for participants to explore and practise key language
- opportunities to reflect on differences in teaching styles and skills
- opportunities to apply new language and skills to participants' own contexts
- progress tests to check learning
- assignments to encourage further development of skills and language use.

## 1.2 Optional tutor-led material

Up to 24 hours of optional materials are available for tutor-led seminars:

- delivered through face-to-face sessions
- providing opportunities for participants to interact, revise and use the language learned in the online modules.

## 1.3 Assessment

Progress is assessed within each module and consists of:

- short, written assignments within each module, requiring participants to use the language of the module in relation to their own context
- an end-of-module progress test.

## 1.4 Feedback

Participants studying the course will be able to see feedback for assignments in the form of checklists and examples of language use.

## 2. Course structure

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Total – 40 hours, plus optional tutor-led material.

Module content	Online material	Optional
		Tutor-led material <sup>1</sup>
Hours		
Introduction to the course		
<b>Module 1 – Language for lectures</b>	5	3
<b>Module 2 – Language for seminars</b>	5	3
<b>Module 3 – Language for small groups and practical sessions</b>	5	3
<b>Module 4 – Language for tutorials and supervision</b>	5	3
<b>Module 5 – Language for online communication</b>	5	3
<b>Module 6 – Language for evaluation and feedback</b>	5	3
<b>Module 7 – Language for developing and extending professional roles</b>	5	3
<b>Module 8 – Language for fulfilling professional responsibilities</b>	5	3
<b>Total hours 40+</b> <sup>2</sup>	<b>40</b>	<b>24</b>

<sup>1</sup>Up to 24 hours of optional tutor-led material delivered face-to-face.

<sup>2</sup>The number of hours specified above represents a minimum number for each element of the syllabus.

# 3. Key features

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## 3.1 Language selection

The course content is based on language that will enable participants to work successfully in a range of interactions with students and colleagues. The language covers grammatical structures, vocabulary and communicative phrases that are useful in an EMI context.

## 3.2 Authentic material

The modules contain videos of real lectures, seminars and tutorials, which give participants the opportunity to see the language in action in a variety of academic situations. There are also interviews with lecturers, providing an insight into the different ways lecturers approach their work.

## 3.3 Control

Participants can:

- work at their own pace through the online modules
- select relevant language and skills to try out in their own contexts.

Local course providers can:

- administer and monitor the course
- select assessment options, if applicable, to meet local needs.

## 3.4 Flexibility

Providers can structure the course to meet participants' needs:

- individual modules, or groups of modules, can be selected
- modules can be completed in any order.

## 3.5 Certification

Participants will gain a certificate of completion when they finish the whole course.

# 4. Methodology and design of the online modules

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## 4.1 Clear progression and opportunity to succeed

- Objectives are clearly stated at the beginning and reviewed at the end of each module.
- Introductory activities are carefully designed to allow participants to reflect on and relate what they already know to the content of each module.
- Every module includes new language input and multiple interactive activities, the last of which is a test.
- The design of every element – from question-level feedback to overall course structure – is carefully formulated to give participants every opportunity to succeed, have a clear sense of progress and build both their knowledge and confidence.

## 4.2 Adequate and timely feedback

- Feedback is designed to:
  - be immediate: to help participants become aware of what they do and do not know
  - support and guide the participant: to help close the gap between the participant's current level of knowledge and the content being presented – feedback provides information, hints, guiding questions, explanations, examples and support on how to approach a given task
  - build confidence: if participants do not understand the first time, there are further opportunities for them to develop understanding and use the language being presented – participants have their correct responses confirmed; their incorrect responses generate further guidance.
- All answers can be reviewed and explanatory text appears as appropriate.
- All scores are immediately available to the participant.

## 4.3 Accessibility

- A *Getting Started Guide* includes a video guide of tips for studying online and an interactive tutorial where participants try out the activity types that they will encounter in the course.
- The Certificate in EMI Skills has been written for professionals using English in their academic context. The language used in the course has been written to be clear, concise and comprehensible.
- A glossary provides definitions for key vocabulary and any subject-specific terminology.
- Participants are able to view transcripts of audio and video recordings.

## 4.4 Usability and navigation

- The online modules have been designed with a simple interface, clear sections and a linear layout.
- Introductory sections, as well as consistent use of navigation controls, make the structure of the course clear and easy to follow.
- Completion is marked at the level of individual activity to show progress.
- Simple buttons and controls are used throughout to ensure that any lack of technological confidence is not a barrier to learning.
- Each activity, test and assignment is presented with a simple design and clear graphics to ensure a focus on the knowledge being presented, practised and applied.

# 5. Structure and content of the online modules

## 5.1 Structure

- The Certificate in EMI Skills consists of eight modules, each module taking approximately 5 hours of study time.
- Each module consists of six sections: an introduction, four content sections, and the final review and test section; content sections are broken down into shorter lessons which provide input and practice of specific language and skills.
- Participants can work through the modules, sections and lessons in any order and at their own pace; each lesson can be repeated to review content if necessary, for example after a break in study.

## 5.2 Content

### 5.2.1 Introduction

- The first section of each module introduces the module topic, gives a description of the content in each section and summarises the main aims.
- Introductory activities are carefully designed to focus participants on the module topic. Participants consider the perspectives of a range of academic staff and reflect on their own ideas and experience.

Example slides from an introductory activity:

1 Your lecturing context

Look at the statements and think about your lectures. Are these statements true for you?

There are no right or wrong answers in this activity.



At the beginning, I explain the main points of the lecture and the order I will present the information.

I use tables and images to help students understand.

I am confident speaking in English.

There is a clear order in my lectures.

I check if my students understand the lecture.

Yes No

Submit

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1.1 Further ideas

Watch the video and choose the correct answers.

There's more than one correct answer.

This lecturer teaches engineering. How has he used online communication?



He communicates with his students by email.

He has put student activities online.

By putting all course materials on tablets.

By using online questionnaires.

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Submit

## 5.2.2 Input

- Sections 2 to 5 of each module provide input in the form of audio, video or text.
- Slides are used to engage participants with the content through a range of interactive activities.

### Example of audio plus text input:

**2.1 Types of online communication**

Look at the example text, then listen to the advice. Select the important features of this type of online communication.

Email to students

To: tania@mail.com  
Subject: Appointment

Hi Tania  
Thank you for contacting me. The next available appointment I have is at 10:30 on Friday.  
If you would like to book this, please let me know as soon as possible.  
Best wishes,  
Eric

Informal  
 Use emoticons  
 Formal  
 Open and close with a standard phrase

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submit

### Example of video input from a Cambridge University practical session:

**2.1 Structuring seminars**

Read the question, watch the video and choose the correct answers. More than one answer may be correct.

What does the lecturer do in the seminar introduction?

Ask the students to review the lecture.  
 Ask the students if they liked the lecture.  
 Give students a handout.  
 Praise students for their preparation for the seminar.  
 Tell students what he thinks of the lecture topic.  
 Give the students an outline of the seminar.

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### Example of text input:

**2.2 Tenses for interviews**

Sometimes choosing the correct tense in English can be confusing. One technique you can use to help you is 'mirroring'. This means to listen carefully to the tense the interviewer uses in their question and use the same one in your answer. Look at these examples and notice how the answer uses the same tense as the question.

1. Present perfect continuous  
Q: *How have you been teaching this year?*  
A: *I've been teaching undergraduate history and politics courses.*

2. Present perfect simple  
Q: *How have you developed your teaching style?*  
A: *I've developed my teaching style by observing colleagues and getting feedback from my students.*

3. Past simple  
When did you start your last research project?  
A: *I started it nine months ago.*

Now you're going to practise 'mirroring' questions.  
Continue to the next slide.

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**2.2 Tenses for interviews**

Listen to the interview and match the question to the correct answer.

Example 1: I advised students on dissertation topics and acted as a student mentor.  
Example 2: I really liked researching new information for my lectures.  
Example 3: I chose mental health as my PhD topic because there weren't many studies in this area.  
Example 4: My approach to student support has become more related to guiding students than teaching them.  
Example 5: I've been teaching them for six years.

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submit

### 5.2.3 Practice

- Interactive practice activities follow each input and give participants the opportunity to recognise, respond to and use the language presented.
- Practice activities include a variety of question types:
  - multiple choice
  - true/false
  - matching drag and drop
  - gap-fill drag and drop
  - grouping drag and drop
  - gap-fill typing
  - ordering.

#### Examples of different question types:

**2.2 Managing students in seminars**

Match the seminar problems to their solutions.

One or two students dominate the discussion.	Put them into groups so they discuss the topic together.
One or more students are very shy.	Don't nominate them until they are ready.
You don't understand a student's question.	Ask them to repeat or rephrase the question.
None of the students answer a question.	Ask other students for their ideas.
The students always speak to you, not to each other.	Rephrase your question or give them some answers to choose from.

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**2.1 Grammar for explaining procedures**

Watch the lecturer explaining a procedure and complete the sentences.

Lecturer: So, [ ] place them into this micro centrifuge and because it's going at a really high speed we just need to balance them so [ ].  
Student: OK.

Lecturer: And then [ ] the lids on tightly. And we'll spin this for one minute.  
Student: Yep. Ops.

Lecturer: There we go. So once this has finished spinning, [ ] the tubes out and then using the pipette we're going to take off the media but we don't want to disturb the pellets.

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### 5.2.4 Assignments

- In Sections 2 to 4, participants use the target language and skills in their own context and complete a short, written assignment about this experience.
- After completing an assignment, participants see a summary of content and language to compare with their own answer.

#### Example of an assignment with a suggested answer:

**Assignment 1 - Discussion Forums and Chat Rooms**

In Module 2 Section 5, you have looked at ways of communicating online and advice on how you can do this in English. In this activity you're going to apply what you have learned.

- Find (or start) a forum discussion in your subject area with your students.
- Review the language you need to encourage students to take part.
- Identify the key points you want to make during the discussion.
- Reply to the students' comments - remember to be clear and useful.

When the discussion thread is finished, think of how well you participated and managed the discussion.

Write an analysis of things you did well and the things you could improve (200 words).

Your answer

**Assignment 1 - Discussion Forums and Chat Rooms**

**Suggested Answer**

What did you do and what do you think you need to improve?:

- try to guide the discussion, correct major errors, encourage good contributions and keep the discussion focused?
- Was it clear who and what you were responding to when you wrote your contributions?
- Did you keep your comments simple and effective and only comment on key areas?
- Did you use positive language to allow thanks, praise, encouragement and interest?

You may have used the following language to help encourage students and keep the discussion focused on the main points:

**Showing interest**

Really?  
I'm very interested in your comment about this, Esther.

**Giving thanks**

I appreciate your input on this point.  
Thank you very much for your ideas.

**Giving praise**

That's a good example of applying theory to practice, James, well done.  
That's an excellent comment, Suzanne.  
That's a great analysis.  
What an excellent reason.  
This is an innovative solution.

**Encouraging student contributions**

Have you got any more thoughts about why this could be important, Denise?  
Can you add anything else, Camille?  
What might be the reason for this?  
What might this be important?  
What could this lead to?  
How can you expand on this?  
Where could we take this argument?

### 5.2.5 Over to you ...

- The final section of each module, Over to you ..., includes a review, a progress test and further resources to help participants continue to develop their language and skills after completion of the module.

# 6. Syllabus

## 6.1 Syllabus aims

The EMI modules aim to develop participants' linguistic skills in order to:

- engage students through clearly structured lecture delivery
- supervise groups of students in seminars
- set up and manage specific activities in small groups and practicals
- interact with and guide students in tutorials
- communicate clearly and effectively with students online
- give effective and supportive feedback to students
- communicate effectively in peer-to-peer professional roles
- operate effectively in different university cultures.

## 6.2 Syllabus content

Module 1 – Language for lectures	
<b>1.1 Different lecture styles</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Helping students engage with the content of lectures through good use of visual aids, e.g. <i>outlines, written instructions</i>.</li><li>b. Helping students engage with the content of lectures, e.g. <i>asking questions, summarising</i>.</li></ul>	<b>1.3 Signposting and cohesion in lectures</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Language for signposting, e.g. <i>moving on from one point to another, presenting an example</i>.</li><li>b. Cohesion in lectures, e.g.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. <b><i>These failures are the result of poor planning.</i></b></li><li>ii. <b><i>Funding is very important to businesses. It means growth.</i></b></li></ul></li></ul>
<b>1.2 Introducing a lecture</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Phrases for introducing lectures, e.g. <i>Today's lecture is going to focus on ...</i></li><li>b. Adjectives, adverbs and common collocations for lecture introductions, e.g. <i>an in-depth analysis, briefly explore</i>.</li></ul>	<b>1.4 Concluding a lecture</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Phrases for concluding lectures, e.g. <i>Let's review the main points from today ...</i> and vocabulary for concluding lectures, e.g. <i>conclude, recap</i>.</li><li>b. Language for giving clear instructions for compulsory and optional tasks, e.g. <i>might, could, must, I want you to</i>.</li></ul>

Module 2 – Language for seminars	
<b>2.1 Structuring seminars</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Vocabulary to describe the different stages of seminars and teaching techniques for seminar stages, e.g. <i>brainstorming, using ice breakers, providing handouts</i>.</li><li>b. Techniques for managing different students in seminars, e.g. <i>keeping the discussion on track, encouraging students to talk to each other</i>.</li></ul>	<b>2.3 Giving step-by-step guidance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Phrases for giving students step-by-step guidance during seminars, e.g. <i>praising, encouraging and refocusing students, summarising ideas and moving the discussion forward</i>.</li><li>b. Techniques and language for correcting students during seminars; showing students what is correct, partially correct or incorrect, e.g. <i>rephrasing, using contrastive stress, using adverbs and asking questions</i>.</li></ul>
<b>2.2 Using questions to guide students</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Using Yes/No questions, Wh- questions, object and subject questions to guide students' thinking and discussions in seminars, e.g. <i>Has he discussed the topic in detail? What do you think of the text? Which theories help us to ...?</i></li><li>b. Using other types of questions to guide students' thinking and discussions in seminars, e.g. <i>How useful is ...? What do you think ...? To what extent ...?</i></li></ul>	<b>2.4 Answering students' questions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Techniques for answering students' questions clearly in seminars, e.g. <i>giving an example</i>.</li><li>b. Phrases for relating answers to academic research, e.g. <i>This is a ground-breaking study</i>.</li></ul>

### Module 3 – Language for small groups and practical sessions

<b>3.1 Explaining procedures</b>	<b>3.3 Monitoring groups and practical sessions</b>
<p>a. Grammatical structures for explaining different types of procedures in practical sessions, e.g. <i>What we're going to do today is ...</i></p> <p>b. Verbs for explaining procedures in practical sessions, e.g. <i>measure, record, sketch.</i></p>	<p>a. Phrases for monitoring the progress of groups and offering help in practical sessions, e.g. <i>What have you done? Are you having any problems?</i></p> <p>b. Techniques and phrases for managing groups that work fast and slowly in practical sessions, e.g. <i>You shouldn't spend any more time on this.</i></p>
<b>3.2 Setting up groups</b>	<b>3.4 Ending a group discussion or practical session</b>
<p>a. Phrases for giving instructions to groups of students, e.g. <i>Get into groups of three.</i></p> <p>b. Using Yes/No and Wh- questions to check students have understood instructions, e.g. <i>How long should you spend on this task?</i></p>	<p>a. Using a variety of question types including direct and indirect questions to bring the group together and get feedback from students, e.g. <i>Why do you think this happened? Can you tell me what this means?</i></p> <p>b. Using different types of questions to help students reflect on their learning in practical sessions, e.g. <i>What are the key points from today's session? How has this session developed your analytical skills?</i></p>

### Module 4 – Language for tutorials and supervision

<b>4.1 Setting goals and expectations</b>	<b>4.3 Problems and solutions</b>
<p>a. Using real conditionals to describe goals, rules and expectations in tutorials and supervision sessions, e.g. <i>If you have any questions, ask me at the end.</i></p> <p>b. Questions and phrases for discussing individual students' goals and how to achieve them, e.g. <i>What do you want to get out of this tutorial?</i></p>	<p>a. Phrases for managing demanding students in tutorials or supervision sessions, e.g. <i>We can deal with that later.</i></p> <p>b. Using different types of questions to encourage more student participation in supervision sessions, e.g. <i>What might be the cause of this?</i></p>
<b>4.2 Advising students on strengths and weaknesses</b>	<b>4.4 Focusing on the individual student</b>
<p>a. Language for talking to students about their strengths during tutorials and supervision sessions, e.g. <i>You have done a thorough job.</i></p> <p>b. Language for talking to students about their weaknesses and suggesting how to improve in these areas, e.g. <i>You need to work on your conclusion.</i></p>	<p>a. Using questions to encourage students to become more independent learners, e.g. <i>How do you usually do your research?</i></p> <p>b. Techniques and language for personalising supervision sessions to individual students and their work, e.g. <i>You've improved the analysis section. This is important because you'll be studying more theory next term.</i></p>

## Module 5 – Language for online communication

<b>5.1 Online communication skills</b>	<b>5.3 Managing group communication</b>
<p>a. Types of online communication, e.g. <i>email, forum, webinar</i> and techniques for communicating online, e.g. <i>politeness, clarity and practicality</i>.</p> <p>b. Language to show a positive tone in online communication: thanking, praising and encouraging students, and showing interest, e.g. <i>This is an innovative solution. Where could we take this argument?</i></p>	<p>a. Language for giving clear instructions and guidelines to students in online forum discussions, e.g. <i>Identify three main changes. Don't post the same points as other people.</i></p> <p>b. Language for comments for moderating online discussions, e.g. <i>How can you develop this idea? How do these ideas compare to the reading?</i></p>
<b>5.2 Writing emails</b>	<b>5.4 Responding to online communication</b>
<p>a. The structure of emails and phrases for each section of an email, e.g. <i>Dear ..., I hope you are well. I look forward to your reply. Kind regards, ...</i></p> <p>b. Writing emails with different levels of formality, depending on the relationship, e.g. <i>I would like to ..., If I may ...</i></p>	<p>a. Phrases and structures for replying clearly and directly to students' questions in online communication, such as emails and forum discussions, e.g. <i>I suggest using examples from chapters 2 and 3 of Social care in the 20th century. Good point, Ingham. Read Ying (2012) for more on this.</i></p> <p>b. Techniques, phrases and conjunctions for summarising students' online forum discussions, e.g. <i>Andy, Gregor and Mati agree that studying Greek history is relevant, but Christina thinks that the history of other cultures is important so we get different views.</i></p>

## Module 6 – Language for evaluation and feedback

<b>6.1 Giving constructive feedback</b>	<b>6.3 Distinguishing between necessity and suggestion</b>
<p>a. Phrases for giving encouraging feedback to students, e.g. <i>I enjoyed reading your report.</i></p> <p>b. Language for giving direct and indirect feedback, e.g. <i>It's a good start. You must .../Perhaps you could ...</i></p>	<p>a. Structures for telling students when it is necessary to change things in their work, e.g. <i>It's essential that you include sources.</i></p> <p>b. Structures for making suggestions to students about how to improve their work, e.g. <i>I strongly suggest you practise your presentation.</i></p>
<b>6.2 Giving targeted feedback</b>	<b>6.4 Organisation of feedback</b>
<p>a. Verb + noun collocation for telling students what to do in feedback, e.g. <i>define key terms, give examples, connect theory to practice.</i></p> <p>b. Language to encourage students to be more creative in their work, e.g. <i>This shows you can solve problems creatively. Think of some innovative solutions.</i></p>	<p>a. Using a clear structure when giving feedback to students and using language to order your feedback, e.g. <i>First, you have to define the key terms. Also, you need to make the comparisons more specific.</i></p> <p>b. Giving specific information in feedback about where the problem is, what the problem is and how students can improve, e.g. <i>Also, you need to make some changes at the beginning of paragraph 4. You've put too much data in the table. Reduce this to the key points.</i></p>

## Module 7 – Language for developing and extending professional roles

<b>7.1 Preparing for academic interviews</b>	<b>7.3 Writing a conference proposal</b>
<p>a. Typical questions in academic interviews, e.g. <i>What experience have you had teaching international students?</i></p> <p>b. Using a variety of tenses to answer questions about your career in interviews, e.g. <i>I've been lecturing in physics for six years.</i></p>	<p>a. Different types of conference presentation, e.g. <i>plenary, workshop, panel discussion.</i></p> <p>b. How to structure a conference proposal and language for the different proposal sections, e.g. <i>This talk explains how the data was collected. The workshop will investigate how to collect the data.</i></p>
<b>7.2 Engaging in peer mentoring</b>	<b>7.4 Networking in social situations</b>
<p>a. Language to describe the mentor and mentee and their roles in peer mentoring, e.g. <i>give practical help, identify goals, take responsibility, address challenges.</i></p> <p>b. Techniques and language for setting goals and boundaries in a peer mentoring situation, e.g. <i>My aim is to be more confident when I lecture.</i></p>	<p>a. Phrases for introductions in social situations, e.g. <i>I don't think we've been introduced.</i></p> <p>b. Topics and phrases for small talk in social situations, e.g. <i>What do you think of the conference?</i></p>

## Module 8 – Language for fulfilling professional responsibilities

<b>8.1 Different students' characteristics and needs</b>	<b>8.3 Institutional differences</b>
<p>a. Adjectives to describe different types of students, e.g. <i>enthusiastic, reserved, diligent.</i></p> <p>b. Phrases for describing students' abilities, e.g. <i>asks insightful questions, shows initiative.</i></p>	<p>a. Grammatical structures for comparing and contrasting university experiences and/or systems, e.g. <i>Studying in France is less expensive than studying in the UK.</i></p> <p>b. Vocabulary for comparing and contrasting university experiences and/or systems, e.g. <i>similarly, likewise, although, whereas.</i></p>
<b>8.2 Institutional conventions</b>	<b>8.4 Relationships within university settings</b>
<p>a. Vocabulary for UK and US university conventions, e.g. <i>paper vs essay.</i></p> <p>b. Using conditional structures for university rules and regulations, e.g. <i>If you don't submit your assessment on time, you'll fail.</i></p>	<p>a. Vocabulary to describe hierarchical structures in universities, e.g. <i>department, faculty, Professor, Dean.</i></p> <p>b. Phrases for greeting people at work and phrases to use in meetings, e.g. <i>How was your lecture this morning? Has everyone got a copy of the agenda?</i></p>

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## Further information

About Cambridge English, including international language standards  
[cambridgeenglish.org/why-cambridge-english](https://cambridgeenglish.org/why-cambridge-english)

Published research

[cambridgeenglish.org/research-and-validation/published-research](https://cambridgeenglish.org/research-and-validation/published-research)

English Profile, including Cambridge Learner Corpus  
[englishprofile.org](https://englishprofile.org)

Teaching English, including Cambridge English teaching qualifications, courses and Teaching Framework

[cambridgeenglish.org/teaching-english](https://cambridgeenglish.org/teaching-english)

Certificate in EMI Skills

[cambridgeenglish.org/emi](https://cambridgeenglish.org/emi)

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For us, learning English is more than just exams and grades. It's about having the confidence to communicate and access a lifetime of enriching experiences and opportunities.

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