

UKALTA

UK Association for Language Testing and Assessment

Statement on equality, diversity, inclusion and accessibility

The UK Association for Language Testing and Assessment (UKALTA) is committed to working towards a fair and just society, with a particular interest in the role and impact of language testing and assessment in achieving this.

As a UK professional association and learned society, we welcome and value participation from all groups and individuals, based in or linked with the UK, who have scholarly and/or applied interest in language testing and assessment. This includes those who work in/with/for academic institutions, commercial testing bodies, non-commercial testing organisations (e.g. with charitable status) or educational institutions and organisations (e.g. the language teaching profession and other learned societies).

We seek to provide a platform for a diversity of voices and for our events to be safe and open spaces in which everyone can contribute. We are mindful of current legislation in the form of the UK Equality Act 2010, which designates nine protected characteristics that can be the basis for unlawful discrimination: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation. We also recognise the ways in which participation can be shaped or limited due to linguistic and other factors, including socio-economic inequality and lack of educational opportunity. We recognise the need to support our members and to create equal opportunities for participation and engagement.

We note the dominant status of the English language within the UK and beyond, and we acknowledge the powerful role played by English language testing in education, employment, migration and citizenship. We are working to decentre our field so it is more inclusive of less widely spoken and minoritized languages in the UK and their assessment. We welcome new ideas and fresh perspectives which diversify, enrich and challenge us, including the study of indigenous, heritage and community languages assessment, sign language testing, language testing accommodations, and multilingualism and assessment. We are committed to learning from others for all of these areas, including from disciplinary fields and traditions beyond our own, even if this requires difficult or uncomfortable conversations.

UKALTA has a particular role to play in drawing attention to the need for ethical language assessment and responsible language test use. We acknowledge the impact – sometimes negative – that use of language tests can have on individuals, groups and societies. Through our scholarly research and exchange of expertise, our training and professional development activities, and our advocacy and social engagement, we seek to contribute to a better understanding of language testing and assessment and its uses, in all its forms, and especially its role in ensuring equal opportunity and social justice.

This statement provides an initial baseline position on equality, diversity, inclusion and accessibility for our professional association. Our intention going forward is to systematically embed EDIA principles into our organisational governance and procedures, drawing on some of the frameworks and good practice which have been developed by other UK learned societies. As a relatively young but maturing professional association, our overall aim is to promote a culture that values equality, diversity, inclusion and accessibility to underpin all our policies, practices and activities.

UKALTA Executive Committee - November 2022