

Press Information

5th November 2007

Cambridge [UK] sets the standard in language learning

In a bid to improve English language standards in Colombia, the country's government is looking to the UK, and have begun a partnership with University of Cambridge ESOL examinations to help develop new national tests. The tests come as part of the bid by Colombia's Ministerio de Educación Nacional to equip the population with English skills for work and higher study.

School-leavers have always had their English skills tested as part of the *Examen de Estado* leaving certificate, but the government wanted to bring these tests into line with international standards. They asked Cambridge ESOL to produce a new test, incorporating CEFR standards and levels, which more than 500,000 Colombian school-leavers have already recently taken. Cambridge ESOL is also providing training and support so that in the future, Colombia will be able to produce its own language tests incorporating the levels.

Dr Michael Milanovic, Chief Executive of Cambridge ESOL said: "We are delighted that Colombia has chosen to collaborate with us. It goes to prove that the UK is still seen as a leading light in the field of education. We work with international government bodies across the globe and many of them look to the UK to lead the way in educational matters".

The development of the new English component of the *Examen de Estado* is just one element of the collaboration with Cambridge ESOL. The test for final year Colombian university students also includes an English language component from Cambridge

ESOL, which will be taken by more than 100,000 students. Meanwhile trainee English teachers have recently been entered for the FCE (First Certificate in English), fully sponsored by the Ministry of Education, and a new project has just been launched for the re-training of in-service English teachers which uses TKT (Teaching Knowledge Test) as the final assessment.

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

About CEFR

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) provides a practical tool for setting clear standards to be attained at successive stages of learning and for evaluating outcomes in an internationally comparable manner and facilitates mutual recognition of language qualifications.

About Cambridge ESOL

University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations is part of the Cambridge Assessment Group, a not-for-profit organisation and a department of the University of Cambridge. It is part of the Cambridge Assessment group, which is Europe's largest assessment agency. We provide examinations in English language for over 2 million people every year, in more than 130 countries, as well as a range of qualifications for language teachers.

Our examinations are developed on the basis of a long-term process of academic and practical research, to ensure that they are accurate, fair, reliable and relevant, and that they encourage learners to develop the skills they need to use English effectively in the real world.

University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations is a founder member of the Association of Language Testers in Europe and works closely with testing organisations, schools and academics throughout the world to support the development of language testing in theory and practice.