

13th CEFR SIG Meeting
Wednesday, 28 May 2025, 14:30-17:30

PRELIMINARY PROGRAMME

14:30-14:40	Welcome by the SIG coordinators, Neus Figueras and Armin Berger
14:40-15:00	María Belén Díez-Bedmar (University of Jaén) Complementing the CEFR/CV descriptors with linguistic information: The FineDesc Project (recorded presentation)
15:00-15:20	Ebtesam Abdulhaleem and Manssor Al-Malki (King Salman Global Academy for Arabic Language) Translating the <i>Aligning language education with the CEFR: A handbook</i> into Arabic: Challenges, opportunities, and implications
15:20-15:40	Johann Fischer (University of Göttingen), Laurent Rouveyrol (University Sorbonne Nouvelle), Juana Sanmartin (Universidad de Murcia), Barbara Sawicka (Poznan University of Technology), and Julia Zabala (Universidad Politécnica de Valencia) Ensuring consistency in university language certification systems: Aligning examinations to the CEFR
15:40-16:00	Break
16:00-16:20	Voula Kanistra (Trinity College London) The ouroboros of the alignment cycle
16:20-16:30	Morten Hunke (Brandenburg University of Applied Sciences Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin HAWK Arden University.) The CEFR Journal: Coming of age and moving forward towards new horizons
16:30-16:50	Carolyn Westbrook (British Council) and Neus Figueras (University of Barcelona) The CEFR CV and the CEFR Aligning Handbook: Involving teachers
16:50-17:10	Neus Figueras (University of Barcelona) and Armin Berger (University of Vienna) <i>Aligning language education with the CEFR: A handbook</i>. Taking stock and moving forward. Next steps
17:10-17:30	Open discussion: The CEFR SIG was founded to enhance knowledge and implementation of the CEFR. How much progress has been made? What actions could further increase the CEFR SIG's impact?

ABSTRACTS

María Belén Díez-Bedmar (University of Jaén)

Complementing the CEFR/CV descriptors with linguistic information: The FineDesc Project

Due to L1 Spanish CEFR/CV end-users' difficulties in the implementation of the descriptors in the learning, teaching and assessment of languages, the FineDesc Project seeks to make the descriptors more user-friendly and promote their use. To do so, the descriptors for the linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences at B1, B2 and C1 levels are being informed with the results of corpus-based analyses using the FineDesc Learner Corpus. This presentation will show the procedure followed to reach the so-called 'fine-tuned descriptors', i.e., descriptors complemented with linguistic information, which has involved researchers, end-users and an advisory board.

Ebtesam Abdulhaleem and **Manssor Al-Malki** (King Salman Global Academy for Arabic Language)

Translating the *Aligning language education with the CEFR: A handbook into Arabic: Challenges, opportunities, and implications*

As part of efforts to enhance the accessibility of the CEFR Alignment Handbook within Arabic language education, we initiated its translation into Arabic following discussions at the October 2024 Barcelona Conference. This presentation outlines the rationale, challenges, and key Arabic-specific characteristics requiring elaboration, such as the impact of diglossia, morphological complexity, orthographic challenges, and cultural considerations in education and assessment. We will share our experience in translating the handbook, highlighting key lessons learned throughout the process. Additionally, we will introduce a specialized glossary to ensure clarity and consistency in CEFR-related terminology for Arabic educators, test developers, and policymakers. Finally, we will discuss collaborations and invite feedback on integrating Arabic-specific considerations into CEFR-aligned frameworks.

Johann Fischer (University of Göttingen), **Laurent Rouveyrol** (University Sorbonne Nouvelle), **Juana Sanmartín** (Universidad de Murcia), **Barbara Sawicka** (Poznan University of Technology), **Julia Zabala** (Universidad Politécnica de Valencia).

Ensuring consistency in university language certification systems: Aligning examinations to the CEFR

Our work-in-progress presentation describes a benchmarking procedure conducted using the handbook for *Aligning Language Education with the CEFR*. The process involved the certification systems integrated into the Network of University Language Testers in Europe (NULTE) of the Confederation of Language Centres in Higher Education (CercleS). The judges included representatives from CertAcles (Spain), UNICERT (Germany), CLES (France), and Acert (Poland), alongside external stakeholder experts.

This presentation will discuss the methodology, key findings, and implications for quality assurance in language testing in higher education institutions, contributing to the ongoing efforts of CercleS and NULTE in promoting standards-based assessment across their systems.

Voula Kanistra (Trinity College London)
The ouroboros of the alignment cycle

The CEFR familiarisation activities, as outlined in *Aligning language education with the CEFR: A handbook*, are an essential first step in the alignment cycle and are interconnected with standard-setting studies. However, similar to the Ouroboros, this process is continuous, feeding into and shaping subsequent stages of assessment development. This presentation explores how familiarisation activities incorporating standard-setting methodologies elements can establish a stronger connection between CEFR descriptors and test constructs. It also investigates how these activities can be used to train item writers and raters, thereby enhancing test validity and scoring reliability.

Morten Hunke (Brandenburg University of Applied Sciences | Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin | HAWK | Arden University.)

The CEFR Journal: Coming of age and moving forward towards new horizons

The CEFR Journal aims to provide a platform for CEFR-informed teachers, researchers, and practitioners. To disseminate valuable ideas and practices is the prime objective of the journal. This session will outline the salient patterns found in the seven issues of the journal, so far, and present what is in store for the upcoming. Furthermore, it will briefly discuss how the journal can continue to reflect the challenges and opportunities (e.g., multiplying best practice) for the wider community of practitioners – teachers and researchers alike – as well as learners of languages in a multitude of contexts.

Carolyn Westbrook (British Council) and **Neus Figueras** (University of Barcelona)
The CEFR CV and the CEFR Aligning Handbook: Involving teachers

Despite the efforts to disseminate these documents in seminars, webinars, conference presentations, journals, etc., it seems that many practitioners are still unfamiliar with how the CEFR can contribute to improved teaching, learning and assessment. The publication *Aligning Language Education with the CEFR: A handbook* aimed precisely at reaching out to the many key stakeholders in any learning system to raise awareness of the steps involved in linking materials and assessments to the CEFR by providing clear, practical and accessible guidance for carrying out alignment projects.

In this session we would like to focus on grassroots teachers, to discuss how best to familiarise them with the CEFR CV and the Handbook and to present a variety of ways to approach and use these two documents, proposing different points of entry to their content with different activities which can contribute to improve teaching and assessment in different education levels.

Neus Figueras (University of Barcelona) and **Armin Berger** (University of Vienna)
Aligning language education with the CEFR: A handbook. Taking stock and moving forward. Next steps

The coordinators of the CEFR SIG will share with the presenters and the participants the most salient feedback and reactions regarding the publication of the *Handbook* in April 2022 and its use, as collected at the Barcelona conference in October 2024 and other events or publications. They will then discuss short- and mid-term developments, as planned by the extended Steering Group following the Barcelona conference. In the final session, all participants are invited to contribute their suggestions and proposals for future developments related to the *Handbook* and the running of the CEFR SIG.