

Latvian Language Examinations for Other Nationalities in Latvia

The Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs is a state institution under the supervision of the Ministry of Interior of Republic of Latvia and is responsible for issue of identity documents and travel documents, maintenance of the Population Register, implementation of state migration policy, including development and implementation of repatriation and asylum policy etc. ¹

One of its functions is to determine the legal status of individuals in the country and naturalization. In order to acquire the citizenship of Latvia through naturalization a person must pass examinations in the proficiency of the Latvian language and the knowledge of the basic principles of the Satversme (the Constitution) of the Republic of Latvia, the text of the national anthem and the history of Latvia.

The first model (1995) and the second model (1996) for examination of Latvian language skills was developed in close cooperation with European Council experts from the Central Institute for development of examination materials in the Netherlands. The content and skills assessment criteria for the third model were developed in close cooperation with European council experts from Cambridge University's local examination centre. The third examination model was introduced in October 1999.

The aim of the examination is to verify the Latvian language skills of the applicants for citizenship and their ability to use the language consciously. Applicants must be able to use the Latvian language at a level enabling them to successfully integrate into the society and communicate in everyday situations and in public.

Latvian language skills are assessed in two parts – oral and a written part testing the 4 language skills of the applicant:

- Listening – the applicant's skills of perception of the language through listening are tested. Applicants have to listen to the text on everyday conversations e.g. short dialogue between two people or information on the radio (monologue) about the weather forecast, changes in the railway timetable etc.
- Reading – the applicant reads texts on everyday situations, simple official notices e.g. various instructions, informal letters/notes, advertisements etc., understand the main idea and find the necessary information.
- Writing – applicants fill in forms, write a short routine letter on everyday issues testifying the ability to provide information about oneself and communicate in everyday situations.
- Speaking – the applicant answers to 10 interview questions about oneself, talks about everyday situations, describes and expresses one's opinion regarding a picture given.

¹ http://www.pmlp.gov.lv/en/par_pmlp/

Applicants are tested in oral or written form regarding the knowledge of the basic principles of the Satversme (the Constitution) of the Republic of Latvia, the text of the national anthem and the history of Latvia. The applicant answers one question regarding the LR Satversme and one regarding Latvian history and culture orally. The applicant takes a written test with 18 questions (10 questions on Latvian history, 8 on LR Constitution). In both forms of this examination an applicant has to write or to recite the text of the national anthem.²

Samples of examination are accessible on the official website of the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs: <http://www.pmlp.gov.lv/lv/pakalpojumi/Naturalizacija/parbaudes.html>.

Examinations assessing the requirements foreseen in the Law on Immigration are carried out at the following examination centres:

- Riga, Daugavpils street 31,
- Liepaja, Graudu street 45,
- Daugavpils, 18.novembra street 105,
- as well as off site examination committees who can conduct examinations in Jekabpils, Valmiera and Ventspils.³

National Centre for Education (NCE) is a public administration institution directly subordinated to the Minister of Education and Science which was established on 1st July 2009 by merging Education content and examination centre, State youth initiative centre, Professional education administration and State special education centre .⁴

One of its functions is State Language Proficiency Testing. The aim of the State Language Proficiency Testing (Certification) is to evaluate a person's (henceforth – Applicant's) state language proficiency level. If the State Language Proficiency Examination is passed successfully, the Applicant receives the state language proficiency certificate. The state language certificate is required for employment requirements and acquisition of a permanent residence permit and acquisition of European Union permanent resident status.⁵

The State language skills are assessed by the State language examination section of the National Centre for education. The State language skills are assessed by a state language examination committee.⁶

The examination consists of two parts – written (listening, reading and writing) and oral (interview and speaking tasks).⁷

² <http://www.pmlp.gov.lv/en/Citizenship/Naturalizacija.html>

³ <http://www.pmlp.gov.lv/lv/pakalpojumi/Naturalizacija/parbaudes.html>

⁴ <http://visc.gov.lv/en/>

⁵ <http://visc.gov.lv/en/stlang/>

⁶ <http://visc.gov.lv/valval/prasmeparb.shtml>

⁷ <http://visc.gov.lv/valval/norise.shtml>

All examinations are divided into three level: A (basic), B (intermediate) and C (advanced).⁸

The examination topics are different – about oneself, one's house and its surroundings, one's everyday life, education, work, leisure time and relationships between people.⁹

Samples of tasks for all levels and all parts of the examination are available online on the National Centre for Education website section „State language examinations”.

Basic (A) level:

- Listening http://visc.gov.lv/valval/dokumenti/kl_a_lim.pdf
- Reading http://visc.gov.lv/valval/dokumenti/la_a_lim.pdf
- Writing http://visc.gov.lv/valval/dokumenti/ra_a_lim.pdf
- Speaking http://visc.gov.lv/valval/dokumenti/ru_a_lim.pdf

Intermediate (B) level:

- Listening http://visc.gov.lv/valval/dokumenti/kl_b_lim.pdf
- Reading http://visc.gov.lv/valval/dokumenti/la_b_lim.pdf
- Writing http://visc.gov.lv/valval/dokumenti/ra_b_lim_no_marta
- Speaking http://visc.gov.lv/valval/dokumenti/ru_b_lim.pdf

Advanced (C) level:

- Listening http://visc.gov.lv/valval/dokumenti/kl_c_lim.pdf
- Reading http://visc.gov.lv/valval/dokumenti/la_c_lim.pdf
- Writing http://visc.gov.lv/valval/dokumenti/ra_c_lim.pdf
- Speaking http://visc.gov.lv/valval/dokumenti/ru_c_lim_no_marta.pdf¹⁰

Examinations are held in Rīga, Ventspils, Liepāja, Rēzekne and Daugavpils.

Information prepared by:

MBA Kristiāna Talente, Turība University Study department, e-mail:

Kristiana.Talente@turiba.lv

⁸ http://visc.gov.lv/valval/dokumenti/prasmes_parb_saturs_16_18.pdf

⁹ http://visc.gov.lv/valval/dokumenti/prasmes_parb_saturs_19_20.pdf

¹⁰ <http://visc.gov.lv/valval/uzdevumi.shtml>