

20th EALTA Conference

6-9 June 2024, Belfast, Northern Ireland

Taking stock – Looking at the past, present, and future of language assessment in Europe and beyond

The first EALTA conference was held in 2004, growing out of the need for educators, researchers, and assessment professionals to support good practice in testing and assessment across Europe. In the 20 years since EALTA's founding, our field has seen a massive increase in professionalism, with a large body of published research, in particular on the alignment of assessment to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). It can also be said that this work across Europe, disseminated through the EALTA community, has had an impact on the wider field of educational measurement and the study of alignment of exams to frameworks and standards, since it has been carried to and adapted for local contexts well beyond Europe.

As this work has progressed over the last two decades, the social, political, and economic contexts within which our assessments sit have radically changed across Europe and globally. Within the last 12 months alone we have seen the impact in language education through the use of generative AI based on large language models. These developments have significant relevance for our field beyond finite applications of new technological tools for building, administering, and scoring tests. They are changing the way we communicate and use language in classrooms and the workplace, and the skills people need to generate and comprehend texts in languages other than their L1.

This year's EALTA conference takes a broad view of language assessment and asks us to take stock of where we have come from, the developments (social, political, pedagogical, technological) which have impacted on our individual research and assessment development work, and to consider what the implications of these are going forward for language assessment and testing in Europe and beyond.

We invite proposals for theoretical and empirical research presentations, works-in-progress, posters, and symposia that will shed light on a range of timely issues that relate to the overall theme and in particular contribute to answering the key questions facing our field below. Proposals may focus on "big picture" issues or zoom in on specific test development and validation projects which fit within the questions below.

- How have our assessment practices responded to the social, political, and economic changes in Europe over the last two decades?
- Has our published research and development work achieved the right balance across large scale standardized assessments and the use of assessment within comprehensive learning systems (i.e., is it built into curriculum design, teaching, and learning, and assessment practices in schools)?

- What role does the CEFR play currently in our work, including in classroom assessment and assessment contexts other than large-scale standardized tests, and what do we need to do to keep it relevant going forward?
- Is the impact of technological change (e.g. through LLMs and generative AI) changing not just how we can / should assess, but also how we communicate and so the constructs we need to assess?
- What are the implications of changing patterns in the global movement of people and the ways of working and communicating on the constructs which we need to assess?

Proposals that are not directly related to the theme can be submitted if they provide timely and important contributions to our field in terms of new theory and empirical research findings.

Please submit your abstract online [here](#).

Extended Deadline: 8 December 2023

Please see guidelines for submission on the following page. If you have any questions during the process of submitting your proposal, please send an email to ealta2024@qub.ac.uk.

Guidelines

We would like to encourage as many people as possible to submit proposals, but every year we receive far more than can be included in the programme. The following guidelines will help you make your proposal as effective as possible and give you the best chance of success. Please note that authors should not submit more than one proposal on which they are first author in the same category (e.g. papers).

I. We will consider proposals for PAPERS (20-minute presentations), WORKS-IN-PROGRESS (15-minute presentations) and POSTERS adhering to the conference theme, and in a separate strand we will consider proposals which make a significant contribution to language testing and assessment research not directly related to the theme.

The proposals for papers, works-in-progress and posters must:

1. contain a clear explanation of how the paper relates to the conference theme, or if it is not related to the theme, why it is of significance to the field
2. keep to the stipulated maximum word count (250 words max.)
3. be well-structured
4. clearly outline:
 - a. the objectives of the paper
 - b. *for empirical papers*: its methods (design, participants, instruments, procedures);
for theoretical papers: its theoretical framework or literature upon which it is based
 - c. the contribution it makes to the field of Language Testing and Assessment
 - d. the novelty it may offer in terms of concepts, approaches or methods
5. be likely to promote discussion and interaction amongst conference participants

II. We will consider proposals for SYMPOSIA adhering to the conference theme (90 minutes).

A symposium addresses a topic from multiple perspectives. It should begin with an introduction to the topic, followed by individual presentations and a synthesis by a discussant. Please consider ample time for discussion with the audience in the scheduling of the symposium.

The proposals for symposia must:

1. contain a clear rationale for the symposium (500 words max.) which
 - a. is well-structured
 - b. outlines the objectives of the symposium
 - c. explains how the papers within the symposium relate to each other and contribute to the symposium goals
2. contain a separate abstract for each contribution which
 - a. outlines its relation to the conference theme and contribution to the symposium
 - b. is well-structured
 - c. keeps to the stipulated word count (250 words max.)
 - d. clearly outlines the objectives, its methods or its theoretical framework, and the novelty it may offer in terms of concepts, approaches or methods
3. be likely to promote discussion and interaction amongst conference participants.

The rationale and the abstracts for the contributions are to be submitted in one document.

III. Each proposal is rated by independent vetters.

We want to ensure an anonymous and impartial vetting procedure. Therefore, we will collect your contact details and the abstract separately. The data containing your name, affiliation etc. go to the conference administrators. They will use IDs to match your personal details with your abstract. You will submit your abstract in a separate file, which goes to the vetters.

NB To ensure anonymity, you are required to avoid any information in your title and abstract that may lead to identifying you or your institution as the author or origin of the proposal.