

Duolingo to Release Test Center: Fair Language Certification for All

Pittsburgh, PA (July 23, 2014) – [Duolingo](#) has announced the launch of its language certification exam to give every job seeker and student around the world a chance to apply for life-changing opportunities.

The popular education platform has focused on providing free access to language skills previously reserved for a select few. Now, Duolingo is giving everyone a way to prove their language proficiency – a necessity when applying for jobs or schools – through a mobile app.

Universally Accessible Certification

For decades, the language certification industry has been comprised of a small number of corporations that charge fees representing up to an entire month's salary for some test takers. Many are also forced to travel long distances to examination facilities available only in select major cities.

The [Duolingo Test Center](#) app was created to allow anyone to certify their English skills from home, on their mobile device, and for only US\$20 – that's less than one tenth of the price of similar tests, regularly priced at US\$250. Even buying a new smartphone and taking the Duolingo test will provide a more financially viable option for most.

Purnima Kochikar, Global Director, Google Play Apps & Games, stated: "We are excited to see Duolingo transform standardized testing through mobile technology and help millions of Android users around the world gain access to better opportunities."

New Adaptive and Anti-Cheating Technologies

Existing language certification tests are unfortunately susceptible to cheating. Bribing proctors and memorizing test questions are known practices, giving an advantage to those who can afford to circumvent learning. This results in the acceptance of students or employees who do not in fact have the required proficiency in English.

For these reasons, the Home Office in the UK recently suspended acceptance of popular standardized English tests required for visa purposes:

<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/feb/10/student-visa-tests-suspended-fraud>

The Duolingo English Proficiency Exam was designed to provide accurate, highly reliable results. The computer-adaptive test varies based on a test taker's performance, so it takes 20 minutes to complete (instead of the 2 hours required by similar tests) and questions are rarely repeated. A remote proctor monitors the experience via video from the device to ensure nobody receives unauthorized assistance.

Reliable Scores

An independent [study](#) conducted by the University of Pittsburgh has found that the Duolingo English Proficiency Exam scores are stable, reliable, and substantially correlated with the TOEFL iBT total scores (a standard English certification test).

Accepted by Progressive Institutions

The company is already in advanced conversations with top tier U.S. Universities interested in using Test Center results. Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) will be the first academic partner. CMU, with world-leading researchers in learning science and data analysis, will rigorously assess the Test Center's effectiveness in evaluating the English proficiency of non-native English speakers seeking admissions to CMU's academic programs. oDesk will be the first industry partner. Institutions benefit from broader applicant pools because traditional testing services may pose significant economic and logistical barriers for qualified applicants.

"Carnegie Mellon is excited that we will be Duolingo's first academic partner," said Subra Suresh, president of Carnegie Mellon University. "We admire Duolingo's bold vision to create an affordable and reliable app-based test for English language proficiency that will allow more young people around the world to pursue higher education at CMU and other English-language research universities. CMU looks forward to working with Luis von Ahn and his team on research projects that will continue to advance the Test Center's already impressive performance."

Duolingo is also working with the government of Costa Rica and the "Ideas en Acción" organization to distribute the proficiency exam across schools to help reduce costs for students.

The Test Center app is available exclusively for Android at launch and can also be accessed on the web. An iOS app will be available soon.

Visit the Test Center online: <http://testcenter.duolingo.com>

Download the Test Center on Google Play here:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.duolingo.testcenter>

About Duolingo

Created by crowdsourcing pioneer Luis von Ahn and Severin Hacker, Duolingo is known for its free, science-based language education platform selected by Apple as iPhone App of the Year 2013, by Google as Best of the Best for Android 2013, and by TechCrunch as Best Education Startup. With over 30 million users, Duolingo is now the most popular way to learn languages online. Duolingo is a spinout company that began as a research project in von Ahn's lab at Carnegie Mellon University's School of Computer Science, where Dr. Hacker received his Ph.D.

About Luis von Ahn

Luis von Ahn is the inventor of reCAPTCHA, a crowdsourcing technology used worldwide to digitize millions of books every year. He has sold two companies to Google, given a very popular TED talk watched by over 1 million people, and is known for changing what can be accomplished via the collaboration of millions of people online. Luis was awarded the MacArthur Genius grant for his accomplishments and has been featured in The Economist, The New York Times, Forbes, The Wall Street Journal and other prominent media worldwide. He received his Ph.D. from Carnegie Mellon University.