



****PRESS NOTICE – 3 July 2012****

LINGUISTS question language testing plans in government immigration overhaul

The British Association for Applied Linguistics (BAAL) has expressed serious concerns over government plans, [announced by the UK Border Agency on June 13](#), to introduce language testing for people seeking settlement in the UK. In a raft of controversial changes, many of which come into effect on Monday July 9, anyone applying for settlement in the UK from October 2013 will be required to pass an intermediate level English language examination, in addition to the Life in the UK Test, while entitlement to English classes in lieu of taking the Life in the UK test will be scrapped.

In an open letter to the Home Secretary, BAAL chair Professor Guy Cook questions whether the new rule is compatible with the government view that 'English Language is the corner-stone of integration', suggesting that it will make English less accessible for many would-be citizens, particularly those who, as a result of conflict, gender discrimination or poverty, possess poor literacy skills in their native languages.

BAAL wishes to highlight the fact that the new requirements will deny many would-be applicants of lower language ability the opportunity to study and improve their English in 'ESOL and Citizenship' classes as part of their route to settlement, as they are currently able to do. In his letter to the Home Secretary, Professor Cook argues that

Rather than promoting English language learning for those seeking settlement, the new measure will greatly reduce opportunities for many who might otherwise have been able to develop their English language proficiency to become fully integrated British citizens.

BAAL is Britain's national organization for scholars of Applied Linguistics, with over 800 members from universities across the UK. For further information, or to arrange an interview with one of our members, please contact Media Coordinator Tony Fisher: anthony.fisher@nottingham.ac.uk - mobile: 0754 0445296.

For further information about BAAL please visit <http://www.baal.org.uk>