What is the technical manual?

The manual describes the content and technical properties of Aptis General, the standard English language assessment product offered within the Aptis test system.

The manual provides information on:

- **The theoretical framework which has shaped the development of the Aptis test system.** The Aptis test system was based primarily on a test development and validation model advanced by O’Sullivan (2011a, 2015a), O’Sullivan and Weir (2011), and Weir (2005). In practice, the socio-cognitive model is reflected in Aptis in the design of the underlying test and scoring systems. These are operationalised using detailed specifications, again based on the socio-cognitive approach, and supported by exemplar tasks and items as reflected in the sample tests available on the Aptis website [www.britishcouncil.org/exams/aptis](http://www.britishcouncil.org/exams/aptis).

- **The content of the Aptis General test.** The CEFR has been used from the outset to provide a descriptive framework of proficiency to structure the levels targeted and as starting points for task design and content selection. The test is primarily a computer-based (non-adaptive) test which can measure all four skills in addition to grammatical and vocabulary knowledge.

- **How the Aptis General test is scored.** The Core, Reading and Listening components are scored automatically within the computer delivery system. This ensures that accurate results are available immediately following testing. Trained human raters mark the Speaking and Writing components, using an online rating system.

- **The technical measurement properties of the Aptis General test, such as reliability.** Aptis reliability measurements achieve the standards expected of high-stakes exams in both the receptive and productive skill components.

The technical manual is **not** intended as a test preparation guide for test takers although some material may be useful in better understanding test tasks for teachers and trainers preparing candidates to take the test. Support materials for these groups are provided separately in the [Aptis Candidate Guide](http://www.britishcouncil.org/exams/aptis).
What’s in the technical manual?

### The Aptis Test System

- **Model of test development and validation**
  Socio-cognitive validation model (O’Sullivan and Weir)
- **Localisation**
  Adaptations for specific contexts
- **Overview of current variants**
  Aptis General, Aptis for Teachers, Aptis Advanced, Aptis for Teens

### Aptis General

- **Overview of typical test takers**
- **Test system**
  - Test purpose
    Outlines possible situations in which Aptis is an ideal assessment
  - Target language use (TLU) domain
    Range and scope of communicative tasks
  - Test components
    Computer-based four skills test
  - Mode of delivery
    Offering test users flexibility and convenience
  - Administration and security
    Offering guidance and support from The British Council

### Scoring

- **Overview of scoring and feedback**
  Relationship between score elements and reporting
- **Reliability of receptive skill components**
  Consistency of reading and listening scores
- **Reliability of productive skill components**
  Consistency of speaking and writing scores, rater reliability
- **Precision of scoring: Standard Error of Measurement**
  Confidence in the Aptis scoring system
- **CEFR level allocations**
  Calculation of CEFR skill levels and overall score

### Other Documentation

- **Description of the test production process**
  - Distinguishing between development and production cycles
  - The production cycle
  - Accommodations
  - Overview of other documentation on research and validation

### Appendices

- **Global scale CEFR**
- **Task specifications**
- **Sample score reports**
- **Flow chart of the item and test production cycle**
- **Glossary**

Educators may find components in the appendices of practical use. Distinct from other assessments, **Aptis task specifications** are included in the Technical Manual. These detailed documents clearly describe the design and structure of test items and can be useful for developing teaching materials focusing on specific language areas.