Language Test Design and Validation

Carrusel de destacados

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- Statistical validation of language tests

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  The second week of the course is entirely dedicated to the statistical analysis and validation of language tests. Both Classical Test Theory and Item Response Theory are taught. No previous knowledge of statistics or mathematics is necessary.

- 2023 Cohort

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- Enjoy the city of Jaén

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  Our cultural program includes a gala dinner at the Castle of Santa Catalina and a private visit to the gallery of the UJA where participants can see several works by Picasso and Dalí among other Spanish Modernist artists.

- 2024 Cohort

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- Reunion of LTDV students at GIELE Gerona 2024

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- Enjoy our Mediterranean landscapes

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  There are plenty of cultural options in the province. The World-heritage cities of Úbeda and Baeza or the natural parks of Cazorla, Segura and Las Villas are excellent options.

- 2025 Cohort

2025 Cohort

- Reunion of LTDV students at ACLES Alicante 2025

Reunion of LTDV students at ACLES Alicante 2025

- Our modern facilities

Our modern facilities

- 2025 Cohort during their visit to the Castle of Jaén

2025 Cohort during their visit to the Castle of Jaén

- Enjoy Andalusian cuisine

Enjoy Andalusian cuisine

- Anthony Green during one session with the 2026 Cohort

Anthony Green during one session with the 2026 Cohort

Anthony Green, Research Director at Oxford University Press spoke to the 2026 Cohort about the test develpment cycle.

- 2026 Cohort at the Castle of Jaén

2026 Cohort at the Castle of Jaén

Our cultural program includes a guided tour to the Castle of Jaén, a gala diner in the main building of the castle and a visit to a private paint exhibition.

Presentation and dates

This two-week 40-hour course will cover key issues in language test design and validation. The course will be held at the Universidad de Jaén (Spain) from May 31 to June 11, 2027.

During the **first week** we will define and learn how to design the main parts of a test: construct, specifications, components (listening, reading, writing, speaking and interaction) through theoretical and practical sessions. Participants will have the opportunity of sharing their own work with colleagues from other institutions and

major examining boards.

During the **second week** we will focus on the statistical analysis of aspects related to validity arguments. We will use both Classical Test Theory and Item-Response Theory to analyze facility values, discrimination indexes, internal reliability, bias, variable maps, etc. and we will see how analytic scales can be validated through Rasch models. *No previous knowledge of statistics is necessary*.

The course will be taught by experts in language test design with extensive experience: **Brian North**, co-author of the Common European Framework for Languages and the Companion Volume (1.5 hours); **Adolfo Sánchez**, expert on mediation at the Universidad de Granada (2 hours); **Javier Fruns**, Head of language assessment at the Instituto Cervantes (4 horas); **David Bradshaw**, Senior assessment Services and Recognition Manager for Cambridge University Press and Assessment (4 hours); **Carmen Álvarez**, Assessment coordinator at the Language Center of the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (4 hours); and **Joaquín M. Cruz**, Deputy Director and Assessment Coordinator at the Center for Higher Studies in Modern Languages at the Universidad de Jaén (24.5 hours).

The course will be held in **English** but its theoretical and practical contents can be applied to test development and validation in any language other than English. **Computers** will be necessary for the second week. The Universidad de Jaén will provide participants with the necessary computers and pre-installed software, chiefly Word, Excel, SPSS, Winsteps and Facets. Participants who want to use their own laptops will have to make sure that they have access to the aforementioned software because the University of Jaén will not provide individual licenses. According to Spanish regulation, this course is considered as a *Diploma de Postgrado* (postgraduate course) **worth 5 ECTS credits**.

If you need any **assistance** or if you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact the Director of the diploma, Dr. Joaquín Cruz (jtrapero [arroba] ujaen [punto] es (jtrapero[at]ujaen[dot]es); +34683750037).

You can download the press kit of the course here.

Contents

This course will have **10 sessions of 4 hours each,** with an additional break of 30 minutes. During the **first week** (May 31 - June 4, 2027) we will define and work on the main parts of a test. During the **second week** (June 7 - 11, 2027) we will focus on statistical analysis using Classical Test Theory and Item-Response Theory. *No previous knowledge of statistics is necessary*. **Participants do not have to work outside the lesson hours** and they will receive a link with the materials for the course one week before its beginning. The content of both weeks is broken down as follows:

Week 1

- Introduction
- The CEFR CV, mediation and new challenges in language assessment
- Listening comprehension
- Reading comprehension
- Oral and written production

Week 2

- Introduction to statistical analysis and Classical Test Theory (I)
- Classical Test Theory (II)
- Item Response Theory (I, *item analysis*)
- Item Response Theory (II, *rating scale analysis*)
- Wrap-up and guided visit to the campus

During the first week there will be an **optional afternoon session** in which participants will have the opportunity of sharing the work that they carry out in their institutions. There will also be a **gala dinner** to be celebrated on June 4, at the main hall of the local Castle of Santa Catalina.

The last day of the course participants will be offered a guided visit to the main facilities of the campus, which includes a **visit to our private art collection Cesáreo Aguilera**, which currently has on display several pieces by Picasso and Tàpies among other modernist artists.

You can download a more detailed list of contents here.

Fees and registration

The fee for the course is **350€** and it grants access to all necessary materials, including computers and software. **Registration** will remain open until **May 23, 2027**. There are **only 15 available places** in the course which will be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis.

To register, FILL IN THIS FORM with your information. Within 48 hours of filling the form you will receive an **email message with instructions to proceed with the payment**. Notice that your participation in the course will only be confirmed upon the payment of the fees.

If you have any doubt or problem during the registration process, do not hesitate to contact the Director of the course, Dr. Joaquín Cruz (jtrapero [arroba] ujaen [punto] es (jtrapero[at]ujaen[dot]es); +34683750037).

Profile and opinion of participants

Participants must be **over 18**, have a **university degree**, an **interest in language test development and validation** and a minimum **B2 CEFRL** level in English. Read below the opinion of some of our previous students.

?ntikam ?lkay Özdemir
Ege University School of Foreign Languages (?zmir, Türkiye)

The course Language Test Design and Validation undoubtedly entails meaningful professional development. This learning experience allowed me to critically reflect on my testing practices, share insights with colleagues

from around the world, and—most importantly—learn from renowned experts in the field. Not only will you hone your test design skills, but you will also deepen your understanding of test validation processes. I highly recommend this course to language educators, teacher trainers, and in general those interested in developing sound and principled assessment practices. The knowledge gained has had a direct and meaningful impact on my education context, enabling me to integrate it into my practice and pass it on to fellow teachers and students alike through classes and workshops.

José David Rodríguez Chaves
Teacher Educator at Universidad Nacional (UNA) of Costa Rica

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Ana Pérez Sesé
Offical Language School lecturer and Coordinator of the Certification Exam Development Committee in Aragón

I had been looking forward to attending this course for some time, and it fully met my expectations. Attending the LTDV course has been an incredibly enriching professional experience. The programme combines solid theoretical foundations with hands-on practice, making complex concepts in assessment and validation accessible to everybody -even if you have no previous experience in test design and statistics- and relevant. The expertise of the instructors ensured that every session was both rigorous and engaging. One of the highlights was collaborating with the rest of participants, who came from all over the world—an inspiring group of professionals who shared knowledge, perspectives, and enthusiasm for language testing. I can say that this course has not only expanded my understanding of test design but also strengthened my professional network and passion for fair, valid assessment. I really hope they offer a second part of the course one day so that I can continue this valuable learning journey!

Elena Llanquileo Aranda
Lecturer at Universidad Los Lagos de Chile

I'm an associate lecturer in the English Teaching Training Program at Universidad de Los Lagos, Chile. I really enjoyed this course, since it offers a solid foundation about EFL assessment and how to create reliable and valid assessment. Even though statistical concepts can be challenging for someone who is not familiar with this field, this course provides an interesting approach balancing theory with practical application. Also, I would like to highlight the quality and expertise of the lecturers, that is why I strongly recommend this course for educators and EFL researchers. I am sure that after this course you will change your mind about statistics and test validation.

Hana Romova
Language Department of the Police Academy of the Czech Republic in Prague

The title of this course on the CERCLES website immediately caught my attention because it was not only in English, but also professionally focused on language testing and unique in that respect. Although I am not a professional language tester, language testing is part of our work. These two weeks at the University of Jaen gave me an overview and insight as well as hands on practice of language testing based on in-depth theory and practical part including statistics, without having to have a background in statistics. The professional network that comes from this and meeting other colleagues from all over the world is an invaluable experience. I can highly recommend this postgraduate course for further professional development.

Pilar Rodríguez Arancón
Director of the language center of the Universidad Española a Distancia (UNED)

The course is interesting and practical. Although you might start by thinking that statistics are not for you, as I did, Joaquín will make sure that you never feel disengaged or lost and will guide you from the understanding of tough concepts (such as a 'construct') to creating and analysing the quality of your own tests. As students, we all felt that we were on holidays surrounded by very nice people who wanted to learn and had a very different set of skills and knowledge that enriched every session… although we were in scorching Jaén in July after a tough academic year. What can be a better testimony to the quality of the content and the layout of the course, the instructors and the welcoming attitude of all those involved than that?

Zilal Meccawy
Assistant Professor, King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia (currently Visiting scholar at Manchester Metropolitan University, UK)

It was a great experience attending this course as it was informative and instructive, linking our minds to ideas and possibilities in assessment. What I acquired from the training was more than what I expected in terms of statistics in the second week. I am looking forward to incorporating what I learned into my teaching and I am anticipating attending more of this training in the future because of its importance to learning and teaching in general and to English language testing and assessment specifically. I have also enjoyed walking around the beautiful city of Jaén, exploring the university campus and the modern student library and practicing my Spanish!

Olga Naranjo Travieso
Official Language School lecturer and technician at the Consejería de Educación, Universidades, Cultura y Deportes of the Canary Islands

Since I became a teacher for Official Schools of Languages in Spain (2004) my main working goals have been focused on keeping updated my foreign language domain and introducing new concepts and approaches improving my teaching methodology Assessment and designing well balanced, validated and consistent proficiency tests has become our priority since our institution is in charge of certifying CEFR levels in Spain. Last summer (July,2022) I had the honor of being accepted as one of the 15 members of this first postgraduate course (worth 5 ECTS credits) edition sharing the experience with talented European and Spanish professionals in Language Design and Validation. This course takes place at the Centre for Higher Studies in Modern Languages (CEALM) at the University of Jaen, Spain. We had the enormous privilege to be lectured, for two intensive weeks, by the top experts in Language Test Design and Assessment in Europe. It was a hard, but well-worth the time and effort, professional challenge. Thank you very much for the opportunity.

Jackie Robbins
English lecturer at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya

The LTDV course was extremely useful for me as I'm involved in designing language tests at my university, both for course tests and our university's ACLES English test. The course materials provided were very complete and these were presented at a good pace, but there was also time for reflection and practice. The presenters were all very knowledgeable and offered fascinating insights into all aspects of language test design. The second week, which focused on statistical validation, was presented in an accessible way for those with more or less prior experience and we were given plenty of opportunities to practice what we learned. I'd thoroughly recommend the course to anyone interested in language testing!

Mariana Burak
Academic director at School of Ukrainian Language and Culture at the Ukrainian Catholic University

The course went above and beyond my expectations! The design and administration were truly exceptional. It covered not only the fundamental test theories and item development principles but also provided valuable insights from reputable institutions like Cambridge Press and Assessment, the Institute of Cervantes, and of course the University of Jaén. This exposure allowed us to explore diverse testing perspectives and practices, empowering us to choose the most relevant ones for our specific testing scenarios. The instructors, who were esteemed researchers, played a crucial role in the success of the program. Their openness to discussions and willingness to assist us were invaluable. Notably, lectures by the prominent language assessment researcher Dr. Joaquin Cruz on statistics equipped us with rare knowledge applicable to language assessment mediation and rating scale analysis. Despite our limited background in statistics, the well-structured instruction and Dr. Cruz's manual enabled us to grasp test analysis and validation procedures, providing us with skills we never thought possible as linguists. Upon completion of the course, we not only gained new skills and knowledge but also acquired a wealth of additional resources for continuous development. Furthermore, the course facilitated the establishment of a supportive network of experts and colleagues, instilling confidence in undertaking new testing projects.

Daniela Cerutti
Coordinator at the language center of the Universitat de València

I enrolled in the course with very high expectations, and they have been met. What I have learned in the course is proving to be an essential working tool in my day-to-day work as an accreditation test coordinator. The experience and the preparation of the teaching staff have helped me to resolve many doubts and to consider changes in our assessment tests. The practical work has allowed me to work in a group and to learn from my colleagues in the same profession. The other fundamental aspect is the professional network that I have been able to build with my colleagues on the course. I would definitely repeat the experience.

Dean Custer
Coordinator of English exams at the University of Castilla-La Mancha

When I first saw the advertisement for this course, the thought of spending two weeks in July in the heat that Jaen is so famous for wasn’t exactly the plan I had envisioned for my summer holidays. But I decided to sign up and I’m so glad I did. The course was extremely well organized and we learned a lot about test design and analysis from the various experts that led each session. In addition, the friendships that were made and the network that we created over those two weeks has proved to be the most invaluable part of the whole experience.

Barbora Bulantová
PhD student at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University

The course provides a good balance of theoretical and practical knowledge, making it very useful for both experienced language test designers and novice researchers like me. My Ph.D. project entails developing and validating vocabulary tests for advanced English learners. After completing the course, I felt confident enough to conduct a Rasch-based validation of my tests without having a background in statistics. I also acquired skills needed for designing and validating high-stakes proficiency tests, which I plan to pursue in the future.

Prepare your stay in Andalusia

The city of Jaén is placed in the Spanish region of Andalusia, one of the richest areas of the country in cultural terms. Read the recommendations below to plan ahead and make the most of your time in Jaén.

Traveling and accommodation

If you need any **assistance** while preparing your stay in Jaén, do not hesitate to contact the Director of the diploma, Dr. Joaquín Cruz (jtrapero [arroba] ujaen [punto] es (jtrapero[at]ujaen[dot]es); +34683750037). He will be more than happy to recommend the best option for you and to help you in case you need local help.

As regards **traveling**, he closest airport to Jaén is the airport of Granada, which is only one hour away by bus. You can also fly to Seville or Málaga and then take a bus or a train to Jaén. The international airport of Madrid is also a good option since it is well communicated by train.

There are several hotels for your **accommodation** in Jaén. Hotel Infanta Cristina is within a 15-minute walk from the venues of the course. If you want to be downtown, you can choose Hotel Xauen, Hotel Europa or Hotel Condestable Iranzo. There is also the possibility of choosing the university dorm of the Universidad de Jaén, the Colegio Mayor Domingo Savio, which is opposite the venues of the course and whose prices you can check here . This is the cheapest option, but notice that you may have to share the facilities of the dorm with regular students, which tend to be noisy. Finally, you can also check availability at our local hostel, which is situated in the old town.

We have **free parking space** in case you decide to travel by car. The parking lot is open from Moday to Friday from 8:00 until 21:00.

Visit the province of Jaén

In the **capital** you can visit the Cathedral or the local Castle of Santa Catalina, where the gala dinner of the course will be held. We also recommend you to visit the Museum of Iberian Art, the only museum of its kind in the world, and the Arabian Baths, the biggest in Europe. During the weekend you can also prepare visits to different parts of the **province** such as Úbeda and Baeza, two world heritage cities which you can reach by bus. If you like nature, you can also visit the Parque Natural de Cazorla, Segura y Las villas.

Enjoy our gastronomy

If there is something that stands out in Jaén it is gastronomy. We are the top producers in the world of **extra virgin olive oil** (known as AOVE from the *Spanish Aceite de Oliva Virgen Extra*). We recommend you to visit local shops and check our world famous selection of AOVEs Jaén Selección, a choice of the best AOVEs in the world which can be bought in most shops downtown.

We are also known by our ***Tapas***. When you order a drink in most local bars you will be served a small portion of food (or *tapa*) for free. This is the best way to try different local dishes for free while you visit the center of the city, and perhaps a good way to socialice with the rest of participants in the course. Check some of the best places for *tapas* in this article of the Repsol Guide. If you want something more sophisticated, you can always book a table in Bagá, our Star Michelin restaurant which is within the top-5 restaurants in the world according to OAD. If you like Japanese fusion food, you definitely must visit Ka-Oru, most likely one of our next Michelin restaurants.

Other things you need to know

As regards **money**, the local currency is the Euro and, since Jaén is not a very big town, exchaning money may be difficult. Our recommendation is to exchange money before you arrive to Spain, or at the airport once you arrive. You will not have any problem to exchange money in Madrid or Málaga airports, while in other airports (such as Granada or Seville) it may be more difficult. Of course, you can always withdraw money from ATMs with your credit card, but this may have extra cost depending on the conditions applied by your bank. Most shops, bars and restaurants accept credit card, and if you do not plan to use cash, using your card may be a very good option. If your bank applies extra charges, you may want to consider using options such as Revolut.

If you want to use **public transportation** within the town, buses and taxis are the best choice. Buses run from 7:00 to 21:30 approximately, and you can pay inside the bus in cash (not with credit card). Taxis are available around the clock and you can pick one by phoning one of the two local companies at 953222222 or at 953271010 (using +34 if you are phoning from outside Spain). They normally answer the phone in Spanish. At this moment companies such as Uber or Cabify do not operate in Jaén.