



MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR

Citizenship

Regulations No. 1129/2008 on Icelandic language tests for persons applying for Icelandic citizenship

No. 1129/2008 12 December 2008

REGULATIONS on Icelandic language tests for persons applying for Icelandic citizenship

Article 1

Tests in Icelandic.

Persons who acquire Icelandic citizenship under Article 7 of the Icelandic Citizenship Act are required to have passed a test in Icelandic based on the demands stated in these regulations.

Article 2

Exemptions.

The Minister of Justice may grant a person who is applying for Icelandic citizenship exemption from the requirement of having passed a test in Icelandic if it must be considered unfair to impose such a requirement. This could apply, for example, in the following circumstances:

- a. if the applicant has reached the age of 65 and has been legally domiciled in Iceland for the 7 years immediately preceding the submission of his application;
- b. if the applicant is attending an Icelandic junior school, or has not yet reached junior school age;
- c. if the applicant is able to confirm, by means of a medical certificate, or other appropriate certificates from specialists in the appropriate fields, that he is not able to take the test due to serious obstacles of a physical or mental nature;

- d. if the applicant is able to confirm, by means of a relevant certificate from an Icelandic educational institution, that he possesses skills that meet the demands that are made in these regulations.

Article 3

Holding of tests.

Tests in Icelandic shall normally be held at least twice each year.

The tests shall be held in Reykjavík or its vicinity. Tests may also be held elsewhere in Iceland.

The Minister of Justice shall place advertisements in the media and on the homepage of the Ministry of Justice stating, with at least eight weeks' notice, where and when tests are to be held.

Article 4

Content of the tests.

The subject matter and level of difficulty of the tests in Icelandic shall be based on the final goal stated in the syllabus published in 2008 by Ministry of Education, Science and Culture covering instruction in Icelandic for foreign nationals (240 hours), with the exception of the goals stated there regarding a basic knowledge of the principal customs and traditions in Icelandic society.

Thus, applicants are required:

- a. to be able to cope with day-to-day situations in educational institutions, employment and private life;
- b. to be able to cope with unexpected circumstances;
- c. to have acquired sufficient command of vocabulary in order to take part in discussions of familiar topics;
- d. to be able to understand simple conversations between persons;
- e. to be able to read short texts in simple language about familiar topics;
- f. to be able to write a short text in simple language about familiar topics;
- g. to be able to understand the main points in coverage in the broadcasting media (radio and television) when the topics are familiar to them.

Tests shall involve speaking, aural understanding, writing and reading comprehension.

Article 5

Registration for tests; assistance.

Only those who have registered for the tests and paid the required fee may take the tests.

Candidates for the tests shall establish their identity when they arrive for the test by producing a personal identification document including a photograph.

Regarding assistance with taking the tests, e.g. in cases of dyslexia or handicaps, the same rules shall apply as apply when standardized tests in English are held in the 10th grade of junior (compulsory) school.

No allowance is made for special assistance during the tests for those who are illiterate or are unable to read the Latin alphabet if they can be expected to acquire these skills by means of traditional teaching in writing and reading.

Article 6

Conduct of the tests.

The Minister of Justice may, by a special contract, entrust the Educational Testing Institute of Iceland (Námsmatsstofnun), or another comparable party, with the preparation and conduct of the tests in Icelandic, including compiling the tests and marking them, registering candidates for the tests and collecting the fees, and also further developing the tests and the way they are conducted in the light of experience gained.

Teachers may not be engaged to compile the tests if they teach foreign nationals Icelandic. Teachers may not evaluate the test performance by candidates who have been their pupils. Obligations of confidentiality and non-disclosure shall apply to those who supervise and participate in the compilation of tests and the evaluation of test performance. They may not discuss or publish test performances by individual candidates, in part or in their entirety.

Article 7

Rules regarding the tests.

The party entrusted with the preparation and conduct of the tests (*cf.* the first paragraph of Article 6) shall set and publicise rules on the conduct and holding of the tests. When tests are held, the instructions accompanying them shall be followed in detail. Deviations from the rules on holding the tests shall not be permitted without the assent of the party responsible for the conduct of the tests.

The party entrusted with the preparation and conduct of the tests shall maintain a register of those who take the tests and of the test results. It shall also send the Ministry of Justice a list of those who pass the test not later than one month following the holding of the test.

Article 8

Grades and certificates.

The tests shall reveal whether the candidate meets the demands set forth in Article 4.

The party entrusted with the preparation and conduct of the tests shall present to those who pass the test a certificate to that effect. Assessment by the party of whether the candidate has passed the test shall be final. Candidates may request an explanation of the results of their tests within 15 days of being informed of the result.

There is no limit to the number of times the test may be taken.

If a candidate does not turn up for the test, or fails it, he shall not have the opportunity of retaking the test until the next time the test is held.

Article 9

Commencement.

These regulations, which are issued under the authorisation in item 3 of Article 9 of the Icelandic Citizenship Act, No. 100/1952 (*cf.* the Act No. 81/2007) shall take effect on 1 January 2009.

Ministry of Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs, 12 December 2008.

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