TRINITY
COLLEGE LONDON

Trinity's ISE: Integrated Skills in English

How to mark practice ISE exam materials

This document provides support for those preparing students for ISE exams. It gives guidance on how to mark and interpret the outcomes of the sample and practice materials that are on the Trinity website for each ISE level. Practice materials are also available from various publishers.

If you would like to know more about the results of actual Trinity exams and the accompanying documentation, please refer to the Understanding ISE results document available on our website.

Please note that these documents do not give information on the ISE IV exam because it has a different format than the other ISE levels. For more information on ISE IV, please visit trinitycollege.com/ISEIV.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Trinity's Integrated Skills in English (ISE) qualifications assess all four language skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening.

These skills are assessed in two modules: Reading & Writing and Speaking & Listening.

The exam modules can be taken together, or at different times when students are ready (except when taken as a SELT in the UK, where they must be taken on the same day). Students must pass both modules to gain an ISE qualification.

PREPARING FOR THE EXAM

The ISE sample and practice materials are examples of the content and format of the exams. Before using our sample and practice materials with your students, it may be a good idea to familiarise yourself with the ISE Guide for Teachers for the relevant level. Sample and practice tests should be completed under exam conditions to give you a more accurate picture of how your students are likely to perform on the day of the exam.

In addition to practice materials, Trinity also provide examples of marked candidate work for each skill, together with detailed rationales for the marks awarded. These give you further insight into how Trinity examiners and markers arrive at their decisions.

MARKING PRACTICE TESTS

Some tasks within the ISE qualification are objectively marked using an answer key, so students' answers can be marked as either 'correct' or 'incorrect'. Other tasks are scored using a rating scale. The answers are specific to each task and can be found at the end of each sample and practice test version. The rating scales are specific to each ISE level and reflect the level of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). The rating scales for the skills assessed at each level can be found at trinitycollege.com/ratingscales as well as in the appendices of the relevant Teacher Guide. The table overleaf provides an overview of how each skill is marked.

OVERVIEW OF ASSESSMENT METHODS

SKILL	LEVEL	TASK	ASSESSMENT METHOD	SCORING	HOW OVERALL SCORE IS REACHED
Reading	ISE A1 to ISE III	Task 1 & 2	Objectively marked through a specific to the task answer key	1 mark for each correct response	Marks for all correct answers are tallied
Writing	ISE A1	Task 3	Reading into writing scale	A score (0-3) is awarded for each of the four criteria	Scores from both tasks are combined to make overall
		Task 4	Extended writing scale	A score (0-3) is awarded for each of the three criteria	
	ISE Foundation to ISE III	Task 3	Reading into writing scale	A score (0-4) is awarded for each of the four criteria	Scores from both tasks are combined to make overall writing score
		Task 4	Extended writing scale	A score (0-4) is awarded for each of the three criteria	
Speaking	ISE A1 to ISE III	All tasks of the speaking exam	Speaking & Listening rating scale	A score (0-4) is awarded for each of the four criteria	Scores from the different criteria are combined to make an overall speaking score

SKILL	LEVEL	TASK	ASSESSMENT METHOD	SCORING	HOW OVERALL SCORE IS REACHED
Listening	ISE A1	Task 1	Objectively marked through a specific to the task answer key	1 mark for each correct response	Scores from both task are combined to make an overall listening score
		Task 2	Objectively marked through a specific to the task answer key	1 mark for each correct response	
	ISE Foundation & ISE I	Task 1	Objectively marked through a specific to the task answer key	1 mark for each correct response	Score from both task are combined to make an overall listening score
		Task 2	Independent listening rating scale	A score (0-4) is awarded for overall performance on this task	
	ISE II & ISE III	Task 1	Independent listening rating scale	A score (0-4) is awarded for overall performance on this task	The score awarded for the task

Trinity is committed to ensuring that the standard of each qualification remains consistent over time and so reserves the right to make appropriate adjustments to published grade thresholds and/or methods of aggregating marks.

MARKS AVAILABLE FOR EACH SKILL

All the ISE levels have marks allocated for each skill (reading, writing, speaking and listening). The table below shows the maximum scores students can achieve in each skill.

MAXIMUM SCORES FOR EACH SKILL

ISE QUALIFICATION	READING	WRITING	SPEAKING	LISTENING
ISE A1	20	21	16	7
ISE Foundation	30	28	16	9
ISE I	30	28	16	10
ISE II	30	28	16	4
ISE III	30	28	16	4

INTERPRETING OUTCOMES OF PRACTICE TESTS

Please remember that high scores in practice tests do not guarantee high scores in an actual exam as there are a number of variables that can affect a student's performance on the day of the exam. Additionally, Trinity examiners and markers undergo rigorous training and standardisation on how to apply the rating scales. Therefore, marks awarded by a teacher in a practice situation may not necessarily reflect those of a trained Trinity examiner/marker.

The following are suggested guidelines intended to help you determine whether your students are ready to take an ISE exam.

READING

Markers assess candidates' performance using a test-specific answer key, allocating 1 mark for each correct answer.

Practice scores 20 and above (ISE A1: 14 and above): A candidate is likely to pass the reading part of the ISE qualification under actual exam conditions, but it may be worth having further lessons and/or practice before taking the exam until performance in the reading part of the exam is consistent.

Practice scores 17–19 (ISE A1: 11–13): A candidate has a good chance of passing the reading part of the ISE qualification under actual exam conditions, but it is recommended to have further lessons and/or more practice before taking the exam.

Practice scores 16 and below (ISE A1: 10 and below): A candidate is not likely to pass the reading part of the ISE qualification under actual exam conditions and should spend more time improving their reading skills before taking the exam.

WRITING TASKS

Markers assess candidates' performance on:

- Reading for writing (only task 3)
- Task fulfilment (tasks 3 and 4)
- Organisation and structure (tasks 3 and 4)
- Language control (tasks 3 and 4)

At ISE A1, markers use a four-band scale (0–3). Therefore, a student can achieve a maximum score of 12 for Task 3 – Reading into writing and a maximum score of 9 for Task 4 – Extended writing, leading to a maximum overall score of 21.

At ISE Foundation and ISE I to III, markers use a five-band scale (0–4). Therefore, a student can achieve a maximum score of 16 for Task 3 – Reading into writing and a maximum of 12 for Task 4 – Extended writing, leading to a maximum overall score of 28.

Practice scores 17 and above (ISE A1: 14 and above): A candidate is likely to pass the writing part of the ISE qualification under actual exam conditions, but it may be worth having further lessons and/or practice before taking the exam until the performance in the writing part of the exam is consistent.

Practice scores 14–16 (ISE A1: 11–13): A candidate has a good chance of passing the writing part of the ISE qualification under actual exam conditions, but it is recommended to have further lessons and/or more practice before taking the exam.

Practice scores 13 and below (ISE A1: 10 and below): A candidate is not likely to pass the writing part of the ISE qualification under actual exam conditions and should spend more time improving their writing skills before taking the exam.

SPEAKING TASKS

Examiners assess candidates' performance using a five-band scale (0–4) on:

- Communicative effectiveness
- Interactive listening

- Language control
- Delivery

Therefore, a student can achieve a maximum score of 16 for the speaking part of the exam.

Practice scores of 9 and above: A candidate is likely to pass the speaking part of the ISE qualification under actual exam conditions, but it may be worth having further lessons and/or practice before taking the exam until the performance in the reading part of the exam is consistent.

Practice scores of 7–8: A candidate has a good chance of passing the speaking part of the ISE qualification under actual exam conditions, but it is recommended to have further lessons and/or more practice before taking the exam.

Practice scores of 5 and below: A candidate is not likely to pass the speaking part of the ISE qualification under actual exam conditions and should spend more time improving their speaking skills before taking the exam.

INDEPENDENT LISTENING TASKS ISE A1

Examiners assess candidates' independent listening performance using a test-specific answer key for each task, allocating 1 mark for each correct answer, ie 4 marks for task 1 and 3 marks for task 2.

Therefore, at ISE A1 a student can achieve a maximum overall score of 7 for Independent listening.

Practice scores of 5 and above: A candidate is likely to pass the Independent listening part of the ISE qualification under actual exam conditions, but it may be worth having further lessons and/or practice before taking the exam until the performance in the reading part of the exam is consistent.

Practice scores of 3–4: A candidate has a good chance of passing the Independent listening part of the ISE qualification under actual exam conditions, but it is recommended to have further lessons and/or more practice before taking the exam.

Practice scores of 2 and below: A candidate is not likely to pass the Independent listening part of the ISE qualification under actual exam conditions and should spend more time improving their listening skills before taking the exam.

INDEPENDENT LISTENING TASKS ISE FOUNDATION AND ISE I

Examiners assess candidates' independent listening performance using a test-specific answer key for task 1, allocating 1 mark for each correct answer, ie 5 marks for ISE Foundation and 6 marks for ISE I. Examiners use a five-band scale (0–4) for task 2.

Therefore, a student can achieve a maximum score of 5 for task 1 at ISE Foundation, a maximum of 6 for task 1 at ISE I, and a maximum of 4 for task 2 at either level, leading to a maximum overall score for Independent listening of 9 at ISE Foundation and a maximum of 10 at ISE I.

Practice scores of 6 and above: A candidate is likely to pass the Independent listening part of the ISE qualification under actual exam conditions, but it may be worth having further lessons and/or practice before taking the exam until the performance in the reading part of the exam is consistent.

Practice scores of 4–5: A candidate has a good chance of passing the Independent listening part of the ISE qualification under actual exam conditions, but it is recommended to have further lessons and/or more practice before taking the exam.

Practice scores of 3 and below: A candidate is not likely to pass the Independent listening part of the ISE qualification under actual exam conditions and should spend more time improving their listening skills before taking the exam.

INDEPENDENT LISTENING TASKS ISE II AND ISE III

Examiners assess candidates' independent listening performance using a five-band scale (0–4).

Practice scores of 2 and above: A candidate is likely to pass the Independent listening part of the ISE qualification under actual exam conditions, but it may be worth having further lessons and/or practice before taking the exam until the performance in the reading part of the exam is consistent.

Practice score of 1: A candidate is not likely to pass the Independent listening part of the ISE qualification under actual exam conditions and should spend more time improving their listening skills before taking the exam.