

Exam Preparation Courses: Trinity GESE

Graded Examinations in Spoken English

Trinity College London has been conducting examinations internationally since the 1880s. Trinity is accredited in the United Kingdom by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority as an independent award-giving body.

Trinity's Graded Examinations in Spoken English (GESE) provide a reliable and valid scheme of assessment through which candidates, teachers and parents may measure progress and development, whether for educational and vocational purposes or as a leisure activity. The grades (1 – 12) provide a continuous measure of linguistic competence from absolute beginner to full mastery.

Exam Structure:

This series of twelve progressively graded tests is designed for speakers of languages other than English and sets realistic objectives in listening to and speaking with other English speakers. **This is an oral exam only.** The grades take the learner from a very low level of proficiency (Grade 1) to an advanced level of proficiency comparable with first-language ability (Grade 12).

Why take the Trinity GESE exam?

A major benefit of a graded examination system is that it provides a motivational tool with which to encourage learners to develop and progress by acknowledging small steps. All learners make progress at different rates, and a graded system ensures that at every stage of their development there is an opportunity for them to mark that progress. There is a Trinity graded examination in spoken English appropriate to all learners, whatever their level of ability in communicating in English.

The twelve Graded Examinations in Spoken English are organised in four development stages. The four stages are designed to give a framework to the teaching and learning progression and the tasks in the different stages are designed in such a way as to allow candidates to demonstrate their abilities in a number of different discourse types.

What is involved in taking the Trinity GESE exam?

General introduction

From Grade 1 throughout the **four stages**, the examinations take the form of a one-to-one, face-to-face interview between the candidate and an examiner who is a native speaker of English. The examination at each stage, and with increasing demands at each grade, replicates real-life exchanges in which the candidate and the examiner pass on information, share ideas and opinions and debate topical issues.

The four stages

Initial Stage	At Initial stage (Grades 1–3), the conduct of the examination is initiated by the examiner. Grades 2 and 3 have been mapped to the first common reference level (Basic User) in the <i>Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment</i> (2001).
Elementary Stage	At Elementary stage (Grades 4–6), the candidate introduces a topic of his or her own choice. The examiner directs the discussion using the points prepared by the candidate. Then the examiner moves on to the conversation phase, selecting two subject areas for discussion from the list provided. Examinations at Elementary stage provide a bridge from the first to the second common reference levels (Basic User to Independent User) in the <i>Common European Framework of Reference for Languages</i> .
Intermediate Stage	At Intermediate stage (Grades 7–9), the candidate initiates and maintains a discussion on a topic of his or her own choice. This is followed by an interaction initiated by the examiner and then maintained by the candidate, and the examination ends with a conversation on two subject areas selected by the examiner from the list provided. Examinations at Intermediate stage have been mapped to the second common reference level (Independent User) in the <i>Common European Framework of Reference for Languages</i> .
Advanced Stage	At Advanced stage (Grades 10–12), the examination begins with a formal presentation of a topic leading into a discussion of the presentation. The candidate-controlled interaction is followed by a listening task, and the examination ends with a conversation on two subject areas selected by the examiner from one of the lists provided. Examinations at Advanced stage have been mapped to the third common reference level (Independent User to Proficient User) in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

Breakdown of the exams:

Initial	Elementary	Intermediate	Advanced
Grades 1 – 3	Grades 4 – 6	Grades 7 – 9	Grades 10 – 12
5-7 minutes	10 minutes	15 minutes	25 minutes
			Topic Presentation
			Topic Discussion
		Candidate-led discussion of topic	Interactive Task
	Topic Discussion	Interactive Task	Listening Task
Conversation	Conversation	Conversation	Conversation

About the tasks...

Conversation	This is an opportunity for a realistic exchange of information, ideas and opinions.
The Topic	Before the examination, the candidate prepares a topic and in the examination this is used as a basis for the interaction.
The Interactive Task	An initial prompt from the examiner gives rise to an interaction controlled by the candidate.
The Listening Task	Three short spoken passages prompt the use of the skills of deduction, prediction and inferring.

How is the Trinity GESE exam graded?

Students choose to sit an exam at their appropriate level (1 – 12) taking the advice of their teacher on board. This is a user-friendly description of the levels of exams you could take mapping them to the Council of Europe's *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*.

European Framework of Reference for Languages	Trinity GESE Levels / Grades
C2	12
C1	10, 11
B2	7, 8, 9
B1	5, 6
A2	3, 4
A1	2

The examiner assesses the candidate's performance by selecting one of four levels of performance and awards a letter grade, A B C or D. In simple terms, these levels can be classified as follows:

- A — Distinction
- B — Merit
- C — Pass
- D — Fail

Disclaimer: The above information on examinations is for reference purposes only for Kildare Language Institute students. This is general examination information only. The Kildare Language Institute Ltd. accepts no responsibility whatsoever if any of the information is inaccurate. For a comprehensive breakdown of each exam please refer to the relevant exam's website, exam descriptor and course book.