

Exam Preparation Courses: Trinity ISE

Integrated Skills in English Examinations

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 Integrated Skills in English (ISE) examinations assess all four language skills — speaking, writing, listening and reading — interacting with each other as they do in the real world. ISE has been designed for all English language learners, young or adult, who wish to record their achievements in reading and writing as well as in speaking and listening.

Students choose to sit an exam at their appropriate level (0 – IV) 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*.

Exam Level	European Framework of Reference for Languages	Explanation
ISE 0	A2	<i>Basic User</i>
ISE I	B1	
ISE II	B2	<i>Proficient User</i>
ISE III	C1	
ISE IV	C2	

What is involved in taking the Trinity ISE exam?

The Integrated Skills in English Examinations (ISE) consist of 3 parts – a portfolio, a controlled Written Exam, and an Interview. The breakdown of the exams is as follows:

Exam Level	Part of Exam	%
ISE 0 – IV	<i>Portfolio</i>	20%
	<i>Controlled Written Exam</i>	30%
	<i>Interview</i>	50%

Breakdown of each part:

The Portfolio

The portfolio is a collection of a candidate’s written work. ISE portfolios are learner-led; candidates are able to draw on a wide range of resources, they can use different media and they are less limited by the factor of time. In all five ISE examinations, the completed portfolio contains three pieces of work. Each piece of work is called a task.

From a published list of fifteen tasks for each ISE level, candidates select the three portfolio tasks that they wish to present.

The Controlled Written examination

Tasks have been chosen which are relevant and appropriate to a range of learners in a variety of cultural contexts. The Controlled Written tasks are based on the subject areas given for each level and candidates are expected to demonstrate their control over a range of the functional, grammatical and lexical items specified for each level.

Examination timings:

Exam Level	Time for Controlled Written Exam
ISE 0	<i>45 minutes</i>
ISE I	<i>1 hour 30 minutes</i>
ISE II	<i>2 hours</i>
ISE III	<i>2 hours 30 minutes</i>
ISE IV	<i>3 hours</i>

The Interview

The third component of every ISE examination is an interview with a Trinity examiner. For candidates already familiar with Trinity Graded Examinations in Spoken English, much of the procedure will be known. An additional element is the discussion of the portfolio.

Structure

Exam	Time	Content
ISE 0	<i>8 mins</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of a topic prepared by the candidate • Conversation with the examiner including discussion of the portfolio and one subject area selected by the examiner
ISE I	<i>8 mins</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of a topic prepared by the candidate • Conversation with the examiner including discussion of the portfolio and one subject area selected by the examiner
ISE II	<i>12 mins</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidate-led discussion of a topic prepared by the candidate • A candidate-controlled interaction — Interactive Task • Conversation with the examiner including discussion of the portfolio and one subject area selected by the examiner
ISE III	<i>20 mins</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal presentation of a topic prepared by the candidate • Discussion of the topic presentation with the examiner • A candidate-controlled interaction — Interactive Task • Listening comprehension task • Conversation including discussion of the portfolio and one subject area selected by the examiner
ISE IV	<i>25 mins</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal presentation of a topic prepared by the candidate • Discussion of the topic presentation with the examiner • A candidate-controlled interaction — Interactive Task • Listening comprehension task • Conversation including discussion of the portfolio and one subject area selected by the examiner

How is the Trinity ISE exam graded?

The breakdown of the exams is as follows:

Exam Level	Part of Exam	%
ISE 0 – IV	<i>Portfolio</i>	20%
	<i>Controlled Written Exam</i>	30%
	<i>Interview</i>	50%

To be awarded an overall pass grade, candidates must achieve a pass grade in both:

- ✓ The Controlled Written examination and Portfolio
- ✓ The Interview.

There are three levels of pass as follows:

- Pass with Distinction
- Pass with Merit
- Pass



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