



Integrated Skills in English (ISE)

Practice exam materials – how to use them

International ISE

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Introduction

This document provides support for those preparing learners for ISE exams. It gives guidance on how to use sample and practice materials, the marking of the practice exams and the interpretation of outcomes.

If you would like to know more about live results and the accompanying documentation, please refer to the '[Understanding ISE Results](#)' document available on our website.

Note: This document does not address ISE IV assessment, which is different in format to ISE Foundation to ISE III. For more information on ISE IV, please visit our website.

General information

Trinity's Integrated Skills in English (ISE) qualifications assess all four language skills:

- reading
- writing
- speaking
- listening.

These skills are assessed in two modules:

- Reading & Writing
- Speaking & Listening.

Each ISE module can be taken at different times. The full Trinity ISE qualification certificate is issued when a candidate has achieved a Pass in both modules.

ISE assessment methods

Some tasks within the ISE qualification are assessed using an answer key (ie objectively scored), and others are assessed using a rating scale (ie subjectively scored). The rating scales are specific to each ISE level and reflect the level of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR).

Individual rating scales for each level and component are available in Appendices 6–9 for ISE Foundation and ISE I, and in Appendices 4 – 7 for ISE II and ISE III of the relevant Guide for Teachers.

Overview of assessment criteria:

Reading - Task 1 and Task 2: Answer key specific to each sample/practice test version (objectively scored)

Writing - Task 3: Reading into writing rating scale; Task 4: Extended writing rating scale (both subjectively scored)

Speaking - Speaking & Listening rating scale (subjectively scored)

Listening - see table below

Table 1 - Assessment method for Independent listening in ISE

Level	Task	Assessment method	How overall score is reached
ISE Foundation	Task 1	Answer key specific to each sample/practice test (objective)	Scores combined to make an overall listening score
	Task 2	Independent listening rating scale (subjective)	
ISE I	Task 1	Answer key specific to each sample/practice test (objective)	Scores combined to make an overall listening score
	Task 2	Independent listening rating scale (subjective)	
ISE II	Task 1	Independent listening rating scale (subjective)	One score awarded
ISE III	Task 1	Independent listening rating scale (subjective)	One score awarded

Individual rating scales are available in the Guides for Teachers for each ISE level. Specific answer keys are available at the end of each individual sample and practice test version.

Marks available for each component

Each skill, ie reading, writing, speaking and listening, is offered at ISE Foundation, ISE I, ISE II and ISE III levels. The table below shows the maximum marks available for each component.

Table 2 - Raw scores available in ISE modules

ISE qualification	Reading	Writing	Speaking	Listening
ISE Foundation	30	28	16	9
ISE I	30	28	16	10
ISE II	30	28	16	4
ISE III	30	28	16	4

Scores for the objectively assessed components are derived by awarding 1 mark for each correct answer based on the answer key. Scores for the subjectively assessed components are derived by awarding a mark for each area described in the relevant rating scale; the mark for each are ranges from 0 (no performance) to 4 (highest possible).

Preparing for the exam

Sample and practice materials are available from the Trinity website for each ISE level. Practice materials are also available from various publishers. These resources provide teachers and students with ways of practising for the exams.

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

You can find a wide range of classroom resources and schemes of work on our website.

Marking practice tests

When using our sample and practice materials with your students, familiarise yourself with the relevant ISE specification. Please refer to the relevant Guides for Teachers, the example marked candidate responses and the sample videos available on our website.

Allocating marks to practice tests

The ISE sample and practice materials are examples of the content and format of the live exams.

To calculate the practice score, award 1 mark for each correct answer based on the answer key. When using a rating scale (or a combination of rating scale scores and objectively marked scores), please refer to the relevant example marked candidate responses available on our website.

Sample and practice tests should be completed under exam conditions to more accurately represent a live exam.

Remember that high scores in practice tests do not guarantee high scores in a live exam. There are a number of variables, including affective influences, which need to be taken into account.

Use the following guidelines to monitor students' skills and progress.

Reading component

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

Practice scores 20 and above: A candidate is likely to pass the Reading component of the ISE qualification under live exam conditions, but it may be worth having further lessons and/or practice before registering for the exam until the performance in the reading component of the exam is consistent.

Practice scores 17-19: A candidate has a good chance of passing the Reading component of the ISE qualification under live exam conditions, but it is recommended to have further lessons and/or more practice before registering for the exam.

Practice scores 16 and below: A candidate is not likely to pass the Reading component of the ISE qualification under live exam conditions and should spend more time improving their reading skills before registering for the exam.

Writing component

Markers assess candidates' performance using a five-band scale (0-4) 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)

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 16 and above: A candidate is likely to pass the Writing component of the ISE qualification under live exam conditions, but it may be worth having further lessons and/or practice before registering for the exam until the performance in the reading component of the exam is consistent.

Practice scores 13-15: A candidate has a good chance of passing the Writing component of the ISE qualification under live exam conditions, but it is recommended to have further lessons and/or more practice before registering for the exam.

Practice scores 12 and below: A candidate is not likely to pass the Writing component of the ISE qualification under live exam conditions and should spend more time improving their writing skills before registering for the exam.

Speaking component

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 speaking, including interactive listening.

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

Practice scores of 6-8: A candidate has a good chance of passing the Speaking component of the ISE qualification under live exam conditions, but it is recommended to have further lessons and/or more practice before registering for the exam.

Practice scores of 5 and below: A candidate is not likely to pass the Speaking component of the ISE qualification under live exam conditions and should spend more time improving their speaking skills before registering for the exam.

Independent listening component ISE Foundation and ISE I

Examiners assess candidates' independent listening performance using a test-specific 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 6 and above: A candidate is likely to pass the Independent Listening component of the ISE qualification under live exam conditions, but it may be worth having further lessons and/or practice before registering for the exam until the performance in the reading component of the exam is consistent.

Practice scores 4-5: A candidate has a good chance of passing the Independent Listening component of the ISE qualification under live exam conditions, but it is recommended to have further lessons and/or more practice before registering for the exam.

Practice scores 3 and below: A candidate is not likely to pass the Independent Listening component of the ISE qualification under live exam conditions and should spend more time improving their listening skills before registering for the exam.

See sample marked candidate responses on our website.

Independent listening component ISE II and ISE III

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

Practice score of 2 and above: A candidate is likely to pass the Independent Listening component of the ISE qualification under live exam conditions, but it may be worth having further lessons and/or practice before registering for the exam until the performance in the reading component of the exam is consistent.

Practice score of 1: A candidate is not likely to pass the Independent Listening component of the ISE qualification under live exam conditions and should spend more time improving their listening skills before registering for the exam.

See sample marked candidate responses on our website.

ISE practice score achievements

The table below shows the suggested scores for achievement in the practice test.

Table 3 - Raw scores and achievement level in ISE sample and practice exam materials

Qualification	Skill	Pass	Merit	Distinction
ISE Foundation	Listening	4	6	8
	Speaking	9	12	15
	Reading	17	23	28
	Writing	16	20	25
ISE I	Listening	4	6	8
	Speaking	9	12	15
	Reading	17	23	28
	Writing	16	20	25
ISE II	Listening	2	3	4
	Speaking	9	12	15
	Reading	17	23	28
	Writing	16	20	25
ISE III	Listening	2	3	4
	Speaking	9	12	15
	Reading	17	23	28
	Writing	16	20	25

Please note, the way that live exams are scored is slightly different to practice tests as explained below. Practice test scores and outcomes give an approximate result and should not be interpreted as an exact representation of the expected achievement in live exams.

Live exam results

Trinity examiners and markers

Trinity examiners and markers undergo rigorous training and standardisation which informs how they come to their decisions. As some of the marks awarded are subjective, teachers who have not gone through the same training process are unlikely to reach the same subjective mark. Subjective marks awarded by a teacher in a practice situation are therefore unlikely to reflect those of a skilled Trinity examiner/marker.

ISE raw marks and scaled scores

The ISE qualifications have been designed so that each skill is equally weighted. This means that a candidate has to pass all four skills to be issued an overall ISE certificate.

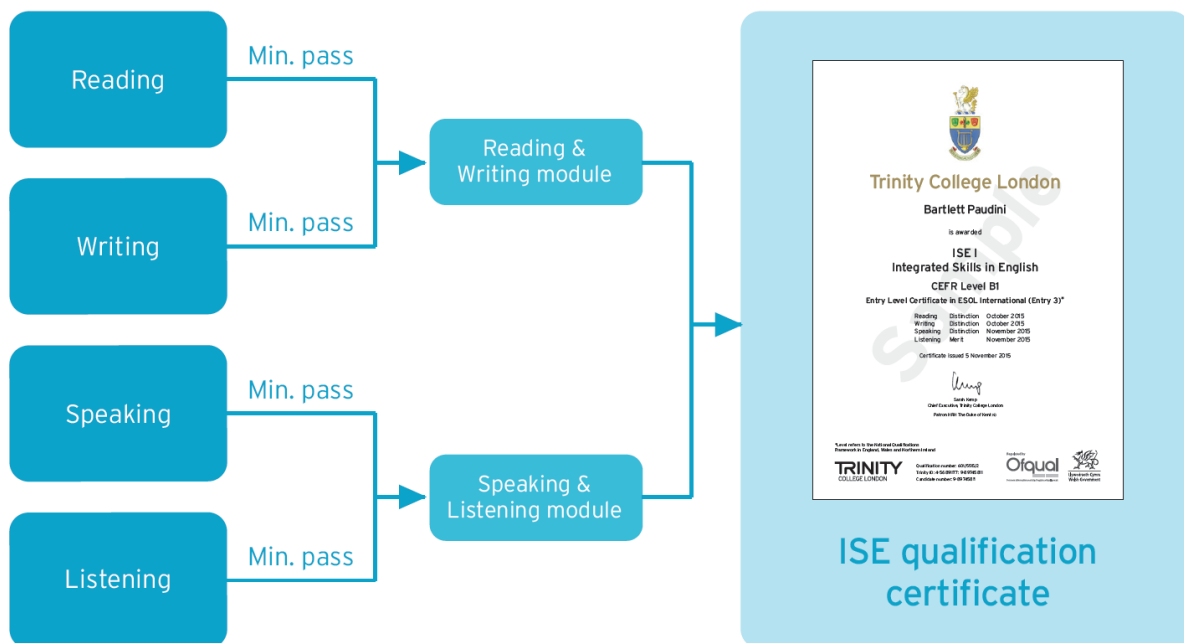
To reflect subtle differences in task complexity through the exam, not all questions and tasks are allocated exactly the same value. Therefore, for certain parts of the Reading and Listening components of the qualification, scaled scores are used to determine the candidate result.

The scaled scores are, therefore, not merely the sum of correct answers, because the difficulty of the task has also been taken into account.

ISE – a modular four-skill exam

ISE qualifications are taken in two separate modules, Speaking & Listening and Reading & Writing.

When a candidate passes one module, they will receive a 'module certificate'. Only when a candidate achieves a pass in both modules will the overarching ISE certificate be issued.*



*Note - Candidates taking ISE under SELT conditions on a single day in the UK don't receive module certificates – only the overarching certificate.

Appendix 1 - Glossary of ISE-related terms

Part 1	
module	a module is made of two components and leads to a module certificate, ie Reading & Writing certificate or Speaking & Listening certificate
qualification	a qualification is made of two modules and leads to qualification certificate, ie ISE Foundation certificate, ISE I certificate, ISE I certificate or ISE III certificate
Part 2	
exam	an exam is an externally set and assessed test of candidates' abilities in the four English language skills, ie reading, writing, speaking and listening; the ISE exam is created at module level, ie reading and writing are tested in one written test, speaking and listening are tested in one oral test
practice exam	a practice test is a test taken in preparation for the live exam , it mirrors the structure and content of the live exam and should be conducted under exam conditions but is not assessed externally, ie by Trinity, but by the teacher/tutor
live exam	a live exam is a test set and assessed by Trinity, taken under exam conditions and leads, if successful, to the module/qualification certificate; the two forms are: 1) a written test assessing reading and writing skills and 2) an oral test assessing speaking and listening skills
Part 3	
examiner	an examiner is an assessor conducting and assessing candidates' speaking and listening skills in a face-to-face exam
marker	a marker is an assessor assessing candidates' reading and writing skills in a written exam
Part 4	
raw mark	a raw mark is the mark awarded by the examiner/marker for each correct candidate's response
scaled mark	a scaled mark is a mark assigned to Q6-10 and Q21-25 once the raw marks have been adjusted to better reflect the candidate's ability
raw score	a raw score is the sum of all raw marks gained throughout the exam; the raw score is final for speaking and writing components
scaled score	a scaled score is the sum of scaled marks (reading only) or the score adjusted at the end of an exam (listening only) to better reflect the candidate's ability
practice result	a practice result is a result achieved in a practice exam and is based on raw marks gained
point	a point is a place on the rating scale for subjectively assessed parts of the exam
Part 4	
rating scale	a rating scale is a summary of the expected outcomes in a specific skill; the scale gives a description of the candidate's achievement in stages and is used in subjectively assessed exams to indicate the candidate's ability in a given skill
answer key	an answer key is a list of acceptable answers to exam questions which are objectively assessed
Part 5	
subjectively assessed	an exam , or part thereof, is subjectively assessed if the examiner/marker is required to use the rating scales to assess the candidate's ability
objectively assessed	an exam , or a part thereof, is objectively assessed if the examiner/marker assesses the candidate's ability by comparing their responses to the set answer key