

General information

Q1: How many ISE levels are there and what are they called?

A: There are five ISE levels: ISE O*, ISE I, ISE II, ISE III, ISE IV (*pronounced 'nought')

Q2: What do these levels correspond to on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)?

| ISE level | CEFR level |
|-----------|------------|
| ISE O | A1 |
| ISE I | B1 |
| ISE II | B2 |
| ISE III | C1 |
| ISE IV | C2 |

Q3: How many parts are there to each ISE level?

A: There are three parts to each ISE level as follows:

| 1. Portfolio | 2. Controlled Written examination | 3. Interview |
|--|---|--|
| A collection of a candidate's written work, selected from Trinity's list of portfolio tasks, and completed in the candidate's own time, in class or at home. | A reading and writing examination completed under examination conditions within a fixed time. | A face-to-face oral interview with a Trinity examiner. |

Q4: How many tasks are there in an ISE examination?

A: Below is a summary of the number of tasks which candidates must complete:

| ISE level | Portfolio | Controlled Written examination | Interview |
|-----------|-----------|--------------------------------|-----------|
| ISE O | 3 tasks | 2 tasks | 2 tasks |
| ISE I | 3 tasks | 2 tasks | 2 tasks |
| ISE II | 3 tasks | 2 tasks | 3 tasks |
| ISE III | 3 tasks | 3 tasks | 5 tasks |
| ISE IV | 3 tasks | 3 tasks | 5 tasks |

Q5: When and where can candidates take the ISE examination?

A: The Controlled Written examination and Interview take place at a Trinity centre registered for ISE examinations. This centre may be a candidate's school, college or

other local institution. The Controlled Written examination is held on fixed dates throughout the year. These dates are available on the Trinity website. The Interview takes place after the Controlled Written examination (but no later than 6 weeks after). The Portfolio must be submitted to the centre the day before the Interview so it is available for the visiting examiner to assess on their arrival.

Q6: How and when do candidates receive their results?

A: The examiner issues a 'Report form' for the Interview component at the end of the spoken examination session. This indicates a provisional result for the Speaking and listening component of the examination only. This report form is given to the Trinity Centre representative.

The overall examination result is sent to the centre at a later date in the form of a 'Results summary slip'. This document gives details of a candidate's performance in the three components of the exam and indicates the overall result. An example of a Results summary slip is available in the ISE syllabus.

Successful candidates are sent certificates indicating 'pass', 'pass with merit' or 'pass with distinction' six-eight weeks after the completion of all components.

Portfolio information

Q1: What tasks must candidates complete?

A: Candidates must submit a total of three portfolio tasks from Trinity's official portfolio task list. There is a new portfolio task list each year. Portfolio tasks must be chosen from the list for the year in which the candidate has their ISE interview.

Q2: Where can I find the portfolio task list?

A: The list is available for download on the website.

Q3: What preparation do candidates need to do?

A: It is not necessary for candidates to attend a specialist ISE preparation course, but it is recommended that they attend an English class that focuses on reading and writing skills, as well as speaking and listening skills. Candidates are advised to visit the portfolio support pages of the website where they can download useful resources including past portfolio tasks for practise and sample candidate answers.

Q4: How long should candidates take to complete the portfolio?

A: There is no specified timescale. It is recommended that a candidate takes 6-12 weeks to prepare their portfolio.

Q5: How much help is a teacher allowed to give a candidate?

A: Teachers are NOT allowed to correct candidates' portfolio work. They can only give one piece of feedback for each portfolio task. They must use the Student Portfolio Feedback form to provide feedback. This document can be found at the back of the ISE syllabus, the ISE Centre Handbook and is available for download on the website.

Q6. How is the portfolio assessed?

A: The portfolio is assessed by the examiner who conducts the candidate's interview. Trinity 'performance descriptors' are used for the assessment of all tasks within the portfolio at all ISE levels. Examiners use the performance descriptors in combination with the specific requirements of the relevant ISE level (as detailed in the ISE syllabus) when making their assessments. You can download the performance descriptors from the website. The overriding assessment criterion for the portfolio is 'Task fulfilment'.

Controlled Written examination information

Q1: What does the Controlled Written examination involve?

A: The Controlled Written examination takes place under timed examination conditions. Candidates are required to complete two tasks at ISE O, I & II and three tasks at ISE III & IV. The Controlled Written examination tests candidates' reading and writing skills. In 'Reading into writing' tasks, candidates are required to read a text and then complete a writing task based on the information given in the text. In 'Writing' tasks, candidates complete a task based on some task instructions. Candidates have no choice in what questions they answer in the Controlled Written examination, they must complete all tasks. For full information about the structure and content of the Controlled Written examination, please refer to the ISE syllabus.

Q2: What preparation do candidates need to do?

A: It is not necessary for candidates to attend a specialist ISE preparation course, but it is recommended that they attend an English class that focuses on reading and writing skills, as well as speaking and listening skills. Candidates are advised to visit the Controlled Written examination support pages of the website where they can download useful resources including past examination papers for practise and sample candidate answers.

Q3: How long is the Controlled Written examination?

A: The table below gives a summary of the exam timings.

| Level | Number of tasks | Length of exam | Time |
|---------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| ISE O | 2 tasks | 45 minutes | 10.00am-10.45am |
| ISE I | 2 tasks | 1 hour 30 minutes | 10.00am-11.30am |
| ISE II | 2 tasks | 2 hours | 10.00am-12.00pm |
| ISE III | 3 tasks | 2 hours 30 minutes | 10.00am-12.30pm |
| ISE IV | 3 tasks | 3 hours | 10.00am-1.00pm |

Q4. How is the Controlled Written examination assessed?

A: A candidate's controlled written examination paper is marked in the UK by a Trinity marker. Trinity 'performance descriptors' are used for the assessment of all tasks within the Controlled Written examination at all ISE levels. Markers use the performance descriptors in combination with the specific requirements of the relevant ISE level (as detailed in the ISE syllabus) when making their assessments. You can download the performance descriptors from the website. Markers use two assessment criteria for the Controlled Written examination: 'Task fulfilment' and 'Accuracy & Range'.

Interview information

Q1: What does the Interview involve?

A: The ISE Interview is a face-to-face interview with a Trinity examiner from the UK. At all levels candidates are required to present and/or discuss a topic of their choice, discuss their portfolio work and have a general conversation on a range of subjects as described in the syllabus. At ISE II, III & IV candidates also engage in an 'interactive task' in which the candidate develops a conversation based on a prompt provided by the examiner. At ISE III & IV there is also a listening phase in which the examiner reads some passages to the candidate which they must respond to appropriately.

Q2: What preparation do candidates need to do?

Candidates should spend time choosing and preparing a topic for presentation and/or discussion in the first part of the interview. Candidates should also familiarise themselves with the conversation subject areas for the ISE level they have enrolled for. However, they must also be prepared to respond spontaneously in the interview so should avoid having scripted answers and topic presentations. In preparing for the Interview, candidates should practise incorporating language of the ISE level they are enrolled for into their speech. Candidates are advised to visit the Interview support pages of the website where they can download useful resources including sample videos and past interactive tasks and listening prompts for practise.

Q3: How long is the Interview?

A: The table below gives a summary of the interview times for each level.

| Level | Interview time |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| ISE 0 | 8 minutes |
| ISE I | 8 minutes |
| ISE II | 12 minutes |
| ISE III | 20 minutes |
| ISE IV | 25 minutes |

Q4. How is the Interview assessed?

A: A candidate's performance in the Interview is assessed by the visiting examiner. Trinity 'performance descriptors' are used for the assessment of all tasks within the Interview at all ISE levels. Examiners use the performance descriptors in combination with the specific requirements of the relevant ISE level (as detailed in the ISE syllabus) when making their assessments. You can download the performance descriptors from the website. The overriding assessment criterion for the Interview component is 'Task fulfilment'.