# 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.

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## Overview of assessment methods

| Skill | Level | Task | Assessment method | Scoring | How overall score is reached |
|-------|-------|------|-------------------|---------|------------------------------|
| Reading | ISE Foundation-ISE III | Tasks 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 Foundation-ISE III | Task 3 | Reading into writing rating scale | A score (0-4) is awarded for each of the three criteria | Scores from both tasks are combined to make overall writing score |
| | | Task 4 | Extended writing rating scale | | |
| Speaking | ISE Foundation-ISE III | All tasks of the speaking exam | Speaking and 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 |
| Listening | ISE Foundation | Task 1 | Objectively marked through a specific to the task answer key | 1 mark for each correct response | Scores from both tasks 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 I | Task 1 | Objectively marked through a specific to the task answer key | 1 mark for each correct response | Scores from both tasks 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 | Task 1 | Independent listening rating scale | A score (0-4) is awarded for overall performance on this task | The score is awarded for the task |
| | ISE III | Task 1 | Independent listening rating scale | A score (0-4) is awarded for overall performance on this task | The score is awarded for the task |

## 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 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:** 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:** 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:** 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 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 17 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:** 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:** 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 6-8:** 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 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 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 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 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 score 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.