

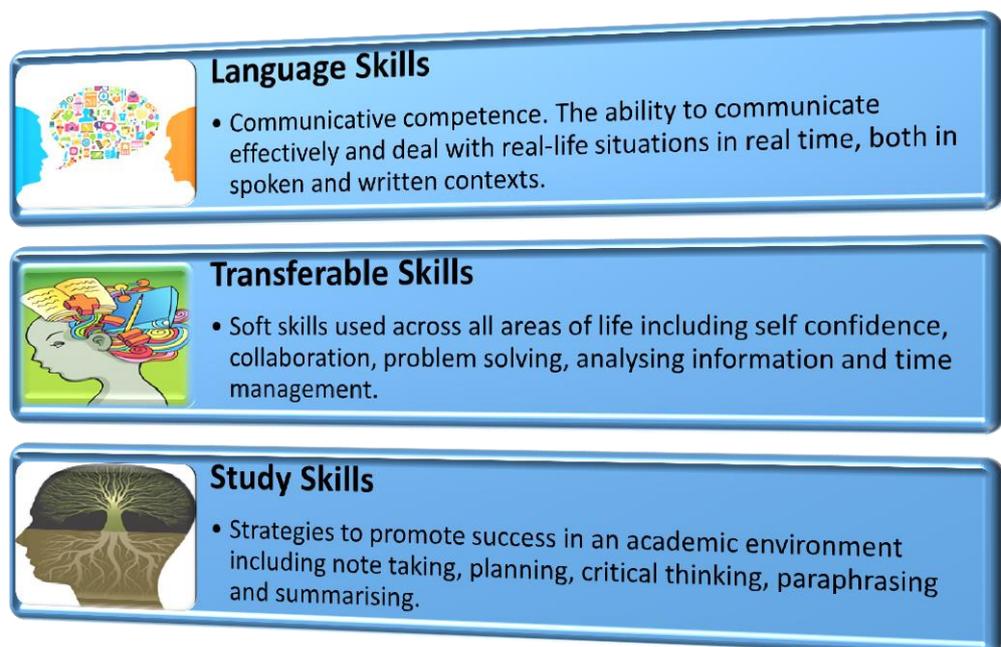
## Integrated Skills in English (ISE)

### What do you want from an English language exam?

What do you need to know about overseas students before they embark on a course of study? There are many skills international students need to succeed in an English speaking academic environment, and these go far beyond the language ability they are required to evidence before commencing a pre-sessional programme or course of study.

### Skills for success in an academic environment?

International students require a skill-set that can broadly be separated into three groups:



Increasingly, university language centres require language assessments to not only offer an indicator of basic linguistic ability, but also ask for a valid measure of communicative competence and an indication of these other relevant skills.

Assessments are needed that demonstrate a student can perform well in a study context within this wider skill-set, whether it is recognised as a valid indication of abilities prior to acceptance on a course, or whether it forms part of a pre-sessional or in-sessional programme.

## **Introducing Trinity's Integrated Skills in English exam**

Trinity College London's Integrated Skills in English (ISE) exam is a contemporary multi-skills language exam designed for people who need English language skills for study. With a strong focus on real language performance and promoting the development of transferable skills for academic study and employability, ISE assesses the communicative skills needed to succeed in the 21st century.

An ISE qualification provides valuable evidence of a student's ability to communicate effectively in English. Preparing for Trinity's ISE exams fosters the language communication skills needed for future development. This is because the type of tasks practised for the exam are also relevant for college, university and for employability purposes.

### **ISE exam – skill sets**

Developed with some of the world's leading linguistic assessment practitioners (including CRELLA and Lancaster University), Trinity's ISE has been constructed to give a valid assessment of communicative competence and places an emphasis on the use and development of a variety of transferable skills and study strategies.

The construct of the exam aims to ensure that a course of preparation will have a highly positive effect on the teaching and learning process, and will engender the development of this wider skill-set.

A brief overview of the skills embedded within ISE is given below.

### **An integrated exam – communicative competence**

Built to assess communicative competence, ISE measures a candidate's ability to communicate in real life situations across all four skills beyond the confines of grammar and lexis.

ISE combines Reading and Writing exams and Speaking and Listening exams to test skills in the way they interact in the real world. Both exams are currently offered at four levels of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) from A2 to C1. The purpose of one module is to assess candidates' English language skills in Reading and Writing and in the other module Speaking and Listening in a context which reflects students' real world activities and their purpose for learning English.

The reading texts reflect the range of sources a student may encounter in an educational or academic context and the way that they need to find, select and report relevant and appropriate information. The writing tasks reflect the kind of activities a student does in an educational context, such as essay or summary writing.

The integrated Speaking and Listening tasks reflect the kind of activities a student will do in an educational context. Additionally, the recordings used in the independent listening task reflect the way that students find, select and report relevant and appropriate information in an academic context.

The speaking and listening rating scales give an assessment of communicative competence, interactive listening, language control, delivery and independent listening; again to reflect an individual's overall communicative competence.

## An integrated exam that reflects transferable skills

ISE has been developed to reflect a range of transferable skills; a skill set that is increasingly referred to as essential for student success.

ISE promotes the development of the following transferable skills:

### Confidence

Taking an ISE exam encourages students to perform at their best in English, using a wide range of interpersonal skills to introduce and discuss a personalised topic, helping to develop self-confidence.

### Collaboration

Candidates are assessed on their ability to interact naturally in real-life contexts that are reflected in the exam. Students are responsible for initiating and maintaining conversation.

### Critical thinking

Tasks are designed to encourage the engagement of critical thinking skills including summarising, paraphrasing, analysing and synthesising.

### Interactive listening and soft skills

Trinity ISE is the only exam that explicitly assesses the essential communication skill of *interactive listening*.

### Self management

Time management and organisational skills are developed as candidates prepare for the exams and perform the tasks in the allotted time.

## An integrated exam that reflects study skills

ISE is set in an educational context and use the type of activities and tasks that students come across in their studies.

ISE promotes the following study skills:

### Authentic, integrated skills

Tests students' ability to use reading and writing skills and speaking and listening skills in combination — to reflect how people use English in real life.

### Academic writing

Supports academic process writing such as planning and reviewing, reading across multiple texts and making notes to inform further writing.

### Spontaneous communication

Tests spontaneous, authentic, interactive and communicative speaking and listening skills that are essential for tutorials and seminars.

### Independent and interactive listening

Tests both interactive and independent listening skills needed for study.

### Learning strategies

Promotes the development of language learning strategies which are important for students who are learning English language in parallel with other subjects.

## Framework alignment

Trinity College London is an exam board regulated by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual). Trinity College London's English language qualification levels are mapped to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Trinity ISE and GESE qualifications have been independently calibrated to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) as part of an extensive and award-winning study led by Lancaster University, a world leader in the field of evaluation.

ISE Foundation	ISE I	ISE II	ISE III	ISE IV
A2 CEFR	B1 CEFR	B2 CEFR	C1 CEFR	C2 CEFR
NQF Entry 2	NQF Entry 3	NQF Level 1	NQF Level 2	NQF Level 3

CEFR: Common European Framework of Reference  
 NQF: UK National Qualifications Framework

## Diagnostic Profile

All ISE candidates receive a detailed diagnostic report for each skill showing strengths and areas for improvement. Here is an example of a candidate's diagnostic report for Task 1 - Long reading in the Reading & Writing part of the exam. It shows the three language skills measured by Task 1:

Diagram B: Example from a report  
 Task 1 - Long reading



## Recognition of ISE

Trinity College London liaises with education authorities around the world to ensure that our candidates' achievements are recognised. These arrangements vary from country to country, depending on the subject area and the type of qualifications concerned.

In the United Kingdom, Trinity College London is one of only two exam boards approved to offer Secure English Language Tests (SELT)s which can be used as evidence of English language proficiency for UK visa purposes. Visit [www.trinitycollege.com/UKvisa](http://www.trinitycollege.com/UKvisa) for details.

Trinity ISE is recognised by most UK universities and Higher Education Institutions. Check proficiency level requirements with institutions before applying and check the Trinity College London website for more details. [www.trinitycollege.com/UKrecognition](http://www.trinitycollege.com/UKrecognition).

Trinity College London's GESE, ISE and ESOL Skills for Life qualifications were awarded Q-mark status by ALTE, having met all 17 of its stringent quality standards.

## So what do you we need from an English exam?

If you're a student looking for a qualification to demonstrate your academic ability to successfully follow a course of study...

If you're a tutor looking for a motivational, academic target for your students...

If you're a centre assessing a student's academic competence...

You might want to take a closer look at the Trinity ISE.

## In summary, Trinity ISE offers:

- A contemporary multi-skills exam matching learning context and purpose
- Assessment tasks that enable learners to apply what they know
- Assessment of truly integrated skills in English
- Building of real-life communication skills for academic study and transferable skills for employability
- Tests that support teachers in the classroom through positive backwash
- A diagnostic report which shows strengths and areas for improvement

For more information and a summary of ISE, **please see the [ISE Fact Sheet](#)**.

You can also visit [www.trinitycollege.com/ISE](http://www.trinitycollege.com/ISE) for exam guidance, specifications, resources and classroom activities. You can also watch sample Speaking & Listening exam videos for each ISE level.

## Next Steps?

Trinity College London offers support and guidance for tutors and administrators. The ISE exams are offered once a week at 10 SELT centres across the UK, bookable on [www.trinitySELT.co.uk](http://www.trinitySELT.co.uk).

It is also a possibility to become a Registered Trinity Centre. Registered Trinity Centres can book their own convenient dates for examiner visits and sessions which are available throughout the year.

To get in touch, please email [unirecognition@trinitycollege.co.uk](mailto:unirecognition@trinitycollege.co.uk).