

# Relating the Trinity College GESE & ISE Examinations to the CEFR

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## Graded Examinations in Spoken English

- 1-1
- Learner-centred
- Unscripted

## Integrated Skills in English

- Test of 4 skills in various interactions

# Graded Examinations in Spoken English

|                |  |                  |  |                                 |  |                     |  |
|----------------|--|------------------|--|---------------------------------|--|---------------------|--|
| Initial stage  |  | Elementary stage |  | Intermediate stage              |  | Advanced stage      |  |
| 1,2,3          |  | 4,5,6            |  | 7,8,9                           |  | 10,11,12            |  |
| a conversation |  | Topic discussion |  | Topic presentation & discussion |  | Topic presentation  |  |
| 5,6,7 minutes  |  | a conversation   |  | an interactive task             |  | Topic discussion    |  |
|                |  | 10 minutes       |  | a conversation                  |  | an interactive task |  |
|                |  |                  |  | 15 minutes                      |  | a listening task    |  |
|                |  |                  |  |                                 |  | a conversation      |  |
|                |  |                  |  |                                 |  | 25 minutes          |  |

# Integrated Skills in English

3 components:

- The Portfolio – 20%
- The Interview - 50%
- The Controlled Written exam – 30%

# Integrated Skills in English

5 levels

| ISE     | CEFR |
|---------|------|
| ISE 0   | A2   |
| ISE I   | B1   |
| ISE II  | B2   |
| ISE III | C1   |
| ISE IV  | C2   |

# Calibration project 2005-2006

## Programme

3 meetings: 2 days, 2 x 3 days

- Familiarisation – at all stages
- Specification
- Standardisation
- Empirical validation – GESE monitoring
  - ISE double-marking
  - test-retest study

# Panel of judges

- Co-ordinated by Spiros Papageorgiou, Lancaster University
- 12 Judges: Members of Academic team, test & syllabus design, item writers, senior examiners, examiner monitors
- Empirical Validation – Ali van Moere, Lancaster University

# Initial problems

- Number of grades in GESE – 12
- Number of positive outcomes – 36
- Skills integration of ISE

# Familiarisation 6-7 Sept 2005

- Recommended procedures followed
- Good inter and intra-rater reliability – see the full report for detailed information
- Panel found the plenary discussion of the descriptors very beneficial
- Problems:  
Memory test?

# Specification 22-24 Nov 2005

- Familiarisation
- Selecting the forms – prompted much discussion
- Descriptive not prescriptive - confusing definitions
- Difficulty in selecting domains for some GESE grades
- 16 levels in total – 12 GESE and 4 ISE

# Problems with the descriptors

- Not for young learners
- No descriptors for task fulfilment
- Inadequate at higher levels e.g. writing competences
- Beyond native-speaker expectations

# Standardisation 28 Feb–2 March 2006

- Familiarisation phase
- Training and benchmarking
- Group work due to the volume of levels
- Number of scales to be used – agreed beforehand

# Standardisation phase – GESE & ISE interviews

- Candidates exhibited characteristics of more than one level
- Allocation of CEFR scales – more the higher the level
- Problems for young learners with high levels of linguistic competence

# Standardisation phase – ISE written

- CEFR scales not very suitable for assessing reading in an integrated way
- Discrepancies among judges occurred depending on the scales/analytical criteria used for writing

# Establishing cut-off scores

- problems in number of levels and possible grades awarded
- Terminology re 'pass score'
- Secure pass scores – high degree of agreement

# Results - GESE

| Grades   | Level of borderline candidate | Level of secure pass candidate |
|----------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Grade 12 | C1+                           | C2                             |
| Grade 11 | C1                            | C1                             |
| Grade 10 | B2+                           | C1                             |
| Grade 9  | B2+                           | B2+                            |
| Grade 8  | B2                            | B2+                            |
| Grade 7  | B1+                           | B2                             |
| Grade 6  | B1                            | B1+                            |
| Grade 5  | B1                            | B1                             |
| Grade 4  | A2+                           | A2+                            |
| Grade 3  | A2                            | A2                             |
| Grade 2  | A1                            | A1+                            |
| Grade 1  | Below A1                      | A1                             |

# Results - ISE

| ISE levels | Level of borderline candidate |
|------------|-------------------------------|
| ISE III    | C1                            |
| ISE II     | B2                            |
| ISE I      | B1                            |
| ISE 0      | A2+                           |

# Response to the project

- Publish the report
- Alterations to the 2007-2010 syllabus to incorporate CEFR findings
- Additional standardisation of examiners
- Further research into all areas of the examinations

# Thank you

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The full report is available to  
download from:

[www.trinitycollege.co.uk/esol](http://www.trinitycollege.co.uk/esol)