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# ISEB & ISTQB Certification Education Guide

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# 1 Introduction

This general overview document details the structure and content of the ISEB & ISTQB Certification schemes for software testing. It is intended to provide information that will help answer questions about the schemes, content and timescales. It does not attempt to recommend one scheme over the other, as the parameters and requirements of individual customers will differ. The content of the ISEB and ISTQB Programmes is outside of TSG's control, but the information presented is correct as we understand it as at the date shown on the cover of this document.

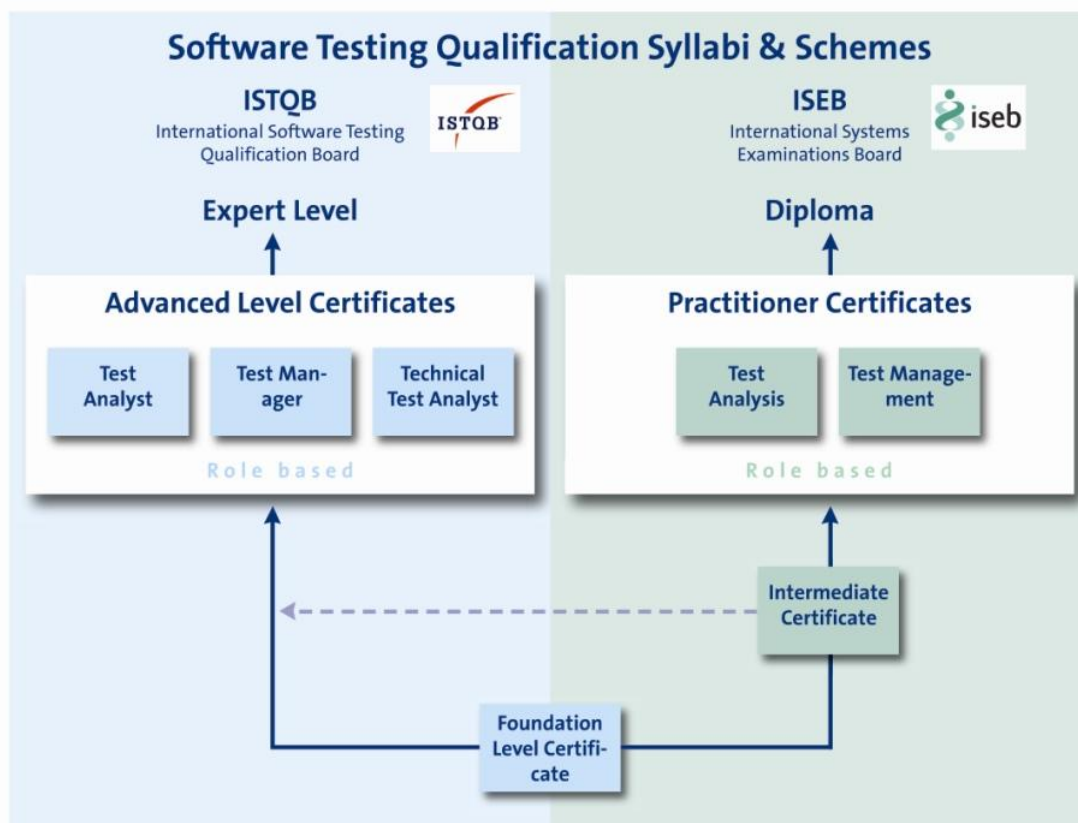
In addition, the document provides information about TSG's innovative 'Academy'. The Academy is used to provide practical training that is fully aligned with a company's life cycle, processes, templates, application, controls and, importantly, the requirements and application of individual roles and responsibilities.

Essentially, certification measures knowledge and the Academy provides practical experience. The combination of the two provides a very powerful learning model.

# 2 ISEB & ISTQB Certification Based Education

## 2.1 Scheme Structures

Certification changed shape in 2008, with the schemes having a new structure, composition and order in which students attend and sit the examinations, as follows:



**Figure 1 - ISEB & ISTQB Scheme Structure**

All ISEB & ISTQB syllabi are now aligned to the 'Foundation Syllabus' and 'Glossary of Terms' from ISTQB. These items are used consistently and form the basis on which the new schemes have been built.

Building on alignment, each of the schemes adopts a role-based approach that separates Test Management and Test Analysis. The ISTQB scheme further separates the Analysis role into:

- Test Analyst, covering generic test analysis & functional test analysis skills;
- Technical Test Analyst, covering additional detail in White Box/Structural testing, non-functional testing and testing tools.

We strongly advise that people who passed the ISEB Foundation Certificate prior to April 2006 go through our rapid 'Transition' refresher to bring them up to speed with the changes in process and terminology that came about when the syllabus was superseded by the unified and commonly adopted version from ISTQB.

## 2.2 Scheme Values

### 2.2.1 Roles of ISTQB & ISEB

There is an important distinction that needs to be made between ISTQB and ISEB. ISTQB provides testing syllabi, a glossary of terms, accreditation and exam guidelines via its network of 41 member boards across the globe. The examination service is offered by a number of parties, which may be member boards or general examination bodies.

ISEB has its own certification scheme, which covers a much broader spectrum of qualifications than software testing. It also acts as an examination body for the ISTQB Foundation Certificate, which it has incorporated into its own scheme. The 'UK Testing Board (UKTB)' is intending to act as an examination body for the ISTQB Advanced Certificates.

### 2.2.2 Scheme Learning Levels

Each scheme is aligned with industry-accepted 'K Level' learning defined within Bloom's Taxonomy, as follows:

K Level	Description
1.	<b>Remember:</b> recall or recognise information
2.	<b>Understand:</b> understand meaning, interpret, extrapolate, translate
3.	<b>Apply:</b> use or apply knowledge, put theory into practice, use knowledge in response to real circumstances
4.	<b>Analyse:</b> interpret elements, organizational principles, structure, construction, internal relationships; quality, reliability of individual components
5.	<b>Synthesis:</b> develop new unique structures, systems, models, approaches, ideas; creative thinking, operations
6.	<b>Evaluate:</b> assess effectiveness of whole concepts, in relation to values, outputs, efficacy, viability; critical thinking, strategic comparison and review; judgement relating to external criteria

Learning Objectives are set for each syllabus within each scheme up to and including the highest level set for the particular qualification.

### 2.2.3 ISEB/ISTQB Foundation

The Foundation examination is sat and passed by students who correctly answer 26 of 40 multiple choice questions. There are no restrictions imposed by ISEB or ISTQB on when an examination can be taken.

The Foundation Certificate is a mandatory pre-requisite for the ISEB Intermediate Certificate and any of the ISTQB Advanced Certificates.

### 2.2.4 ISEB Intermediate & Practitioner

Each course in the new scheme has its own certificate, which is awarded to delegates who sit and pass the appropriate examination.

The Intermediate examination is sat and passed by students who correctly answer 15 of 25 scenarios-based multiple choice questions. There are no restrictions imposed by ISEB on when an examination can be taken.

The Test Analysis and Test Management courses have essay based examinations that require students to answer any four of six questions set in the paper on any one of the four dates prescribed by ISEB in a calendar year.

ISEB considers the original Practitioner Certificate wholly equivalent to attaining all three new certificates (Intermediate and both Practitioner), but have yet to announce any equivalence with the ISTQB Advanced scheme.

Holders of the original or new certificates may use them to progress to 'Diploma in Software Testing' level within the BCS/ISEB qualification scheme, although full pre-requisite criteria for sitting the Diploma is still to be defined as it is under development. It is likely that the pre-requisites will include certificates in non-testing disciplines.

The following table provides an overview of the ISEB certificates, pre-requisites and the current status of the syllabi and associated examinations:

Course	Pre-Req's	Exam	K Level	Status
Foundation based on ISTQB Syllabus	None	Multiple choice on demand	3	Live
Intermediate	Foundation	Multiple choice on demand	4	
Practitioner Test Analysis	Intermediate	Written quarterly on dates mandated by ISEB	6	
Practitioner Test Management			6	
Diploma	TBD	TBD	TBD	Dev

### 2.2.5 ISTQB Advanced

Each course in the new scheme has its own certificate, which is awarded to delegates who sit and pass the appropriate examination. An overall ISTQB 'Full' Advanced

certificate is awarded to delegates sitting and passing all three examinations within the scheme.

All course examinations are multiple choice format and based on delegates selecting the most appropriate answer to each question which may be scenario based. There are 65 questions in each exam with a pass mark of 65%. There are no restrictions imposed by ISTQB on when an examination can be taken.

ISTQB have yet to announce equivalent value recognition of ISEB's new Practitioner scheme.

There is an additional 'Expert' scheme beyond Advanced under development by ISTQB, although full details and qualifying criteria have yet to be announced.

The following table provides an overview of the ISTQB certificates, pre-requisites and the current status of the syllabi and associated examinations:

Course	Pre-Req's	Exam	K Level	Status
Foundation	None	Multiple choice on demand	3	Live
Advanced Test Analyst	Foundation		4	Syllabus live; exam live from October 2008
Advanced Technical Test Analyst			4	
Advanced Test Manager			4	Syllabus live; exam live from June 2009
Expert level	TBD	TBD	TBD	Dev

## 2.3 Tutor Based Delivery

All courses in either certification programme can be delivered in a classroom at public locations, client offices, TSG's Education centre or other chosen location. Current public locations include:

- Birmingham,
- Bristol;
- Cardiff;
- Edinburgh;
- Leeds;
- London;
- Manchester;
- Reading;
- Swindon.

A full list of public certification courses, dates and locations is always available by using the left hand side of the Learning & Development section of TSG's website, or directly from the following scheme based pages:

- ISEB: <http://www.testing-solutions.com/index.php?cid=169>
- ISTQB: <http://www.testing-solutions.com/index.php?cid=171>

### **2.3.1 ISEB Foundation Based on the ISTQB Syllabus Certificate**

Classroom based public Foundation courses consist of 3 days training, with an examination taking place on the afternoon of the final day.

An alternative schedule is available that provides for 3 full days training and the examination on the following day. This is a popular option for dedicated in-house training courses as it maximises the amount of training time the delegate group receives in what is an 'information packed' syllabus.

The exam is 1.5 hours and the pass rate is 26 questions answered correctly from 40.

### **2.3.2 ISEB Intermediate Certificate**

The ISEB Intermediate is a full 3-day course, with an examination of multiple choice scenario-based questions sat on the afternoon of the following day. The public course has an optional revision session on the morning of day 4 at an additional cost. In-house courses include the revision session.

The exam is multiple-choice format to K4 level. 25 questions are to be attempted over 1 hour with a pass mark of 60% (15 questions answered correctly).

### **2.3.3 ISEB Practitioner Test Analysis and Test Management Certificates**

The ISEB Practitioner in Test Analysis and Test Management courses share a common structure in that they have:

- 3-full days each;
- The option of full revision day a week prior to the exam, which is recommended. This is included for in-house courses and available at an additional cost to delegates on public courses;
- Essay based examinations, which ISEB hold one per quarter.

The exam is essay based to K6 level with students required to answer any 4 questions from 6. The pass mark is 60%.

### **2.3.4 ISTQB Advanced Test Certificates**

The ISTQB Advanced Test Analyst and Test Management courses have the same structure in that they have:

- 5 full days each;
- A full revision session prior to the examination later in the afternoon. This is included for in-house courses and available at an additional cost on public courses;
- Examinations having multiple choice scenario based questions.

The exam is multiple-choice format to K4 level. 65 questions are to be attempted over 3 hours with a pass mark of 65%

### **2.3.5 ISTQB Advanced Technical Test Analyst Certificate**

This course is currently being developed and prepared for submission to ISTQB for accreditation. The course, which we expect to be available in May of 2009, will share the same time, delivery and exam characteristics as the other Advanced courses.

## 2.4 Online Based Delivery

TSG is launching its brand new Learning Management System, Learntesting™, on April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009 to deliver its certified Foundation and ISTQB Advanced courses online over the Internet.

The courses follow the ISTQB syllabus, with each structured lesson containing worked examples, revision questions and, at the end of the course, a mock examination. A forum is available to post questions for answer by a TSG Tutor.

The online version is particularly useful for students who:

- Don't thrive in an open classroom environment;
- Learn more comfortably and readily within their own chosen environment at a time of their own choosing;
- Need learning checkpoints;
- Need time to revisit and revise questions;
- Cannot readily be released from the workplace.

The courses are made available for varying periods of time and can be accessed any where and anytime the student has access to the Internet.

The courses are available as follows:

Course	Available	Logon Duration	Study Hours
Foundation based on ISTQB Syllabus	Now	6 Weeks	20
ISTQB Advanced Test Analyst	Q3 2009	8-10 Weeks	35
ISTQB Advanced Test Manager	Q3 2009	8-10 Weeks	35
ISTQB Advanced Technical Test Analyst	Date TBA		

TSG currently has no plans to offer ISEB Intermediate and Practitioner courses online through Learntesting.

### 2.4.1 Course Packages & Structure

All courses will be offered using three variants that include:

- Basic: Course;
- Plus: Course & Exam;
- Extra: Course, Exam and Revision with a TSG tutor

All courses offer a 'post study' structured revision day. This gives delegates the opportunity to come into a classroom to address some subject matter they may have had difficulty understanding and, importantly, a further mock examination that is marked and discussed prior to sitting the real exam later in the afternoon.

End of course revision days are available at TSG throughout the year or may be provided in-house through the 'Plus' package.

In addition, each 'Advanced' course is to be supported by a number of 3-hour open tutor sessions over the Internet. The sessions are to be scheduled regularly, and delegates will be able to join them at the appropriate part of the course. Again, this blended approach

to learning provides delegates with the opportunity to checkpoint and confirm their learning with a TSG tutor during the course.

### 2.4.2 Examination Options

The examination can be taken at:

- TSG or by joining one of our public courses on the final afternoon;
- In-house at client premises or other third party location provided that 2 delegates are in attendance;
- At a Thompson Prometric® Test Centre.

The 'Basic' package is one that has proved popular with developers who need to know about testing and how to approach it, but do not need to take the exam.

As an additional consideration, this course and any other within Learntesting™ can be made available on a licensing basis:

- Via Learntesting™
- By placing it directly into any SCORM compliant learning management system a client may already have in place.

This approach offers the added benefit of:

- Consistency in approach, process, terminology and understanding across the organisation;
- Economies of scale through considerably reduced cost per head.

## 2.5 Other Online Courses

In addition to the existing online courses, TSG plans to develop and make available via the Learntesting™ the following during 2009:

- Black and White Box Technique courses;
- TMap course;
- Various other testing related content, journals and books.

## 3 Success Rates

Based on statistics published by ISEB, TSG's pass rates over recent years have exceeded national averages, as follows:

Course	Period	Pass Rate	Industry Average	TSG Advantage
Foundation – Tutor	2002-2007	86.80%	85.60%	1.20%
Foundation – Online	2006-2007	95.00% <sup>1</sup>		9.40%
Practitioner	2003-2007	68.00%	57.77%	10.03%
Intermediate	2008	77.49%	63%	14.19%
Advanced	2008	65.00% <sup>2</sup>	Unpublished	Not yet known

<sup>1</sup> Based on delegate feedback from Prometric examinations and sittings at TSG

<sup>2</sup> Advanced Test Analyst. Advanced Test Manager currently under review with the UKTB  
Website ISEB & ISTQB v1.0.docx