Tips for preparing the ISE IV Portfolio

The ISE IV Portfolio is a collection of the student's best written work. It is prepared ahead of the ISE IV Interview. Candidates are able to draw from a wide range of resources to draft and redraft, they can use different media, and they are less limited by time. Candidates may take as much time as they have available in the preparation of their portfolio. We recommend they should work on it over 6–12 weeks, but the overall time will depend on other demands upon their time. They should spend as much time as is necessary in order to submit work with a high level of language and accuracy.

Each year there are 15 portfolio tasks available to choose from, divided into three sections, with five tasks in each section. The final ISE IV portfolio should include only three pieces of work — one piece of work from each category:

1. Correspondence: An online forum between two or more participants OR two related letters and/or emails
2. Factual writing: Factual text on a wide range of subjects
3. Critical and analytical writing: Respond to a quotation and present a case that will inform and engage the reader

The list of ISE IV portfolio tasks changes each year. Candidates must make sure they choose their ISE IV portfolio tasks from the current year's list (January to December). This is determined by the year in which the Interview component takes place. Candidates must present their final portfolio with the portfolio cover sheet and the three student portfolio feedback forms. The tasks must be presented in section order, ie Section 1, Section 2 and Section 3.

TOP TIPS

Here are some tips to help you do well in the ISE IV Portfolio:

1. You are strongly advised to plan, draft, redraft, edit and revisit your writing as many times as is necessary to ensure you submit work which you consider to be your best effort. Check your final portfolio for mistakes and missing information. You do not need to include drafts in the portfolio.

2. Perfect your work by using all available resources — dictionaries, encyclopaedias, grammar reference books and online resources. However, you must use your own words; any piece of work considered to be the result of copying, cheating, plagiarism or not your own work will be indicated as Ungraded and no marks will be awarded for that section. You may quote other work within your piece, but this must be clearly referred to as a quotation and attributed to its author. Please note that quotations will not be included in the word count.

3. The assessment is based on the following factors:
    - Overall achievement of communicative aim
    - Text organisation including adherence to word count
    - Appropriacy of format, style and register
    - Accuracy and range of language functions, grammatical structures and texts
    - Effect on the reader

    Overall, you should demonstrate that you can write clear, smoothly flowing complex texts in an appropriate and effective style with a logical structure that helps the reader find significant points.

4. Task instructions must be interpreted accurately. Read them carefully so you don't misunderstand anything, and follow them exactly.

5. Analyse the task in detail and answer all parts of the question fully. It is vital that all requirements of the task are satisfied. If the task asks you to use examples (plural), make sure you provide more than one. If you only use one example, this will be regarded as an 'omission'. Omissions, irrelevance and/ or repetitions will affect the grade awarded. Expand on the points made. If there is a quotation to interpret, as in Section 3, make sure you refer to it, more than just fleetingly. Keep checking back at what is being asked, so your whole piece is relevant and the reader is informed as fully as possible.

6. Check the word count for each task (300–350 for each section). Please note that addresses, dates, customised email prompts, abbreviations, titles, headings and quotations are not included in the final word count. Make sure you do not exceed the maximum word length. Any additional text will not be assessed by the examiner and will affect the grade awarded. Accurate word counts must be provided for each task and clearly stated on the portfolio cover sheet.

7. Organise your writing using paragraphs and linking phrases appropriately.

8. Write in a suitable format, style and register. Each section requires you to display your ability to deal with different types of writing so it is important that you learn the standard conventions for different text types. For example, if writing a letter, make sure you include addresses, dates, and the appropriate opening and closing. At this level, you are also expected to demonstrate subtle distinctions of style.

9. Demonstrate a wide range of ISE IV language. You should be able to handle abstract concepts and topical subject matters relevant to today's world. Make sure you are demonstrating the functions of the level, such as asserting, affirming, implying, denying, contradicting, implying, softening and downplaying propositions.

10. Write accurately, using correct spelling and grammar. As you have the benefit of the use of spellchecks, dictionaries, and are able to draft, correct and redraft, a very high degree of accuracy and sophistication is expected.

11. Ask your teacher/supervisor to complete an ISE IV student portfolio feedback form to improve your writing. Please note, however, that no one except you, the candidate, should correct, add or take anything out of the task presented. Teachers/supervisors must not correct their students' work. They are allowed to give one piece of feedback per task, using only the student portfolio feedback form at **trinitycollege.com/ISE-IV-Portfolio**