TRINITY
COLLEGE LONDON

Graded Examinations in Spoken English (GESE)

Academic guidance for teachers

Trinity College London is modernising the content of GESE to ensure it remains relevant while retaining its format and assessment approach.

The following changes will be reflected in exams from 1 January 2026:

◗ Candidates will be able to choose between **GESE for School**, **GESE for Work** and **GESE** for everyday communication and visa purposes.

◗ The grammatical structures listed for each grade will be suggested rather than required items.

The tasks and assessment method will remain the way they have been, which means that there is no impact on your teaching. The lexis listed for each grade remains relevant.

Choosing between GESE for School, GESE for Work and GESE

◗ Intended candidature:

GESE for School	A child or young person aged 5 or above who uses English primarily in an educational setting.
GESE for Work	A young person or adult aged 14 or above who uses or is preparing to use English in a work-related setting, including in vocational schools.
GESE	A typical candidate will be preparing to take GESE for visa purposes.

◗ Support candidates in selecting the focus that aligns with the context in which they are learning and using English.

◗ Candidates tell the examiner at the start of the exam if they are choosing **GESE for School**, **GESE for Work** or **GESE**. If all candidates in a session choose the same focus area, the teacher may inform the examiner at the beginning of the session instead.

◗ Trinity's examiners are trained to conduct the exam in an age-appropriate way regardless of the candidate's choice.

How are the changes reflected in the exam?

Pictures	Grades 1–3	Any pictures used may be reflective of the focus area chosen by the candidate. For instance, terms for items of clothing may be elicited using an image of a student in **GESE for School**.
Subject areas in the Conversation phase	Grades 4–12	Where the examiner selects subject areas for the Conversation, these may be adapted to suit the context chosen by the candidate; eg the subject area travel may feature as travelling for work in **GESE for Work**.
Topic phase	Grades 4–12	For the Topic discussion and Topic presentation, candidates may choose any topic of interest, including but not limited to topics related to their focus area of choice, eg their work.
	Grades 10–12	
Prompt in the Interactive phase	Grades 7–12	The context of the prompt in the Interactive task and of the listening text in the Listening task will reflect the candidate's chosen focus area. For instance, the Interactive prompt may refer to a another student or a teacher in **GESE for School**, and to a colleague or manager in **GESE for Work**.
Listening phase	Grades 10–12	

How to use the suggested grammar of the grade

We are changing the listed grammar items from required to suggested grammar items for each grade. This will allow candidates more flexibility in choosing the language structures necessary for the communicative functions of the grade.

The grammatical structures suggested for each grade are often the best way to express the functions of the grade. However, there are usually other suitable forms, and your students are free to use the suggested grammatical structures or any others that allow them to express the language functions of the grade appropriately and accurately.

This means that the lists of suggested grammatical structures of the grade remain valid; other grammatical structures that fulfil the communicative functions of the grade are valid, too.

How can you support your students?

- Reinforce that clarity, appropriacy and effectiveness matter more than using set structures.
- Explore multiple ways to express each language function of the grade.
- Teach grade-appropriate grammar as before: the grammar items listed for each grade remain relevant as forms candidates may typically use. However, candidates can use suitable alternatives that you cover in your lessons.

There is rarely one correct grammatical structure to fulfil a particular language function. For instance, for the Grade 7 language function making suggestions you could use the listed grammatical structures:

- *If I were you, I would…*
- *One thing you could try is to…*
- *In my opinion, you ought to…*

But there are also many other structures that could be used to successfully demonstrate this language function:

- *How about…*
- *Have you thought about…*
- *What if you…*
- *One solution would be to…*

The focus on functions gives candidates the flexibility to use the grammatical structures they feel confident using. Apart from this added flexibility, the requirements for each grade remain the same.

How do examiners assess candidates?

Examiners assess candidates on task fulfilment. This refers to:

- how effective, comprehensible and appropriate a candidate's contributions are
- the coverage of communicative skills, functions and vocabulary items of the grade
- how accurately and appropriately language is used
- the extent to which any inaccuracies impede the communication of meaning
- how smooth the interaction is.

Where language of the grade is concerned:

- passing the grade or achieving a good result does not depend on a candidate's use of the specific grammatical structures listed
- examiners focus on the functions listed for the grade, and the extent to which candidates use language appropriately and accurately to fulfil these functions
- candidates are expected to use the lexis and phonology items listed, in combination with appropriate grammatical structures, to demonstrate the communicative skills and language functions of the grade; at higher grades, this involves candidates using an increasingly wide range of more complex structures.