Frequently Asked Questions
What is the language of instruction at INSEAD?
English is the language of instruction at INSEAD. You need to be fluent in English to apply to the programme. A valid English certification must be sent with your application for it to be considered as complete.

How do I prove fluency in English?
You can demonstrate fluency

- either by a degree from a university where all courses were taught exclusively in English (if your university degree was exclusively taught in English but in a non-English speaking country, please make sure to send proof of the language of instruction at the same time as your application);
- or by taking one of the following English tests and reaching the minimum passing scores (in brackets): TOEFL (internet-based test: 105; computer-based test: 260; paper-based test: 620), TOEIC Listening & Reading (950), Speaking (190) & Writing (170) sections, IELTS Academic (7.5), CPE (B), PTE Academic (72). These tests have a validity period of 2 years.

When do I prove fluency in English?
The Admissions Office requires a valid English certification (see paragraph above) to consider an application as complete and start the selection process. If your university degree was exclusively taught in English but in a non-English speaking country, please make sure to send proof of the language of instruction at the same time as your application.

Do I require any languages other than English to start the programme?
Yes, you need to prove at least a “practical knowledge” of a second language (referred to as “entry language”) to be able to start the programme. This can be your native language for non-English native speakers.

If I am an English native-speaker, when and how do I have to provide certification for my entry language?
You need to provide certification no later than June 1st for the September intake and November 1st for the January intake. Accepted certification is listed in the Language Policy. We recommend that you work on satisfying this entry requirement as soon as you hear about your acceptance to the programme.

Am I required to have some knowledge of a third language?
Yes, you need to prove at least a “basic” knowledge of a third language (referred to as “exit language”) before or during the programme. We recommend that you work on satisfying this graduation requirement as soon as you hear about your acceptance due to the intensity of the programme.

When and how do I certify the exit language?
The exit language can be certified before, at the start of, or during the programme. We recommend that you work on satisfying this graduation requirement as soon as you hear about your acceptance due to the intensity of the programme. You will be able to certify your level for the exit language by taking a language test during the first week of the programme (referred to as “Orientation Week”). Other acceptable certification is listed in Annex 4 of the Language Policy.
**What is meant by "fluent", "business", "practical" and "basic" knowledge of a language?**

"Fluent" knowledge is the ability to communicate very fluently and precisely in complex situations and is the minimum level required to prove English proficiency.

"Business" knowledge is the ability to interact with a degree of fluency and communicate on a wide range of subjects including in a professional context.

"Practical" knowledge is the ability to understand and communicate on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. and is the minimum level required for the entry language.

"Basic" knowledge is the ability to communicate in a simple and direct exchange of information on routine matters and is the minimum required for the exit language.

**What do I need to do to declare my languages?**

Once accepted, you will be asked by your Admissions Officer to confirm the three languages you will use to satisfy the INSEAD graduation requirement.

**Do I need to send proof of proficiency for my native language?**

No, certification is not required for the native language. However, once you have declared your native language in your application, it will not be possible to change it. This native language will automatically be listed in your final transcript.

**I took one of the official language tests accepted by INSEAD prior to application. Can it certify the requirement?**

Yes, provided that the test is taken within two years of your application to INSEAD (even for the DELF exam). Beyond the two year validity period, you will need to either re-sit for the test or arrange to take another test from our language partner.

**I studied abroad in Germany for one academic year in 2001. Would this meet the entry/exit language certification for German?**

Yes. University studies abroad (a minimum of one year exchange where instruction is conducted exclusively in the language) or final secondary school exam (where exam and schooling must be conducted exclusively in the language) are accepted and do not have limited validity dates.

**Can elective courses at university certify the entry or exit language other than English?**

No, elective courses at university are not sufficient means of certification. However, a university degree major is acceptable means of certification (a minor is not sufficient).

**Although Spanish is not my native tongue, I've lived and worked in Spain for many years. Am I still required to prove my language proficiency?**

Yes, you will still be required to provide us with proof/certification of your language proficiency.

**Can I declare a second native language?**

Yes, you may but please note that this is accepted only on a case-by-case review and requires evidence of actual use (i.e., high school leaving certificate or higher education).

**If I have no training in the language, do I need to take a test in order to demonstrate a Beginner level in the exit language?**

No. You can register for on campus language tuition without taking a placement test and start language courses for beginners in Period 1.
Can I take a language exam for the exit requirement before the MBA programme begins?
Yes, you can take any of the recognised tests listed in Annex 4 of the Language Policy or take the test on campus during Orientation Week.

Are there any restrictions on the choice of entry and exit languages?
Yes there are certain restrictions:
  a) Entry and exit languages must be languages officially recognised in different countries.
  b) Entry and exit languages must be linguistically different.

Is it possible to change my exit language after having informed my Admissions Officer?
We recommend that you keep to the exit language declared to your Admissions Officer. As the information will be used in the assigning of groups to facilitate the scheduling of classes, you need to notify us as soon as possible and no later than one month before the start of the programme.

I would like to take the language test during Orientation Week when I arrive. How do I register?
FL&C is in charge of organizing the tests. Your dedicated contact is Muriel PAILLEUX, Global Account Director at FL&C. You can contact her at the following email address: muriel.pailleux@flc-int.com.

I would like to take the language test before Orientation Week. How do I register?
FL&C offers entry and exit tests in 13 languages: Arabic (classic), Bahasa Indonesian, Bahasa Melayu, Dutch, French, German, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish.
To arrange for a test, please contact FL&C at the following email address: muriel.pailleux@flc-int.com.

Who is the language partner school?
The partner institution for language testing and language tuition is FL&C in Fontainebleau.

For test scheduling, recommended books and more information on language instructors, please contact them directly:

Your dedicated contact is Muriel PAILLEUX, Global Account Director at FL&C.
You can contact her at the following email address: muriel.pailleux@flc-int.com

Is the exit language test during Orientation Week only a written test?
The test includes oral and written components. For students obtaining 50% or higher on the written test, an oral test is required to validate the level. A minimum of 50% is needed to pass the oral test. The oral and written scores are averaged to obtain the final grade/level.

Is there a different test for each level of proficiency?
No, it is the same test for every level. The test grades people differently and assigns them a level of proficiency according to performance (e.g., level of understanding, level of complexity in sentence writing).

If I pass the exit language test conducted during Orientation Week, am I still required to take language tuition?
No. If you score 50 and above, you reach a “basic” level and automatically satisfy the exit language requirement. No further language tuition is required.
Are language classes available and is it included in the curriculum?
Language classes are provided on-campus throughout the year by our language partner school. Language tuition fees are included in the MBA programme fees.

Can I take up additional language classes, on top of what is required?
Yes, but please note that priority in language tuition is given to students who need to certify the exit language requirement in order to graduate. Other students may join language classes if there are places available in the groups.

Can my partner attend a language course?
Yes, partners can take individual or group classes with other partners if there are enough people interested. Priority in language courses is given to students who need to certify the exit language requirement in order to graduate. They cannot however participate in the classes run for the MBA students.

How are the language classes scheduled? Will I miss out on any of my regular classes?
No, you will not miss out on the regular MBA classes. The language classes will be scheduled around the MBA curriculum.

Last revised in April 2014. Please note that this Language Policy is subject to change without prior notice.