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Language Policy

Frequently Asked Questions

NB: This Language Policy applies to applicants of the 20J and 20D MBA Classes. For all other MBA Classes, please use this document as a reference only and be sure to contact the MBA Admissions Office for confirmation.

Last revised in October 2018. Please note that this Language Policy document is subject to change regularly and without prior notice.

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 MBA programme. Acceptable valid English proof must be sent **with** your application for it to be considered as complete before your admissions evaluation starts. *(See page 5 of the Language Policy.)*

How and when do I prove fluency in English?

When: The Admissions Office requires valid English proof to consider an application as complete to start the selection process. *(See page 5 of the Language Policy.)*

How: You can demonstrate English fluency:

- Either with a university degree (*a minimum of one full-time academic year with a diploma received from that host university*) where **all** courses were **taught exclusively** in English. *(An exchange programme does not qualify.)* If your university degree was exclusively taught in English but in a non-English speaking country, please make sure that your transcripts clearly mention the language of instruction is English to complete your application
- Or by taking one of the following English tests and aiming for the recommended scores in brackets hereafter: TOEFL (internet-based test: 105, computer-based test: 260, paper-based test: 620); TOEIC (all 4 sections) Listening & Reading (950), Speaking (190) & Writing (170); IELTS Academic (7.5); CPE (B); PTE Academic (72). **These tests have a validity period of 2 years prior to the application deadline to which you are applying.**
(See page 3 of the Language Policy.)

Do I require any languages other than English to *apply and be admitted* to the programme?

No, you do not need to have validated another language other than English to apply and be admitted. However, to make the most of your INSEAD MBA programme, we strongly encourage you to put as much time and effort into improving your Entry and Exit languages before the start of the programme.

Do I require any languages other than English to *start* the programme?

Yes, you need to prove at least a B1 “practical” level 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, for which we do not require proof. *(See page 6 of the Language Policy.)*

If I am an English native speaker, how and when do I have to provide certification for my Entry language?

You need to provide acceptable certification no later than **1 June** for the **September intake (July Class)** and **1 November** for the **January intake (December Class)**. *(See page 6 of the Language Policy.)* We recommend that you work on satisfying this Entry requirement **as soon as you hear about your acceptance to the programme, if not earlier**. *Please make sure that your Entry & Exit languages are compatible (see page 7 of the Language Policy) and can be tested (both oral and written) by a recognised institution.*

Frequently Asked Questions *(continued)*

Do you have an official language partner school?

Yes, the partner institution for language tuition and testing is FL&C in Fontainebleau.

For test scheduling, recommended books and more information on language instructors, please contact them directly: <https://flclanguage.wordpress.com/> (Full contact details for FL&C can be found on page 8 of the Language Policy.)

Am I required to have some knowledge of a third language?

Yes, you need to prove at least an A2 “basic” level 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.** (See page 7 of the Language Policy.)

How and when do I certify the Exit language?

The Exit language can be certified with FL&C before the start of the programme, during Launch Week or at the end of Period 3. (Other acceptable certification is listed in the Language Policy, pages 6-7.)

What is meant by “fluent”, “business”, “practical” and “basic” knowledge of a language?

“**Fluent**” knowledge (C1 on the CEFR scale) is the ability to communicate very fluently and precisely in complex situations and is the minimum level required to prove English proficiency.

“**Business**” knowledge (B2 on the CEFR scale) 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 (B1 on the CEFR scale) 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 (A2 on the CEFR scale) 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.

(See page 3 of the Language Policy.)

What do I need to do to declare my languages?

Once accepted, you will be asked by the MBA Admissions Office to confirm your Entry and Exit languages you will use to satisfy the INSEAD language requirements.

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

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

How does INSEAD define a native language?

The definition of a native language is the first language you have been exposed to from birth AND the language in which you consider yourself most fluent and skilled.

Frequently Asked Questions *(continued)*

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. Beyond the two year validity period, you will need to either re-sit for the test or arrange to take a test with our language partner FL&C.

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 full-time academic year, where instruction is conducted exclusively in the language*) or final secondary school exam, or high school leaving certificate (*where exam and schooling must be conducted exclusively in the language*) are accepted and do not have limited validity dates. (*See page 6 of the Language Policy.*)

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 an 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 acceptable proof/certification of your language proficiency. (*See page 6 of the Language Policy.*)

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). (*See page 6 of the Language Policy.*)

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, if you have absolutely no knowledge in the language, you can register for on-campus language tuition without taking a placement test and start language courses for “complete 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 the *Language Policy* or take a test on campus during Launch Week with our language partner, FL&C. (*See contact details on page 8 of the Language Policy.*)

Frequently Asked Questions *(continued)*

Are there any restrictions on the choice of Entry and Exit languages?

Yes there are certain restrictions:

- a) Your chosen Entry and Exit languages must be languages that are officially recognised in different countries
- b) Your chosen Entry and Exit languages must be linguistically different from each other *(See page 7 of the Language Policy.)*

Is it possible to change my Exit language after having informed the Admissions Office?

Please note that you cannot change the Exit language that you declared to the Admissions Office, as the information will be used when assigning you to a study group to facilitate the scheduling of classes.

I would like to take the language test during Launch Week when I arrive. How do I register?

You need to register with FL&C *(see contact details on page 8 of the Language Policy)* after declaring your Exit language with the MBA Admissions Office. This is a prerequisite to attend the exam.

I would like to take the language test before Launch Week. How do I register?

FL&C offers tests in 14 languages: Arabic (classic), Bahasa Indonesian, Bahasa Melayu, Dutch, French, German, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin (simplified and traditional), Portuguese, Russian and Spanish.

To arrange for a test, please contact FL&C directly. *(See contact details on page 8 of the Language Policy.)*

Is the Exit language test during Launch Week only a written test?

The test includes written and oral components; you will first take a written test – if you succeed in obtaining 50% or more, you will be called for an oral test within two weeks. The oral and written scores are averaged to obtain the final grade/level.

If I pass the Exit language test conducted during Launch Week, am I still required to take language tuition?

No, if you score 50 or above, you will have achieved a “basic” A2 level and will have automatically satisfied 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 by our language partner school FL&C, from Period 1 to Period 3. Classes are arranged around your MBA schedule. Exit language courses and tests are included in the MBA tuition fees.

Can I take additional language classes, on top of what is required?

Yes as a “volunteer student”, but please note that priority in language tuition is given to students who need to certify the Exit language requirement in order to graduate. “Volunteer students” may join language classes only if they have already validated their Exit language, and if there are places available in the existing groups. *(See page 11 of the Language Policy.)*