



The Business School
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MBA Language Policy

NB: This Language Policy applies to applicants of the 25J and 25D 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 September 2023. Please note that this Language Policy document is subject to change regularly and without prior notice.

Contents

Page 3	INSEAD Language Proficiency Measurement Scale
Page 4	Summary of INSEAD Language Requirements
Page 5	English Proficiency Certification
Page 6	MBA Second Language Requirement
Page 7	MBA Third Language Requirement
Page 8	Useful Links and FAQs

INSEAD Language Proficiency Measurement Scale

INSEAD uses a four-level scale to measure language competency. This is in line with the Common European Framework of Reference for language levels (CEFR). Below is a table which indicates the proficiency needed to fulfil INSEAD language requirement.

To be admitted to the MBA Programme, a candidate must have a “fluent” level in English. A candidate also needs to validate a minimum “practical” level of knowledge of a second language. **We strongly encourage students to validate the second language requirement before starting the programme.**

A candidate must also validate a minimum “basic” level of understanding of a third language before graduation.

LEVEL	DESCRIPTION	INSEAD REQUIREMENTS
Native	Ability to communicate spontaneously, very fluently and precisely in more complex situations. Equivalent to C2 on CEFR scale.	
Fluent	Ability to communicate very fluently and precisely in complex situations. Equivalent to C1 on CEFR scale.	Minimum Required Level for English Proficiency
Business	Ability to interact with a degree of fluency and communicate on a wide range of subjects including in a professional context. Equivalent to B2 on CEFR scale.	
Practical	Ability to understand and communicate on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure etc. Equivalent to B1 on CEFR scale.	Minimum Required Level for Second Language
Basic	Ability to communicate in a simple and direct exchange of information on routine matters. Equivalent to A2 on CEFR scale.	Minimum Required Level for Third Language
Beginner	Ability to communicate in a simple way, using familiar, everyday basic phrases. Equivalent to A1 on CEFR scale.	

Native Languages - Please note the following:

- ✓ 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. Therefore, it is not necessary for you to certify your declared native language.
- ✓ Your native language will automatically be listed in your final transcript and cannot be changed once you have declared it in your application.
- ✓ You may declare a second native language in your application. Please note that proof will be required to validate your second declared native language.

Summary of INSEAD MBA Language Requirements

INSEAD has a 3-Language Requirement Policy

- ✓ A candidate must be fluent in English
- ✓ A candidate must have at least a B1 “Practical” level of knowledge in a second language
- ✓ A candidate must have at least an A2 “Basic” level of knowledge in a third language

Certification requirements will differ for each candidate, depending on whether or not English is your native language.

- ***If English is your native language***, you must validate a minimum "Practical" level of knowledge of a second language (equivalent to B1 on the CEFR scale) as soon as possible.
- ***If English is not your native language***, a combination of your native language (for which we don't test) and your proof of English proficiency is sufficient means to satisfy your first and second languages.
- ***Your third, commercially useful, language*** must be validated in order to graduate (equivalent to A2 on the CEFR scale)

It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that adequate and acceptable evidence is provided to certify competence for these language requirements.

(More details can be found on pages 5, 6 & 7.)

English Proficiency Certification

If English is not your native language, then official English certification must be sent with your application.

Only the following methods are considered as acceptable means of certification for English Language proficiency.

- **A UNIVERSITY DEGREE** - *a minimum of one full-time academic year, taught exclusively in English, with a diploma received from that host university (an exchange programme does not qualify, English major at university does not qualify.)*

Transcripts should clearly mention the language of instruction is English to complete an application.

- **TOEFL***

www.toefl.org Internet-based test (*recommended minimum score: 105*)

- **PTE Academic***

<https://pearsonpte.com> (*recommended minimum score: 72*)

- **IELTS Academic***

www.ielts.org (*recommended minimum score: 7.5*)

* *To be valid, the acceptable tests above must be less than two years old, prior to the application deadline, to which you are applying.*

Combination of your native language and proof of English proficiency is sufficient means to satisfy your first and second languages.

MBA Second Language Requirement

If English is your native language, we do not require proof to certify your level of English.

To validate your second language, you will need to provide acceptable means of certification as soon as possible (ideally before the programme starts).

Acceptable means certifying competence in your second language:
(*other than English*)

- **Second native language** **Fluent**
Examined only on a case-by-case basis and requires evidence of actual use (i.e. schooling or higher education, not just *"language spoken at home"*, or *"mother's/father's native language"*, or *"work experience"*).
- **Final Secondary School Exam** **Fluent**
Exam and schooling must be conducted in the language:
E.g. Brevet or Baccalauréat to validate French; Immersion programme in Canada; Abitur for German; Maturita for Italian, (for Singaporeans) GCE "A" level or "O" level for Mandarin, Tamil & Malay; Secondary Education Certificate for Hindi or other national Indian languages (10th grade minimum) and for Afrikaans, etc.
- **University education** **Business**
 - a) Conducted in the language (certification required).
 - b) A university major or minor in the language.
- **Certification from state-recognised cultural or commercial bodies currently known to INSEAD** **According to performance**
You are free to choose which second and third languages you declare, but it is your responsibility to ensure that the languages chosen are compatible and can be tested (both orally and in written form) by an official institution. Only certificates from official bodies* are recognised as acceptable means of certification for the INSEAD language requirement and must be less than 2 years old from the application deadline to which you apply.
** Please check your private language institution for validation with your Admissions Officer.*
- **Written and oral tests with FL&C (by appointment only – see [Useful Links page 8 for FL&C details](#))** **According to performance**
Language Evaluation Tests (written and oral) are available by appointment with FL&C. The written test can be taken during INSEAD test sessions (please contact FL&C to know the dates), or in the future student's country of residence.
To organise a written test in the country of residence, the future student must find a "Proctor" (e.g.: from a reputable and recognised language school or university). The proctor must be approved by FL&C. Any charges requested by the proctor for their services remain the student's responsibility. The oral test can be organised either face to face or via a video conferencing tool. Appointments for tests must be made a month in advance. Test results are sent directly to the MBA Admissions team at INSEAD.

MBA Third Language Requirement

To make the most of your INSEAD experience, both academically and socially, we encourage you strongly to put as much time and effort into improving your third language before the start of the programme.

Third language validation is a requirement for Graduation

To be eligible for Graduation, students must validate at least A2 “Basic” level of knowledge in a commercially useful language, which is the official language of a country other than one’s native or chosen second language.

Please note that it is difficult to change your third language once declared to the MBA Admissions Office.

The third language requirement can be certified by using the same means available for validating the second requirement as detailed on page 6.

NB. Students going to Wharton in P5 should plan on certifying their third language prior to the exchange in order that the language requirement is fulfilled in time for graduation.

Please note that we take into account linguistic similarities between your chosen second and third languages.

For example INSEAD will not allow the following combinations:

German-Luxembourgish

Danish-Norwegian-Swedish

Finnish-Estonian

Bahasa Indonesia-Bahasa Malaysia

Dutch-Afrikaans

Slovak-Czech

Croatian-Serbian-Bosnian-Macedonian

Mandarin-Cantonese-Taiwanese-Hokkien

Hindi-Urdu

(Several Indian national languages are also linguistically similar – please check with the Admissions Office for confirmation.)

Useful Links and FAQs

Please find below some useful documents to help you prepare your languages for studying on the INSEAD MBA Programme.

[MBA Language Partner, FL&C](#)

[Official Language Tests recognised by INSEAD](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)