



---

---

## Are You Confused About the ISEB & ISTQB Certifications?

---

---

Prepared for: The Change in Software Testing Certification

Prepared by: Testing Solutions Group,  
117-119, Houndsditch,  
London EC3A 7BT

Tel: +44 20 7469 1500  
Fax: +44 20 3411 8637

Email: [general@testing-solutions.com](mailto:general@testing-solutions.com)

Date: April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2011

Version Basis: 1.8

Our Ref: Web ISEB ISTQB 2010 v1 8.docx

TSG Web: [www.testing-solutions.com](http://www.testing-solutions.com)

## Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>CHANGES TO CERTIFICATION BASED EDUCATION.....</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1	WORKING TOWARD A GLOBAL SCHEME .....	3
2.2	WHY IS THIS GOOD FOR YOU IF YOU ARE WORKING IN THE UK TESTING INDUSTRY? .....	4
2.3	WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR ME – Q&A? .....	4
2.4	SCHEME VALUES .....	6
2.4.1	Scheme Learning Levels .....	6
2.4.2	ISTQB Foundation .....	6
2.4.3	ISTQB Advanced .....	6
2.4.4	BCS/ISEB Intermediate .....	7
2.5	TUTOR BASED DELIVERY .....	7
2.5.1	ISTQB Foundation .....	8
2.5.2	ISTQB Advanced Test Certificates .....	8
2.5.3	BCS/ISEB Intermediate Certificate .....	9
2.6	ONLINE BASED DELIVERY .....	9
2.6.1	Course Packages & Structure .....	9
2.6.2	Examination Options .....	10
2.7	ONLINE COURSES .....	11
2.8	ONLINE VALUE ADDS .....	11
<b>3</b>	<b>SUCCESS RATES.....</b>	<b>12</b>

## 1 Introduction

This general overview document details the structure and content of the Integrated ISTQB certification scheme for software testing. It also details the optional courses available from the BCS/ISEB. It is intended to provide information that will help answer questions about the scheme, content and timescales. The content of the programme is outside of TSG’s control, but the information presented is correct as we understand it as at the date shown on the cover of this document.

## 2 Changes to Certification Based Education

### 2.1 Working Toward a Global Scheme

Recognising the need for greater alignment, working practices and unity in the software testing certification market, the British Computer Society, the Chartered Institute for IT and the UKTB (ISTQB) issued the following statement:

BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT, which promotes qualifications for IT professionals, has signed an agreement with the UK Testing Board (UKTB). The agreement will see the two organisations working more closely together to promote and support Software testing accreditation and certification internationally. UKTB will become the preferred supplier for ISEB’s software testing exams at Foundation and Advanced levels, in accordance with the international ISTQB program.

Following that announcement, the integrated scheme now looks as follows:

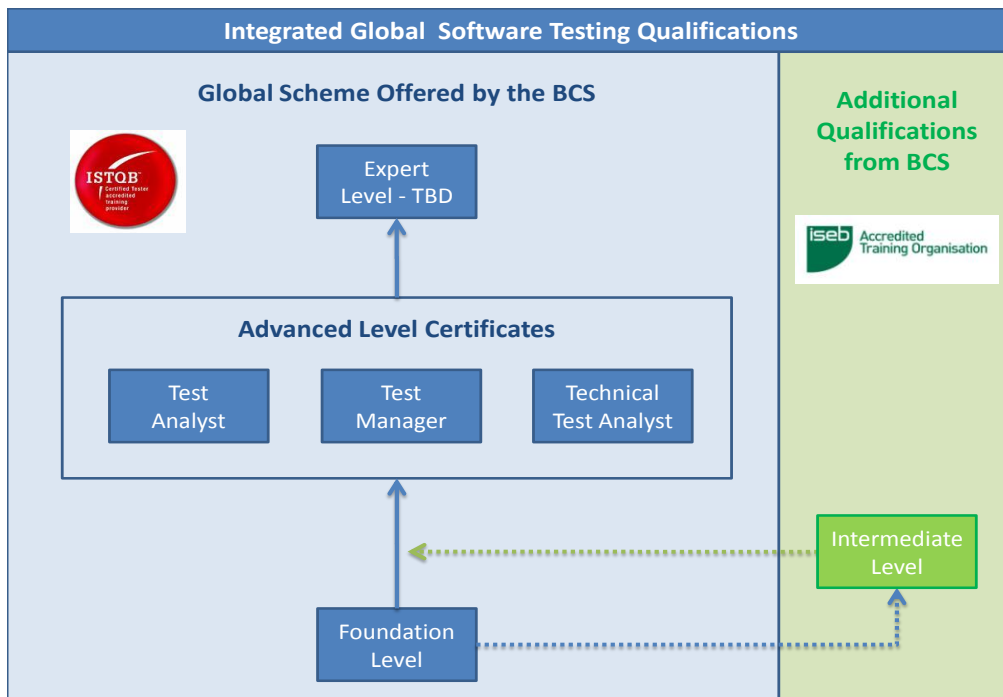


Figure 1 – Integrated ISTQB and BCS/ISEB Scheme Structures

The agreement will see BCS/ISEB working more closely with an increasing number of ISTQB boards around the world.

Internationally, software testing exams are currently available at a number of different entry points from Foundation to Advanced, with BCS/ISEB's Intermediate exam providing a valuable optional route between the two levels. For those professionals looking for certification beyond Advanced level, ISTQB will be providing its Expert level exam. The Institute will continue to offer its UK only Practitioner level in Software Testing until early 2011.

ISEB will act as the exam provider for the ISTQB Advanced examination, provided by the UKTB from April 2010.

Did you know that as of March 2011:

- ISTQB Advanced became the de facto standard in the UK for role based certificated training beyond Foundation;
- BCS/ISEB Practitioner in Software Test Management & Analysis were retired;
- BCS/ISEB Intermediate remains available as an option for those who have passed Foundation to bridge the gap between the Foundation and Advanced level certificates.

## 2.2 Why is this good for you if you are working in the UK Testing Industry?

### For trainees:

- Harmonised post Foundation level certification – one single International Software Testing Certification Scheme provided by ISTQB, examined by BCS/ISEB;
- Introduction of optional Intermediate step into the ISTQB scheme if required.

### For employers:

- Simplified the choice of scheme to follow, ISTQB is recognised globally and supported by 47 national boards;
- Consistent certification and testing vocabulary used globally;
- Simplified testing certification to support internal testing career paths.

If you want to find out more about how you can advance your career in testing please contact us on [career@testing-solutions.com](mailto:career@testing-solutions.com) or download the [career path presentation](#) from our website.

## 2.3 What Does it Mean for Me – Q&A?

**Q1:** *Why did the BCS withdraw the ISEB Test Analysis Practitioner and ISEB Test Management Practitioner certifications and examinations at the end of March 2011?*

**Answer** BCS recognise the significant value of a single, consistent international software testing certification scheme. The benefits to the UK testing industry include:

- Clarity of career paths for software testing professionals
- Consistency in standards and vocabulary
- Clear understanding of the global standards that software testers need to meet
- Simplified choice of certification scheme from Foundation to post

Foundation level leading to internationally recognised qualifications

BCS' decision to withdraw both ISEB Test Analysis Practitioner and ISEB Test Management Practitioner reflects their commitment to ensuring there is only one global standard.

**Q2:** *I previously qualified at ISEB Practitioner level what does this mean for me?*

**Answer:** BCS ISEB Test Management Practitioner and Test Analysis Practitioner certification will continue to be industry recognised relevant qualifications and provide a valuable contribution to your career development plan and your professional development portfolio. Holders of Practitioner level certifications can demonstrate and apply significant in-depth specialist knowledge of software testing practices and techniques which are highly valued within the software testing community.

The good news is that these certifications will now contribute to your progression within the internationally recognised ISTQB software testing certification scheme. People with BCS/ISEB Practitioner qualifications will be 'grandfathered' to the equivalent ISTQB level. This means that existing Practitioner holders will be able to enter the ISTQB Scheme at 'Expert' level

**Q3:** *I am a candidate who needs to re-sit the BCS/ISEB Test Analysis Practitioner or BCS/ISEB Test Management Practitioner exam, can I still do this?*

**Answer:** No – the BCS held its last exam for Practitioner in March 2011. Candidates in this position are recommended to pursue their preferred role based qualification in the Advanced scheme. Please contact TSG to make arrangements.

**Q4:** *I missed out on Practitioner, but don't really want to sit the Advanced scheme. Is there something else available?*

**Answer:** Yes. Call TSG and we can run you through a number of options from certified to practical, role relevant training

**Q5:** *I have Practitioner - am I going to receive additional certificates?*

**Answer:** No. The ISEB certificates you already hold will remain valid for your ISEB Test Analysis Practitioner or ISEB Test Management Practitioner certifications. Your certification will be verified by BCS, as necessary, should you wish to progress within the ISTQB software testing certification scheme to Expert Level (when available).

**Q6:** *Do I need to pass the ISTQB Foundation examination as a prerequisite to the ISTQB Advanced level examinations?*

**Answer:** Yes

**Q7:** *Do I need to pass the BCS/ISEB Intermediate examination as a prerequisite to the ISTQB Advanced level examinations?*

**Answer:** No. Taking the BCS/ISEB Intermediate course is an optional route towards taking ISTQB Advanced level examinations. Intermediate is also recommended for people who have fewer than 3 years experience who wish to progress to the tougher Advance level.

**Q8:** *What are TSG's credentials with respect to ISTQB?*

**Answer:** TSG's staff were, in fact, involved with ISTQB's original formation and have remained closely involved in several different areas, including active participation on the Advanced and Expert level syllabi. We have been supplying ISTQB courses since 2008

**Q9:** *What do you do if you are confused about the schemes*

**Answer:** Please contact us at TSG so that we can either discuss by telephone or arrange to meet you

## 2.4 Scheme Values

### 2.4.1 Scheme Learning Levels

ISEB & ISTQB aligned their learning objectives and syllabi with industry-accepted 'K Level' learning defined within Bloom's Taxonomy, as follows:

K Level	Description
1.	<b>Remember:</b> recall or recognise information
2.	<b>Understand:</b> understand meaning, interpret, extrapolate, translate
3.	<b>Apply:</b> use or apply knowledge, put theory into practice, use knowledge in response to real circumstances
4.	<b>Analyse:</b> interpret elements, organizational principles, structure, construction, internal relationships; quality, reliability of individual components
5.	<b>Synthesis:</b> develop new unique structures, systems, models, approaches, ideas; creative thinking, operations
6.	<b>Evaluate:</b> assess effectiveness of whole concepts, in relation to values, outputs, efficacy, viability; critical thinking, strategic comparison and review; judgement relating to external criteria

Learning Objectives are set for each syllabus within each scheme. It should be noted, however, that the higher level does not necessarily mean 'harder', they are simply aimed achieving different things.

### 2.4.2 ISTQB Foundation

The Foundation examination is sat and passed by students who correctly answer 26 of 40 multiple choice questions. There are no restrictions imposed by ISEB or ISTQB on when an examination can be taken.

The Foundation Certificate is a mandatory pre-requisite for the BCS/ISEB Intermediate Certificate and any of the ISTQB Advanced Certificates.

### 2.4.3 ISTQB Advanced

Each course in the new scheme has its own certificate, which is awarded to delegates who sit and pass the appropriate examination. An overall 'Full' Advanced certificate is awarded to delegates sitting and passing all three examinations within the scheme.

All course examinations are multiple choice format and based on delegates selecting the most appropriate answer to each question which may be scenario based. There are 65 questions in each exam with a pass mark of 65%. There are no restrictions imposed by ISTQB on when an examination can be taken.

There is an additional 'Expert' scheme beyond Advanced under development by ISTQB, although full details and qualifying criteria have yet to be announced.

The following table provides an overview of the ISTQB certificates, pre-requisites and the current status of the syllabi and associated examinations:

Course	Pre-Req's	Exam	K Level	Status
Foundation	None	Multiple choice on demand	3	Syllabus & Exam Live
Advanced Test Analyst	Foundation		4	
Advanced Test Manager			4	
Advanced Technical Test Analyst			4	
Expert level	TBD	TBD	TBD	Dev

#### 2.4.4 BCS/ISEB

Each course in the scheme has its own certificate, which is awarded to delegates who sit and pass the appropriate examination.

The Intermediate examination is sat and passed by students who correctly answer 15 of 25 scenarios-based multiple choice questions. There are no restrictions imposed by BCS/ISEB on when an Intermediate examination can be taken.

Holders of the original or new certificates may use them to progress to 'Diploma in Software Testing' level within the BCS/ISEB qualification scheme, although full pre-requisite criteria for sitting the Diploma is still to be defined as it is under development. It is likely that the pre-requisites will include certificates in non-testing disciplines.

The following table provides an overview of the BCS/ISEB certificates, pre-requisites and the current status of the syllabi and associated examinations:

Course	Pre-Req's	Exam	K Level	Status
Foundation based on the ISTQB Syllabus	None	Multiple choice on demand	3	Live
Intermediate	Foundation	Multiple choice on demand	4	Live
Practitioner Test Analysis	Intermediate	Written quarterly on dates mandated by ISEB	6	Retired
Practitioner Test Management			6	Retired

## 2.5 Tutor Based Delivery

All courses in either certification programme can be delivered in a classroom at public locations, client offices, TSG's Education centre or public locations, which include:

- Birmingham,
- Bristol;

- Cardiff;
- Coventry;
- Leeds;
- London;
- Manchester;
- Reading;
- Southampton.

A full list of public certification courses, dates and locations is always available by using the left hand side of the Learning & Development section of TSG's website, or directly from the following scheme based pages:

- ISEB & ISTQB: <http://testing-solutions.com/training/courses>

### 2.5.1 ISTQB Foundation

Classroom based public Foundation courses consist of 3 days training, with an examination taking place on the afternoon of the final day.

An alternative schedule is available that provides for 3 full days training and the examination on the following day. This is a popular option for dedicated in-house training courses as it maximises the amount of training time the delegate group receives in what is an 'information packed' syllabus.

The exam is 1 hour long and the pass rate is 26 questions answered correctly from 40.

### 2.5.2 ISTQB Advanced Test Certificates

The ISTQB Advanced Test Analyst, Technical Test Analyst and Test Management courses have the same structure in that they have:

- 5 days each;
- An examination a week or so after the revision day;
- Examinations having multiple choice scenario based questions.

The five days learning for Advanced courses are offered in two formats:

1. Five consecutive days;
2. 3 days, followed by 2 days around 2-weeks' later

The exam is multiple-choice format to K4 level. 65 questions are to be attempted over 3 hours with a pass mark of 65%.

Of the two Test Analyst courses:

- The Technical Test Analyst version provides more in the way extended test techniques for non-functional testing;
- The Test Analyst version concentrates more on functional techniques.

### 2.5.3 BCS/ISEB Intermediate Certificate

The ISEB Intermediate is a full 3-day course, with an examination of multiple choice scenario-based questions sat on the afternoon of the following day. The public course has an optional revision session on the morning of day 4 at an additional cost. In-house courses include the revision session.

The exam is multiple-choice format to K4 level. 25 questions are to be attempted over 1 hour with a pass mark of 60% (15 questions answered correctly).

## 2.6 Online Based Delivery

TSG launched its brand new Learning Management System, Learntesting™ during April of 2009 to deliver certified BCS/ISEB and ISTQB and other courses in a virtual learning environment over the Internet.

All online ISEB & ISTQB courses and value-add material available through Learntesting can be viewed at: <http://testing-solutions.com/training/courses> or [www.tsg.learntesting.com](http://www.tsg.learntesting.com)

The courses follow the appropriate syllabus, with each structured lesson containing worked examples, revision questions and, at the end of the course, a mock examination. A forum is available to post questions for answer by a TSG Tutor and some have a number of virtual classroom lessons and exam bootcamps with a tutor.

The online version is particularly useful for students who:

- Don't thrive in an open classroom environment;
- Learn more comfortably and readily within their own chosen environment at a time of their own choosing;
- Need learning checkpoints;
- Need time to revisit and revise questions;
- Cannot readily be released from the workplace.

The courses are made available for varying periods of time and can be accessed anywhere and anytime the student has access to the Internet.

### 2.6.1 Course Packages & Structure

Online course through Learntesting consist of:

- Tutor-videos;
- Full transcript of online presentation;
- Interactive exercises and sample questions;
- 50 testing books from the Skillsoft library, including 'Guide to Advanced Software Testing' by Anne Mette Jonassen Hass and 'The Testing Practitioner' by Erik Van Veenendaal;
- Sample exam papers;
- Full tutor support.

All courses are offered using two variants that include:



All courses offer a 'post study' structured revision session. This gives delegates to join an online classroom to address some subject matter they may have had difficulty understanding and, importantly, a further mock examination that is marked and discussed prior to sitting the real exam.

In addition, Intermediate and 'Advanced' courses are supported by a number of 3-hour open tutor sessions over the Internet 'Live Virtual Classrooms (LVC)' for;

- Advanced Level exercises; and
- Exam question revision.

The LVC sessions are scheduled regularly, and delegates will be able to join them at the appropriate part of the course. Again, this blended approach to learning provides delegates with the opportunity to checkpoint and confirm their learning with a TSG tutor during the course.

### 2.6.2 Examination Options

The examination can be taken at:

- At a Pearson View® Test Centre using a voucher provided by TSG;
- TSG or by joining one of our public courses on the final afternoon;
- In-house, provided that minimum invigilation numbers are met (3 as the date on the cover).

The 'Course Only' package is one that has proved popular with developers who need to know about testing and how to approach it, but do not need to take the exam.

As an additional consideration, this course and any other within Learntesting™ can be made available on a licensing basis:

- Via Learntesting™
- By placing it directly into any SCORM compliant learning management system clients may already have in place.

This approach offers the added benefit of:

- Consistency in approach, process, terminology and understanding across the organisation;
- Economies of scale through considerably reduced cost per head.

## 2.7 Online Courses

TSG plans to develop and make available via the Learntesting™ platform the following courses:

Course	Language	Availability
ISTQB Foundation – full course, native language	English	Now
	German	Now
	Spanish	Now
ISTQB Foundation – tutor video refresher/revision course	English	Now
ISTQB Advanced Test Manager		Now
ISTQB Advanced Test Analyst		Now
ISTQB Technical Test Analyst		Now
ISEB Intermediate		Now
Client led material	On demand	On demand
ISTQB Advanced Test Manager Sample Questions interactive evaluation & model answers	English	Now
ISTQB Advanced Test Analyst Sample Questions interactive evaluation & model answers	English	Now
ISTQB Foundation & Advanced – Full sample papers ‘Live exam strength’ set by Stuart Reid	English	Now

## 2.8 Online Value Adds

In addition to the unique learning experience offered by Learntesting™, the following value-adds and benefits are provided:

- People registering for a course will have open access to TSG’s library of up to 50 online testing and testing related books for a period of 1-year.
- ‘Advanced’ courses are to be supported by a number of 3-hour open tutor sessions over the Internet. The sessions are to be scheduled regularly, and delegates will be able to join them at the appropriate part of the course. Again, this blended approach to learning provides delegates with the opportunity to checkpoint and confirm their learning with a TSG tutor during the course.
- All courses have e-mail support on a 24/7 basis, which is provided by an accredited tutor.

Visit [www.tsg.learntesting.com](http://www.tsg.learntesting.com) for more information.

### 3 Success Rates 2011

Based on statistics published by ISEB, TSG's pass rates in 2011 have exceeded national averages, as follows:

Course	Classroom % Pass <sup>1</sup>	Online % Pass, based on delegate feedback
ISTQB Foundation	84.44%	95%
ISEB Intermediate	84.29%	93%
ISTQB Advanced Test Manager	62.39%	Stats not available from ISEB at present
ISTQB Advanced Test Analyst	78%	Stats not available from ISEB at present
ISTQB Advanced Technical Test Analyst	Stats not available from ISEB at present	Stats not available from ISEB at present

<sup>1</sup> Pass rates as at April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2011

Web ISEB & ISTQB 2010 v1.8.docx