

Certified Tester

Foundation Level 2018

Course Timing Information

Released version 2018

International Software Testing Qualifications Board



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Foundation Level Course Timing Information

ISTQB® Foundation Syllabus was developed to describe a three day (minimum duration) training course. It is still a three day (minimum duration) training course in our 2018 version. The total length is 16 hours and 45 minutes.

There is no ISTQB® requirement for training providers that precludes running a four day course, or a three day course with an exam on day four. However, the syllabus is built to describe the minimum course content that can be covered in three days; for example, there can be 6.5 hours of training on each of the first two days, and then 4.75 hours on the third day, with a one hour exam at the end of the day.

There are six major chapters. The top-level heading for each chapter specifies the minimum time for the chapter. Time requirements are not provided below the chapter level. For accredited training courses, the syllabus requires a minimum of 16.75 hours of instruction, distributed across the six chapters as follows:

- Chapter 1: 175 minutes Fundamentals of Testing
- Chapter 2: 100 minutes Testing Throughout the Software Development Lifecycle
- Chapter 3: 135 minutes Static Testing
- Chapter 4: 330 minutes Test Techniques
- Chapter 5: 225 minutes Test Management
- Chapter 6: 40 minutes Tool Support for Testing

When the Foundation Level Working Group (FLWG) updated the ISTQB® Foundation Syllabus from 2011 to 2018, one of our targets was to adjust the timing of each chapter and the overall syllabus to the guidelines which ISTQB® have been working with since 2012. These guidelines propose a specific time to cover each learning objectives as follows:

- K1: 5 minutes
- K2: 15 minutes
- K3: 60 minutes

The additional time for K2 learning objectives compared to K1 learning objectives is due to: 1) the increased complexity of teaching materials at a K2 level compared to a K1 level; and, 2) the requirement that accredited training include a realistic software example illustrating the concept described by each K2 learning objective. The additional time for K3 learning objectives compared to K2 learning objectives is due to: 1) the increased complexity of teaching materials at a K3 level compared to a K2 level; and, 2) the requirement that accredited training include not only a realistic software example illustrating the concept described by each K3 learning objective, but also a realistic exercise, which must be solved in the class. (See the CTFL 2018 Accreditation Guidelines and the ISTQB® Accreditation Process for these and other relevant rules.)

In the ISTQB® Foundation Syllabus 2011 (and previous versions), the ISTQB® did not use these guidelines, since the ISTQB® first started to use these guidelines in 2012. In the ISTQB® Foundation Syllabus 2011, the ISTQB® simply dictated a required minimum time per chapter, based on past history with the previous versions of the syllabus.

If the timing guidelines above had been used on the ISTQB® Foundation Syllabus 2011, that syllabus would have required the following minimum time:


$$27 (K1) * 5 \text{ minutes} + 47 (K2) * 15 \text{ minutes} + 9 (K3) * 60 \text{ minutes} + 1 (K4) * 75 \text{ minutes} = 135 + 705 + 540 + 75 = 1,455 \text{ minutes} = 24.25 \text{ hours.}$$

To address this overload of learning objectives, the ISTQB® Foundation Syllabus 2018 has 22 fewer learning objectives compared with the ISTQB® Foundation Syllabus 2011.


2011 Syllabus

| Chapter | K1 LO | K2 LO | K3 LO | K4 LO | Total |
|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------|
| 1 | 3 | 9 | - | - | 12 |
| 2 | 4 | 8 | - | - | 12 |
| 3 | 4 | 5 | - | - | 9 |
| 4 | 2 | 10 | [3] 7 | 1 | 20 [16] |
| 5 | 10 | 12 | 2 | - | 24 |
| 6 | 4 | 3 | - | - | 7 |
| Total | 27 | 47 | [5] 9 | 1 | 84 [80] |

2018 Syllabus



| Chapter | K1 LO | K2 LO | K3 LO | K4 LO | Total |
|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1 | 2 | 11 | - | - | 13 |
| 2 | 2 | 6 | - | - | 8 |
| 3 | 2 | 5 | 1 | - | 8 |
| 4 | 0 | 8 | 4 | - | 12 |
| 5 | 4 | 9 | 2 | - | 15 |
| 6 | 5 | 1 | - | - | 6 |
| Total | 15 | 40 | 7 | 0 | 62 |



Using these guidelines for timing with the ISTQB® Foundation Syllabus 2018, we have for each chapter calculated the timing, and adjusted it if we thought that would be appropriate. The ISTQB® Foundation Core Team and the ISTQB® Executive asked Erik van Veenendaal (former vice president of the ISTQB®, published testing expert, and experienced ISTQB® Foundation trainer) to review our final timings, which we present below.

Chapter 1, Fundamentals of Testing

| | | |
|-------|-----------|-------------|
| K1 | 2 | 10 minutes |
| K2 | 11 | 165 minutes |
| K3 | 0 | 0 minutes |
| Total | Chapter 1 | 175 minutes |

This is 20 minutes more than the ISTQB® Foundation Syllabus 2011, with one fewer K1 learning objective and two more K2 learning objectives compared to the ISTQB® Foundation Syllabus 2011.

When debating timing of chapter one, all the people who the Foundation Core Team talked with who have had experience teaching Foundation classes have had difficulties covering the content of the syllabus within the timeframe provided for Chapter 1 in the Foundation Syllabus 2011.

Additionally, in the Foundation Syllabus 2018 we now have more time to spend on the test process (4 K2s) and a significant amount of material on this topic in the syllabus. In the Foundation Syllabus 2018, we also moved section 4.1 to chapter 1 and incorporated that material in the test process discussion.

Chapter 2, Testing Throughout the Software Development Lifecycle

| | | |
|-------|-----------|-------------|
| K1 | 2 | 10 minutes |
| K2 | 6 | 90 minutes |
| K3 | 0 | 0 minutes |
| Total | Chapter 2 | 100 minutes |

This is 15 minutes less than in the Foundation Syllabus 2011, with two fewer K1 learning objectives and two fewer K2 learning objectives in the Foundation Syllabus 2018.

In Chapter 2, we have rewritten the learning objectives and part of content of the chapter, but the main points are the same as in the Foundation Syllabus 2011, where timing always has been more correct.

Chapter 3, Static Testing

| | | |
|-------|-----------|--|
| K1 | 2 | 10 minutes |
| K2 | 5 | 75 minutes |
| K3 | 1 | 60 minutes |
| Total | Chapter 3 | 135 minutes (not 145 per the calculation) |

This is 75 minutes more than in the Foundation Syllabus 2011, with two fewer K1 learning objectives but with one new K3 learning objective added to the Foundation Syllabus 2018.

Chapter 3 has an increased focus on reviews with a K3 learning objective, which also requires more instructional time, as K3 learning objectives must have an exercise when taught.

Chapter 4, Test Techniques

| | | |
|-------|-----------|--|
| K1 | 0 | 0 minutes |
| K2 | 8 | 120 minutes |
| K3 | 4 | 240 minutes |
| Total | Chapter 4 | 330 minutes (not 360 per the calculation) |

We reduced the time allocated for Chapter 4 by 30 minutes from that predicted by the timing guidelines, as we expect boundary value analysis and equivalence partitioning can be taught together, thus reducing the time required for each of these K3 learning objectives by 15 minutes.

This chapter was 285 minutes in the Foundation Syllabus 2011, and is now 330 minutes, so a total of 45 minutes is added to increase focus on test techniques. Remember, each K3 learning objectives must have an exercise when taught.

Chapter 5, Test Management

| | | |
|-------|-----------|--|
| K1 | 4 | 20 minutes |
| K2 | 9 | 135 minutes |
| K3 | 2 | 120 minutes |
| Total | Chapter 5 | 225 minutes (not 275 per the calculation) |

We reduced the time allocated for Chapter 5 by 50 minutes from that predicted by the timing guidelines, as the K1 and K2 learning objectives are quite straightforward. Furthermore, the treatment of the topic is broad in Chapter 5 since this is Foundation Level, and not Advanced Test Management.

This chapter was 170 minutes in the Foundation Syllabus 2011, and it is now 225 minutes, so a total of 55 minutes were added. Remember, each K3 learning objectives must have an exercise when taught.

Chapter 6, Tool Support for Testing

| | | |
|-------|-----------|------------|
| K1 | 5 | 25 minutes |
| K2 | 1 | 15 minutes |
| K3 | 0 | 0 minutes |
| Total | Chapter 6 | 40 minutes |

This chapter was also allocated 40 minutes in the Foundation Syllabus 2011. We reduced the content to be covered, with one fewer K1 learning objectives and two fewer K2 learning objectives than Foundation Syllabus 2011.

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