Preparing for the D Tests

Now that you are starting Module D you will be thinking ahead to taking the D Tests. There is plenty you can do to prepare for these and increase your chances of success.

D1 TEST: THEORY
Revise the Modules study notes and make sure you understand the principles of indexing that are taught there. If you have any questions or are not clear on some of the theory, you can still consult your Course Adviser for help, any time until you apply for Test D1.

Revisit the quizzes and practice exercises on the SI Training Course pages. These are designed to support the theory in the study materials and give you the opportunity to apply it in straightforward exercises. Again, if you have questions about any aspects of this you can ask your Course Adviser for clarification.

Some students have found it helpful to **take the 'Indexing Basics' workshop**: although designed as an introduction to indexing, it also serves as a good revision guide.

When answering the Test Paper, do make sure to **check your work carefully for minor errors**: indexing requires meticulous attention to detail, and marks for accuracy are a component of the theory assessment.

You need to pass the D1 theory test before proceeding to the D2 practical indexing test. You can however resit if you are not successful. You may resit the test twice.

D2 TEST: PRACTICAL INDEXING
For the D practical indexing test, you are required to compile an index to a much longer text than you have done so far in the indexing assignments or online tutorials. This is quite a big step, and it takes a lot of practice to achieve the standard we set for Accreditation—which is, after all, a recognition of your ability to index competently in the commercial publishing world. Most of those who sit the D2 Test do pass and become Accredited indexers but not everyone passes first time, so be prepared to resit. Indexing requires very specific skills and approaches, and some students take a little longer to acquire these than others.

A longer text is obviously more of a challenge to index, although all the principles that you are taught in the modules still apply; in some respects, it is easier to index a longer text where there are more substantial discussions of topics than in shorter texts where references can be quite minor. On the other hand, a more complex structure is required to organise the entries in an efficient and user-friendly way. In a longer index, there are also more opportunities for small errors to creep in, so leaving time for very thorough checking is important too.

You should be aware that the instructions for Test D2 are quite specific in terms of conventions and length. Even if you have collected index entries as you have progressed through the course, the entries for the Test D2 index should be constructed afresh according to the instructions. This will also give you the opportunity to review decisions you may have taken at an earlier stage in the course when you had had less practice.

To optimise your chances of success in your final test:

Review all the feedback comments you received on the B and C index assignments
- Have similar comments been made on more than one assignment? Perhaps you have not quite got to grips with the problem yet.

- Have major issues been flagged up to you as needing more attention, revision or practice? Now is a good time to look at these again.

Review the *'Test D index grades criteria'* and the *'Marking percentages guidance'*

These will help you understand how the various aspects of indexing are marked and what qualities will most likely lead to a pass mark. The documents are downloadable from the website.

Use indexing software

- If you have not already tried out the indexing programs, take an opportunity to do some trial indexing with the packages available and use the one you are most comfortable with for your further indexes and test. All programs have either free demo or student versions which are adequate for Training Course indexes. You can find out more about the programs by following the link in your Materials tab.
- Indexing software brings many advantages: speeding up entry of terms, organisation of entries including correct alphabetization and punctuation, cross-checking of cross-references, and providing and ensuring a consistent layout. It is also invaluable at the editing and checking stages to have functions that are designed to assist with this.

Take another online group tutorial

- You may have one or two tutorials still to participate in—if so, signing up to the next available one would be a good move.
- Even if you have already taken your statutory three tutorials you may still sign up to another one.

Try some of the longer practice texts available from the Materials tab and compare your indexes with those of professional indexers

The texts are listed in order of length: *Maritime and Coastal Heritage* and *Strong Foundations* are longer than tutorial indexes; and the longest, *Victorians in search of Winter Health*, is a short book and comes with additional guidelines.

Take the Optional D Indexing Assignment

This is another tutorial where you will get one-to-one feedback and the opportunity to discuss your index with a tutor. The text is longer than the C Assignments and online tutorial texts, so it gives you the opportunity to practise working with more in-depth material. That said, the text is also fairly uncomplicated, so provides an indexing experience where you can apply your new indexing skills in a straightforward way. This helps to highlight if there are aspects of your indexing technique which need re-thinking.

Make sure you have developed a structured checking and editing procedure

Take another look at the 'Editing checklist for online tutorials', which also applies to tests and assignments.

Consider taking one or both of the SI online workshops: 'How to edit an index' or 'Writing index entries'

These workshops are available to all SI members, whether students or working indexers, and help to increase your ability to create a well-constructed, user-friendly and accurate index.

If you are not successful when you first take the D2 practical indexing test you may resit it twice.