

DELA

Optimise your success!

Doing well at university requires excellent academic language skills – a step up from what you have been used to in your previous studies. This is why the University of Melbourne requires many students to take the Diagnostic English Language Assessment (DELA) when they commence their studies.

What is DELA?

DELA is a diagnostic tool that assesses your strengths and weaknesses in academic reading, writing and listening. DELA results will indicate if you'd benefit from extra language support at the start of your degree. DELA has no impact on your place in the course.

Will I have to sit DELA?

You will have to sit DELA if you are an undergraduate student with any of the following:

- VCE English study score below 30
- VCE English Language study score below 30
- VCE English Literature study score below 30
- VCE ESL study score below 35
- IELTS below 7.0
- or equivalent (for equivalencies, go to:
http://services.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/933886/Table_of_EquivalenciesMay2014version.pdf

OR

- You are a student entering through the University of Melbourne English Language Bridging Program (UMELBP) offered at Hawthorn English Language Centre.

In addition, some Graduate Schools may require you to sit the DELA.

Why do I have to sit DELA?

Developing tertiary academic language skills early is a key to success in your studies. DELA will identify the language skills you may need to improve, and direct you to the best program of support for your requirements and course.

Will I have to sit DELA even if I am a native speaker?

Yes – if your language study score falls within the range identified above. All students, both native and non-native speakers of English need excellent academic English skills in order to fully engage in their studies AND get good marks. As a native English speaker, you may still require assistance in developing the sophisticated language skills that you need at tertiary level. Developing strategies for improving your academic English may mean the difference between just passing and getting high marks.

What if I don't take DELA – will I be in trouble?

Your enrolment will not be cancelled if you don't sit DELA, or if you fail to participate in the skill improvement opportunities that are recommended to you following completion of DELA. However, if your academic results are subsequently unsatisfactory and you have not taken up these opportunities, you are unlikely to receive a favourable response to a request to continue your studies. If there are particular problems that prevent you from participating in the recommended action, you should discuss these with a Student Adviser so that alternatives can be explored.

What happens if I fail DELA?

You can't fail DELA! It's a diagnostic tool to help you get the most out of your university studies. DELA is working for you, not against you! Also, DELA results don't appear on your transcript or impact on your university place.

When do I take DELA?

DELA is offered throughout orientation week and is held in one of the University's teaching venues – the times and venues are listed in your orientation program and on the DELA webpage:

http://services.unimelb.edu.au/academicsskills/english_as_a_second_language/DELA.

Check your orientation program or the DELA webpage to find a session being held at a time that suits you.

What does DELA involve?

DELA takes around 2 hours, and is made up of three components:

- Reading (45 minutes)
- Writing (30 minutes)
- Listening (30 minutes)

To find out more about the format of DELA and the kinds of questions you'll be asked out, check out a sample test at: http://services.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/470947/DELA-Handbook2009.pdf

Can I study for DELA?

No, we don't encourage you to study for DELA – remember it is a diagnostic tool designed to raise awareness of your language needs, not a selection test.

I've got a health issue/impairment that makes it hard for me to perform well on a timed assessment. What should I do?

You can't fail DELA, but if you feel you haven't done as well as you could on the test, you should discuss this with a Student Adviser who will give you advice on appropriate strategies. *(Some students with certain impairments, e.g. a learning disability, sensory or physical impairment, may not be required to sit DELA. You should discuss this with a Disability Liaison Officer: <http://services.unimelb.edu.au/disability>*

When will I find out my results?

You'll be emailed your results and recommendations within 5 working days after you've taken DELA, so make sure you check your university email account. You may be asked to enrol in an English language credit subject or a language program that supports one of your core subjects, depending on your course. Or you may have a study plan developed specifically for your needs. It is important that you discuss your results with a Student Adviser. All language programs are designed to fit within your course of study, at no additional cost. If you would like to know more about the kinds of programs that your faculty provides to help you develop academic language skills, go to: http://services.unimelb.edu.au/academicskills/english_as_a_second_language/DELA/dela_outcomes or talk to a Student Adviser.