

Macau University of Science and Technology

2016/2017 Admission Examination Syllabus (English)

This entrance examination, apart from serving the purpose of screening applicants, is set as a placement examination that allows the University to make a balanced and professional assessment of applicants' levels of English proficiency (in order to place them in the appropriate levels of the English program).

The examination is comprehensive: assessing English mastery in a wide range of skills including reading, grammar, vocabulary and writing. The allotted time for the examination is one hour and thirty minutes.

Reading Comprehension (25 minutes)

A few short passages of about 300 words each will be given in this section. Subject matter may include historical and/or contemporary articles taken from a textbook, a newspaper, or a periodical. Candidates will be tested on their deductive reasoning skills, ability to identify meanings of words from the context, ability to understand inferred and implied meanings, and the range and depth of their exposure to materials in the English language medium.

How to prepare Reading with understanding depends mainly on the interplay of two factors: vocabulary and grammar. To develop good reading skills, one has to build up a large vocabulary and have a good background in grammar. A good knowledge of reading techniques will also help to make reading easier. Reading the materials that one is interested in is a helpful way to practice reading. Remember: always try to read for the main ideas. A passage in the exam should be read at least twice: the first time, to obtain a general idea of the text, and the second time to look for details to answer the questions. When encountering some unknown words, try to use the context clues to guess their meanings.

Grammar and vocabulary (30 minutes)

The multiple-choice questions of this section will test the understanding of vocabulary and various English grammar points. Candidates will be expected to demonstrate their knowledge of vocabulary and grammar concepts used in formal and informal English.

Grammar concepts include:

1. Nouns and pronouns
2. Subject and verb agreement
3. Verb voices and tenses
4. Comparatives and superlatives of adjectives and adverbs
5. Conjunctions
6. The infinitive, the gerund and the participles
7. Noun clauses, relative clauses, object clauses, subject clauses, etc.

How to prepare A review of prefixes and suffixes can be very helpful for this section of the examination. One may not know all the vocabulary items, but the context of the situation will often help in making a reasonable guess. Also, one can review all the grammar concepts learned in the secondary school. In order to get familiar with the essential grammar do more reading and pay close attention to how various grammar concepts are applied in sentences. Also do more writing to practice using this essential grammar.

Writing (35 minutes)

Candidates will be required to write an essay of about 150 words on one of the given topics. These topics will require candidates to express personal opinions, give information, or discuss a subject of general interest. Assessment elements include accuracy in spelling, the correct use of grammar and punctuation marks, the ability to express ideas with appropriate words, and the logical development of ideas throughout the essay.

How to prepare To develop good writing skills, first of all, one has to build up a large vocabulary and have a strong foundation in grammar. Frequent reading can also help to improve one's writing skills through observing how native writers express their ideas in writing. When reading, one should study the construction of sentences. Practice writing as much as possible, and pay attention to the errors made in past writing exercises in order to avoid making the same mistakes again.